BIBLE TREASURY VOLUME 10

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Bible Treasury Volume 10, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

192 Chapters

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Chapter 0

Bible Treasury Volume 10

Thoughts on 1 Corinthians 12

THE SUBSTANCE OF A LECTURE.

The great truth I wish to assert, with all the simplicity and clearness I can from the word of God, is the present action of the Holy Ghost in the assembly. Here we have the principle, as in chapter 14 the practice. Between the two we have the spring of power which alone can make that principle reducible to practice. For principles alone never suffice; nor can there be without faith practice according to God, nor again will this spring of power work if alone, unless it be guided by principles in that practice. The fact is we have them all here, and each in its due place; and that is the difficulty, because, in fact, in ourselves we are apt to sway to this side or to that, yet are we responsible to walk in the truth.

But we have One in our Lord who has provided for all, and who has given us, as our best present gift, in addition to Himself, the Holy Ghost, the divine gift for the Christian, as Christ is for the sinner.

Now as to the chapter before us, it may be well at once to state, that the word “gifts” in the first verse weakens the sense. For the apostle is not going simply to speak about spiritual gifts. To put it on the ground of gift is to lower the subject; for there is a truth out of which gifts flow, and that is the presence of the Spirit Himself. He is above all gifts, and gifts are not said to be exactly of the Spirit though they may be said to be spiritual gifts. God or Christ is said to be the Giver. The Holy Ghost is the One who makes them good, intervening between Christ and the object of the gift; so that I believe it is of some consequence, though it may not appear more than a nice shade at first sight.

If there is to be an addition to the words the Spirit of God has used, one might suggest “manifestations.” He uses “spiritual,” but then I suppose “spirituals” is hardly an English word, and no doubt our translators were backward to make a word to suit the sense, but “spiritual [manifestations]” may suit the point, including the great truth of the Holy Ghost Himself now given by God. It is not the effects produced only, whether in the way of power or grace; but above all there is the primary parent truth, the center of all, the Holy Ghost Himself come down to be here for the glory of the Lord Jesus in the assembly. The apostle is not here discussing the individual state of those that form part of that assembly, but rather the Spirit's action in each and all.

The great distinction in verse 3 does not raise the question whether people are converted. It is a test for each, and the source and character of the teaching, whether from the Spirit of God or from the spirit of error. Now, in the present state of Christendom, people are apt to be always occupied with the person's state, whether the preacher is a Christian or not; but when the heart rests on Christ, there is another and deeper question,—how things bear on the glory of the Lord Jesus. The Holy Ghost, being come down, has a suited sphere for carrying out a testimony to the glory of the Lord Jesus, and that sphere is the church. And, though there is a broken state of things, the church is not gone or extinct. It may be ever so ruined in its practical condition, but still it is here,

and here for the gravest of all reasons and most comforting of all facts—to testify of Christ's victory over Satan, for we are to God's glory. The Holy Ghost is here (I do not mean in individuals only, but) still to be counted on to act in the assembly where there is faith to look to Him for it.

I do not speak of His gracious way where blessing is diffused spite of things ever so irregular. God blesses the gospel in circumstances which may be quite anomalous, and uses His word according to His sovereign will. But when He is pleased to use a man's singing gospel solos for instance, or a woman's preaching in a theater, perhaps, well one understands that Christ acts in grace; but it is base and false to interpret that grace of the Lord as if it supposed His approbation. It is really a sentence on Christendom that God is pleased to use what is so disorderly, and not those who assume to be the regular channels in ministry—especially as the gospel thus irregularly preached is a kind of parody or rude imitation of the truth, and not at all in the received style of the modern pulpit.

For God will have souls brought in. But the evangelistic blessing of God is not even touched on in these chapters.

Therein is another most singular contradiction of what men look for. For when people ordinarily say there is great blessing, they mean that souls are converted; as if God did not care about. His church, and only occupied Himself or His servants with saving sinners. What I complain of is, not persons taking delight in conversion of souls, but their not having a thought beyond it. The gathering of souls is the express object of the death of the Lord Jesus— “to gather together in one” &c. Now I ask, How does that meet my soul's desires? does my heart answer to the word of God? or does the gathering of souls make me uneasy? is there no blessing in the assembly of saints on earth? are you to say that communion will be true only when we are together in heaven? I grant indeed that gathering on earth costs one a great deal; in heaven God's grace will effect it in perfection.

Here then the apostle says, “Now concerning spirituals, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led.” (Vers. 1, 2.) There was a danger for them; there may be for us; for we are members of that one body. There was not a little also to learn, “Ye know that ye were Gentiles,” &c. He is contrasting the power of the Spirit with which that had sometimes been at work. A solemn lesson to all of us is the reality of Satan's power. It was not merely that they had had bad affections but now kind and good; for there is the spirit of the enemy at work to lower His name, as on the other hand there is the Holy Ghost for the express purpose of maintaining the glory of the Lord. This cannot be enjoyed without faith, not only dealing with each individual but where souls come together. God looks that there be faith in the action of the Holy Ghost in the assembly. What is acted on there should flow from the distinct conviction of the presence of the Holy Ghost in it. This is what the apostle sought to produce in the minds of the Corinthian saints.

Here is the test: “No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed.” If the Spirit of God is working in a man, be never lowers Christ. What is the bearing of that man's teaching? Does it depreciate Christ? On the other hand no man can say that Jesus is Lord, but &c. He particularly takes up the lowest form of exalting Christ. For of course to say “Lord” is far from being the highest way of naming Christ. It is what every soul on its parting company with the world, when one repents and believes the gospel, is called on to own. “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord

Jesus," &c. Hence it was the very first confession all through the Acts. A person could not be owned as a Christian till be owned Jesus as Lord. Paul preached that He was the Son of God. This is personal glory. But "the Lord" means that He is the one that God has exalted, not only raising Him from the dead but setting Him over everything. It is by the Holy Ghost that this testimony is produced, and it is important to know the least testimony that the Spirit in the fullness of His grace puts His own stamp on. It is not even a question of believing what is taught or spoken in the assembly. It is a question of what the Spirit of God is doing. What lowers Christ is not of the Holy Ghost, what exalts Him is of the Spirit of God.

Now he comes to differences (ver. 4), but at the same time he carries on the great truth. Each member of Christ is a suited vessel of the Holy Ghost to glorify the Lord Jesus in. There is nothing that is of value except it has a divine ring in it. There are diversities of gift, &43. He will not allow of such a thing as looking at the qualities of the vessels as men. God is giving, through Him to those who confess Christ, this or that gift to bear witness to His glory. There are "differences of administrations." No one is made other than a servant in what he receives. And there are "diversities of operations" or results produced, but it is "God that worketh them all" —the same spring of power. There may be ever so many distinct streams through which He is pleased to manifest Himself, but there is one source of supply that feeds them.

The saints at Corinth were far too much occupied with what might suit carnal persons. They had a great desire to hear something striking and to see miracles; they valued philosophy, eloquence, anything external that struck the ear or the eye and drew public attention. All this was at work. They liked what attracted the eye and mind and filled the imagination, so that they paid comparatively little heed to other and deeper ways of the Spirit's action. What then does the apostle say? Wherever persons take up a particular line of the truth, do you ever find that it is really the best? Those that get the best blessing are such as look for Christ to have all the glory and praise.

The Corinthians had pitched on external displays of power in which the Spirit acted; but they were His lowest ways. The first failure was to have a choice at till. It is one of the great features that goes with a particularly precious and valued gift, that it as the rule appreciates and recommends other gifts. You will find that the richer is the power of the Spirit of God, the more a man admires what is not like his own line. The truth is, it arises from another reason. It is not merely because he himself has not got it that he values it, but if spiritual he sees it all flowing from the divine source to the exaltation of the Lord Jesus. The Corinthians had scarcely entered into anything more than that the church was a place where anyone might play his part. They were not thinking of it as the assembly of. God, or whether it would be for profit. What they had taken up was for admiration, a display of energy to make the heathen feel there was a power in the church superior to the world now that they were delivered from it.

The apostle reminds them that they used to be led away by power, for it was not only evil but power without responsibility. It was really of Satan, and they were carried away by it even as they were led. For their will was toward evil. Now the Holy Ghost never works in this way, but in subjecting to the glory of the Lord Jesus, and this in responsibility.

All here then we see to be under this great truth: the Holy Ghost working to exalt Christ; Satan working to lower Him. A gift does not make a man independent, but, as he never was, a servant of

Christ in the gift that he receives. The Holy Ghost has Himself taken the character of Servant, and gives that character to the man whom He works in. The Corinthians said, as it were, If God has given me a tongue, why not speak? and so it was human reasoning. The apostle brings in totally different thought and action. He says, “the manifestation of the Spirit” &c. (ver. 7), “to one is given by the Spirit the gift of tongues?” No. He begins with those manifestations they did not value enough, “to one was given the word of wisdom” (there was very little of that), “to another the word of knowledge.” The word of knowledge is of a lower character than the word of wisdom. The word of wisdom implies acquaintance with the source, not mere knowledge of things. Wisdom is never found in a man that is not familiar with God Himself. Knowledge may be a careful acquaintance with what God has said. You may pick up a good deal of what His word declares and not identify yourself with His mind. But he does not say the word of wisdom is a manifestation of the Spirit, the word of knowledge only of man. They have both their place. “To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit.” (Ver. 8.) “To another faith by the same Spirit” —there Is that power that conquers difficulties, for this is the characteristic effect of the gift of faith. “To another the gift of healing; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” (Vers. 9-11.)

They did not deny that these were by the same Spirit. It was not therefore necessary to say each by the same Spirit, but he puts the same signature to them all as a whole. All are wrought by the same Spirit, and therefore whoever respects the Spirit of God will respect whatever flows from the Spirit. This seems the main drift of this statement of the apostle. “For as the body is one, and hath many members', and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ.” (Ver. 12.) Now he begins to point out the connection of this subject with Christ's body.

But one word on verse 11. There are two things, the first is, “All these worketh one and the same Spirit.” It is not merely that He gives, but He works, it all. Thus the connection of the Spirit is kept up. It is not a thing He lets out of His hand. There is a free and full communication between the source and the stream. Constant active grace has done that work. There is dividing to each, there is a portion of what is suitable to this or that vessel. Yet it is not merely that the gifted man works, but the Spirit works what is for the glory of the Lord Jesus, the same Spirit dividing to each.

Now it will be found that, wherever the body of Christ is not clearly apprehended and held as a truth, there will be feebleness in the way in which the working of the Holy Ghost will be held by the soul. You cannot sever the one Spirit from the one body. The Holy Ghost being a divine person, he says it is the same Spirit that works in all. Withal he maintains the divine character of the Holy Ghost. Whatever His grace, He did not lower His divine glory as Son of God by becoming a servant.

There never was such glory brought to God as when the Son stooped so that none could go so low. And whoever understood the glory of God so as when the Holy Ghost came down? The disciples knew the Lord a great deal better than they had before when in bodily presence. So with us now. We are the heirs of all this blessedness, being brought into this wonderful place of having the Holy Ghost and. so of union with Christ. It is a question of owning the blessing we have got; we may have a blessing and be little sensible of it. If we do not own it, we shall be exposed to

mistakes.

Let us examine a little why the body is introduced here. He is going to enforce the principle, for he has shown its divine source and character. All the forms of power were equally divine. “For as the body is one, and hath many members,” &c. So also is, not the church, but” Christ.” Yet it is the church, only he does not call it the church, but Christ; this is remarkable, and the more so because of the low state of that assembly. I believe it to be for the purpose of rebuking their low state. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized” &c.: this was the way they were brought into it, “whether we be Jews or Gentiles, bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” (Ver. 18.) Thus whether it was the first constitution or the place of divine acknowledgment, whether it is looked at outwardly, or inwardly, still everything depends upon the Holy Ghost, it was He distributed, He worked. It was His blessing through and for Christ. All was in consequence of the presence of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven but His coming was the fruit of Christ's going up and sending Him down after redemption.

It was not only the astonishing gifts, but “the body is not one member, but many.” (Ver. 14.) “If the foot shall say because I am not the hand I am not of the body.” If a humble member of the body were to complain that he was not set in a more exalted place, is he not of the body? There are two ways the flesh acts; the first is discontent as to oneself, and the second is disdain of other people. Each to be contented with his place. “If the ear shall say because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; if the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand; is it therefore not of the body?” (Ver. 16.) The ear would like the position of the eye; there it is discontent. “If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing?” (Ver. 17.) And so it is most true of all— “if the whole were hearing,” &c.; but the full blessing of the body ordinarily depends on these differences.

The only healthy state of any member is getting blessing from every other member. If any were to shut himself up to even Paul himself, he must lose blessing from the Lord. Perhaps a favorite has a very special gift or some one will say, For myself I do not care to hear anyone but Mr. Better. Is this then the desire to enjoy the means the Holy Ghost gives for the use of the body? The Lord has arranged the church not after the pattern of ever so many captains over so many companies, which is the pattern of the religions world. There it is the one man surrounded by the persons who look up to him. But in the church according to God's order it is wholly and manifestly different. The question is, Where are we as to these greet matters? We must see where we are and what our souls accept, God or man, and judge ourselves by this divine standard.

There is where true spiritual sense of the ways and order of the Lord Jesus is now proved. It is wonderful how the whole Trinity is brought in, God, the Lord, and the Holy Ghost. All has a divine source. A person says, If I had the gift of such a one? Why do not you use what you have? There is nothing that has so much power and reality as using what the Holy Ghost has given for the glory of Christ. A few simple words where they flow from faith and love have power; but where the person tries to imitate another person, does it succeed? Now this is very encouraging for the soul to be simple, and a very solemn warning of letting slip the ways of God, but there is no way of doing truth but using what the Lord has given for the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Now he comes to the other part: “the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee.” (Ver. 21.) Here it is disdain and not discontent; in the former case it was the lower member discontented because it was not the higher. It is but flesh, no matter where it may be; this is what is reproved

and set aside. “Nor the head to the feet I have no need of you,” &e. He is using the comparison of the body, but not speaking of Christ. The fact is, this chapter does not present the Lord Jesus as the Head on high; here he is looking at the church on earth, and he calls it “Christ;” that is, the identification of the whole. And he adds another thing; he says those members of the body engage us which seem to be more feeble (ver. 28), and those members which we, &c. (ver: 28), just as with the natural body. Suppose a person has some member that is weak, what is the effect ?Why you take more care of the weak member instead of slighting its being so.

Having now finished the allusions to the body thus brought in from verse 12, and having done with the reproofs, God tempering the body together, and that the members should have the same care one for another, “if one member suffer,” ate, he comes to the application of all he had been teaching. “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (Ver. 27.) That is, if he looked at them as a whole, they were Christ's body; if individually, they were Christ's members. You do not lift saints out of slow condition by disparaging them, but by maintaining their true relationship. He looks at that assembly at Corinth, and, spite of their condition, says, Ye are the body of Christ; he looks at the individuals there as His members. God has revealed this to us that we might learn His thoughts. He desires to bring them out in the place that God has given them, “ye are the body of Christ,” &c., not meaning that it was confined to the saints at Corinth. But it was true of them; and hence an assembly that is gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus has this stamp upon it. It is responsible to display Christ thus. It cannot have the Holy Ghost forming any other relationship than this. He could not constitute anything different from the body of Christ: it is His mission. The Holy Ghost never was untrue to that for which He has been sent. What we have to see to is whether we lay hold of this place. There is the joint place, and the individual place; in both it is Christ, “ye are the body of Christ,” &c. A true assembly (it may be in great weakness, and who can wonder at this present time?), it was as to such that the Lord Jesus said,” Where two or three are gathered together,” &c., it is Himself in the midst, but in the midst of what? No doubt the moment was not yet come to bring out the body, but this is what the assembly is. It is not a thing that is such because of Christians, but of Christ who stamps His name on the church. He connects His own name with them for the purpose of giving validity to two or three acting for Him.

“Ye are the body of Christ.” This is what we have to bear in mind as gathered to His name; we are His not only individually, but in joint capacity. I admit a broken state. Suppose a person believes in the church of God, but ignores its present condition, it would be a state alien from the truth. We have to take into account how we use the truth, and not the truth only. We must look at the state of that which is precious to the Lord.

We have to do with these two classes of Christians; persons who having known the truth have gone away from it, and those who have never been intelligent. The conduct that would be proper towards persons that have departed from the truth would not be right to those who are ignorant. Do we know the way the Lord dealt with us? But with persons who have turned away, it is another thing altogether; and necessarily along with the sorrow there must be the deep feeling of their unfaithfulness, and the dishonor they have done in turning their back upon Christ. There is the character of indifference that treats Him as nothing. But there is more, for there is another feeling that is apt to grow up with these, and that is, dislike and hatred of those that hold on faithfully. There was a time when all these persons seemed at any rate to have their hearts in It. Let us too take care, looking to the Lord. There is but one way to be kept—the eye singly on Christ. “If we live

in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Gal. 5:25.) It is not merely a question of our own general feeling, but of a most solemn place God has put us in. We have to do now with a divine person, thus maintaining the glory of the Lord Jesus. We should be sensitive, not ungracious—stern where there is the deliberate sin of turning the back on the Holy Ghost or the Lord Jesus Christ.

God has set some in the church, first apostles, &c. (Ver. 28.) There was at Corinth a disrespectful feeling toward Paul himself. Now he asserts that "God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; second, prophets," &c. The last thing (diversities of tongues) is what they made the first. "And all apostles?" there it comes back to his present doctrine, "Are all prophets? Are all workers of miracles?" &c. All this would have set aside the whole nature of the church of God.

But true blessedness is by God working in different ways, all by the same Spirit, and all for the glory of the Lord Jesus.

Chapter 2

Notes on 1 Corinthians 1:1-3

The Epistle on which we are about to enter gives us more than any other an inner view of the church or assembly of God. It does not, like the Epistle to the Romans, lay the foundation of divine righteousness. But it is not at all contracted in its scope. It deals with the practical conduct of the Christian, as well as the public walk of the assembly. It maintains the authority of Paul's ministry as apostle. It denounces party spirit. It exposes worldly wisdom; it insists upon the power of the Spirit. It urges godly order both in the Lord's institution of the eucharist, and in the use of the gifts or spiritual manifestations. It commands holy discipline. It reproves litigiousness,—above all before the world. It presses personal purity; it counsels the saints as to social and family difficulties, as to their relation with the heathen, as to decorum, privately or publicly, in men or women. Finally, it meets their speculations as to the future state, and shows how an error as to this jeopards soundness of faith as to Christ Himself, holiness of walk meanwhile, and the brightness and strength of the Christian's hope. Nor does it withhold the light of God from a matter seemingly so trivial as the mode of collection for the poor saints, whilst it adjusts also the mutual relations of those who labored on the. spot, or of those who might visit them.

From this sketch, slight as it is, one sees how varied and momentous are the topics handled in the first Epistle to the Corinthians; and an examination in detail will manifest the holy wisdom, the burning zeal, the delicacy of affection, the admirable elasticity with which the apostle was enabled by the inspiring Spirit to throw himself heart and mind and soul and strength yet always in the name of the Lord, into their most critical circumstances. For he writes from Ephesus, not far from the close of his three years' abode in that city, when, to any other man than Paul, it might have seemed that his labors for a year and a half at Corinth were fatally compromised. But not so: the Lord, who had cheered him on soon after his arrival at Corinth, strengthened his faith now so severely taxed at Ephesus. “I have much people in this city” were words then to stimulate, now to sustain his hope in God spite of many fears, and in the midst of the deepest exercises of heart. Of all this and more the Epistle bears the impress, and every now and then lets out the expression.

“Paul, a called apostle of Jesus Christ by God's will, and Sosthenes the brother, to the assembly of God that is in Corinth, [persons] sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, theirs and ours; grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ver. 1 - 3.)

To the Roman brethren Paul began by introducing himself as “a bondman of Jesus Christ.” This he omits to the Corinthians to whom he speaks of himself at once as a “called apostle of Jesus Christ.” The difference is due to the facts before him. There had been no undermining of his ministry at Rome, where indeed personally he was a stranger. At Corinth it was well-known to the saints how truly he was a bondman of Jesus Christ. Had not his very hands borne witness to it, night and day caring spiritually for the saints with the Lord's glory before his eyes, even in that outward work by which he had refrained from being a burden to them? To both he writes formally as an “apostle,” and this, not by birth, not by acquirement, not by election of man, but as “called,”

that is, by calling of God. Both he reminds that they themselves were saints, and this too by calling. It was grace which chose them as saints, grace that chose him, not as a saint only, but as an apostle. Such is the principle of Christian ministry, as well as of the salvation of souls or Christianity itself. It is “by God's will,” as he adds; “a called apostle of Jesus Christ by God's will,” not by his own ability or merit, nor by other men's choice. God's sovereign goodness is the spring in every respect. What can be more blessed? We do well to ponder it, and to repudiate whatever is inconsistent with it. It is God then, it is grace which, as it calls saints, so also calls to His service. How different from the ecclesiastical thought and style of modern times! Paul is not what he was in the church” by divine providence” or “by divine permission,” for this might be where the person was alien from His mind or will, God merely overruling for His own secret purpose. And it is not denied that such cases may be, as of old in Balaam, so under Christianity; but how awful for all these who intrude thus unbidden to speak in the name of the Lord! For many shall say to the Judge in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied through Thy name, and through Thy name cast out demons, and through Thy name done many wonderful works? But He will Say, “I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

Beyond controversy it is God, not man, who sets in the church, as we are expressly told in 1 Cor. 12:28, and this applies to “teachers” as distinctly as to “apostles.” They never are in scripture called by man. The church never chose them, as it did those entrusted with its funds for the poor. Nor did apostles or their envoys choose teachers or preachers as they did elders; for these were a local charge, those are gifts set as members in the body of Christ as a whole. Such are the biblical facts, and the principle on which this distinction depends.

It is gross ignorance to confound ministry with priesthood, and to cite for the former what the Epistle to the Hebrews (v. 4) says of the latter, as applied from Aaron to Christ. Yet if it did apply, it would go to prove, not men's calling to the ministry, as they term it, but the exclusive call of God; for in priesthood God alone chose, though this after Aaron (and we may add perhaps Phinehas) by birth successionally, whilst the consecration was in view of all the congregation. In ministry as in the church, where the Holy Spirit dwells and acts, who is a spirit of power and of love and of a sound mind, we are entitled to look for reality; in the flesh or in the world one must be often content to let the merest forms pass, bound to pay to each the honor owe, even where the object of it may be personally undeserving, as is laid down in Rom. 13, 1 Peter 2 The church is, and is responsible to be, the pillar and ground of the truth, the epistle of Christ known and read of all men; and therein, by virtue of the Holy Ghost dwelling in it, is power and obligation to judge according to the word of God whatever is inconsistent with its profession corporately as well as individually.

We see next that the apostle associates with himself, here “Sosthenes the brother,” as in the second Epistle Timothy. If the Sosthenes here named were the chief of the synagogue who seems to have succeeded Crispus on his conversion, if he were himself converted after his ignominious failure to hurt Paul before Gallio the proconsul of Achaia, at Corinth, we can see with what propriety he, no longer the Jewish adversary but the brother in Christ, should thus accompany the apostle in this address to the Corinthian saints. But I affirm nothing, as there is no direct evidence, and the name was not uncommon. He was certainly known at Corinth and was then with the Apostle at Ephesus.

Notice now in what character the Corinthian believers are addressed: “to the assembly of God that is in Corinth.” It is in the strictest connection with the scope of the Epistle, as this is of course according to the true wants there and then. It was not because of a godly few amongst a vast multitude; of ungodly persons. What unacquaintance with the mind of God! It is not so that holy scripture speaks. They constituted God's habitation there by the Spirit's presence. This is the real character and distinctive constituent. No ungodly multitude could be the church or assembly of God; nor have a godly few as such any virtue to be themselves the assembly, still less to make others so by their own presence in their midst. Only the Spirit of God sent down from heaven makes those whom He gathers and with whom He dwells to be the assembly of God. The state of the Corinthians was frightfully bad, perilous to all, and such as to raise the gravest fears as to. some. But we must recollect that, in commanding them to deal with the most scandalous case of all, the apostle goes on the ground of the spirit being saved in the day of the Lord Jesus; and that the second epistle exhorts the saints to confirm love by taking back the offender as one at length roused to deep self-judgment and in danger of being swallowed up with excessive sorrow. No; the assembly of God is liable to the inroad of the most serious evils through ignorance and unwatchfulness; but it does not forfeit its character, if duly constituted, till it renounces all holy discipline by refusing to judge according to the word when evil is brought before it. For it is responsible, if it have let in evil, to put it out in the Lord's name which it bears. And the second epistle is of the greatest value among other things in this also, that it proves how the apostle's confidence was justified in such a clearing of conscience, as led him to expect the work of vindicating the Lord to go on still farther, and thus maintain the character of the assembly of God which grace had given the brethren in Corinth.

But it is well also to observe that in apposition with that character stands more, “[persons] sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints.” The construction is peculiar, but the language is exact. The term η^ιασμ■νοκ (“sanctified “) is in what is called a rational concord with εκκλησ■α. It would not be correct to speak of the assembly as, ηψασμ■νη any more than as εκλεκτ■, though those who compose it are both. But the fact that they were sanctified, and that the form of the word does not mean merely a process going on but their character as stamped with separation to God in Christ Jesus, and thus saints by calling, not merely called to be saints, was a most impressive appeal to their hearts and consciences, especially in the crisis at which things had then arrived in the Corinthian assembly.

It is incorrect to say that here, or anywhere else, justification is meant rather than sanctification. The fact is that, while almost all admit sanctification in the practical sense as a matter of growth and so allowing of degrees among those justified, it seems to be forgotten that scripture speaks of all those who are actually born of God as being sanctified from the beginning of the work of grace in their souls. Compare 1 Cor. 6:11, and 1 Peter 1:2. And so far is it from being true that the call to holiness in practice is enfeebled by this primary and absolute sanctification of all real Christians, that contrariwise it is this setting apart to God which is the ground and a powerful support and a solemn motive to consistency with Christ Jesus in whom we are thus sanctified. It is in virtue of God's will we are said (in Heb. 10:10) to be sanctified through the offering of Christ's body once for all, as elsewhere the Spirit is viewed as its agent. Thus all the Godhead take their part in this great work from the outset and indeed right through. And this is confirmed by its result from the first; for those who participate in this sanctification are saints, “called saints” (not a mere holy nation by

birth like Israel), whilst they are exhorted to follow holiness no less than peace.

But there is an addition that claims our attention: “with all that call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, with theirs and ours." (Ver. 2.) It is of the deepest interest and value, as it connects the epistle with the entire field of Christian profession. There is no hint of limiting the address to “he Christians in all Achaia, as we see in 2 Cor. 1:1. And the difference is the more striking as God foresaw that men would ere long seek to tamper with the application of this epistle beyond all others, and seek to limit it to the apostolic age when the gifts (χαρ■σματα) were, in full force. The unbelief that would make the Corinthian assembly an exception to the order in other places is still more strikingly provided against. Compare for this chapters iv. 17; vii. 17; x. 16; xiv. 36, 37; xvi. 1. Further, the clause seems to me one of those which, while applying then to those who bore the name of the Lord truthfully, would acquire a meaning more distinct as the professing mass became more and more distant from the true character of the assembly of God, when Christianity will be well nigh swamped in Christendom.

“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and [the] Lord Jesus Christ.” (Ver. 3.) Such is the initiatory wish or prayer of the apostle here as in Rom. 1:7, from God in His relation of Father to us, from, Jesus Christ as Lord (compare chap. 8:6): an association however impossible in an inspired writing; derogatory anywhere, if they were not one in the unity; of the divine nature. True and sovereign favor was the spring, grace the result that would prove and magnify its source, shedding its light even on those too blind to see beyond the effect. Be it ours, enjoying the gift, to adore the Giver.

Chapter 3

Notes on 1 Corinthians 1:4-9

After his address and usual greeting, the first thing the apostle does is to let them know that he always thanks God for them. That he should write thus to the saints in Rome, Ephesus, Colosse, Thessalonica, is not surprising; and the wonder to some may be increased when it is observed that he withholds it in writing to the assemblies in Galatia. But the wisdom and the propriety of his procedure are apparent to the spiritual eye. The Corinthians were suffering the consequences of fleshly wisdom and worldliness; the Galatians had let in law, and thus fallen from grace, to the subversion of the truth of the gospel. Hence the reserve of the apostle's tone to the latter; whilst he begins to the former (far more grossly fallen) with the recognition of all he could thank God for in their case. Without some such assurance, where indeed would be the ground of appeal? What the standard by which to judge themselves? It was the more necessary because of their low and disorderly state, as well as of the reproofs that must follow.

On the other hand it is a grave misconception of their state and of the apostle's words that he alludes to any proof of maturity and richness of their spiritual life. He takes care to give prominence to the source which had so bountifully supplied the assembly in Corinth; but there is not a word that implies a spiritual state, much less maturity in it, such as could comfort his heart in thinking of them. He knew his God sufficiently to be sure that there had been no lack on His part.

“I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus; that in everything ye were enriched in him, in all discourse and all knowledge, according as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you, so that ye come not short in any gift, awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you until [the] end, unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God [is] faithful by whom ye were called into [the] fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Ver. 4 - 6.)

Thus the occasion of thanksgiving was the grace of God bestowed on them in virtue of Christ Jesus. But this is defined immediately after. They had been in everything made rich in Him. In spiritual discernment of His glory and feeling of His grace? in enjoyment of Christ and devotedness to His name? In these respects alas! they were defective, as all that follows shows. He means, as he says, in every sort of expression of the truth, and all knowledge, in what was preached or taught, as well as in apprehension; for God had amply é confirmed the testimony of Christ which Paul above all with others had rendered in their city. Many of the Corinthians, as we are told in Acts 18, heard, believed, and were baptized. But there was more than this: the power of the Spirit wrought largely and mightily among them. And this was the characteristic token of the assembly of God—not more truly, but far more sensibly, then than now. The issue was that they came behind in no gift, clearly not in what is called the inward grace of the spiritual life, but in communication to others and manifestation of power, as in 1 Cor. 12.

This is strengthened by the way the saints at Corinth are next characterized: “awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It is not that aspect of our Lord's return which will unfold and express His grace to His own, but rather that which deals with conscience now, as it by and by will

display their faithful or unfaithful employment of all entrusted to their charge. Every saint who walks with God meanwhile and judges intelligently of the growing miseries of Christendom, not to speak of the world at large and of man, has love for the appearing of the Lord, as the time when He shall be exalted and we are to reign with Him, the power of Satan being publicly and effectually expelled from the earth. But our proper hope is that Christ will come and fetch us to the Father's house; and so shall we be forever with the Lord. The Corinthians however are hereby reminded of Him who will judge of every one's work; when each shall receive his own reward according, to his own labor. They needed to be exercised in self-judgment whether they were serving the Lord with the manifestations of the Spirit distributed to each. And hence also the repeated and striking way in which the name of “our Lord Jesus Christ” is brought before them here.

Not that a word is said to induce a doubt of His goodness or love to them. Never does a soul more need to hold fast grace than when it is probed and searched by the unsparing and all-detecting word of God. Hence the apostle does not hesitate to say that the Lord should also confirm them to the last unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. How sad then that a Christian should be to Christ's reproach now! “When Christ, our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory. But this to the apostle becomes by the Spirit only one cogent motive more for urging us to mortify our members that are on the earth. It is the day of our Lord which here again calls our responsibility into play. And as this does and must act on conscience, being in truth intended to do this, so it makes the saint feel the need and value of what the apostle adds as closing his introduction— “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Ver. 9.) If He has called, will He not also perform? Phil. 1:6 Thess. 5:24. But His calling to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord is not more sure in His grace than serious in its present claim on us that we cast no shade of unfaithfulness on both, sullying His name that is named on us, to which the very world binds us, loose as may be its sense of what is due to Him whom it knows not. How did the Corinthians answer to that call then? How do we now?

Chapter 4

Notes on 1 Corinthians 1:10-16

The apostle begins now to touch one of the evils which particularly dishonored the Lord and injured the saints at Corinth. Their party spirit was a sore grief to his heart. Not only did it hinder mutual comfort of love in their midst but the testimony they owed His name before the world.

Compared with what has followed since, or even what the New Testament elsewhere discloses, it might seem but a little beginning, but it was the beginning of a great evil. For the allowance of such fleshly preferences and the consequent formation of parties lets loose the activities of the natural mind and feeling, goes out ward into passionate zeal or dislike, and well if it end not in helpless heterodoxy and open insubjection to the Lord.

“Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all say the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be made perfect in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been shown to me concerning you, my brethren, by those [of the house] of Chloe, that there are strifes among you. But I say this, that each of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized unto the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius, that no one should say that ye were baptized unto my name. And I baptized also the household of Stephanas; further I know not whether I baptized any other.” (Ver. 10 - 16.)

Apostle though he was, and the one who had not only instructed them in Christ, but begotten them through the gospel, he appeals, to them here by that “name which most intimately deals with the believer, and most solemnly even with the professor, the center of unity, as the Holy Spirit is its bond. By that name, if by any means, would his exhortation come home to their souls. He is jealous of the honor of Him, their Lord, whom their discords compromised. Where was the witness to men in these rival schools with their misguided chiefs, to the fellowship of God's Son? He exhorts them therefore that they should “all say the same thing.” For the Philippian saints he earnestly desired that they might “think the same thing,” and this by thinking one thing. Of these, as being more experienced and in a more spiritual state, he could not but expect more. Nor is it the like-mindedness one toward another pressed on the Roman saints.

Would the apostle then have been satisfied with the same uniform confession outwardly? By no means. With this he begins, according to the wisdom of the Spirit which directed him; for it is surely unbecoming in reformers or men who can easily follow reformers in what was wrong, to criticize an inspired writer or presume that they can draw nicer distinctions or arrange the truth better, than Paul Then he adds “that there be no divisions among you,” of which, their party-ties were the expression; and lastly he beseeches that they maybe “made perfect” (see Eph. 4:12 as well as 2 Cor. 13:9) or wholly united,” in the same, mind and in the same judgment.” Not that he means by this exactly the will, so that there should be a complete division of the soul, the first referring to faith and this second to love, however important all this may, be is its place; for νο■s signifies mind viewed as intelligent faculty, as γν■μη the opinion or judgment it form?. He wanted them to have a nicety of intelligent opinion. They were defective where they were proud, as men

generally are.

Nor does the apostle hesitate to write on the information which he had received (and indeed it was too plain and precise in its character to doubt its accuracy), nor to tell them its trustworthy source. A godly woman's household might be a particularly good means of ascertaining; as it also gives warrant for another day. It is the same apostle who, if he reprobates silly women laden with divers lusts, shows how a Phoebe: or a Persis, a Prisca and a Mary, an Euodia and a Syntyche, should be valued and cared for. He can: here write with full confidence of what he had learned from Chloe's household.

The divisions were as yet within the assembly, not rents from it, but they tended to this end, as we are expressly told in 1 Cor. 11:18, 19. No conclusion can be less well founded than that the separation into denominations is lawful, while an evil spirit within is the sin; for this schismatic working is evil most of all because it leads those who are heady and unsubject to that worst result. It is assumed here that the assembly has not compromised by unholy tolerance of false doctrine or any such evil as would make it a duty to disown those who would retain the title when they have forfeited its true character.

Alas! at Corinth the saints seem to have been largely infected with party spirit. “But I say this that one saith I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ: “this last to my mind as intelligible as any of the others; for the wrong was not in any of those named, but in such as set up their names out of their own vanity and love of opposition. And the worst of all, I doubt not, was that party which plumed itself on its superior spirituality. They had done with men. Paul, Apollos, Cephas, were beneath their aspirations. Not the servants, but the Master was their watchword. They disliked the high claims, especially of Paul. For their part they would cleave to the Lord's own precept: one is your teacher, one your leader, and all ye are brethren. Thus not unfrequently does self-exaltation among Christians disguise itself unconsciously (and unconsciously, because the state is bad, and the heart too long away from the Lord in practice); whereas it is evident that he who really loves and bows to the Lord does for this very reason honor His servants for their work's sake, and according to the place He has set them in. The corruption of the best thing is truly said to be the worst; and so it was here where the specious plea of such as abjured all but Christ might seem to be the only thing right and spiritual in Corinth, divided as the assembly was. How important, it is, and now as then, to judge righteous judgment, not according to appearances!

It is well to note that the evil at Corinth was the converse of what the apostle meant in his address to the Ephesian elders. (Acts 20:30.) For in the one it was the sin of the disciples,” in the other of the rulers. Our only security is in that subjection of heart to Christ, which estimates what is of Him wherever it may be, and walks in dependence on Him, come what will. I had made the reflection before noticing that Calvin fell into this very confusion. Perhaps in Presbyterianism, as being of a democratic character, it is harder to see that the mass of the disciples have their snares no less than those who guide. It is however as sure from scripture as it is evident in experience. No thing, nor person, escapes the vigilance of the enemy. How blessed that all are under the eye of perfect love in our Lord: may we be guided by it!

“Is Christ divided?” asks the indignant apostle. Is He not the Head of that one body the church to which they all belonged? It is a whole Christ to whom all His own belong and. who Himself belongs to all. To think of dividing Him would be as irrelevant as absurd. They might divide, not He: what an

inconsistency if they valued Him! But this is followed up by the further query, “Was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized unto the name of Paul?” To state the question was to render the true answer certain and necessary to the Christian; yet how many since have overlooked both! So blinding is the influence where the first man is allowed to take the place of the Second. Apostles and others have died, yea, been crucified, but Christ alone for as, as it is to Him we have been baptized, not to the twelve, still less to other men.

Far different was the loyalty of the apostle to Christ. Therefore does he not scruple to express his gratitude to God that he had baptized so few personally at Corinth: an impossible subject for thanksgiving, if baptism be the means of new birth, for in this case he who loved God and man must rejoice the more, the more he baptized. On the other hand there is no real slight put on Christian baptism as our burial with Christ unto death; the appointed outward sign of subjection to Him who died for us and rose again.

Its solemn import is derived from the objective truth signified by it, not from the position or power of the baptizer, nor from any qualities of the baptized, whatever be the Lord's will as to either. But the apostle owns the good hand of the Lord in ordering things so that in fact Paul had baptized only a very few out of the many Corinthians who, on hearing the gospel, believed and were baptized (Acts 18:8): had he actually baptized the mass, it might have given a more tangible excuse to those who affected his name at Corinth. But there can be little doubt that those he did baptize were among those who stood comparatively faithful to the Lord there.

It may be mentioned here that Professor Olshausen notices it as a surprising circumstance that the apostle should not have reasoned on the import of baptism itself in order to cherish his argument, but rather on the providential history of the facts as to it, so far as he was concerned. Dean Alford also urges the last clause of verse 16 as important against those who maintain the absolute omniscience of the inspired writers on every topic which they handle.

Do the two divines seem to write with enough of reverence? Both forgot, if they seriously knew what it is to believe, that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul. Does He not know better than any when to urge this topic, when that? And as to the inspired writers, I know of no sober believer who holds their omniscience, but that of Him who employed them to communicate the truth. It is common, but incorrect, to speak of their infallibility; whereas evidently none can be said to be infallible but God.

The true statement of inspiration is not that the writer became omniscient or infallible, but that the Holy Ghost so controlled his writing as to convey the truth without admixture of error and perfectly for His own design. Hence He might with perfect consistency withhold absolute recollection on a given point here, or a distinct command from the Lord on another point, as in chapter vii.

But all this leaves unimpaired the divine authority of what He does convey or command as from the Lord. Those orthodox as to inspiration may be incorrect in phrase or a shade of thought; but this in no way lessens the seriousness—indeed sin—of enfeebling inspiration, especially in these perilous times, when God's word is the grand resource of the faithful. For the simple but firm faith that it is His word is not only a truth in itself clearly revealed, but it is the basis and support of every other. Weaken inspiration, and you jeopardy all else that concerns God and man, and may end with nothing better than human ideas.

Chapter 5

Notes on 1 Corinthians 1:17-20

It is not that the apostle Paul slights baptism: who could that accepts it as Christ's institution? Impossible that he could have used such language if baptism be the means of life to the soul, as so many falsely teach. Yet we can hardly conceive any of the twelve speaking as he does here. “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel; not in wisdom of word, lest the cross of Christ should be made vain.” (Ver. 17.) The rest were expressly sent to baptize, which they did either personally or using others for the purpose. Paul too was baptized and did baptize; and no apostle unfolds the observance in so profound a way as we find in Rom. 6, Gal. 3, and Col. 2. But 1 Cor. 11 shows us that the Lord’s supper was revealed directly, not merely accepted as he found like baptism. And when we reflect, we perceive that the rite is not the seal of union with Christ, but the individual owning of Him who died and rose again, buried with Christ into death, as the former sets forth the communion of His body, for which we need His ascension and the sending down of the Holy Ghost, with which is bound up all the doctrine of the church, of which Paul pre-eminently became minister. (Col. 1:25.)

But Paul as emphatically became “minister of the gospel” (Col. 1:23); and so he was sent by Christ to preach it, as he tells us here, “not in wisdom of word,” as the Corinthians liked to hear, “lest the cross of Christ should be made vain.” It seems to be philosophic speculation and not rhetoric only which he denounces thus strongly. And philosophy leaves no room for divine love on the one side, or for man's utter ruin on the other: the cross of Christ maintains both in the highest degree.

By the cross of Christ is meant much more than the means of pardon for the sinner. To treat it only as the great remedy for man's need, however true as far as it goes, is to rob it of an immense deal of its importance as well as to obscure the truth and shut out God's glory. For in that most stupendous of all facts, what has not come to issue? God's holy hatred and judgment of sin; His amazing love of the sinner; the infinite grace, humiliation, and suffering of the Savior; the audacity and craft of Satan; the abominable wickedness of man, under the best possible circumstances and, spite of the greatest benefits, without cause to justify or excuse to palliate: all met, as nowhere else, in the cross. There are the pretensions of man crushed; sin condemned and put away; Satan defeated and vanquished; judgment borne; and God glorified in Christ who knew no sin made sin for us, that we might be made God's righteousness in Him. There only indeed divine attributes and ways, which our sin had otherwise seemed to set aside or at variance, are now conciliated forever on behalf of those that believe, and a firm basis laid for the ruined creation, as well as the people of God, to be made new and shine unto eternal ages to the glory of God. Yet all this would be rendered vain by that wisdom of speech which some in the Corinthian church were ignorantly affecting and blaming Paul because it was far from him.

But the Corinthians were in danger who shrank from the facts of the gospel and desired to hear the philosophy of the Christian scheme. “For the word of the cross is to those that perish foolishness, but to us that are to be saved it is God's power.” (Ver. 18.) The cross bespeaks the lowest extreme of human shame and suffering. It was the severest penalty for a slave. That the

Son of God should stoop not merely to the nature of man but to the death of the cross, and this in atonement for man to God as well as in rejection of God by man, seems the depth of folly to those who, ignorant of their own sin-fullness and of the holiness of God, must needs perish, living and dying as they are. That He must suffer in order to save supposes the hopeless ruin of the race. But it is also irreconcilable with every feeling of the natural heart that He would stoop so low to suffer for His enemies, and that God would give Him up to do so. For philosophy knows nothing truly of love in God, any more than of total ruin in man: the cross proclaims both, and that He who hung there in grace, suffering for our sin, that God might deliver us righteously, was Himself God over all as surely as He was man without sin. For the gospel was no effort or device of man's wit. Yea, the word of the cross is the deepest offense and the sheerest foolishness to him; but it is God's power, not wisdom only, to believers, “to us that are to be saved,” for here, to bring it the more home, the apostle treats it as a personal fact instead of continuing his abstract statement. Salvation here, as elsewhere in this Epistle, is regarded as not complete till the Lord comes; it takes in the whole work of bringing us through till we are conformed to Christ in resurrection glory.

In fact the seeking for thoughts” and words palatable to the world argues a mind at issue with God, who had fully pronounced on its best wisdom as folly in divine things. It is worthy of note that the apostle quotes in proof God's sentence on Israel by the prophet Isaiah (29:14). I cannot agree with those who fail to see the pertinency of this testimony, for it would be impossible to find, out of the many scriptures which declare the insufficiency of human resources, one more to the purpose which the apostle had in view, and therefore serving better to warn the Corinthian saints. “For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and put away the prudence of the prudent. Where [is the] wise, and where scribe, and where disputer of this age? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world.” (Vers. 19, 20.) In the last words are seen not more than an illustrative allusion to Isa. 33, where there is a burst of surprise at the deliverance from the scornful power of the enemy, as here a triumphant challenge over the failure of its proud pretensions against God.

It is well to remember that the digression here begun but carried on much farther, in which the world's wisdom is shown to slight and oppose but to be judged by the cross of Christ, is none the less really connected with the party spirit and divisions of the saints at Corinth which the apostle has been denouncing, as he will be found to do yet more in chapter iii. Indeed it was their value for what the world esteems as wisdom which had wrought to the depreciation of Paul and to the advantage of those whom he afterward designates “false apostles.” (2 Cor. 11)

Notes on 1 Corinthians 1:21-25

Men had dared to call the preaching of the cross of Christ foolishness. But who and what were they? Those that perish! Was it wise to follow such? They might vaunt of their wisdom, but this would not save them from perdition; and Jews at least, yea all who feared God and heard His ancient but living oracles, should remember that it is His way to stain the pride of human wisdom no less than human power. So it is written: God had already judged it in His word. And so experience confirms. For what has been the moral history of man?

Tremendous is the blow which the apostle here deals the wisdom of the world. The proof that God made it foolish follows in a few pregnant and unanswerable words. “For since in the wisdom of God the world through wisdom knew not God, God was pleased through the foolishness of the preaching to save those that believe; since both Jews ask for signs and Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling-block and to Gentiles foolishness, but to those that [are] called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ God's power and God's wisdom; because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (Ver. 21 - 20.).

When man fell and got the knowledge of good and evil, it was the wisdom of God to leave him to himself, though not without a plain revelation which from the first held out to the eye of faith the Seed of the woman, who, bruised Himself, should bruise the serpent's head. But this did not suit the fallen child of Adam who assumed his own competency for worship or anything else without grace from God or the sense of his own ruin which would have made him feel its necessity. And the world grew up till its corruption and violence were so unbearable that it became morally imperative to sweep off the guilty race in the deluge. Even after this solemn intervention of God in judgment the world only became more subtly evil. It ceased to retain God in knowledge; it set up the powers of nature in heaven and earth, deifying them, and degrading themselves into whatever the demons behind those objects might drag their votaries. Thus Satan's triumph over the nations now heathen was complete; for their religion itself most of all corrupted them, its symbols being also identified with every moral iniquity, and their wisdom bound them fast in that debasing slavery, seeking at best to explain, or explain away, all that misrepresented and supplanted the true God.

The Corinthians too of all men should have known how powerless is the wisdom of the world to deliver man from the grossest self-pleasing and the lusts which, while shunning the light, usurped the name of a god, and only proved how completely God Himself was unknown For evil is too serious and fatal to be overlooked, and the creature would fain roll it off from himself on God, and is thus necessitated to attenuate its moral consequences as well as its contrariety to the Creator. To this effort, resisted by conscience till it is utterly seared, it is philosophy lends its baleful torch, but thus, as man is unjudged, so is God lost for the soul. Were His holy nature and His righteous judgment bowed to, man must own his iniquity and humbly seek a door of escape through divine mercy. But such was not the course of the world. Nothing is a man so slow to acknowledge as his

own badness; and in such a state religion is only a blind for the soul and a sop for God, of all vanities the greatest and most pernicious.

It appears to me that Calvin has mistaken the force of the reasoning, as if by the wisdom of the world was meant the workmanship of the universe, an illustrious token and clear manifestation of His wisdom. This is one of the two witnesses adduced for God to heathen conscience in Rom. 1, the other being that knowledge of God which they possessed till the flood and after it, when first they fell into creature worship. One must not be surprised that not a few adopt the rendering “by the revelation of God's wisdom,” that is, in His works with or without His law. I believe it to be simply a question of God's wise ordering of things that the folly of idolatrous man should be apparent, and so the need of His salvation by the cross of Christ be the more felt when it was preached. By δι■ τηφ σ. is meant “by wisdom” in the abstract or “by its wisdom,” either of which would require the article in Greek. I do not think that Stanley and Alford are right in taking the phrase as “through the wisdom [of God]” just mentioned, though of course the article there too would be proper. The latter wisdom seems to me contradistinguished from the former, the one self-exalting and destructive, the other real and righteous altogether.

Thus in God's wisdom ends the world's wisdom: He is unknown, the knowledge of whom in Christ is eternal life. And what did God in presence of this pretentious wisdom which was thus the guiltiest folly? “It pleased God by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe.” The world had either adopted the most degrading notions of polytheism, or it had tried to escape superstition by the dreary blank of pantheism and even atheism. Man being now fallen was not prevented (at least after the flood) from thus in his presumption proving his ignorance of God; but God showed His grace as matchless as His wisdom; for when the world's wisdom had spent itself weary and worn in its idolatrous devices or in the waste of skepticism which those abominations provoked, God was pleased not to close the revolting theater of man's rebellion, whether religious or irreligious, by judgment, but contrariwise to save. And as salvation to be open and effectual for sinners must be by grace, so could it only be by faith. (Compare the reasoning of Rom. 4) In this way alone could it be sure to all that believe; for the essence of faith is that the worth is found in the object believed, the efficacy lies in what He, the Savior, has wrought for us, not we for Him, however truly we do, when believers, seek to please and serve Him. Thus is God glorified in this as in all things by Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever.

Accordingly it will be noticed by the careful reader that the apostle here speaks not of preaching exactly as a mere instrument, but of the thing preached. Such is the force resulting from the form of the word, which with others I have translated “the preaching.” This the Jews derided, as well as the Greeks. It was to them foolishness; nor need we wonder, if they saw not the glory of the person of Christ given to die in God's love to sinners. For what could seem less reasonable to the natural mind, than for a crucified man to be the only Savior from sins and the wrath of God? Yet this is the truth, preached, το κ■ρυγμα.; and salvation is the fruit of believing it. Grace not only gave the Son of God thus to suffer, but takes care to send out everywhere the proclamation, that souls may hear, believe, and be saved.

Men naturally despise the cross, who do not believe either that their sins deserve divine judgment or that He in grace bore that judgment thereon. Their depth of need is unfelt, and hence other and lesser objects occupy them. The world is pre-occupied or turns elsewhere: “since both Jews ask

for signs, and Greeks seek wisdom.” Visible tokens were vouchsafed of God when He sent the Lord Jesus to the land of Israel. Never since the world began had there been such a cloud of witnesses in this kind; but what can satisfy the heart where, all is alienated from God? The Jews overlooked all He gave and asked for a sign as if none had appeared. Greeks expected nothing from God; but, if the object of their search was wisdom, they never learned its first lesson in the fear of Jehovah.

This obstinacy or levity of unbelief did not dishearten the apostle, but rather stimulated him in the work near to his heart. “But we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a stumbling-block and to Gentiles foolishness.” It is not here simply the blood shed that makes atonement; and it is more to say “crucified” than dead; for though both declare the end of man in the flesh, there is the extreme of shame and weakness in the cross beyond all else. That God then should save by virtue of that cross, where the world saw the worst of human suffering and humiliation was to silence that wisdom, proving that to be folly which dared so to think and speak of His wisdom. Over the stone of stumbling fell the Jews who would only have a Messiah in power and glory. So will He come shortly, but where then will those Jews find themselves who were offended by His stooping to the cross in order to save those that believe? Where the Gentiles who preferred their own ideas and vaunted reasonings to the mighty work then wrought at infinite cost? Like the lightning shall the Son of man shine in His day; but first must He suffer many, things and be rejected by this generation. For it was morally impossible for God's kingdom to be till sin was judged in the cross. How senseless and slow of heart were even disciples to see that so it must be if God was to be glorified and man righteously blessed and saved! But “to the called Christ,” and Christ thus crucified, “is God's power and God's wisdom; because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (Vers. 24, 25.) Any other way had compromised sin or made salvation impossible. The cross of Christ is the fullest display of God's judgment of sin and of His love to the sinner. What men taunted as foolishness and weakness, the incarnate Word suffering on a gibbet, equally proves man's utter rain and God's saving mercy. So did the Savior endure the judgment of sin that the believer might be saved. Is it not then wiser and stronger than men? Did not the resurrection, does not the gospel, prove it so?

Chapter 7

Notes on 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

The apostle pursues his theme—the annihilation by Christ's cross of every object flesh would cherish and vaunt. His first proof was drawn from the utter and evident infatuation which was most foolish where most it affected wisdom without God; his second from the ways of God in those brought to Himself by the gospel. As to the latter he appeals to themselves.

“For look at your calling, brethren, that not many [are] wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many highborn. But the foolish things of the world God chose that he might put to shame the wise; and the weak things of the world God chose that he might put to shame the strong things; and the lowborn things of the world and those despised God chose, [and] the things that are not, that he might bring to naught the things that are, so that no flesh might boast before God. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who was made wisdom to us from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption that, according as it is written, He that boasteth, let him boast in [the] Lord.” (Ver. 26-31.)

Thus the reproach which infidelity loves to cast on the gospel the apostle avows and puts forward as a fact which brings glory to God. For the gospel is the revelation of the grace which calls man from the world to Himself. Hence every ground of worldly distinction and of human merit disappears. He who alone is good and great would act in His own love and display His supreme excellence above the faults and the ruin of mankind. Yet so stubborn is the pride of guilty man that he parries the consequence of his misery and rejects the proof of his sin and danger, rather than accept the free mercy of God in Christ the Lord: and thus it becomes a question of God's love in electing sinners to eternal life in His own sovereignty, unless He would either save or condemn the race indiscriminately and thereby destroy all testimony to His holy judgment on the one hand, or to His counsels of grace on the other. If neither can be, He must choose: else none could be saved, for all have sinned, and not one sinner would trust His love in Christ for eternal life, such goodness being above all his own feelings and contrary to all experience of others. The more man reasons, the less can he believe and rest on salvation in Christ for one who, if God's word be true, deserves condemnation. He prefers to trust his own efforts with or without Christ, manifesting how little he accepts the testimony of God to the glory of Christ and to the infinite value of His work. If he is an unbeliever and lost, still more plainly is the man who defies the truth of God and despises His grace, at open war with the God who now bears with but will surely judge him. If a man values his advantages and disdains those around, he is the surer to fight against that grace which makes nothing of all that is precious in his eyes.

The Corinthians then, who were not weaned from their old admiration of man's wisdom and power and rank, the apostle bids to consider their calling. In the assembly of God before their eyes was the clearest evidence that not many were wise according to flesh, not many powerful, not many highborn. And they could not but know enough by report of Christians in other parts to be satisfied that the same features were true everywhere else. But the apostle goes “farther and shows that it is not only a fact among men (ver. 26) but a purpose on God's part. (Ver. 27-29.) He chose the

foolish things of the world to put shame on the wise men; He chose the weak things of the world to put shame on the strong things: so clear is His judgment even now on what is ever apt to captivate the heart of Christians, for they love to be able to count up the wise and the world's grandeur in their own ranks, as if aught of the sort could add luster to Christ. Did not God choose the mean things of the world, and the disdained things, the things that are not, that He might bring to naught the things that are, so that no flesh might boast in the sight of God? It is no question of what they or their circumstances seemed, but of what they really were for most when God chose them. Few of the saints had been among the wise, most knew what it was to have been arrested by the gospel from obscurity and of no influence or account among men. If God called such to the fellowship of His Son, to be one with Him now, to reign with Him soon and forever, if the wise and powerful and nobly-born were for the most part left in their possession or pursuit of alt which blinded them to the glory of Christ on the one hand and to judgment on the other, whose sin was this? whose grace that? But how unworthy and inconsistent that the Christian should yearn after or glory in flesh and advantages! Looking within and without, what believer could fail to learn that no flesh should boast before God?

Yet such a negative conclusion, important as it may be, is not enough for the Spirit of God. He would lead the heart from the emptiness of man's vanity or pride to real moral worth, to the provision of divine grace and holiness, and to that glory which shall not pass away; and all this and more he shows to be the portion of the Christian, with pointed emphasis affirming it of those he was addressing. “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus.” How vast the change of nature, position, and relations for any! How blessed for those whose wretchedness in the world and according to flesh he had just set forth without disguise! Nor is the stability of the source a whit less than the character of the blessedness “of Him,” of God whose grace has given us to have our being in “Christ Jesus” “who was made to us wisdom from God.” Here is the reality, and this of blessings incalculably precious.

Christ has been made wisdom to us from God, for wisdom is the first question here; and it is now answered for the Christian in Christ, and Christ crucified, who alone thus put everyone and everything in its true place; and this it is the part of wisdom to see, as folly disarranges and misunderstands all. If philosophy left God out, it was necessarily all wrong; if it essayed to bring Him in, it subjected Him to man's mind, and this made matters, if possible, worse. Christ revealed God and blessed man, and this not by glossing over his state and sins but by suffering for them on the cross, so that God was glorified as much about evil in His death as about good in His life. He was thus made unto us wisdom from God. Not merely was the world's wisdom, flesh's wisdom set aside, but God's wisdom shown and given us in Him.

Nevertheless wisdom was not our sole want, greatly as it was needed—wisdom to its end, and not its beginning only in God's fear. The sinner has no righteousness for God; but God has for him, and this in Christ, yea, Christ Himself, for He it is who was so made to us, not wisdom alone from God, but righteousness. Man is thus set aside root and branch; God takes His place and gives all we lack in Christ. He had amply tested man's efforts under His law, which the Jew twisted to make up a hollow appearance, instead of submitting to learn by it his own insufficiency and sin. But Christ is not more surely God's wisdom than He is God's righteousness, and made this to us; for by His death God is just and can justify the believer in Jesus. Man—the believer alone truly and fully—owns himself as a sinner. The righteousness is God's, though it is Christ's work alone which

could have made it not condemn but justify us. In virtue of the cross God is consistent with Himself in justifying us both freely and righteously.

Further, Christ was made to us “sanctification.” The Greek wallowed in sin, however he might sentimentalize; the Jew boasted in the law, but broke it. Christ is the measure and means and pattern of holiness to the Christian, no doubt the Spirit is the agent; by it He works by keeping not Himself but Christ before us. So we read elsewhere that, where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, as there is bondage where the law rules. But we are not under law but under grace. Nor is this all; but we all beholding the glory of the Lord with unveiled face are changed according to the same image from glory unto glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

Finally, He was made to us “redemption,” by which, as the order clearly shows, is meant not the forgiveness of sips which we have, but that complete deliverance from the effects of in our bodies which we await at the coming of our Lord Jesus. See Rom. 8:23; Eph. 1:14; 4:30.

How complete the blessing Christ has been made to us! And what a joy that we not only may but ought to boast in. Him who has so ordered and given to us! Do pious souls call on us to beware of presumption? It is the apostle, and this on the strength of Jeremiah the prophet, who calls on him that boasts to boast in Jehovah. It is therefore not rash nor wrong, but a hallowed boast. We owe it to Him, and He deserves it of us.

Chapter 8

Notes on 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

The apostle now touches on that which had been made a matter of reproach against his preaching at Corinth. He had not sought to avoid the scandal of the cross here any more than elsewhere. On the contrary it was this precisely to which he had given undisguised prominence in that city of intellectual culture and of moral corruption. Even here however there was a guard against narrow one-sidedness, as well as care to bring forward Christ personally, not a point of doctrine only, were it even that deepest and most justly absorbing point of the cross. It was Jesus Christ he preached, and Him crucified. He eschewed the pompous phrases and the subtle speculations which Corinth then affected.

Thus the brethren there might see the consistency, first and last, of that which unbelief stumbled at in Paul, and which the flesh in saints would rather shroud in silence. Is the cross God's power to those that are saved? Is Christ crucified foolishness to the Gentile and an offense to the Jew? Does wisdom of word make the cross vain? The apostle was led of God to present the truth in a way not palatable but truly wholesome and withal most for God's glory when he went to Corinth. It was not Jesus and the resurrection as at Athens, nor was it His return to reign as at Thessalonica, though no doubt none of these elements was wanting; but at Corinth the Spirit directed to that which was in due season. And as he says to the law-affecting Galatians," God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world;" so here he could look back with satisfaction on the preeminence given to Jesus Christ and Him crucified in his first visit to Corinth; and this too with decision and conviction on his own part. It is not merely that so it was, but he judged it best. Nor does it mean, as some have thought, that with all the abasement of the cross, he nevertheless preached Christ. No such uncertain sound came from the apostle as from his commentators. It was not Christ, crucified though He was, but emphatically Christ and Him crucified. Well he knew and deeply felt that there is nothing like that cross which stands alone apart from all before and after: yea, nothing in time, nothing in eternity, similar or second to it. For there sin in man rose up to slay the Son of God, yet was in slaying Him itself slain as well as judged, that grace might reign through righteousness unto eternal life for every believer.

"And I, when I came unto you, brethren, came not in excellency of word or wisdom announcing to you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified. And I in weakness and in fear and in much trembling was with you; and my word and my preaching, not in persuasive words of wisdom but in demonstration of [the] Spirit and of power; that your faith might not be in man's wisdom but in God's power." (Ver. 1-5.)

There can be no doubt in my judgment that the various reading in the first verse μυστ■ριον though given in the Sinaitic (first hand), Alexandrian and Palimpsest of Paris (C), with some good cursives and very ancient versions (Pesch. and Cop.), &c., is not correct, but the common text. It is not only erroneous but an error which destroys the beauty and indeed the sense of the passage. For the apostle is contrasting his use of revealed truth in dealing with such souls as those in

Corinth when he first carried them the gospel, and that which he would do with those who simply and thoroughly submitted to Christ. The mystery in all its hidden depths and all its heavenly glory he sets before those he calls “the perfect,” that is, the full-grown who were established in Christianity; but not so with babes unformed in the truth of the gospel. Hence the force of the introductory words. The apostle came not in excellency of word or wisdom when announcing at Corinth the testimony of God, who was calling them as all men to repent, and to this end testifying of Jesus Christ and Him crucified. To this Paul judged it right to confine himself at the beginning of the gospel in that voluptuous city. Maturer souls need Christ every way, risen, at God's right hand, and coming again in glory. Here he presented His person, and especially Him crucified. It is not a philosophy but a person and a work. “The perfect” need much more, and have no stint; and there it is that God's hidden wisdom in the mystery hidden from ages and generations becomes so important: not that there is reserve on God's part, but that the state of souls is such that some want milk as being babes, others solid food as being settled in Christ; and they are welcomed into all the truth of God, as indeed they need it all.

But further there was in the apostle's tone and way a suitability to the message he brought. He repudiated all artificial method whether in thought or in the language which clothed it, that the truth of God should address itself directly to man's heart. So also he was with the Corinthians in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. This is not the ideal that men in their imagination frame of the great apostle! But such a deep sense of weakness was by grace his strength, as the Corinthians' straining after power was their weakness. His one desire was to exalt God, owning the nothingness as well as the guilt of man; with an anxious dread lest any word on his part should obscure the true glory, that it might be God's testimony to and in Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. Hence his word and his preaching (the thing preached, not merely his manner in it) was not after the rhetoric of the schools, but such as gave scope to God's Spirit.

Did the saints then loathe the bread of heaven? Did they pine after the leeks and onions and flesh-pots of Egypt? The apostle was not the one to gratify their natural tastes. He at least was true to Jesus Christ and Him crucified. He sought not to win by the display of his own extraordinary ability; nor would he exhibit the wonders of the divine word which he could easily have presented so as to dazzle the Corinthian mind; nor did he condescend to set out these precious truths in a diction attractive to refined ears. The matter and the manner he judged most for God's glory was that which poured contempt on man and looked only to the Spirit's demonstration and power, that their faith might not be in man's wisdom but in God's power. For just so far as preachers fill men with admiration for their peculiar style of thought or language, is it evident that they are weak in the Spirit, and attract to themselves instead of clearing and establishing souls in the truth whereby the Spirit works in power. Another indication of unwholesome teaching (too abundant at Corinth) is that which produces a distaste for all but the favorite or his line. It is not that the heart does not bless God for the instrument; but the effect of such a course as Paul's is to maintain the Lord's glory and His truth unimpaired, to avoid the natural tendency to a school or clique with its leader, and to keep the saints in full liberty and holy confidence before God by faith. May our decision be like his whose words (and they are God's) have occupied us here!

Chapter 9

Notes on 1 Corinthians 2:6-10

The apostle next explains his attitude towards those established in Christian truth, “the perfect” as they are designated here and elsewhere. To these he brought out far more than Jesus Christ and Him crucified. There is no limit or reserve. Had there been truth undisclosed in the Old Testament, secret things which belonged to Jehovah, in contrast with those revealed which had to do with Israel and their children? They are; none of them, hidden now, but shared by the Father with His children to the glory of Christ His Son.

Hence says he “But we speak wisdom among the perfect, but wisdom not of this age nor of the rulers of this age that come to naught. But we speak God's wisdom in a mystery, the hidden [wisdom] which God predetermined before the ages for our glory; which none of the rulers of the age knew (for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory) but according as it is written, Things which eye hath not seen and ear not heard, and into man's heart have not come, all that God prepared for those that love him, but God revealed to us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God.” (Ver. 6-10.)

It is not then that “wisdom” is wanting to the Christian scheme; nor could this be, for Christ who is all therein is God's wisdom which has a character, height, depth, and extent proper to God. For this reason it suits His children, at least such as are weaned from the first man and the world in which he seeks activity and exaltation; it suits in a word “the perfect” or full-grown, not the babes that are absorbed in their personal wants and care at best for milk, not for the meat which a riper condition needs for its due nourishment. Wholly apart from such wisdom as Paul spoke of is “this age,” the course of the world that now is, and this not in the lower strata only but in its “rulers” “that come to naught,” little as they themselves expect it, or those who covet their place. Blessed be the grace that has revealed the mind of heaven to man on earth, it is “God's wisdom” the apostle spoke habitually and characteristically, where it was proper to be spoken, and this “in a mystery;” not meaning by this aught that was unintelligible or vague or obscure, but truth which could not be discovered by the wit of man, and was never before made known in the living oracles of God. The faithful who were settled on the great foundations of Christianity the apostle would initiate into it. All that ignore or oppose Christ come to naught: He is God's power as His wisdom.

But if Christ be God's wisdom, as He surely is, it is not His personal glory simply, but this “in a mystery.” It is not Christ as He was here presented to the responsibility of man, especially of the Jews; nor is it Christ when He returns again as the Son of man in His universal kingdom which shall not pass away. It is Christ exalted on high and invested with a new glory, outside all the old revelations, and founded on the cross where the world, led on by its prince, rejected Him, but thereon glorified in God, and given as head over all things to the church which is His body. This therefore the apostle adds was “the hidden” wisdom, “which God predetermined before the ages for our glory.” It formed no part of His ways either in creation or in providence. The law never touched it, nor did the chosen people under law look for it. Nay, not only did the prophets ignore it altogether, but the Spirit did not speak of it in His ancient communications, though, when it was

revealed, it could be seen from hints here and there from the beginning and all through that He of course knew all and said enough to justify its principles even where mast differing from all that had been meanwhile carried on.

But when the patient and full trial of man's responsibility closed in the cross which showed alike his own sin and ruin, Satan's guile and folly, and God's perfect goodness and wisdom, then was the suited moment to bring out those counsels of God in Christ for our glory, which were predetermined before all the sorrowful history of man, before even the world was created as the sphere in which his responsibility was tested. Of this man is still as then wholly ignorant, and none more than, if so much as, “the rulers of this ago.” None of them knew it when Jesus was here; and just as those that dwelt in Jerusalem and their rulers, not having known Him, fulfilled the voice of the prophets which were and are read on every sabbath by jugging and slaying Him, so “none of the rulers of this age knew; for, had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory;” yet thus it was that they too instrumentally laid a basis for it. For the cross of Christ on earth answers to and is answered by the glory of God in heaven. Wondrous fact! a man exalted over all the universe, risen and glorified with all things set under His feet at God's right hand! Not only a matter of faith, but the revelation of it is also made known, as indeed only now since the cross and the ascension is it a fact. But it is a fact, and a fact revealed to the Christian, totally distinct from all Old Testament hopes, or that which shall be realized when the kingdom comes in the displayed power and glory of the millennial days.

Strikingly does the apostle proceed to set out the newness of this work and word of God in terms too often perverted through misapprehension to a mere confession of such ignorance as could not but be in the times before Christ rose and the Spirit was given. It is an application of Isa. 64:4, yet for the purpose not of direct illustration but of full contrast. The Jewish prophet most consistently was inspired to stop with the acknowledged inability of man to pierce the veil that hides the future blessedness that God has prepared for him that waits for Him. Not so the Christian apostle; for the veil is rent and we are invited to draw near now, emboldened by the blood of Jesus. Thus all things are ours, coming no less than present. We look at the things that are not seen and eternal; we seek and have our mind on the things above, not on the things that are on the earth. It is in vain to say that they are hidden from man. They were so, but assuredly are now revealed to the children of God. They are revealed that we may not doubt or remain in the dark but believe. This is the emphatic statement of the apostle. What God has prepared for those that love Him He has revealed to us by the Spirit.

Do you limit His competency or question His willingness to show us all the truth, yea, things to come, in divine love? Expressly is it added, as if to meet our hesitation, “for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God.” Such a declaration may well silence every argument of unbelief, as disposed alas! to trust in the ability of man as to distrust the gracious power of God on our behalf. The Spirit who searches all, and knows all, is now in the believer to whom all is revealed in the written word of God. He who sounds the depths of God is able to instruct His children; and He is as ready as able, being here for this as for other loving purposes worthy of God and in virtue of Christ's redemption.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 2:11-16

It is the Holy Spirit then by whom God has revealed to us what of old was hidden; and He is thoroughly able to do, so, seeing that He searches the very depths of God, as indeed He is God. This the apostle illustrates by an analogy drawn from human nature. “For who of men knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of the man that [is] in him? So also the things of God knoweth no one save the Spirit of God. But we did not receive the spirit of the world but the Spirit that [is] from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God.” (Vers. 11, 12.)

No man knows what is in another's mind; He may conjecture more or less accurately, but none of men can know inwardly what is in another's mind and has not been communicated to him. The spirit of the man himself knows, and no one else. It is shut out not only from animals inferior to man in the scale of creation, but from his fellows. So, but with incomparably greater force, no one has come to know the things of God, unless they be revealed: only the Spirit of God knows them. But here is the inestimable privilege of the Christian. It was not the spirit of the world we received, but the Spirit that is from God, and this expressly that we might know, inwardly know, the things freely given to us by God.

We are in the conscious relationship of children, and have not merely an acquired objective knowledge, but realize what God has vouchsafed in our own minds. Were any courting the spirit of the world? what a descent for a Christian! What a forgetfulness of our new and divine and eternal associations through our Lord Jesus! Here then it is a question of knowing through the Holy Ghost the things freely given us by God, and to this end is the Spirit given to the believer now that Christ was come and had wrought redemption. Where the blood has been put, the oil can follow, that unction from the Holy One whereby the very babe in Christ knows all things. For the grace that has freely given him all with God's own Son would put him in the conscious knowledge of all and in the joy of communion; and this can only be by the Holy Spirit of God, who accordingly anoints us when established in Christ, that is, when firmly attached to Him.

But the apostle tells us of more than this supernatural Spirit-given knowledge. In order that they may be enjoyed, the things of God had to be communicated divinely; and here the chosen instruments had to be made, not infallible of course, which is the quality of God alone, but perfectly guided in giving out the truth and guarded from all error for their task. This is inspiration, its permanent fruit being the scriptures we possess in the goodness of God. The principle is stated in verse 13, “which things also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in [those] taught by [the] Spirit, communicating spiritual things by spiritual [words].”

It is well known that the last clause has been variously interpreted, through a different sense given, now to συνκρ■νοντες, now to πνευματικο■ς, and even to πνευματικ■. Thus Chrysostom, Theodoret, &o., take it to mean, “explaining spiritual truths [of the New Testament] by [Old Testament] spiritual testimonies.” Only less far-fetched is the counter-view of Theophylact, H. Grotius, and others, “explaining what the Spirit-led prophets said by what Christ has opened to us by His Spirit.” But Theophylact proposed a way too, which, as it prevailed in medieval times, so

also it has been common up to our day, of taking πνευματικο■ς as masculine, which the late Dean Alford treated as “clearly wrong” in several editions of his Greek Testament, but gave as right in his New Testament revised (1870), as Wiclif had done in 1380.

Again our Authorized Translation preferred, with all the other early English versions except that of Geneva, the sense of “comparing” as in the Syriac, Vulgate, &c., rather of “explaining” for συνκρ■οντες. And doubtless it is a natural impulse to use a meaning which is unquestionable in 2 Cor. 10:12 for the same word in 1 Cor. 2:13: so Tyndale's (1584), Cranmer's (1539), and perhaps that of Rheims (1582), though I am not quite sure what was meant by “comparing spiritual things to the spiritual,” as the latter might be understood as masculine (so the Arabic) no less than as neuter. The Geneva Version (1557) gave “joining spiritual things with spiritual things,” I presume after Calvin, Beza, Piscator, &c.

There are two elements for gathering the mind of God in the clause which have not been in general borne in mind adequately. First, the context as elsewhere helps to the sense of e. here demanded. Now it is certain that the apostle is describing, in verse 13, neither the revelation of divine things which the Spirit of God alone knows and can give (vers. 10-12), nor the reception of what is revealed, which is due to the power of the Spirit (vers. 14, 15), but the intermediate process of conveying in words spiritual things when disclosed that they may be received by the spiritual man. Secondly, as συνκρ■νοντες appears to be a carrying on the thought of speaking the things of God to others in verse 13, so is ■νακρ■νεται equally characteristic of the manner and means of reception. As the one aptly expresses the putting together (συνκρ■νοντες) spiritual things with spiritual words so as to furnish that concrete whole, the word of God, so the spiritual man ■νακρ■νει π., the converse sifting and examining accurately—a sense common to the New Testament and the LXX. (1 Sam. 20:12; Acts 17; 11) ■νακρ was a word used technically in ordinary Greek of the preliminary investigation to ascertain whether an action would lie.

Hence in my judgment the meaning of “comparing” or even of “explaining” is here shut oat; and, when we examine the present passage along with that in the second Epistle, we may readily see with certainty that the construction wholly differs, though Parkhurst is rash enough to say the contrary. For in the latter it is a question of persons only, and hence “comparing” gives the sense justly. So Wahl in his second edition rightly, though from Rose's note to Parkhurst it would seem that in his first with Schleusner he explained it as “we cannot endure to enroll or mix ourselves with” &c.—a poor sense assuredly.

Here, in one phrase, if not in both, it is a question of things, and hence the analogy disappears. In the LXX, which so constantly furnishes the true source of the Greek New Testament language, we find the verb and its derivatives used in senses more suitable to the requirement of our text, as has been often noticed. Compare Gen. 40:8, 12, 16, 18, 22; Dan. 2:4-45 (thirteen times); iv. (seven times); v. (eight times), where “interpret” or “interpretation” is meant. Again we have Num. 15:32, where it means “to determine;” also Num. 9:3; 29 six times in the sense of “ordinance,” &c.

It is certain then that the most common meaning in the Septuagint, so familiar to the writers and earliest readers of the New Testament, is that of making known the previously hidden mind of God couched in a dream or vision; and that the word was also applied to a determination through a judge or law-giver speaking for God. By an easy transition thence the apostle was inspired to use it here in the sense of “communicating” (or, in a similar usage, of “expounding") spiritual things by

spiritual words. “Communicating” however seems to me better, because less ambiguous than “expounding,” as the point here is the fact and appropriate form of conveying spiritual truths rather than of “expounding” or explaining it when conveyed in words, which is the function of the teacher and not really in the passage at all. It is plain to him who weighs all that, though in some cases σ■νκρισις may seem to mean pretty much the same as ■ξ■γησις applied to such subjects, it goes really farther. For instance, Joseph's or Daniel's task went much beyond that of an ordinary expounder of scripture; and the word which duly described it might easily pass into the sense of communicating the previously unknown things of God in language suited to them. This I feel assured is the idea in the verse under consideration.

The apostle then shows that not human wisdom but the Spirit taught the words to convey the truth of Christ now. How null then in divine things is that wisdom! Why did Corinthian eyes see differently?

There was another lesson in its place of no less weight—the incapacity of man without the Holy Spirit not merely to know or convey, but even to revive the truth of God. “But [the] natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he cannot know [them] because they are spiritually discerned; but the spiritual [man] discerneth all things while he himself is discerned by no one. For who hath known [the] Lord's mind that he should instruct him? But we have [the], mind of Christ.” (Ver. 14-16.)

This is a momentous declaration in all its parts. For the apostle by the “natural man” means man as he is born and grows up, without being born of God or the Holy Ghost given to him. He might be ever so learned, scientific, intellectual and refined; still, till quickened of the Spirit, he is ■υχικ■ς. He does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for to him they are folly; nor can he learn them, so as to appropriate them, apprehending their truth, because they are spiritually discerned, and the Spirit of God he has not as unbelieving in Christ. The spiritual man on the other hand is one who is not only renewed but in the power of the Spirit. He accordingly has a divine spring of discerning while he is beyond the ken of all who are destitute of the Spirit.

It is in virtue of the Spirit of God that the believer now stands in so astonishing a place, capable of discerning all things, yet himself outside the discernment of man. How great the folly of any saint in Corinth or elsewhere yearning after human wisdom! What makes it even more striking is the application the apostle appends from Isa. 40:13. For there the prophet insists on the supremacy of Jehovah's intelligence, as before of His infinite goodness and power. Unsearchable Himself yet searching all, “who hath measured the Spirit of Jehovah, and, the man of his counsel, will teach him?” As independent of man's measuring and instruction is the Christian in divine things, and this through the Spirit of God dwelling in him. Thus the use of Isa. 64 bears witness that, as man's heart had not conceived the purpose of God before the world for our glory (not merely the nations, as Kimchi would have it, but man generally, Israel included), so God has revealed it now that Christ is crucified and received up in glory, and this by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven to be in and with us. But the use of Isa. 40 goes farther; for the apostle ascribes to the Christian the mind (νο■ν) or intelligence of Christ, in whom God's wisdom is, and thus appropriates to us now by grace, as possessing the Holy Spirit, that which, belonging characteristically to God, is wholly independent of man and undiscoverable by him.

In short, as the revelation of God's hidden wisdom is of the Holy Spirit, so is the inspiration that conveys it, and no less truly though of a more general character is the reception of it. In the gospel as Paul knew and made it known, in the mystery of the gospel, was brought positively new truth, of which not Gentiles only but Israel or men universally were ignorant; but now it was revealed, communicated, and received in the Spirit. As He only could make it known, so He gave the words which were the due medium of conveying it, and He enables us to receive it.

How infinite then is the Christian's debt not only to the Father and the Son but to the Holy Ghost! Paul's gospel was pure truth to man, and pure truth through man: may we have self judged so as to receive it in like purity. It is the flesh—man's nature—which ever opposes the Spirit of God. There are those who count what the apostle insists on as supernatural; and they labor, some in this way, some in that, to reduce the gospel to the level of common sense. But let me warn them that if they succeed in their scheme for themselves or other men, they have lost the truth for God, who will not, to please man, give up His purpose of thus glorifying Christ by the Holy Spirit.

To naturalize Christianity is simply to ruin it. Only scripture draws a deep and marked distinction between the revelation. and inspiration of the truth on the one hand and the reception of it on the other, though all be of the Spirit, and of Him only to be of true spiritual profit. And indeed it is evident that, if the communication had not been perfect by those employed as instruments of His inspiration, the revelation of God had not been any more perfect; and consequently the authority of God attached to their writings had been not only a delusion but a deception; for Christ and the apostles treat it as no less the word of God than what He uttered without human intervention. If it be not the infinite brought into the finite we should have nothing to trust to as divine truth; we should have the finite and nothing else. Whereas the word of God, like Christ Himself, is God's entering into our circumstances, and this to give us His own grace and truth in perfection. Our use of it is another thing; and for this we are wholly dependent on the Spirit of God. But He is given to us; and we have the mind of Christ.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 3:1-4

Such then is the ample complete and perfect provision of God for the blessing of His children by the truth to His own glory. His spirit is everywhere the agent and power, as Christ is the object presented, and His work the efficacious ground and means, which His own sovereign counsels are the spring of all. Expressly is it the Holy Ghost who, as He reveals, and communicates in suited words, so enables the believer to receive, the things of God. And this led to a contrast between him that is spiritual, who discerns all things, and the natural man who does not receive and cannot know the things of the Spirit.

It is not however that the Corinthian saints were “natural” men, for this would imply that they were not born of God. This the apostle does not say or mean, but that they were “carnal,” or “fleshly:” that is, flesh had still attractions for them. It was not judged, detected in principle, or hated in all forms and degrees. They still valued what was of man, wisdom, ability, or eloquence, as such. They had no adequate sense of nature's worthlessness in divine things. “Carnal,” or “fleshly” describes not those dead in their sins, but those who, though quickened of the Spirit, are either not yet set free (as in Rom. 7) or still swayed by the influence of men, and nature unjudged—I do not say in its immorality, but in its estimate of itself. This last is before the apostle's mind here. The Corinthians might be babes in Christ, but they were not spiritual.

“And I, brethren, was not able to speak to you as spiritual, but as fleshly, as babes in Christ. With milk I gave you drink, not meat; for ye were not yet able, nor indeed are ye now able, for ye are yet carnal. For whereas emulation and strife [are] among you, are ye not carnal and walk according to man? For when one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are ye not men?"(Ver. 1-4.)

Thus the reason now given by the apostle for having urged on the Corinthians the elementary truths of Christ is their own state. They were not spiritual but fleshly. What a blow to their self-complacency! If they were, but babes in Christ, what else would be suited food? That hankering after, or admiration of, the world's wisdom was its sure evidence: for flesh delights in what is of man, as the Spirit gives to enjoy what is of God.

It is quite an error however to suppose that all Christians are “spiritual” in the sense in which that term is used in chapter 2 which differs not at all from its use in chapter 3. In both it means those not merely quickened but walking, feeling, judging in the Spirit. To say in chapter ii. that one discerns all things but is oneself discerned by none conveys quite as much as the contrast with fleshliness in chapter 3. The mistake is in supposing that the apostle looks only at but two classes, whereas in truth he speaks of three: the natural man, the carnal, and the spiritual, the last two being Christians, but the state different. For “babes in Christ” does not refer to the recency of their conversion, but to their lack of growth. As the Hebrews were kept back by their religious prejudices (Heb. 5), so were these Greeks by their philosophizing. In either way souls may be arrested, or misled, and stunted in growth. In one of the cases indeed it was from no went of time; for on this score they ought to have been teachers when they had need to be taught the elements of the beginning of the oracles of God, as the apostle put it to their great humiliation. So here: he gave

them milk to drink. Meat was of no use in their actual state, nay, it might help on the mischief.

But there are other mistakes to guard against. Some in opposing the absurdity of reserve, Arcani Discipline, &c., have labored to prove that the same doctrine is in one aspect milk, in another meat. It is true that the Christ in whom the babes rested is more and more enjoyed of the fathers, but it remains certain that there is a whole range of truth as to Him which a carnal or even immature state in the believer would render unseasonable. The mystery of Christ and the church in Ephesians and Colossians is more than the priesthood of Christ in Hebrews. It was not that the apostle could not have communicated the depths of God; but could they then profit by such teaching? Would it be of God to give meat beyond them, or injurious to them? “Ye were not yet able, nor indeed are ye yet able.” Nor was it from lack of natural ability, but on the contrary because they valued and trusted it to the hindrance of the Holy Spirit: “for ye are yet carnal.” And this he proves from their state by incontestable evidence. “For whereas emulation and strife [are] among you, are ye not carnal and walk according to man? For when one saith, I am of Paul, and another, I of Apollos, are ye not men?” Emulation and strife were works of the flesh, not fruits of the Spirit. Their existence in their midst showed how little they walked in self judgment. It was the party work they were used to in the schools of men. Certainly party zeal for Paul or Apollos was no better than for Plato or Aristotle; it had all the same root. Nor is there any difficulty in conciliating such a reproof of not a few of the Corinthian saints with his thanksgiving for the church in the introduction of the epistle? For as already seen, this was for the privileges bestowed on them by the goodness of God, not for their actual state. Whatever their gifts, they were in fact grievously lacking in practical grace, and this, as it exposes to fresh or revived forms in which human nature works, so it would effectually binder growth through the truth. The Holy Spirit in such circumstances most take of their things to show them their faults, not of Christ's things to glorify Him and comfort their hearts.

It is important, moreover, to see that it is a question not of morality according to the law, but of what suits, pleases, and magnifies Christ—the very object of the presence and action of the Spirit here below. Hence the apostle reproves them for walking, not as bad men merely, but “according to man.” They ranged themselves under their new favorites in forgetfulness of Christ, and in abuse of their own mercies through His servants. “Are ye not men?” says he, indignantly protesting against such a state of things. They were saints and ought to walk as such.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 3:5-15

Glorying in men, be they ever so blessed, is carnal, no less than self-assertion; they are indeed off-shoots of the same tree. How could those who are thus erected into heads of schools tolerate so false a position for themselves or their followers if indeed they have the eye single to Christ: if not, can they be trusted? Far different is our apostle who asks, “What then is Apollos? and what is Paul? Ministers by whom ye believed, and as the Lord gave to each. I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So that neither he that planteth is anything nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase. And he that planteth and he that watereth are one thing; but each shall receive his own reward according, to his own labor.” (Ver. 5-8.)

Thus does God's wisdom correct the workings of unjudged nature, and this by a simple statement of the truth. For what are any? Servants at best in the proclamation of the gospel and the truth in general—servants by whom the Corinthian saints believed. Was there then no difference between Paul and Apollos? As the Lord gave to each. What room for boasting of men? Why not of the Lord who gave to each? Of this they had thought little. Grace unites. Flesh divides and scatters—flesh pre-occupied with this man or that, sometimes as here unable to find anything save in its favorites, sometimes heaping to itself teachers as at a later day. In either way there they be ever learning, but really no coming to the knowledge of the truth. The fact is that the Lord gives variously, nothing that is not good for the use of edifying, nothing in vain. It is not His way to form a class of laborers all alike, but to work differently by each. “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.” As it is in the work of the field where labor is expended in one form or another, but God alone can cause to grow, so it is in spiritual things. “So that neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase.” How insignificant is any instrument God it is who works efficiently. “And he that planteth and he that watereth is one thing.” Here he sets ministry, or ministers, together as “one thing.” The consequence is that God alone is seen to be of moment. But this very consideration, that they are “one thing,” rebukes the party work of their flatterers; as his own reward for his own work to be received by-and-by is a serious suggestion for ministers who like or allow the unwise zeal of those who cry them up and depreciate others. Their differences vanish into nothingness before God who graciously deigns to use each for blessing; even as “each shall receive his own reward according to his own labor:” not according to his personal qualities, however cried up by his partisans, nor even according to the particular gift bestowed of the Lord, nor yet according to present results before the eyes of men often deceived and in no case able to discern as He does and will manifest by-and-by, but “according to his own labor.”

How cheering to the despised but faithful and self-denying and gracious laborers. How humbling to Corinthian vanity which never took into account the one principle the Spirit here gives for the divine and enduring recompense! “For we are God's fellow-workmen; ye are God's husbandry, God's building.” (Ver. 9.) This is the transition which justifies the foregoing, and prepares for the expansion of the last figure into the applications that follow. Whoever the servants may be, they are God's in direct responsibility, not in this sense the church's, still less of a party. Not that for this

reason they do not serve the saints, for the more they preach not themselves but Jesus Christ, the more are they bondmen of the saints for His sake. But they are God's fellow-laborers, given of Him, doing His work, responsible in everything to Him, and finally to give Him an account. The phrase in no way means “workers together with God.” This is not the gist of the argument in the context; it is a thought and language foreign to scripture; and also, in my judgment, unbecoming and presumptuous. The emphasis rests on “God's.” They were “God's fellow-workmen, workers together,” not rivals as flesh in others or themselves might make them, but companions in work under God who employed them as such.

Nor is this all. The saints are God's husbandry, God's building, as emphatically. Were they producing what was suitable for Him who had the field tilled Was the building as God's should be? I am surprised that any should think the meaning to be “with a view to your being God's husbandry and God's building;” for the apostle in saying “ye are” goes much farther. And duty is ever grounded on and shaped and measured by relationship.

We now come to language and application still more precise and solemn. “According to the grace of God that was given to me as a wise architect I laid the foundation and another buildeth on [it]. But let each see how be buildeth on [it]. For other foundation can none lay than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one build on this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, the work of each shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare [it], because it is revealed in fire, and the fire shall try the work of each of what sort it is. If the work of any shall abide which he hath built on [it], he shall receive reward; if the work of any one shall be burnt up, be shall suffer loss, but himself shall be saved but so as through fire.” Ver. 10-15.)

Even the apostle loved to connect his work and office with the grace of God rather than with abstract authority. It is this feeling which has so evaporated from Christendom, so that ministry has humanized and assumed even a worldly character, to the unspeakable loss of the church and the most serious dishonor to the Lord. Here he is careful to speak plainly; “according to the grace of God that was given mess a wise master-builder [or architect] I have laid a foundation, and another buildeth upon [it], but let each see how he buildeth on [it].” Here we have the responsibility of him who ministers. Apostolic place is maintained, but responsible service is affirmed, and it is a serious thing. “For other foundation can none lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. But if any one buildeth upon the foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, grass, straw, the work of each shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it is revealed by fire; and the work of each, of what sort it is, the fire itself shall prove.”

Here all is in due proportion, and the revelation of God in Christ is laid as the foundation of all; but we see how man's responsibility remains. On that foundation very different material might be built up—not only what is precious, like the great and costly stones, &c., of the temple, but also what is worthless and vile. And here man's judgment is at fault; for doubtless many a Corinthian saint had prized the hay and straw of man's wisdom, and slighted the gold and silver of apostolic truth. Hence the need of another day and of the Lord's discernment. Therefore are they told that much may only be disclosed in the day that is coming. None but this day is to be revealed in fire. Then will the consuming judgment of God deal with each one's work. Even now there may be manifestations; but they are necessarily partial. The fire itself of that day will prove of what sort is the work of each. It is good to weigh this now. All that lets in the light of God's future on present

occupation is wholesome not only for His servant, but for all concerned. There will be no mistake then: all must be in the light of God. “If any one's work which he hath built up shall abide, he shall receive reward.” For reward there is to cheer in the midst of present sorrow in the hope of the Lord's recompense in that day. Present reward is a danger for every soul, especially in divine things. There is however comfort of love, and the more real the more we rest upon Christ rather than on Christians. He then takes care that we shall have it in good measure, even if the sphere seem small. And so it must be in a day of general departure from faith. It is His love which constrains the servant, and confidence in His grace which acts as a constant spring of action.

When so laboring, the hope of future reward from the Lord acts both safely and powerfully: otherwise there is danger. But it is dangerous also to despise the future as those naturally do who are too much occupied with present results. Will their work stand? “If the work of any one shall be burnt up, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire.” It is a powerful figure, and not hard to understand where the truth in general is held firm.

It is well known that Rome has founded on this passage one of its chief proofs of purgatory; but this is itself a sample of the refuse against which the apostle warns. For it is evident that not the faithful in general or their ways are in question, but, ministers and their doctrine; and again that a day of sifting judgment is meant and not some intermediate state now after death. Fire is the figurative expression of His judicial action which consumes all dross, not punishment for the separate spirit or soul, nor even a process of purifying it. “Saved, yet so as through fire,” is to mark the difficulty of it; yet will God take care that so it shall be. So, as has been said, a builder might see his building ruined by fire, yet himself escape. Besides each one's work is to be thus tested—the apostle's work as certainly as that of his detractors, and gold, silver, and precious stones are subjected to the fire no less than the consumable material. Does all this apply to Romanist ideas of purgatory? The real point is the danger of introducing rubbish even where the true foundation is owned, not fundamental error or Anti-Christianism, but airy notions, lax maxims as to practice, &c., which the day of trial would detect and destroy. It was not so with his work whom some at Corinth had despised.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 3:16-23

The figure of a building with its foundation, already used, furnishes the apostle with a yet fuller illustration. We have seen workmen wise or negligent, materials costly and durable or perishable and worthless, with a reward as the result on the one hand, or the workman suffering the loss of his work and his person only saved with difficulty. Now he develops on both sides, and contrasts the holiness of God's temple in the saints with the enemy's instruments in corrupting and destroying.

“Know ye not that ye are God's temple, and [that] the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any one destroy the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which ye are. Let none deceive himself: if any one thinketh himself to be wise among you in this age, let him become foolish that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; for it is written, He that taketh the wise in their craftiness; and again, [The] Lord knoweth the reasonings of the wise that they are vain. Wherefore let none boast in men, for all things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye Christ's, and Christ God's.” (Ver. 16-28.)

Thus God has His temple on earth now as surely as of old in Israel. But this is often not seen by those who confess that the old Levitical order is judged and gone, and that the effort to imitate it since redemption is to fall away from the grace and truth of God now come in Christ, and proclaimed in the gospel, and to be displayed in the Christian and the church. It was the presence of God always which constituted God's temple. Not the costliness of stones, nor the splendor of gold or silver, but the cloud wherein Jehovah was pleased to come down was its true glory, when Israel could boast of a habitation in their midst for the mighty One of Jacob. So now it is not merely that there are Christians, but God has His house or temple. It is the assembly, not the individuals considered as such, but those builded together for the purpose in virtue of the Spirit. See Eph. 2:22. The Spirit dwells in each believer doubtless; but this is another truth and equally certain from God's word. “Know ye not that ye are God's temple, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” How solemn the fact that a divine person, the Holy Ghost, dwells where Christians are; and this, it may be added, because of redemption! For it was never so till the work of Christ was wrought, and He going on high sent the Holy Spirit down to be in the saints and abide with them forever. It is God's testimony to the efficacy of His sacrifice. Whatever the mercies and blessings and privileges before, this could not be till the blood that makes atonement forever was shed. Now the Spirit of God comes where that blood-shedding is confessed; and there He dwells, making those who confess it God's temple.

But it is much to be weighed that the apostle is here sheaving the danger not only of unreality but of defilement. There are those who build wisely and well; there are those who admit what is trashy, who build on the one and only foundation unfit materials. But there is worse still. There is the enemy at work using men that bear the Lord's name to corrupt or destroy: the same word, and one may say, the same thing. For God speaks of evil doctrine according to its own nature if it work

unimpeded; and this is the only result of heterodoxy so left. He who teaches it corrupts and destroys; and him who destroys (or corrupts) the temple of God shall God destroy. Awful end! but is there not a cause? is it not sufficient? Could the holy God feel or do otherwise? It is in vain to plead love; for in truth the blow of love in caring for the objects beloved is beyond all to be feared. And how does not God resent that evil Which defiles the holy temple where His Spirit dwells in virtue and honor of the work of Christ on the cross? He will surely destroy those whom Satan thus employs, under whatever disguise, to pollute the very streams of life and blessing for souls, yea, to dishonor the temple wherein He dwells.

It is to deceive oneself where any reason is allowed in palliation of evil. Men who so weaken—I will not say Christian feeling only, but—common conscience may be found among those who bear the Lord's name; but, specious as they may seem and fine-spoken, it is not the wisdom of God in Christ, but of this age that comes to naught. How incomparably better and safer to become foolish that one may be wise! Such was the path the apostle took, obedient to the heavenly vision. Did he not seem foolish in the eyes of all with whom he broke? Was he not wise, whatever a Festus might say? What and where is Festus now? and Agrippa and Bernice? and the high priest and the accusing chiefs of the Jews? They thought themselves wise; and so did others who in the Corinthian assembly brought in the wisdom of the schools to evade the cross and stand well with the men of the time.

But everywhere, without yet more than within," the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God;" and nowhere is its character so exposed, nowhere its indulgence so perilous, as in the temple of God—the church. So it is written in Job 4:13, and Psa. 94:11. Whether one look back on past experience or forward to the kingdom, it makes no difference: least of all can human craft or sage reasonings suit God's temple, or those who traffic in them there escape His judgment. And why should those boast who have with Christ all things? For so indeed it is in the grace of God. "All things are yours: whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye Christ's, and Christ God's." We have all and abound, not only all those whom flesh would set up as rivals, but all circumstances present and future, ours now through the grace of Christ, and ourselves His as He is God's, forever and to His glory. How blessed and infinite the associations which flesh overlooks and the world in its self-sufficient nothingness treats as nothing!

Chapter 14

Notes on 1 Corinthians 4:1-5

The apostle had now shown the solemn responsibility of the workman, and the impropriety of all boast in men, seeing that all things were theirs as truly as they were Christ's and Christ God's. It was needful however to draw out still more fully the relations of ministers, and this lie does in the beginning of our chapter. “So let a man account of us, as servants of Christ and stewards of God's mysteries.” (Ver. 1.) The apostle is careful so to characterize himself as well as Apollos. They were Christ's official servants, not merely he and Cephas who were apostles, but he and Apollos, the latter of whom certainly had no such apostolic place.

Indeed nothing could be simpler than the manner in which this Alexandrian brother was led on in the work of the Lord, having begun it when possessed of the least possible light (the baptism of John) and afterward indebted to no more formal instructors than the godly Priscilla and Aquila. But being an eloquent man and mighty in the scriptures, he contributed much to those who believed through grace, particularly in the controversies which sprang up with the Jews. From Ephesus he went to Corinth soon afterward. We can thus understand how readily so distinguished a person fell in with the taste of not a few Christians in that city, whose party-spirit raised him up (with not the least allowance of it on his part) against Paul or Peter. On the other hand the apostle in the holy liberty of grace would in no way lower Apollos—rather the contrary, classing him with himself, and this not merely as bondmen (δο■λονς) but as servants of Christ. They were therefore responsible to Him only. Thus they were also ■π■ρεται (official servants) and stewards of God's mysteries. This was their duty to the household of God—to furnish meat in due season, specially that truth which is most distinctively characteristic of the New Testament.

It is scarcely needful to prove here that “mysteries” never mean the sacraments or standing institutions of Christianity. God's mysteries mean those secret things which are now revealed in contrast with what Israel had of old (Deut. 29:29), not, as is vulgarly supposed, things unintelligible, but truths reserved by God in Old Testament times, now displayed in Christ on high and made known by the Spirit in the New Testament.

“Here moreover it is sought in stewards that one be found faithful, but to me it amounts to very little that I be inquired into by you or by man's day. Nay, I do not inquire even into myself, for I am conscious to myself of nothing, yet I am not justified by this, but he that inquireth into me is the Lord. So then judge nothing prematurely until the Lord shall have come, who shall both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and shall make manifest the counsels of the hearts, and then shall each have his praise from God.” (Ver. 2-5.)

Thus the apostle reasons from the figure of a steward where fidelity was especially required. The critical reading is ■δε instead of the common ■ δ■, and there can be little doubt that the former, not the latter, is correct. Here (meaning on earth), he adds, it is required in the case of stewards, that one should be found faithful. Undoubtedly it is of still more consequence in the steward of heavenly things; but the apostle is careful to place the personal responsibility of the steward in direct relation to Christ; “but to me it is a very little thing [or, “amounteth to very little"] that I should

be," not exactly, "judged" "by you." The word properly signifies the preliminary inquiry before the trial. Not that this was said in contempt of the Corinthian saints; man's day, or inquisition, was held equally cheap by him, whoever might essay to undertake a task which the Lord had never delegated to man. Not only is none competent, but the Spirit gives no sufficiency for this thing. It is reserved for the Lord whom alone it suits, even if the creature could conceivably be made fit for it. Here again it was no slight of others, nor self-complacency, for he particularly disclaims any pretension either to irresponsibility or to be his own judge.

Man is wholly incompetent for such an inquiry, were he even an apostle: yea, it would be, an usurpation of the functions of the Lord. It is of the highest importance that this immediate sense of responsibility to Him be maintained always and everywhere. Whether it be a question of Paul or of Apollos, it is the same principle. Nor does it apply only to those whom God set first in the church, or in Christ's service, but to the last or least no loss than to the first. To the Lord alone it belongs to inquire into their service.

Again, it is of the utmost importance to see that the church has no such authority or duty. Christ's servants according to their gift in His sovereign disposal may serve the church, or they may be debtors to all men in the gospel, but in their service, in all its details as well as in principle, they are accountable alone to Christ. For He, and not the church, gave them the gift, the possession and exercise of which constitutes them His servants. As they are called to love and honor the assembly, is) the assembly is bound to respect their direct allegiance to Christ the Lord, not to interpose itself between Him and them.

The servants no doubt are saints, and as such their conduct, if apparently so wrong, comes under discipline, and, if really evil, under holy censure. No person or office enjoys or ought to enjoy immunity. Nay, the doctrine of teachers if false, would expose them to the assembly's judgment, and more severely than in the case of others, because of their position, perhaps even to putting away. A clearly improper use of their gift for selfish purposes might bring them under similar dealing, were the doctrine ever so sound. Still in their service as each, apart from such evil, Christ's ministers are directly and exclusively accountable to Himself. They have not a lady over them in the church, but are subject only to the Lord. The abandonment of this truth, the assertion of the assembly's instead of Christ's authority over ministry, brought in catholicism and finally popery, though other and still more deadly ingredients might mingle with both and the last especially. But the substitution of the church for Christ in regulating ministry, as well as claiming to be its source, is assuredly an evil of the gravest nature; and Protestantism has by no means succeeded in exorcising completely this evil spirit. Do we not see it active in Presbyterianism, flourishing in Wesleyanism, gross and unblushing in Congregationalism? Truly we may say this kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting; for as the energy and self-importance not of ecclesiastics but of men dearly loves it, it is only faith that can walk in constant dependence on the Lord, so as to dispense with it and make it an intrusion and offense.

It is of deep interest also to observe the apostle's choice of expression. Even in speaking of the Lord he does not say κρ■νων, but ■νακρ■νων με. The truth is that the believer never comes into judgment (κρ■σιν), as our Lord Himself laid down in John 5; if he did, he must be lost. Life and judgment are incompatible. He that refuses Christ and life in Him, will assuredly be judged. He is lost, and it will be manifest then.

Thus is the honor of Christ vindicated by God on such as have spurned His Son. Those who believe in Him are called to no such compulsory and ruinous homage; they gladly bow even now to Him their Lord and life. They will give account to God; they will receive according to the things done in the body, as they will be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ; but they will never come into judgment, having already faith and eternal life in Him. They exercise themselves, therefore, to have a good conscience now.

So the apostle says here (not speaking of his past life, though even there he had walked conscientiously, however blinded and so sinning with a high hand), “I am conscious to myself of nothing,” yet, he adds, “I am not justified by this.” A good conscience is a good thing; but it does not clear the person who may in this or that be blinded by self-love or other feelings. The Lord will decide at His coming; it is He who makes the only adequate inquiry. “Wherefore judge nothing prematurely [which the Corinthians were presuming to do], until the Lord shall have come, who will [not judge us but] both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall each have his praise from God.” At that epoch all that sought the dark to avoid detection will be exposed in the light of God, which will even manifest the counsels which the hearts themselves failed to see through. How fallacious often is the praise of men now where shams and shadows reign for most! Then shall each have the praise that is due and enduring and precious from God. Of this alone the apostle speaks here. He had already spoken of perdition, and of salvation where the work of the careless workman is burnt up.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 4:6-13

The apostle had thus established both the dependence of the servant on the Lord, and his independence of human scrutiny. Not, of course, that the church is denied its responsibility to judge conduct. Here it is a question of the counsels of the heart, which no man can scan duly, but the Lord will at His coming. “And then,” he adds solemnly, “shall the praise be to each from God.” He could thus speak freely and happily himself. It ought to have searched the conscience of many a Corinthian.

“And these things, brethren, I transferred to myself and Apollos on your account, that ye may in our case learn nothing above what is written, in order that ye be not puffed up one for one against another. For who distinguisheth thee? and what hast thou which thou didst not receive? But if thou didst even receive, why boastest thou as not having received? Already ye are filled; already ye have been enriched, apart from us ye reigned; and I would that ye did reign, that we also might reign with you” (ver. 6-8). The apostle explains here what he has also done elsewhere—his applying a principle to himself; and, in this case, to Apollos also, which he meant for others, in order that the saints might be profited. The misleaders at Corinth were really in his view, as the apostle here implies but he lays down a standard, by which he does not hesitate to measure himself and Apollos, which the saints could easily use for others whose pretensions were as high and unfounded as the services of Paul and Apollos were real and of God. Of Him some had lost sight entirely; and each, choosing his leader, was puffed up with party feeling, What is written makes God everything, man at best an instrument, as he is alone rightly a servant. God only makes the difference between one and another, and this especially in divine things. And as it is He who makes a difference, what has anyone that he has not received? and if received, why boast as if it were not so? The folly of Corinthian vanity was evident in being puffed up for those they exalted as their respective chiefs.

But he proceeds to deal a further blow, and this of the keenest irony, as Isaiah scrupled not to do in exposing the folly of idol-worship. Trashy, if not corrupting, doctrine always lowers practice; and the Corinthians had insensibly relinquished or lost the place of sufferers with Christ. This the apostle notices witheringly. When Christ reigns, we shall indeed be at ease, and in the fullest satisfaction; and He will drink the wine new with us in the kingdom of His Father—yea, He will gird Himself, and make us recline at table, and come and serve us as He in His grace deigned to assure us, when He will also set the faithful servant over all that He has. But now is the time to deny self, to take up one's cross, and follow Him, who suffered many, all, things here below. But all was confusion for the Corinthians; their eye was not single, and their body therefore anything but full of light. “Already [that is, before the time] ye are filled, already ye have become rich, apart from us ye reigned, and I would that ye did reign.” For they were deceiving themselves: the time was not yet come. False doctrine had made them false practically to the present object of God. Satan had succeeded in severing them, in walk at least and aims, from the Lord, who nevertheless waits for the time of glory, when He and they shall really reign together. The apostle proceeds to draw out the contrast seen in those to whom, if God had set them “first in the church,” He had given

grace to become the greatest and most patient sufferers in the world.

“For, I think, God set us the apostles last as devoted to death, because we became a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men, we, fools for Christ, but ye wise in Christ; we weak, but ye strong; ye illustrious, but we disgraced. Until the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted and homeless wanderers, and we toil, working with our own hands; reviled, we bless; persecuted, we suffer; slandered, we beseech. We became as the world's scum, offscouring of all, until now (ver. 9-18). It is evident that those who misled the Corinthians, as well as the saints misled by them, had made the church their world, and that fleshly principles had supplanted the grace of Christ for their souls. They had schools and spectacles of their own, as well as the Greeks outside. In a burst of the finest feeling, not without sarcasm but with real love, which could use it for good, the apostle sets out the true path of Christ as one of suffering but, victory over the world. Faith working by love can alone secure such victory. This was apostolic ambition, if ambition there can be of a saintly kind; and this God had given the apostles in appointing them last, nearest to Christ, who had gone down into depths of suffering where none could follow. But there were sufferings of Christ which grace does share with the Christian, and these the apostles knew best, and of the apostles, we may perhaps add, none so much as Paul. Well could he then say, “God set us, the apostles, last, as devoted to death, a spectacle to the world, both to angels and men.” Did the Corinthians wish and claim to be prudent in Christ? The apostles at least were content to be fools for His sake. Were the Corinthians strong and glorious in their own desire and estimate? The apostles gloried in weakness and disgrace; even as Peter and John, on a well-known occasion, went their way rejoicing from before the Sanhedrin, because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of the name. Nor was it only the fervor of early zeal. “To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked and buffeted and homeless wanderers, and labor working with our own hands.” Had not the Corinthians, or their misleaders, counted all this low and eccentric, ascetic and enthusiastic, in Paul? “Railed on, we bless; persecuted, we endure; slandered, we beseech: we became as the world's scum, offscouring of all, until now:” an utter impossibility, of course, not in this or that particular which superstition can readily imitate, but as a whole, save through the constraining and assimilating love of Christ, who cheers those who set out and go on in such a path as this with the bright comfort of reigning along with Him. For I reckon, as the apostle says in Rom. 8, that the sufferings of this present time are of no account in comparison of the glory that is to be revealed in regard to us. If there is a more energetic sketch of the suffering here, it is because apostles are in view rather than the saints at large; but the principle is the same, and the Corinthians had slipped out of it to present ease and dignity, which they thought due to the truth of Christianity—an error which soon culminated, as it still does, in Christendom. Where are those that can expose it, not only in word but in deed and in truth?

Notes on 1 Corinthians 4:14-21

The apostle, in accepting, yea, claiming, a place of present contempt in the world's eyes for the chief emissaries of the Lord, in contrast" with the ease and honor which the Corinthians lived in and valued, the fruit of the false teaching in their midst, had put the case in such a form as could not fail to appeal, and deeply, to every heart that loved Christ. He now, with the quick sensibility of genuine affection, seeks to reassure them. If he had wounded any, were not his wounds those of, a friend? "Not to abash you do I write these things, but as my beloved children I admonish [you]; for if you should have ten thousand child-guides in Christ, yet not many fathers, for in Christ Jesus, through the gospel, I begot you. I beseech you then, become imitators of me." (Ver. 14-16.) A false teacher flatters his party, and abuses those who oppose his aims. He who is faithful to the Lord loves the saints; but this very love makes him vigilant, and gives moral courage, to deal with what is offensive to Him. Yet his reproof is for those ears who need it, not for others to lower in their eyes such as may be censured.

It is well to observe that there is no depreciation of Christian teaching or teachers in comparison with gospel work, such as the common version naturally insinuates. It is an appeal to the love which ought to bind specially the converted souls to him who was the means of bringing them to God; and not in any way a formal comparison of the relative value of this gift with that. Hence there is the avoidance of the word διδασκ■λους, or teacher, and the use of the somewhat slighting term, παιδαγωγο■ς, as applied to those at Corinth who had done too much to occupy and turn away the saints there. Some of these might affect the law, others philosophy; but all sought to keep the brethren who listened to them in their leading-strings. They had little enjoyment of, or confidence in, the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and hence sought to direct the thoughts and ways of their admirers, as do guardians, or παιδαγωγο■, with the young entrusted to their charge. But this savors more of Jewish or Gentile modes, than of the gospel or its liberty; and the apostle could not but remind them that he it was who begot them through the gospel. Only one could feel for them as a parent himself; yet was it against him especially that these leaders of cliques had sought to alienate his "beloved children." It is the interest of such a guardian to retain his charge in subjection as long as possible; while a father's joy is to see his children grow up intelligent as well as affectionate, maintaining the family character. Hence he adds, "I beseech you then, become imitators of me," a word which he urges again at the beginning of chapter 11, with the beautiful proviso, "even as I also [am] of Christ." Disinterested love is bold, and can speak freely. Certainly he sought not theirs, but them, and the cross in practice, not earthly case, or honor, or gain. Had they not lost their sense of what becomes the Christian? Let them follow him in self-renunciation for Christ.

"For this cause I sent to you Timotheus, who is my beloved and faithful child in [the] Lord, who will remind you of my ways that are in Christ [Jesus] even as everywhere in every assembly I teach." (Ver. 17.) This young servant of the Lord was one who could speak the more intimately of the apostle's ways in Christ; inasmuch as, on the one hand, he himself was his beloved and faithful child (which the apostle could not say of the Corinthians); on the other, the apostle never

accommodated his doctrine to the assemblies, so as to falsify the testimony of the Lord. Whatever might be the elasticity of grace which dealt with individuals, seeking their blessing in Christ, he taught in every assembly just as he wrote to Corinth. The ways that are in Christ do not waver; they are straight, if painful to the flesh. Yet this was the man whom the perverse eyes of detractors charged with inconsistency and untrustworthiness! It is utterly false that a differing doctrine in discipline prevailed in the different assemblies. The apostle taught the same everywhere, and his writings insist on it where he did not go personally. It is the assembly of God, and His mind varies not. He had demanded nothing of the assembly in Corinth that he had not laid down elsewhere.

But some had drawn from the apostle's not going to Corinth, and sending Timothy, that he shrank from visiting the assembly there. So had the false apostles insinuated in their own pride to his depreciation. “Now some were puffed up as though I were not coming unto you; but I shall come shortly unto you, if the Lord will, and will know not the word of those that are puffed up but the power; for the kingdom of God [is] not in word but in power. What will ye? that I come unto you with a rod, or with love and a spirit of meekness?” (Ver. 18-21.) Indeed he was coming, and for this dependent on the Lord's will. But subjection to the Lord in no way enfeebles the conduct of His servants. So on coming the apostle tells them he will know, not pretentious talk, but reality— “the power.” For this in truth is the essential characteristic of “the kingdom of God,” in contradistinction from “the word,” to which Greek ears had been ever used, and alas the Jews, for the most part. And this leads the apostle to remind the Corinthian saints that, if he had reminded them of the peculiar bond between them and him, as their father through the gospel, he had power and authority from God, however slow he might be to enforce it. It was for them indeed, as he puts it, to decide how In was to come, for this was the real question, not whether, nor when, belt how: with a rod, or with love and a spirit of meekness? What he desired himself, as he says elsewhere, was their edification, not their destruction. In Acts 5 we see Peter using the rod; and the apostle Paul could do as much according to the Lord. But his heart sought other things for his beloved children: what did they wish?

Notes on 1 Corinthians 5:1-5

Grave reason there was, why the apostle should speak of such an alternative as “a rod.” For the assembly at Corinth had at present no happy name, if common rumor were true.

“Universal report is of fornication among you, and such fornication as [is] not even among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who hath done this deed might be taken out of the midst of you.” (Vers. 1, 2.) It was distressing enough that so monstrous an evil should have found an entrance in. the assembly of God. But what grieved the apostle most—as well it might—was the tolerance of the offender in their midst. The assembly cannot hinder a Christian from falling into the worst scandal, but it is bound to deal with evil as identified with Christ before God and man. Here below this is the reason of its being. It is the temple of God, “as he had urged in chapter 3 for a warning against trashy and corrupting theories; but if that holy habitation of God through the Spirit be inconsistent with false teaching, certainly and yet more manifestly with immorality.. Now there was in their midst grossness beyond the heathen—a brother, so-called, living with his step-mother!

Granted that the Corinthian assembly was young in the knowledge of the Lord, and few, if any, men spiritual experience were among them. Gifts they had abundantly; but elders are nowhere hinted at, as indeed we know they were not, and could not be, in an infantine state of things. And divine wisdom, I doubt not, selected this state rather than one more mature and fully furnished, in order the better to provide for the exigencies of a day like ours.

But surely the youngest saints ought at least to have been appalled at such sin where God's Spirit dwelt. They might have had no special teaching on discipline, nor previous cases of evil, while the apostle was with them. But why did they not mourn that he who had wrought such evil in the assembly might be taken away? Humiliation and prayer are the resource, of those who feel a wrong, and know not yet the remedy: and the Lord would have acted for them, or given them to act for Him. Instead of this they were “puffed up” a grievous aggravation of the mischief. I will not go so far as to assume that the offender was one of those, of whom they were proud, and who helped the carnal multitude to carp at the apostle; but it seems plain enough that the self-exalting doctrine and the bad morality went together in his mind. Had they allowed into their hearts the germ of that unholy idea, so rife in modern and even evangelical circles, that the evil of another is not to be judged, but each is solely to judge himself? It is to the destruction of God's glory in the church. For what can more directly strike at all common union in good, all corporate responsibility in evil? Where such thoughts are suffered, it is plain that the presence of the Holy Ghost is either ignored or forgotten; for no believer will deliberately say that He can be a partner of iniquity, and this He must be if evil is known and unjudged where He dwells.

Seriously, as one familiar with the presence of God, and not like those whose self-esteem or vanity led them to evil in the assembly, does the apostle speak. It was that power of God in which he would have acted if present. “For I, absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged as present, in the name of our Lord Jesus [Christ], ye and my spirit being gathered together with the

power of our Lord Jesus [Christ], [concerning] him that so wrought this—to deliver such an one to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." (Ver. 8-5.)

It thoroughly fell within the province of the apostle to help the church at such an emergency, as indeed it was his joy at all times. For an apostle regulated and governed, and in this differed from such as were prophets without being apostles. But here was the assembly at Corinth, his own children in the faith, ensnared into the grossest dishonor on the Lord's name, and withal puffed up, instead of mourning in order that the offender might be removed out of their midst. He proceeds, therefore, to pronounce the only judgment open to such a case. "For I, absent in body, but present in spirit, have already judged as present [concerning] him that so wrought this." The best authorities thus give the sense. "As" comes in to modify the second present, not the first, which is sufficiently qualified by "in spirit," contrasted with "absent in body." In the second case the very reverse is intended, and "as" is indispensable (for he means as if actually there), whereas in the first it would be improper. He then shows the authority and manner for dealing with the person: "in the name of our Lord Jesus (ye being gathered, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus), to deliver such an one to Satan for destruction of the flesh, that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."

This has been confounded, especially since Calvin's time, with excommunication. But delivering to Satan is power here associated with the assembly, as the conferring of a gift is in 1 Tim. 4:14 with imposition of the hands of the elderhood. In both cases the result hinges on apostolic power. But the absence of this in no way enfeebles the duty of putting away the guilty professor, as is carefully laid down in verse 18.

Our Lord, indeed, had Himself set forth the principle in Matt. 18, and provided for its maintenance in the worst of times. He had put the assembly, as the last resort, even for a case which began with an individual trespass; for I do not doubt, spite of the omission of ε■ς σ■, "against thee," in versa 15 (according to the Sinai and Vatican manuscripts, supported by three cursives, &c.), that they are genuine, resting as they do on most ample ancient authority, and falling in exactly with the context, which is embarrassed by the omission—an omission easily accounted for by the similarity of their sound in a Greek's mouth to the last two syllables of the preceding word. If the matter, then, were told to the assembly, and the offender should not heed it, "let him be to thee as the heathen and the tax-gatherer." But the Lord gives what is general and abiding: "Verily, I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on the earth shall be loosed in heaven." This goes beyond the enforcement or removal of a sentence on evil to the more general authority of the assembly as acting for Christ. Next, He shows the efficacy of its united prayer, even if but two agreed in asking: "Again, I say to you, that if two of you agree on the earth about whatever they may ask, it shall come to them from my Father that is in the heavens;" and this on a ground which takes in not merely a meeting for judicial decision or prayer, but every assembly of the church as such: "for where two or three are gathered together to my name, there am I in the midst of them." For the authority of the assembly or the validity of its action in these matters of practice and conduct depends, not in any way on its numbers or the weight of the persons composing it, but on Christ, who guarantees His presence where but two or three are gathered together to His name.

This is clearly urged by the apostle in verse 4. If Satan had sought to alienate the Corinthians from Paul, he at least joins himself in spirit with them, as gathered together with the power of our Lord Jesus, in His name to deliver the incestuous Corinthian to Satan. If flesh had been indulged shamelessly, flesh must be galled and broken to pieces under the adversary's hand, but for good in the end at any rate" that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." In fact, as the second epistle shows, the discipline was blessed to him in this world also; but the end specified cannot fail for all born of God, whatever may be the hindrances here, or the particular shape of God's dealing with the soul. For there is a sin to death, and in this case to make request of God would be an error. In the present instance it was not so, awful as the sin was: and the man not only did not fall asleep, but was brought to the deepest abasement and grief, and the apostle called on the saints to forgive, as doubtless they did.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 5:6-8

As yet the Corinthians had no sense how they themselves were implicated in this frightful evil, and, what is more important, how the Lord's name was compromised by it. On the contrary they were high-minded, and levity prevailed. “Therefore,” says the apostle, “your boasting [is] not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, according as ye are unleavened. For also our passover, Christ, was sacrificed. Wherefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.” (Ver. 6-8.)

There cannot be a more serious principle for the practical and public walk of the church. Evil is here presented under the symbol of leaven. Not only may it exist among-saints, but its nature is to work, spread, and assimilate the mass to itself. The apostle insists that it shall never be tolerated. Here it is moral evil, in Galatians doctrinal; and, of the two, the latter is the more insidious, because more specious. It does not shock the conscience so immediately, or strongly, if at all. To the natural mind, evil doctrine is but a difference of opinion, and the generous heart shrinks from proscribing a man for an opinion however erroneous. The church stands on wholly different ground, because it stands in Christ on high and has the Holy Ghost dwelling in it here below. No assembly can guarantee itself against the entrance of evil, but every assembly of God is bound not to tolerate it. When evil is known, the church is bound to put it away. Elsewhere we may find details in dealing with it. There are those who may be specially fitted not only to discern but to apply moral power, and they are responsible to act faithfully to Christ whose the church is. It is no question, where known evil is persisted in, of exercising compassion, still less of cloaking it. This would be connivance with Satan against the Lord, and the ruin, not only of the individual already ensnared, but of the assembly. When the assembly knows evil, and either forbears to judge through indifference, or (still worse) refuses it when appealed to according to the word of God, it is playing false to the name of the Lord, and can no longer be regarded as God's assembly after adequate means to arouse have failed.

Bad as the state of things in Corinth was, the evil had arrived at no such footing as yet. It was humbling that their consciences were not yet wakened up beyond perhaps individuals, who communicated facts to the apostle or others who sympathized with their uneasiness. The mass, if they knew, acted as if they knew not, and were proud and puffed up instead of being abased in sorrow but in prayer to God. So early did the notion creep in that sin in the church belongs only to those directly guilty, that it does not involve all, and that the Lord Himself forbids others to judge, commanding tares and wheat to grow together till the harvest. It is scarcely needful here to expose such unholy and ignorant sophistry.

Now comes the grave warning of the apostle, in Christ's faithful love to the church. The tolerance of evil in any part vitiates the whole. It virtually commits the. Holy Ghost to the sanction of what God hates. No interpretation can be more contrary to the spirit of the apostle's admonition than that which supposes that the whole is only leavened when every part is saturated with the leaven.

It is really meant that a little leaven gives its character to the whole lump. Even the late Dean Alford, (though far from sound generally in doctrine, strict in ecclesiastical principle, or firm for the glory of Christ) speaks incomparably better than those brethren who debase the holy name of love to mean license for their friends or themselves. “That this is the meaning,” says he, “and not that a little leaven will if not purged out leaven the whole lump, is manifest from the point in hand, namely, the inconsistency of their boasting: which would not appear by their danger of corruption hereafter, but by their character being actually lost. One of them was a fornicator of a fearfully depraved kind, tolerated and harbored: by this fact the character of the whole was tainted." (Comment. on 1 Cor. 5)

The apostle therefore charges them to purge out the old leaven, that they might be fresh dough, “according as ye are unleavened.” This is of high importance. The saints are unleavened, not merely ought to be. Their practical conduct is grounded on their standing. All efforts to deny the purity of the church are from the enemy. The apostle, writing even to the Corinthians, reminds them of this, and insists upon it. He recalls them to what God's grace had done for them. He rouses their conscience to act consistently with Christ. Never does he think of allowing sin, because saints have the old man as well as the new. Was not the old man crucified with Christ? If God has already executed sentence upon it, there is no excuse for allowing it. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set every believer free. Not only has he a new nature, but the Holy Ghost to work in it by the word and grace of Christ. They were unleavened then and must purge out the old leaven. The very object of God was to form the church in purity for Christ and according to Christ in this world, and the responsibility of the saints is to walk individually and corporately according to Him. His word makes His will plain.

But the figure of an unleavened lump at once recalls Christ as the tine paschal lamb, and the consequent putting away of sin by His sacrifice. This deepens the ground on which the apostle demands that sin should be judged by the saints if through unwatchfulness anyone had fallen into sin and repented not. The feast of unleavened bread was bound up with the passover, as every Israelite knew. This is turned to practical account here. “Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, nor with leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened [bread] of sincerity and truth.” There might be new forms of evil besides those of old habits and associations. But as all leaven had to be shut out by the Jew, so the Christian is solemnly called to deal unsparingly with evil in every shape.

Further, it seems to me of some importance to remark that this does not mean only at the table of the Lord on His day. The seven days of the Jewish institution represent the whole term of our stay on earth; and the celebration of the feast covers therefore the fall time of each here below. Nothing inconsistent with Christ morally is tolerable in the Christian, and this not now and then but continuously. Such is the teaching of these types which the New Testament unveils and enforces. Beyond doubt the true light now shines. Redemption, far from allowing of sins in the redeemed, is the basis of holiness, and all evil was only then fully judged when Christ our passover was crucified. Before that how much was borne with because of the hardness of men's hearts! Now that it has been condemned in the cross of Christ and consequently in grace to the believer, we are told to yield our members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Freed from sin and become servants to God we have our fruit unto holiness and the end everlasting life. Anything short of this is not Christianity.

Chapter 19

Notes on 1 Corinthians 5:9-13

THE apostle now lays down the direction of the Lord as to unworthy confessors of His name in the assembly. Those at Corinth did not know how such should be dealt with; but why did they not at least pray and mourn? Why were they puffed up?

“I have written to you in the epistle not to mix with fornicators; not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or the covetous and rapacious, or idolatrous, since [in that case] ye must go out of the world. But now I have written to you, if any one called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or idolatrous, or abusive, or a drunkard, or rapacious, not to mix with [him], with such an one not even to eat. For what is it to me to judge those without? Do ye not judge those within? But those without God judgeth. Put out the wicked person from among your own selves.” (Vers. 9-13.)

There appears no sufficient reason a priori, why an inspired apostle might not have written an epistle which God meant to lapse after accomplishing Its end, without filling a constant place in the scriptures. Hence there would be no difficulty, to my mind, if allusion were here made to an epistle of Paul which was never included in the canon. But where is the evidence that this is the fact, or that any other epistle is here intended than the one he is writing? In the latter case, the tense used would he what is called the epistolary aorist. It is in vain then to say, “not this present epistle,” which the phrase means as naturally as a former letter which has not come down to us. (Compare Rom. 16:22; Col. 4:16; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Thess. 3:14.) Indeed 2 Cor. 7:8 is the only instance that exemplifies a reference to a former letter, as the context necessitates, where the contrast is plain between the two letters. But there is nothing of the sort to determine here. As the usage the other way is far more frequent, so the sense is excellent, if we understand the actual epistle we have to be in view. The notion of a previous letter involves the inference that, the present is a correction of their misunderstanding of a former command of his respecting keeping company with fornicators; but this appears gratuitous. So is the idea that there must be something in the preceding part of this epistle bearing on the point; for it is quite sufficient for the passage that he should be so instructing, them now. That he must be referring to what went before is simply to deny the epistolary sense of the aorist. Again, ■ν τ■ ■πιστυλ■, far from being irrelevant and superfluous, if he meant the letter in which he was now engaged, is full of force and precision. “I have written to you in [not “an” but] the epistle not to keep company with fornicators.” He was exhorting to this effect now. This he proceeds to qualify: “not absolutely [or in all cases] with the fornicators of this world, or the covetous and rapacious, or idolatrous, since [in that case] ye must go out of the world. But now [or as the case stands] I have written to you not to keep company, if any one called a brother be,” &c. Here the same tense is used for what must be allowed to be what he is going to say in the present epistle; the νυν■ only serving to distinguish the guarded sentence, a more definite application of the principle in verse 11, from the general statement in verse 9.

In short, the apostle is showing that brotherly intercourse is restricted to brethren, and so is discipline: to extend either to men of the world is false ground, and would make intercourse with people at large impossible. Christian companionship, on the other hand, demands purity of life on

the part of those who enjoy it. If any one called a brother be impure, or covetous, or idolatrous, or abusive, or a drunkard, or rapacious, one is not to mix with him: “with such an one not even to eat.” The meaning is, not that we ought not to take the Lord's supper, but not to eat the least meal with him. The corrupt or violent professor of Christ is to be avoided even in an ordinary social act, not merely on the most solemn occasion of Christian worship.

The closing verses explain why this limitation ought to be. “For what [have] I [to] do with judging those without? Do not ye judge those within? But those without God judgeth. Put out the wicked person from among your own selves.” (Vers. 12, 13.) The world is not the sphere of divine judgment as yet, but His children, whom the Father judges without respect of persons, as the church is bound to do. By-and-by the world will be not only judged but condemned. (1 Cor. 11) Therefore should the believer so much the more seek to judge himself: also grace would be of ill report, and seek to cloak evil. But even if he fail, the Lord does not, who chastens by a divine judgment that he should not be condemned with the world.

Those without, then, are not the actual arena for apostolic or church judgment, but those within, as God deals with the rest in due time. The church cannot evade their duty; strong or weak, they must stand clear in this respect before God. The saints may not be able to deliver to Satan, but are bound to put out from among themselves the wicked person. But they are not called on to put out any one who is not “wicked.'

There are other steps in discipline which should never be forgotten, as rebuke in some cases, and withdrawment in others. It is false and mischievous that every offender should be thus removed; none should be but the wicked. In their case it is imperative, otherwise communion no longer exists according to Christ. It is not the entrance of the worst possible evil that destroys the character of the assembly, but the deliberate toleration of evil, were it even the least. Only we have to take care in judging that it be done in the word and Spirit of God. Unity that subsists by allowing known evil in its midst is of Satan, and directly opposed to God's object in His assembly, which is responsible to reflect the character of Christ now in holiness, as it will by-and-by in glory.

Chapter 20

Notes on 1 Corinthians 6:1-11

We have now to encounter a worldly evil among the Corinthian saints, as distinguished from the fleshly state and the corruption which have already passed before us.

“Dare any of you having a matter against another, go to law [seek judgment] before the unjust and not before the saints?” (Ver. 1.) Here modern practice, or even thought, greatly differs from apostolic principle. Christians now-a-days have little conscience in appealing to a worldly tribunal. It is evident that the Holy Ghost felt it to be an outrage, nor could any Christian walking rightly think of prosecuting a suit before the world against another however wrong. He must forget what God accounts each to be: the world, as having rejected His Son; the saints, as those that are by grace separated from it to God.

Here, however, the apostle grounds his reproof on the anomaly of seeking judgment at the hands of those whom we shall judge at Christ's coming. “Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world is judged by you, are ye unworthy of the least judgments? Do ye not know that we shall judge angels? Much more things of this life. If then ye have judgments in thing of this life, set up those who are of no esteem in the church.” (Ver. 2-4.) The apostle thus brings in the light of the coming day to bear upon present matters. This is certain from verse 3, if any one could question verse 2. In vain the efforts of ancients (Chrysostom, Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret, &c.) to make it moral, or of moderns (Mosheim, Rosenmiller, &c.) to make it political and worldly. The future judgment of the quick in the kingdom of our Lord is a reality that acts on the apostle now. He uses it to judge the conduct of every day. How can it be a living truth if it operate not thus? Even the Corinthians did not doubt the fact as to the future; but, like all unspiritual persons, they had let it slip where they ought to have remembered it.

It is evident, however, that “that day” was a truth so familiar, and admitted on all sides by the saints, that Paul could reason from it as unquestionable. The saints have the same life now, and the same Spirit; they have also the word of God. How monstrous then thus to ignore the glory with Christ to which grace calls them, and to fall into the ways of men! To faith it was the grossest inconsistency; for if the world is judged by the saints, are they unworthy of the “least judgments?” Such were and are the questions on which men usually go to law. Nor is it only the world but other beings they would judge. “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? Much more things in this life.”

The future judgment of the world and of angels has slipped away from Christians generally. They believe in the judgment of the dead, not of the living; and hence the ground of the apostle's appeal no longer exists for them. Scriptures such as these become unreal to their minds. So far they are practically infidel; and necessarily their practice is worldly in this respect. Alas! it is only a sample, not an exception. The difficult times of the last days are come, when men are lovers of self and of money, boastful and arrogant, abusive and disobedient to parents, lovers of pleasure rather than of God, having a form of piety but denying its power. From these we are commanded to turn away. Scripture is the grand resource; and this, not forgetting the apostle's conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecution, suffering, and the certainty that all who desire to live

piously in Christ shall be persecuted, while wicked men and impostors grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. The time is come, when men will not bear sound teaching, but according to their own lusts will heap up to themselves teachers, having itching ears, turning away from the truth as decidedly as they have turned aside to fables. What more mischievous delusion than a millennium to be brought in by the church's testimony and labors? It will really follow divine judgment when the Lord Himself comes, who, after executing it, will pour out the Spirit afresh on all flesh, when they see the salvation of God.

The Corinthians were not so far gone as the Christians of our day. They were well aware that the saints shall judge the world: only selfishness had dulled their remembrance of it: The Spirit of God now recalls the truth to them, and appeals to their sense of the evident incongruity that those who are to judge the world on the grandest scale were accounting themselves in fact unworthy of the smallest judgments. Such no doubt were those that could be then for the Corinthian brethren, whereas by-and-by the gravest will be held by them when glorified. And the apostle makes the inconsistency more pungently felt by characterizing the world as the “unjust” and themselves as “the saints” nay, by reminding them that we shall judge angels. Surely then things pertaining to this life between brethren ought not to go farther! Where was their faith and their love? Where their hope?

Some interpreters, as we know, take verse 4 interrogatively, others sarcastically. There seems no particular reason for the former. Matters of this life require no more than good sense and honesty; and surely the possession of these would not constitute a claim for honor in the church. Brethren might have both, and be little esteemed there, where the grace and power of Christ alone constitute such a claim. The decision of those matters in no way called for high spirituality. Indeed the apostle says, “I speak to your shame. Thus there is not among you one wise [man] who shall be able to decide between brethren” (literally, “brother [and brother] “). “But brother goeth to law with brother and this before unbelievers. Already therefore it is altogether a fault in you that ye go to law among yourselves. Why are ye not rather wronged? why are ye not rather defrauded? But ye do wrong and defraud, and this, brethren.” (Ver. 5-8.)

It is clear that the apostle in no way wished such disputes to be brought, in the first instance at least, before the assembly. The gravest cases should be, not lighter ones. Had they not even one wise man to decide them? He is slighting such questions as well as reproving themselves for their worldliness; and their moral state was worse to him than their lack of wisdom. The Christian is called to suffer, even when he does well, and to take it patiently, not to go to law. The Corinthians were sadly forgetful of the true glory of the church; and when Christians thus forget their proper standing and the conduct that suits it, they cease to walk even as upright men should: “Ye do wrong and defraud, and this, brethren.” Nor is it so surprising, when we consider that it never was intended that Christians should walk well except by faith, any more than Peter could walk on the waves without looking to Christ. When he ceased to look to Him, he begins to sink at once, less safe than those who had never ventured out of the ship.

Failure in faith and hope too, I must repeat, will soon be found to involve failure in love. “Ye do wrong and defraud, and this, brethren.” All through from first to last, it was a direct dishonor to God, and a false testimony to their relationship to Him, if indeed they were born of God. His sense of their failure as Christians does not lessen his horror at the dishonesty or other wrong which

provoked the law-suits. “Know ye not that unjust [men] shall not inherit God's kingdom? Do not err: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves as women, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor rapacious, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit God's kingdom.” (Vers. 9, 10.) It is clear that the apostle, without confining himself to the actual case, is exposing severely the habits so common at Corinth—corruption much more than violence. He is speaking for profit and for solemn warning as the Holy Ghost always does, if He touches sin at all. He is not beating the air, nor denouncing sins only found elsewhere. Fleshly and worldly license would surely end, if unjudged, in revolting excesses. Tampering with a little evil is the straight road to more and worse, and in none so certainly as the professing Christian. To indulge in any evil is in works to deny Christ. The business of a Christian is to manifest Him. The Corinthian saints were in danger of slipping back into the vilest ways of human corruption.

“And these things were some of you.” This would give Satan an advantage if they looked away from Christ. Old habits then resume their power, and evil communications corrupt good manners. Then he adds, “But ye were washed” [literally, “had yourselves washed “], “but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus [Christ] and by the Spirit of our God.” (Ver. 11.) He reminds them of the gracious power of God in Christ on whom they believed by the action of His Spirit; and will not allow that this could be all in vain. In (■πελο■σασθε there may be an allusion to the administrative sign, as in Acts 22:16; but the connection here points rather to the reality signified. The sanctification is clearly the setting apart of the Christian to God which the Holy Spirit effects in conversion, rather than the practical holiness which He afterward works to make good, the former being absolute as the latter is relative. This is shown conclusively by its preceding justification, which has here of course its regular sense, when the soul is not only born of God, but stands acquitted of all charge before Him through the work of Christ, and is then sealed by the Spirit.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 6:12-20

The apostle turns next to fleshly abuses: the first in respect of meats, the second and gravest in fornication. He had shown that, whatever the grace of God is in calling the vilest, all such are saved after a holy sort. This he now exemplifies in two instances where some pleaded liberty to deny practical purity. Of this he will not hear. He will not diminish liberty one jot, but he asserts its character to be Christian, as all our other privileges are. If not of Christ, it is sin. So is it with all we boast: life, righteousness, peace, and glory. In this liberty differs not from the rest. What Christian could wish any of these in or for the flesh? It would be to abandon the Second man for the first: to wish license for sin proves utter lack of love and honor for the Savior.

“All things are lawful to me, but all things do not profit; all things are lawful to me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God will bring to naught both it and them; but the body [is] not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. And God both raised the Lord, and will raise up us by his power. Know ye not, that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then taking the members of Christ make [them] members of a harlot? Let it not be. What! Know ye not that he that is joined to the harlot is one body? For, saith he, the two [shall be] one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin which a man may practice is outside the body, but the fornicator sinneth against his own body. What! Know ye not that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit that [is] in you, and that ye are not your own? ye were bought with a price: do then glorify God in your body.” (Ver. 12-20.)

If all things are lawful to the Christian, certainly all do not profit. As Christ never did what did not profit, so neither should the Christian. He is free, but it is only according to Christ for good, and this in love, the good of others. But there is another guard: if all things are lawful to the Christian, he refuses to be brought under the power of anything: were it not so, it would be bondage, not liberty. Thus to have regard for others' good must be kept up, as well the liberty itself intact. The Christian is called to serve others, never to be the slave of a habit in anything great or small.

The first application of the apostle is to meats, which he deals with in terms so curtly contemptuous as to decide the question for every godly soul. “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God will bring to naught both it and them.” He then points out an analogy as forcible as it is surprising and withal no less true: they mutually suit one another, and both perish under God's dealing. They are but temporary. It was the more striking, as coming through one who had been a Jew to those who had been Gentiles; and all know the place meats had in Judaism. But Christianity brings in the light of God and of the future for our present guidance; as we see in the second case still more at length. For “the body is not for fornication but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” If the belly is put down to its true and passing use, the body is exalted to a place of which philosophy knew nothing. As it was not formed for unhallowed or promiscuous indulgence, so it is for the Lord and the Lord is for it. Never was the honor of the body set in its true light till Christ came and proved it not only in His own person as man but in ours as redeemed by His blood and indwelt by the Holy Spirit. (Compare Rom. 6:12, 18, 19; 8:10; 12:1; Col. 2:23; 1 Thess.

4:4; 5:28; 1 Tim. 4:8-5.) Even now the Lord disdains not this temple of the Spirit: how much less when changed into the likeness of His glory? (Rom. 8:11, 18-28; Phil. 3:21.) In this body we shall have the portion of our Lord. For" God both raised the Lord and will raise up us by His power." (See 1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 4:14.)

It is not merely that our spirits go to be with the Lord in heaven: our bodies shall be raised like His at His coming, as many bodies of the saints which slept arose and came out of their graves after His resurrection. For if death shows man's weakness, resurrection displays God's power. The actual spiritual effect of this is immense. Not our souls but our bodies are deplored to be members of Christ. Those who descant on the soul only may claim a superior elevation. But it is never really so in practice or in theory. On the contrary the immortality of the soul is easily perverted to man's pride; not so the resurrection, which not only exalts God and humbles man, but delivers from present ease and indulgence where it is held in faith. Of this the Holy Spirit is the earnest, who joins us to the Lord and constitutes our bodies members of Christ. Hence the enormity of fornication. (Vers. 15, 16.) How basely inconsistent with such intimacy, yea union, is impurity with a harlot! It was the more needful to urge this on a city more than any other noted for this sort of license, besides the broad. fact that the heathen in general regarded fornication as an indifferent act like eating and not as in itself a sin. "The two, saith he, shall be one flesh; but he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." (Vers. 16, 17.)

But its incongruity with our relation to Christ is not all that the apostle urges. Fornication he would have avoided earnestly, because of its peculiar character, differing as it does from every other sin in this that it is against the body itself, while others are external to it. How dreadful then to think not merely of the body so misused, but the Christian's body, temple of the Holy Spirit as it is! not from any mere consecration to Him but from His being in us, and this from God, on the ground of purchase by Christ's blood. Therefore the apostle's appeal to glorify God in their body.

It was only because of Christ's work that the Holy Spirit could thus be given to us and dwell in us. He quickened souls before Christ shed His blood, but He never sealed them till after. Jesus, the Holy One of God, is the sole example of man so sealed without blood. But He is the exception that proves the rule. Adam was not, because, though innocent, he was not holy nor is ever said to have been; the Second man was, and only He apart from redemption; and therefore was He sealed by God the Father in virtue and witness of His intrinsic perfection. If we can be and are, it is solely in virtue of being perfected by His one offering; and we are therefore exhorted not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption (that is, of our bodies). The Spirit given is the expression of God's love shed abroad in our hearts; He is also the measure by which we should try our conduct, and the power of enjoying and representing Christ aright. Bought then, so that we are not our own but God's, we are called accordingly to glorify God in our body. A wondrous foot to be assured of on divine authority that such as we by grace can and should glorify God! These are the motives. We are bought with a price, and we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in us. But let us not forget that it is in our body we are to glorify God: Many a one deceives himself in the thought that he is all right in spirit, though he dare not say that he keeps his body under and brings it into subjection. The Christian is bound to glorify God in his body.

So in the consecration of the priests under the law (Lev. 8) we may see that the washing of water preceded the putting on of blood, and the anointing of oil closed the matter. It is just the same

order of truth which is desirable here, and which is true of the Christian in fact. Then followed the duties of their office according to the instructions of the Lord; as we see the Christian exhorted to glorify God.

Chapter 22

Notes on 1 Corinthians 7:1-14

We now enter on a fresh division of the Epistle, though the opening of it is naturally connected with, at least, so as to follow, the apostle's exhortation to personal purity, which he has just shown to be due to the Holy Ghost's presence, as well as the Lord's purchase of us: our consequent call is to glorify God in our body.

It seems that the saints in Corinth had written, among other topics, about marriage, and the various questions it naturally raised for the Christians as yet little versed in the truth. From the laxity of heathen, especially of the Greeks, and, above all, the Corinthians, there was a reaction toward asceticism, that favorite resource of moralists and philosophers in the East, which had thence spread, more or less, into the West. The apostle urges holiness, but not at the expense of liberty in Christ.

“But concerning the things of which ye write to me, [it is] good for a man not to touch a woman; but on account of fornications, let each have his own wife, and each have her own husband. To the wife let the husband render his due, and likewise also the wife to the husband. The wife hath not authority over her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not authority over his own body, but the wife. Defraud not one another, unless by consent for a time, that ye may have leisure for prayer, and again be together, that Satan tempt you not because of your incontinency.” (Ver. 1-5.)

When Adam was made, Jehovah said, It is not good that the than should be alone: I will make him a help meet for him. And so He builded the woman out of the man. They were to be, and were, one flesh. The apostle was the last man to weaken the order of nature. It was he who still later wrote to the Hebrews, Let marriage be every way honorable, and the bed undefiled. He in no way contradicts it, or differs, here. He is in full unison with his Master, in Matt. 19 and Mark 10, who vindicated God's original institution from creation for man in the flesh, whatever the law might allow in view of the hardness of men's hearts, though he maintained the superior excellence of the unmarried state, where there was power to be undividedly for the Lord and His things. But it is not so with every saint. All cannot receive it, but those to whom it has been given. If any one is able, let him receive it: if he boast, he is in danger of dishonoring the Lord more than those he despises. The Lord and His apostle both caution souls. Grace may call and strengthen to live above what is not only lawful but honorable every way; and surely, if kept thus in lowliness, the former is the better portion.

But there are snares through nature as it is; and nowhere was there reason to fear more from the habits and associations of the place than at Corinth. Heathenism in some cases consecrated fornication. Because of the licentious ways, there and then of the commonest occurrence, but at all times a danger, let each have his own wife, and each have her own husband. Mutual consideration to the last degree becomes both in a relationship where they that were two are no longer so, but one. Grace, if it lift above nature in certain cases for the Lord's glory, enforces the honor and duties of those who are in a natural relationship. It is the sure mark of the enemy, where

grace is perverted, to put contempt on the least or lowest ordering of God. If we are in the relationship, we are bound to be true to its claims. Hence the husband was to pay her due to the wife, and in like manner the wife to the husband. The married estate is inconsistent with independence of each other in all that pertains to it. The wife has not authority over her own body, but the husband; and in like manner also the husband has not authority over his own body, but the wife. Hence they were not to defraud or wrongfully deprive one another, unless by consent, for a time, that they might be free for prayer, and again his together, lest Satan should tempt them for their incontinency. The law made nothing perfect. Christ vindicated God's mind and will as to the first man, but Himself was the manifestation of God in man. So does the apostle speak of marriage in words far above the thoughts and ways of Israel. What is first was never so fully stated before; but grace, as ever, presents, a better thing.

“But this I say by way of permission, not by way of command. Now I wish all men to he even as myself; but each hath his own gift of God, one this way, and another that: But I say to the unmarried and to widows: It is good for them that they remain even as I. But if they have not self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to burn.” (Vers. 6-9.) thus did the Holy Spirit lead the large-hearted apostle to write, in what he had laid down, declaring that it was not as a commandment, put a permission. His own wish for others was that all should be even is himself. But he does not overlook that each has as God gives him. Hence to the unmarried and to widows he says, it is good for them to remain even as he; yet even then not absolutely, but only in case they can without fear of sinning in this respect.

“But to the married, not I enjoin, but the Lord, that wife be not separated from husband (but if also she be separated, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband), and that husband leave [or put away] not wife.” (Vers. 10,11.) Here it was no fresh direction from apostolic authority, but the ruling of the Lord Himself, already known, the general duty of man and wife, grounded on the indissolubleness of the tie. Wife was not to be parted from husband, nor husband to dismiss wife: if parted, she was to abide unmarried, or be reconciled, for, even if she were with out fault; separation is a reproach and might be a snare.

Next we have the apostle inspired to add light as to present difficulties, and this not at all a repetition of the principle for Israel, but in contrast with it. “But to the rest I say, not the Lord, If any brother have an unbelieving wife, and she consent to dwell with him, let him not leave [or put away] her; and a woman which hath an unbelieving husband, and he consents to dwell with her, let her not leave [or put away] him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified in the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in the brother; since then your children are unclean, but now are they holy.” (Vers. 12-14.) Here it was the grave question of mixed marriages, where one of the parties already united, and not the other, had been won to Christ by the gospel. In this the grace of Christianity is strikingly contradistinguished from the rigor of Judaism. (Compare Ezra 9:10.) One of the ways in which Israel abode a holy people was in refusing to mix with the heathen in marriage. Those who thus intermarried, or took strange wives, were polluted, and their children were unclean; when they felt and judged the sin, they proved it by not only offering a ram for the trespass but putting both away. The holiness of the Christian is not only intrinsic, instead of being fleshly and external, but there is a far more gracious consideration, and a largeness, of which the law knew little or nothing. Thus, if husband or wife were a believer, he or she was not defiled by union with the unbeliever, but contrariwise the unbeliever is sanctified, and the children are holy.

In this way does the Spirit of God comfort the believer whose wife or husband, as the case might be, still remained an unbeliever; for I presume it was as true of an Israelite as of a heathen. It was, of course, a grievous trial to be so united. If the believer were the wife, she might be suspected and thwarted at every turn by her unbelieving husband. He would naturally be vigilant that the children should be kept from Christian truth and privileges of every kind, and would himself show his contempt for that which his wife valued, resenting above all the calm confidence of faith that counted idols nothing and confessed the Lord Jesus before men. But she is here instructed and strengthened by the apostolic injunction. If her husband consented to dwell with her, spite of that confession, she was not called to quit or put away her unbelieving husband, for he was sanctified in her, as the children were holy. What a relief this must have been to godly but scrupulous souls, who had been brought to God by the gospel, after being married to Gentiles or Jews, with children brought up in Judaism or idolatry! Were they troubled when they read in the scriptures that of old the requirement was to abandon the ill-assorted wife and the children so born? The grace of the gospel, as the apostle shows, delivers from all uncertainty as to God's mind, and pronounces the unbeliever, whether husband or wife, to be sanctified in the believing correlative, and the children holy, not profane.

Chapter 23

Notes on 1 Corinthians 7:15-24

We have seen then the striking contrast between the gracious power of the gospel and the weakness of the law. Under the one, the unbeliever sanctified in the believing relation and the fruit of their union holy; under the other, the Jew defiled and the children unclean.

But it may be well here to notice the use made of verse 14 by both the parties to the baptismal dispute. Thus writes Dr. Wall, in his “History of Infant Baptism” (I., 145, Ed. 4, 1819): “Mr. Walker has taken the pains to produce quotations out of almost all the ancient writers, to show that this was a common phrase with them to say, an infant or other person sanctified, when they mean baptized; and I do, for brevity's sake, refer the reader to his book. The scripture also uses it so (1 Cor. 6:11; Eph. 5:26), which makes that explication of 1 Cor. 7:14, ‘Now are you children,' which is given by Tertullian, St. Austin, St. Hierom, Paulinus, Pelagius (chap. 19), and other ancients, and since by Dr. Hammond, Mr. Walker, &c., much the more probable; whereby they make the words (■για) holy, and (■γ■αστται), has been sanctified, to refer to baptism. Their explication is also the more probable, because there has no other sense of those words been yet given by expositors but what is liable to much contest; but especially that sense which some Antipredo-baptists have endeavored to affix to them (of legitimacy, in opposition to bastardy) seems the most forced and far-fetched of all. The words are ■γ■αστται, κ. τ. λ. The grammatical translation of which words is, ‘For the unbelieving husband [or an unbelieving husband] has been sanctified by the wife;'.... and our translators altered the tense, and put is sanctified instead of has been sanctified; because they thought, it seems, the sense required it; but without any such alteration, the paraphrase given by many learned men is to this purpose: For it has ordinarily come to pass, that an unbelieving husband has been brought to the faith, and so to baptism, by his wife; and likewise an unbelieving wife by her husband. If it were not so, and if the wickedness or infidelity of the unbelieving party did usually prevail, the children of such would be generally kept unbaptized, and so be unclean; but now we see, by the grace of God, a contrary effect, for they are generally baptized, and so become holy, or sanctified.”

The intelligent Christian will see that, the ancient fathers notwithstanding, scripture does not warrant this usage. 1 Cor. 6:11, and Eph. 5:26, teach a truth as different from the bearing of 1 Cor. 7:14 as from 1 Tim. 4:4, 5, the cleansing power of the word as applied by the Spirit. The Christian, the assembly, is thus sanctified. It is a real divine work: cf. John 13; 15, and 1 John 5 Blood expiates, but water purifies; that is, the word, as the expression of the truth, and the revelation of God in Christ, judges all contrary to God within and without. Thus are the saints, from first to last, formed morally to have part with Christ on high. His power will complete all at His return, as His first coming in love laid the foundation for all in the gift of Himself for us. It is ignorance of these scriptures to confound with them 1 Cor. 7:14, as may yet be shown more fully. But the ancients, and those who build on them, are scarce darker as to this than the moderns, even if evangelical. Washing by the word is outside their traditions; it is perfectly certain in scripture, and most momentous for Christian doctrine and practice,

But Dr. Wall's criticism is unsound. Our translators were far nearer the troth than he. His alteration of the tense is not only not required, but falsifies the sense. The aorist would be the form, rather than the perfect, to convey his notion and bear his paraphrase. The perfect expresses a state consequent on an act, whether we say “is,” or “has been, sanctified.” But it means the permanent result of a completed action, and not what ordinarily comes to pass, a sense of which the gnomic or iterative aorist may approach, as in James 1:10, 23 Peter 1:24. Hence the teaching deduced is all wrong. The apostle means a sanctified, or holy, state, actually and always true of the husband and children of a believing wife, not of what generally becomes true. Not a hint is dropped in this verse of being converted or brought to baptism.

Must we then embrace the view which prevails among Baptists? Not so. Legitimacy is out of the question. The children are said to be ■για, not γν■σια the danger was lest they should be ακ■ιαρτα, not ν■θα. The marriage of believers is no more lawful than that of unbelievers. The question is as to God's sanction for the Christian's conscience of a mixed marriage, and its fruit; and, as to this, the apostle decides that the unbelieving partner is hallowed in the believing one, and the children holy, not unclean: the one being placed in that state of holiness by the faith of the other, and the children viewed as in it already. Of fitness for baptism, on the one hand, the text says nothing: if it did, it would assert it for the unbelieving husband or wife, no less than for the children. On the other hand, it is a mean and untrue sense of ■γ■αστα ι that it refers to the lawfulness or validity of the marriage, especially as all turns on the faith of at least one of the parties. So Mr. Booth's effort to render ■ν to, instead of “in,” is futile. Luke 1:17, 1 Thess. 4:7, and 2 Peter 1:5, 6, 7, give not the least warrant for it, any more than 1 Cor. 7:15. The first is elliptic, and has a pregnant force. John was to turn disobedient ones not merely to, but so as to abide in, thoughts of just men. (2) God called us, says the apostle to the Thessalonians, not for uncleanness, but in sanctification, which similarly is far stronger than ε■ς, to. (3) Peter calls on the Christian Jews, in their faith, to supply or have also virtue, in virtue, knowledge, &c.; as Paul reminds the Corinthians, God hath called us in peace.

It remains clear then that the unbelieving husband is sanctified in virtue of the Christian wife, and the children holy, to the relief of those that were troubled by scruples from God's judgment of such a state of things among the Jews. God's grace in the gospel reverses the sentence of the law, to the pure making pure what had hitherto been unclean. Otherwise it might have seemed the duty of the believing husband to have put away his unbelieving wife and their children, as Gentile admixture was abhorrent to the law. Hence the apostle keeps up the language of the Jewish ceremonial, even where he determines the question by God's gracious and holy sanction of such marriages and their offspring, in contrast with the obligation of the Jews as shown in Ezra and Nehemiah.

We have now the question raised of separation on the part of the unbeliever. “But if the unbelieving separateth himself, let him be separated. The brother or the sister is not in bondage in such [circumstances]: but God hath called us in peace. For what knowest thou, O wife, if thou shalt save thy husband? or what knowest” thou, O husband, if thou shalt save thy wife? Only as the Lord divided to each, as God hath called each, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the assemblies.” (Ver. 15-17.) Thus, if the unbelieving party in the relationship were to sever himself from the other, the believer is released from bondage, be it the brother or the sister in the case. Not that such an act on the unbeliever's side gives to the believer thus abandoned license to

marry, but that the believer is thereby left the more free to serve the Lord by the other's separation. Such a union after all is apt to involve strife, the natural man hating the life of the Spirit. Not that this would justify anything on the believer's part to break the marriage tie: the unbeliever is supposed to have broken it of himself or even herself; and “in peace hath God called us,” (or “you,") not to seek separation. On the contrary, whatever the trial involved in such a life, the brother or the sister must earnestly desire the salvation of the unbeliever; but this after all is in God's disposal. “For what knowest thou, woman, if thou shalt save the husband? or what knowest thou, husband, if thou shalt save the wife?” If it were so, what a joy! We have to acquiesce therefore in the ordering of the Lord and as we should on no account take the initiative into our own hands, so also to save the unbeliever is a question, and should not swamp everything else. Thus the apostle even here cautions by pressing the rule, whatever the issue: “Only as the Lord divided to each, as God hath called each, so let him walk.” This was intended to guard against undue or excessive, feeling. Our place is one of intelligent subjection, owning the Lord's allotment and God's call: the one at the time of conversion, the other the permanent condition. So was each to walk. If Judaism enfeebled, Christianity strengthened a sense of relationship, and meets every difficulty and complication in grace. Nor was the apostle laying down anything peculiar on the Corinthians because of their peculiar circumstances: “So I ordain in all the assemblies.” There may be ever so many assemblies, but the order of all is one, and apostolic authority is universal. Nothing is more opposed to its trite idea than ecclesiastical independency. The notion of different bodies, each with a distinct regimen, is a modern invention, while the assumption of a continual power of regulation in or over the church may be ancient but is no better. Neither the one nor the other was “from the beginning,” when the foundation was laid by the apostles and prophets. There is no authoritative regulation now outside the word of God, though the Lord raises up those that guide and take the lead, but they, as all, are bound by scripture to which the Spirit answers in power.

It will be seen that the authorized version following the common text inverts the true relationships here. It is God that has called, the Lord that divided, not the converse, as in what is known as the Received Text.

“Was any one called circumcised? Let him not become uncircumcised. Hath any one been called in uncircumcision? Let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping God's commandments. Let each abide in that calling in which he was called. Wast thou called [as] a bondman? Let it not be a care to thee; but if also thou canst be free, use [it] rather. For the bondman called in [the] Lord is [the] Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called free is Christ's bondman. Ye were bought with a price; become not bondmen of men. Brethren, wherein each was called, in this let him abide with God.” (Vers. 18-24.) Christ thus raises the Christian superior to all circumstances. Hence, when called of God, it is not worth while to change. Why should the circumcised man care to disguise or obliterate the fact of his circumcision? Why should the uncircumcised seek or submit to it? It is no longer a question of distinctions in the flesh. What God values, and what the Christian should, is keeping His commandments, not forms of truth or schools of doctrine, which are an unquestionable danger. The believer is sanctified to obedience, and this, the obedience of Christ, not that of a Jew, as the apostle of the circumcision himself insists. (1 Peter 1:2.) So does the apostle of the uncircumcision here.

But we are led somewhat farther. “In the calling in which each was called, in this let him abide. Wast thou a bondman? Let it” (that is, the bondage) “not be a care to thee, But if also thou canst be free, use it” (that is, the freedom) “rather.” I am aware that many in ancient (Chrysostom, Theodoret, Oecum. Phot., &c.,) and in modern (Bengal, De Wette, Estius, Meyer, &c.) times take this last verse (21) quite differently, supposing it to mean, Even if thou canst be free, use it rather (that is, the bondage). Prefer to be a slave rather than a freeman. This however appears not only to be extravagant, but to make the human circumstances of too much weight, as if slavery were more favorable for Christian walk than freedom. Yet even the Syriac so construed the words; and such is the view taken in one of the most recent of English versions. The true sense is given in the authorized Bible; and such was the conviction of the Reformers and of most since the Reformation.

It may be well to notice here the grounds of the question. The Dean of Canterbury thus argues for the sense of remaining rather in slavery: “This rendering.... is required by the usage of the particles, ε■ κα■-by which, see Hartung, Partikel-lehre, i. 139, the κα■, ‘also' or ‘even,' does not belong to the ε■, as in κα■ ε■, but is spread over the whole contents of the concessive clause.... It is also required by the context: for the burden of the whole passage is, Let each man remain in the state in which he was called.'“ It is remarkable that the same commentator, in his note on Mark 14:29, seems to reverse this statement, and says that the κα■ before ε■ intensifies the whole hypothesis; the κα■ after ε■ intensifies only that word which it introduces in the hypothesis, citing Klotz on Devar. p. 519 f. (I cite from the fifth edition of both vols.) Allowing however that the latter is incorrect, I maintain that the principle is quite consistent with the ordinary version and view. For the effect of κα■ following ε■ is in some cases simply to emphasize the verb that follows; whereas κα■ ε■, were this the reading, would really be more in favor of the sense desired. For we should then translate it, Wert thou called, a slave? Let it not trouble then; but even if thou canst become free, use it [that is, slavery] rather. But these very epistles to the Corinthians furnish plain instances, which prove what is just affirmed. Thus, in 1 Cor. 4:7, the Dean gives (New Testament newly compared, 1870) “if thou didst receive.” As Madvig observes, the κα■ is often best rendered by the emphatic present or past (do, did), or emphatic auxiliary. So 2 Cor. 4:8, 16; 5:16; 7:8 (three times), 12; xi. 6, 15; xii. 11. In every case the right rendering is “if also” where an additional fact is intended; “if even” or “though” where it is not. In the text under discussion the apostle meets the question as to one called while a slave by the answer, Let it [that is, δουλε■α, understood from the preceding δο■λος) not be a care to thee; as he meets the added supposition, but if also thou canst be free, which of course might occasionally be, rather use it (that is, ■λευθερ■α, understood from the preceding ■λε■θερος.). The context is in no way decisive against this; for as abiding in the marriage state has the exceptional provision for separation enforced by the unbeliever, so for the slave there is the analogous provision for the use and even preference of freedom. Manifestly too if the unmarried have an advantage in being less divided in caring for the things of the Lord, a similar remark tells perhaps as much in favor of the freeman compared with the slave. (See vers. 82-85.) The objections urged are null. Thus κα■ is in its right position here, not after δ■νασαι. Again, ■λλ ε■ is required rather than ε■ δ■, as one may see by comparing 2 Cor. 4:16, and Phil. 2:17. Nor is a demonstrative needed after χρ■σαι, more than before μελ■τω. The imputation of inconsistency with the general context and with verse 22 in particular has been already disposed of; the depreciation of the prevalent view of the apostolic precept as “worldly wisdom” is as unjust, as it seems important to rescue this teaching from the total absence of sobrietyimplied in the

preference of slavery to freedom. Gal. 3:28, and 1 Cor. 7:29-31, are quite consistent, and with one equally as the other. Nor is there any weight in the argument as to χρ■ομαι, the import of which suits the use of freedom as a new thing no less than slavery as an old. Besides, it was meant to express not the act of entrance on freedom, implied in ■λε■θερος γεν■σθαι, but of using it when given. Indeed it is evident that, as the other view of slavery, μ. χρ■σαι is a hard or vague phrase, and thus differently understood by Bengel, &c., of late, as compared with Chrysostom of old.

The apostle explains, “For the bondman that was called in [the] Lord is [the] Lord's freedman.” Such is the correct force, “freedman” rather than freeman. ■πελε■θερος means one who was made free, not who was free born. It is the accurate term here, and it is the more emphatic, because freeman or free-born (■λε■θερος) follows immediately. “Likewise he that was called [being] free is Christ's bondman.” Christ alone puts every one in his place and true light: emancipation by human means cannot effect or approach it. The Christian slave is the Lord's freeman; the Christian freeman is Christ's slave. The Lord's authority breaks the fetters of the one to his faith; the grace of Christ reduces the other to slavery for his heart. “Ye were bought with a price.” Whether it be the freeman or the bondman, all were bought. The saints are the purchase of Christ's blood: so indeed is all the world; but believers alone acknowledge it, and they are called to act on it. “Be [or come] not slaves of men:” an exhortation as incumbent on the free as on the slave. A single eye alone secures true service, and yet is perfect liberty. They were already serving the Lord Christ: only so can the Christian serve aright in any case. Strange to say, none are so prone to slip into human bondage as those who profess the Lord's name: so the second Epistle to the Corinthians shows. But this was real forgetfulness of Christ and unfaithfulness to Him. Christianity in its true power brings into responsibility no less than into liberty, and as this is true in doctrine, so it is of all consequence to be remembered in practice. “Wherein each was called, brethren, in this let him abide with God.” “The calling” appears to mean a man's providential condition when called of God, as here we see it applied to circumcision or uncircumcision, freedom or slavery, not earthly occupations, commonly supposed, some of which might involve not a little that would clash with God's word and offend a Christian's conscience. Here all pleas for continuance in evil, because one was converted by God's grace spite of them, is effectually cut off, for the believer is called to abide “with God.” If one cannot continue with God, it is high time to ask His direction who assuredly never calls a saint to do evil but to cease from it at all cost.

Chapter 24

Notes on 1 Corinthians 7:25-40

The apostle had spoken of the married relation, Christians on both sides or mixed. Now he takes up the unmarried. “Now concerning virgins command of [the] Lord have I none, but I give an opinion as having received mercy of [the] Lord to be faithful. I think therefore that this is good because of the present necessity that [it is] good for a man to be so. Art thou bound to a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But if even thou should have married, thou didst not sin; and if the virgin should have married, she did not sin. But such shall have tribulation in the flesh; but I am sparing you.” (Vers. 26-28.)

In “virgins” or ο■ παρθ■νοι we see an usage of the word not exactly unknown in classical Greek (see Jacob's Index to the Anth. Gr.) but so unusual that most New Testament commentators seem indisposed to allow it. Of the ancients Theodore of Mopsuestia found no harshness in the language. “■τ’■ν ο■ν ε■πη περ■ τ■ν παρθ■νων, δ■λον ■τι περ■ τ■ς παρθεν■ας λ■γει, τ■ ■μοια κα■ ■π■ το■τον περ■ τε τπων ■νδρ■ν κα■ τ■ν γυναικ■ν φθεγγ■μενος. As to its contextual propriety there ought to be no doubt. That it should be rarely said of males in ordinary Greek authors no one acquainted with the morality of the heathen can be surprised at. If therefore it were absolutely strange among their productions, I should not consider this a valid objection to its extension in Christian or apostolic hands. What believer would limit ■γ■πη to its sense in classic Greek? We shall find a further use of the word, lower down, natural indeed yet uncommon, the admission of which appears to be essential to a due understanding of the closing verses, where it is used for a man's own state, not of his daughter; but of this more in its own place.

It is the general question of entering on the married relation by brother or sister; and this too the apostle solves, not on the Lord's authority as commanding, but by giving a judgment of his own grounded on the opposition of the age to Christianity. It is not the instant but the present necessity which makes it best to remain as one is: such is the force of the word everywhere else in the New Testament as in other writings. It was then existing, not impending merely; nor is there any reason that I know to think that it does not exist still, as it will till the Lord come. Men habitually deny, as Christians are too apt to forget, it; but the apostle had it ever before him and sets it before us. He never conceives of a truth, especially one so solemn, without a corresponding effect on practice. Till the day of the Lord the earth is a scene of wickedness, confusion, and misery: why act as one who likes a settled life there, if indeed you are a pilgrim and stranger? It is not the special time of tribulation or of apostasy before the Lord comes in judgment that he has before him but that the gospel necessarily encounters enmity where in its purity the world discovers its own doom as unbelieving and already judged.

Yet the apostle guards the abuse of his commending a single life to the Christian ordinarily. The married should not seek its dissolution, any more than the single seek to be so bound; and again he would keep the conscience free for such as might marry. Neither man nor woman sins in being married, whatever may be its inexpediency to the Christian judgment. For trouble in the flesh is inevitable for such, and the apostle desired that they should be spared this.

Next he recurs to the topic of faith's estimate of present things, not more constantly before him than needed by the Christian. “But this I say, brethren: the season is straitened: henceforth that both those that have wives be as having none, and those that weep as weeping not, and those that rejoice as rejoicing not, and those that buy as possessing not, and those that use the world as not using [it] for themselves; for the fashion of the world passeth away.” (Vers. 29-31.) It is no common-place on the brevity of time, but the solemn affirmation that the time is shortened henceforth (that is, as I suppose, since Christ's death and the call of the church) in order that the believer should hold all but Christ with a loose hand—all things in which men might rejoice, however sorrowful their lot may be. But the Savior has changed all for the Christian, who looks on the earth as His place of rejection and follows Him in spirit into the heavens now opened, whence he in peace awaits Him with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This world has really no more permanence than the shifting scenes of a theater.

The construction here given of the opening clause seems to me the true one; others involve us in harshness and break the connection.

“But I would have you to be without care. The unmarried cares for the things of the Lord, how he shall please the Lord; but he that hath married careth for the things of the world how he shall please his wife. Divided also is both the wife and the virgin: the unmarried careth for the things of the Lord that she may be holy both in body and in spirit; but she that hath married careth for the things of the world how she shall please her husband. But this I say for your own profit, not that I may cast a snare [lit. a noose] over you, but for what [is] seemly and waiting on the Lord undistractedly.” (Vers. 32-35.) Here the apostle urges the greater exemption from earthly anxiety for serving and pleasing the Lord, which the single man or woman enjoys as compared with the married. There is less weight in the race and less distraction from the goal. Yet even here the apostle speaks with caution and delicacy. He would not entangle any, he sought their welfare with a view to seemliness and undistracted attendance on the Lord.

Here however I must take the opportunity of protesting against the remarks of a late commentator. “Since he [the apostle] wrote, the unfolding of God's providence has taught us more of the interval before the coming of the Lord than it was given even to an inspired apostle to see. And as it would be perfectly reasonable and proper to urge on an apparently dying man the duty of abstaining from contracting new worldly obligations—but both unreasonable and improper should the same person recover his health, to insist on his abstinence any longer: so now, when God has manifested His will that nations should rise up and live and decay, and long centuries elapse, before the day of the coming of Christ, it would be manifestly unreasonable to urge—except in so far as every man's καιρ■ς is συνεσταλμ■νος, and similar arguments are applicable—the considerations here enforced.” This may sound plausible to men in Christendom who have let slip the view scripture gives of the total ruin of man and the world, and the imminence of that judgment of the quick on which all the inspired writings insist, just as truly as those of Paul. To my mind it is a lamentable pandering to unbelief and worldliness, as it springs from the lowest conception of the authority of God's word. Doubtless the truth was so revealed that none beforehand could know that God would lengthen out the interval which severs from us the coming of the Lord. But the moral grounds are increasingly strong, not weaker. The apparently dying man is now only a great deal nearer more evidently the moment of dissolution instead of his having recovered health and strength so as fittingly to enter on new obligations. The deepening darkness of Jew and Gentile, and not of

Mahometanism only but of professing Christendom, warns every eye which can see that a crisis from God is at hand; while the bright hope of the Christian, independent though it be itself of all circumstances, and essentially of heaven with Christ, shines out but the more if possible as he sees the day approaching.

It is in the next section that we have ■ παρθ■νος employed as equivalent to it ■ παρθεν■α. For there is no question here of a man's daughter but of his own state. The Lord deserves to have us wholly devoted to Himself. This is true Christian seemliness. “But if any one thinketh that he is behaving unseemly to his virginity, if he be past his prime, and so it ought to be, let him do what he will: he is not sinning: let them marry. But he who standeth firm in his heart, having no necessity, and hath authority over his own will, and hath judged this in his own heart to keep his own virginity shall do well. So that he that marrieth [his own virginity] doeth well, and he that marrieth not shall do better.” (Vers. 36-38.) Apparently this, the plain key to the passage, was not seen before the well-known Locke observed it, and produced excellent reasons drawn from the context, which commend themselves to any dispassionate mind. The great emphasis given to the heart's purpose, for instance, one's own will and one's own heart, suits perfectly if it be a question of one's own virginity, but how a daughter's? There they sound beyond measure arbitrary and inconsiderate. If it mean one's persevering unmarried himself, it is easy to see the force of all; as to a daughter or ward, it seems out of the way. The wonder is that Whitby should be among the few who follow Locke's interpretation. The phrase is no doubt peculiar; but the apostle may have been influenced by the Hebrew idiom which uses the plural for the abstract idea. The singular seems more suited to the Greek tongue, which allows sometimes of a secondary sense, as e. g. β■ος life, and means of life.

“A wife is bound as long as her husband liveth; but should the husband have fallen asleep, she is free to be married to whom she will, only in [the] Lord. But she is happier if she so remain according to my opinion, and I also think that I have God's Spirit.” (Vers. 39, 40.)

The close of the chapter takes up widows especially and is a remarkable instance of opposition between the apostle's mind and the church councils which dared to treat a widow's marrying as so evil that the church had to refuse its sanction and prayers. The marriage tie of believers is for life. Death separates. Not only the widower but the widow becomes thus free to marry again. But the apostle gives his judgment against it: not on moral grounds, of which only superstition could raise a question, but as the happier state to abide in. Even here we have no such language as sprang up later when celibacy was cried up as the highest of Christian virtues, and re-marriage was denounced as unchristian. On the contrary, even for the widow, the apostle qualifies her marrying again “only in the Lord:” a phrase which goes farther than the fact that both are Christians and demands that it be after a Christian sort. Yet here again the apostle points out what he judged more expedient on spiritual grounds. Had others given a different opinion? He, if any man might, gives his judgment as one who thought he had God's Spirit. He was inspired to put it thus, not as if he were of doubtful mind, but as avoiding an express command from the Lord, and rather as apostolic counsel.

Chapter 25

Notes on 1 Corinthians 8

The apostle now turns to another subject which presented dangers to the saints in Corinth.

“But concerning the things sacrificed to idols, we know that we all have knowledge: knowledge puffeth up, but love edifieth. If any one thinketh that he knoweth anything, not yet knoweth he as he ought to know; but if any one loveth God, he is known by him. Concerning the eating, then, of the things sacrificed to idols, we know that [there is] no idol in [the] world, and that [there is] no God save one. For even if there are [so]-called gods, whether in heaven, or on earth, as there are gods many and lords many; yet to us [there is] one God the Father, of whom [are] all things, and we unto him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom [are] all things, and we by him. Howbeit not in all [is] the knowledge, but some with conscience of the idol until now eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol; and their conscience being weak is defiled. But meat shall not commend us to God; neither if we eat have we the advantage, nor if we eat not do we come short. But see lest in anywise this your authority become a stumbling-block to the weak. For if any one see thee who hast knowledge sitting at table in an idol's temple, shall not his conscience, as he is weak, be emboldened to eat the things sacrificed to idols? And he that is weak perisheth by thy knowledge, the brother for whom Christ died? But thus sinning against the brethren, and wounding their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. Wherefore if meat stumble my brother, I will in nowise eat flesh forever, that I may not stumble my brother.” (Chap. viii. 1-13.)

The construction of the opening sentence has led to some difference of judgment and arrangement. Griesbach and Scholz, among editors, insert marks of parenthesis from after “we know,” in verse 1, to the end of verse 3, which involves translating ■τι “for,” or “because.” This was the view of Luther, Bengal, Valcknaer, and others; but it is liable to the objection that in the resumed sentence “■τι,” after the second ο■δαμεν, certainly means “that.” I am therefore disposed to take it so in the former case. Mr. T. S. Green, &c., would begin the parenthesis with π■ντες, which necessitates singular abruptness in the structure. According to that which most commends itself to me, the apostle does not dispute that we Christians as such have knowledge; but he soon proceeds to show how empty it is without that love which brings in the consideration of others, and, above all, God Himself. This leads him to compare knowledge, in which they boasted, with love, which they overlooked, or ignored. The one puffs up, the other builds up. Love is only known in God's presence, where self is judged. Knowledge in one's own opinion is not love, which is inseparable from the new nature. For he who is born of God loves, having the nature of Him who is love. The apostle however says not that he who loves God knows Him, but that he is known by Him. The turn may be unexpected, and has embarrassed the critics, but its propriety is unquestionable. Not that the believer does not know Him, as indeed it is eternal life (cf. John 17:8 John 4:6-18), but that it was seasonable for the consciences of the Corinthians to weigh that he is known of Him—a serious but blessed and blessing consideration. There is no sufficient or right ground therefore for taking ■γνωσται in a Hophal sense— “hath been caused to know.” It is really the converse (see Gal. 4:9). Nor is there need to give it the sense of approval. The best meaning is its ordinary one.

It would seem also that the parallelism in the last clause of verse 4 favors our translating ο■δ■ν ε■δωλον ■ν κ■σμω as “there is no idol,” rather than, “an idol is nothing in the world,” though in itself equally legitimate. It is quite true, as the prophets assert, that the idols of the Gentiles are vanities and impotence; but here the apostle appears to affirm that they had no existence in the world. There were no such beings as they associated with their idols. Later on he shows there were demons behind, as indeed the law intimated. (Deut. 32:17)

The apostle, as all can see, refers not to the decrees of the apostles, though we know that he and his companions instructed the assemblies they visited to observe them. He meets the question on intrinsic grounds, according to the principle of his own apostleship, in no way as leading men to think that the apostolic decrees were not binding on the whole church. It is monstrous to infer the competency of Christians, even then, or at any time, to open and question a matter thus decided. Such an idea could only lead to lawlessness and presumption, especially in presence of the solemn claims of what seemed good to the Holy Spirit and the apostles. Their determination however was not at all impaired, but confirmed, by the apostle's dealing with the question on its own merits, and settling it similarly. He allows then, that there was no such thing as the heathen conceived in an idol, and no God save one. He insists that, whatever the multiplicity of so-called gods and lords in heaven or on earth, to us there is but one God, the Father, source of the universe and object of our being and obedience, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, who has taken the place of administrator of all and mediator of redemption. But it would be rash and precarious to reason hence that everything was absolutely indifferent and open. Love takes account of things and beings as seen in the light of God; it seeks not its own things but the things of others—of Jesus Christ above all.

But conscientious men are apt to be slow in apprehension, often much more so than those who are less exercised. For them the apostle would have us feel. Howbeit knowledge, or that knowledge, is not in all: but some, with conscience of the idol until now, eat as of a thing sacrificed to an idol, and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. They were not at all assured of the nonentity of these false gods. The Sinaitic, Vatican, Alexandrian, and Porphyrian uncials, four or five cursives, and several of the most ancient versions, &c., read, συνηθε■α, “through custom,” not conscience, that is, from their habituation; and so Lachmann and Tischendorf. Doubting thus, they were condemned when they ate; and Satan thus took advantage of them through guilty fears. The apostle admits that food will not commend us to God. Those who pleaded their title should see that its exercise did not stumble the weak. What if the weak one imitated it with a conscience not free and edified or emboldened the wrong way, and the brother for whom Christ died perished. For scripture characterizes an act according to its tendency, without palliating it by the resources of grace in arresting the issue. To sin thus against the brethren, to wound their weak conscience, is to sin against Christ. The apostle closes this part of his subject by a fervid declaration of his refusal of a thing otherwise open to him, if it were the occasion of stumbling to his brother. Such is love according to Christ.

Chapter 26

Abraham: Chapter 12-13

What we see in the word of God before this remarkable account of the call of. Abram though profitable surely for us, is also bumbling; and much the more, the more we think of it and see what God has told us of man's sin and ruin, net merely as bringing on the flood but as following it. What was to be done now? For God had hung out a sign in the very heavens that He would no longer visit, the iniquity of the race as He had done in the deluge. There had been a secret principle of grace with God that He always acted on; and now this principle was to be brought out manifestly. What had made the difference in the case of Abel, of Enoch, or even Noah? It was grace that had flowed to them and wrought in them whatever was good and holy and true. But there is a new thing that comes out in the history now before us. It was to be no longer the favor of God, In its bidden dealings. Promise was to be thenceforth a manifest ground of action on the part of God. Is not this a most weighty and instructive change? God was no longer content that He should act after a secret sort. If He had Himself called souls without any one knowing it outside, now He would make the call distinct and plain, drawing to it the attention of friends and enemies: and this so definitely that it has been the invariable starting-point with God from that day to this. It was the call of God, no, more secret but evident to all.

So we are told in this place: “Now the Lord had said to Abram, get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house unto a land that I will show thee.” We are apt to pass over such a statement of the ways of God, because of the tendency to confound what is a secret of grace with what is manifest. But Abram was called by God to a place of separation, and this so as to be manifest, the express point with which the chapter opens, and the great principle that God would now hate us to weigh with all seriousness.

By Israel at Sinai the ground of law was taken. Yet God had called His people by grace. out of Egypt; but they were, as most know, put (or put themselves) under the law. The consequence was that, however divine the principle was, it fell through in the case of the chosen nation. So again, God has now applied the self-same principle to the call of the church. There, it is not (one need not say) a body put under law, but the very contrary, dealt with in sovereign grace. It is not merely mercy towards the soul, for this has always been true; but God has a body publicly called in this world, composed of such as are meant to be witnesses of His grace in Christ on high, just as much as Israel ought to have represented the law graven on stones and manifested it before the whole earth:

This will show, then how early and wide the principle is—but the Lord begins, as you can easily understand, first of all with an individual; and there was great wisdom and much force in this. Long centuries after it was the resource of the prophet Isaiah, impressed on his heart by God when Israel was passing into a desperately low condition, and with the prophecy of still greater ruin at hand. How does he seek to comfort the people? With the fact that God called Abraham alone. He falls back upon what was the salient principle of God's dealing at this very time. It was as good as saying “Be things as they may, count on the Lord. Impossible to be lower than that with which

Israel began; for when God called and blessed at first, it was Abraham alone."

To what end was this? Not only that he himself should be blessed, but to be a blessing; and this not only to his own seed, but to others far and wide. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

In the, earth and with men, as they are, such is the sole possible way of blessing. In the line of His call God brings out His promises, and there it is that His blessing is found and maintained. Man may, no doubt (not to say that He must, when put on the ground of law), end in more manifest ruin than ever; but the principle of His call is not only sound but invariably true. If there is to be blessing at all in a world that is ruined, it must be on the ground of one who comes out obedient to the call of God, not staying where he is, nor attempting to reform the evil in the midst of which he may be. God made it particularly manifest at this time; for it was now for the first—that the world had seen nations and families and tongues, all arranged in the elements of that which is in our day approaching its finally developed form. The world was no more as it had been before the flood; it was separated into its distinct nationalities. Government also had now been instituted. This was of course an outward mercy for the world. Wickedness was not to go on, j unpunished, iniquity must be restrained by the judge. God had accordingly given responsible charge on the earth to man who was thenceforth to curb evil in the world. He had authority for it from God. (Gen. 9)

But now that idolatry had entered (Josh. 24:2), separation to God, the true God, comes in as the recognized place. Instead of having souls to walk individually with Him, although seeking to please Him by faith, God, from that day to this, takes up what was then a wholly new thing for man, that, if He was to be pleased, or magnified, if His will is really to govern, it must be as separate to Himself, and not merely by our looking to Him individually where we are, and in the midst of all our natural associations. God looks for more now; He calls out. Hence the force of the word here, "Get thee out," &c.

It is not simply "believe;" this was not at all the question put. The great object of faith was not brought out, though we find a type of the way of faith in chapter 15 where Abram's faith is seen exercised on the word or promise that God gave him; but still it is not a question here of the gospel being sent out, nor of Christ being presented personally. It is God who separates to Himself, at His own word, a man who was in the midst of all that is evil—his own family worshipping false gods like the rest. For although God had already marked off a certain part of the sons of Noah as preserved for blessing, and Shem particularly so—that it might be proved it was in no way an afterthought, but God's purpose in all steadfastness and not depending on a certain part of mankind as in themselves better than others (though in fact piety was there); yet here too was the solemn fact that the family of Shem had gone into idolatry no less than others. In spite of the predicted purpose of God, Shem's sons had proved faithless. What next could be done? Was there no way of securing God's honor? This was the way: the call of God goes out in sovereign grace, separating to Himself a man no better than his fellows but avowedly involved in the idolatries of his fathers. "Get thee out of thy country.... unto a land that I will show thee."

Now the first thing I would press is that faith is shown, not so much by following what others have received before, but in believing what God brings home now to one's own soul and for one's own path. For God has a will about each successive stage in all the varying phases of life, as evil itself grows and works in the world. Satan does not limit himself to the same snares of falsehood and

sin, but becomes more and more subtle and determined in his plans. God looks for faith in His word accordingly. So in this case (I refer now to Shem's line) the very family that had whatever there was to hope for were fatally involved in his meshes just like other men. But God has a way, a blessed and worthy way, of vindicating Himself; and this is a way which, giving all the glory to Himself, faith at once feels is just what it ought to be. The call comes without the slightest ground for it in Abram himself. This we see to be perfectly consistent with the dealings of God. He meant the blessing to be in that line; He meant to take up this man and make him the father of the faithful; but he was evidently a child of the unfaithful, and no doubt an unfaithful child himself. The calling was, accordingly, of grace: God Himself called; and God, at the same time, was fitting this man for the place of blessing; and God had, before Abram was fitted for it, pronounced what it was in His heart to give him, so that it might be, not of Abram who deserved it but of God that called him. It was grace. “And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great.” The whole principle of the blessing as flowing out of the call of God had been manifested in a man distinctly separated to Him, and (I would add) called out without disturbing the arrangements of the world.” There was no setting him up with a mightier sword in his hand to put down the workers of iniquity. The world was left, after having been arranged under the providence of God in separate families, nations and tongues, but not till government was by man sanctioned by God. But there God's honor being completely set aside, and false gods worshipped, He separates under His promise of blessing the man who comes out at His call to the land He would show him.

This then is God's own blessed way—one most effectual, as it is also peculiar to Himself; and on it in fact God had acted in our own call, whether to Himself or into the church. It is on my heart to dwell a little on the general truth of the call of Abram, so as to illustrate the way in which God connects the principle of the call with the promises and with the whole place of faith here below. It was much for God to say “I will make of thee a great nation and I will bless thee, and make thy name great.” But there was another word, and this was especially dear to the heart of one so blessed himself. “Thou shalt be a blessing.” This was to make him not only the object of grace, but the instrument of it. It was to give him communion with God Himself in the activity of His own goodness. “Thou shalt be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee” (of course on the earthly side); “and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.”

Abram then acts on the word of the Lord. “He departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him.” But there was more than one drawback. Lot his nephew went with him and we shall see the consequence of that. Further, Abram not only took Lot, “his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran,” but in the chapter before we have a remarkable intimation not brought before us here. It is not that Abram took Torah, but that “Terah took Abram.” This was not merely a hindrance, it was a false position as long as it lasted. It acted as an interference with the call of God; for although the call might seem to nature harsh, and that which no doubt man would have been quick to condemn, the word of God was plain— “Get thee out of thy country and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house.” Abram does get out of his country, though hardly from his kindred; but instead of getting “out of his father's house,” his father takes him. There was clearly an influence at work that was inconsistent with the call of God. It was not merely that Terah was with him; the Spirit of God has not put it so, and of course it was incompatible with due relationship that a man should or could be said to take his father. It was “Terah took Abram.”

Here then was that which positively hindered the accomplishment of the will of God as long as Terah lived. The call of God should be paramount; but the honor due to a father who was not in it must oppose. “Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law his son Abram's wife, and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldeee.” The simple fact is stated in chapter 11; and one can see that the reason why it is stated there is this. It was purely a question of Abram acting from his own judgment, from himself, and not from the call of God, who therefore does not make it a part of chapter xii. No doubt, the move was after the call of God spoken of in chapter xii. but inasmuch as it was not the accomplishment of His will, God puts it in the chapter of nature and providence (that is, the eleventh), and not in that of grace or promise, the twelfth. We have in chapter 11 simply a list of fathers and sons from the flood, and among the rest Abram and Nahor. Sarai is seen there with no child. This was nature; and had it simply been a question of nature, so it would always have been—Sarai always barren. When grace begins to act, we find the dawning of hope in the heart of Abram (at any rate what we can now well understand to point in that direction); finally God gives the distinct word that Sarah shall have a child. But this was after grace begins to be developed. At first there is nothing of the sort, and it is here therefore we have the account of Terah taking his son Abram and coming as far as Haran, and dwelling there. Accordingly there also we have the days of Terah shown us, and Terah's death.

But now there is another side so distinct that, although the same facts are alluded to, God begins an entirely new unfolding of His mind. In chapter xii. He is not speaking of the family as viewed in nature but of His call. Although Abram believed in God, yet nature was at work and had its way. Accordingly God takes no notice of it here. Thus we see that what looks a great difficulty in the two chapters—a thing which people have often put one against another—is perfectly solved the moment we come to see that the one chapter is the story of the family in nature, the other is the secret of grace now made manifest.

“Now the Lord had said to Abram, Get thee out.” Note that so He “said to Abram,” not to Terah. As long as Terah was there, he was the acting person, as indeed he had the claim of father; and if (not God but) you bring a father on to the ground of faith, what is the effect? If he is not in the call of God and you are, what must result from allowing your father's authority to have its way there? It swamps you. It is not that you raise him into the higher regions of faith, but that he dregs you down into the quagmire of nature. This is what we may see in these two chapters; so that, spite of the blessed call of God we have the fact brought before us that Abram remains at Haran and fails to reach Canaan.

At length however “Terah died in Haran;” and what follows? We are told next (ver. 5) that “Abram took Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.” Now what a different tale! Not that everything was according to God, for there is no perfection save in One; but still Abram could now act and not before. Lot was his nephew only, and did not bar the way as his father had done. While he was alive along with him, Abram must needs be subject, but henceforth he was free. Lot might act selfishly and be an encumbrance; but his father, if there at all, must have a father's authority; and so it was. He found himself in a sort of half-way ground, and this is what compromise leads to. It is certainly no longer Ur of the Chaldees, but yet only Haran, and not Canaan. The fact brought before us in the

previous chapter explains how it is he can get no farther. Terah, who was not in the call of God, was nevertheless the one who “took Abram” thus far, and Terah acted so positively as a hindrance, that, as long as he lived, Abram could never get on; but the moment that Terah is taken away, as we read, Abram took Sarai, “and they went forth to go into the land of Canaan, and into the land of Canaan they came.”

There is no failure, so far, in the accomplishment of the purpose of God. When they reach Canaan, what is it that God sets before us? “The Canaanite was then in the land” (ver. 6). Things were not yet according to God. It was not only that Abram's faith shows the weakness of man, but, further, the state of Canaan was altogether opposed to that which befits the nature and proper purpose of God. It was not only that the world already left behind by the man of faith was still pursuing its idolatries; but if there were men on earth peculiarly under the curse of God, it was the very race that Satan planted in Canaan. “Cursed is Canaan.” What a solemn thing, the meeting of the blessed one, about to be a blessing, with the cursed ones, that God would surely deal with in the day that was coming (and so accordingly we find)! Satan's object by it was no doubt to thwart the purpose of God: but it only gave Him the opportunity of carrying it out more thoroughly and gloriously to the enemy's shame and everlasting contempt.

We never understand the importance of our walk here below, unless these two things are distinctly and steadfastly before us, not merely that we are objects of God's tender mercy and personal interest, but that we are called out to Himself, as well as to “the better country” that He has shown us. But He has told us too who has meanwhile usurped possession of it. The heavens are now opened, and we see by the Holy Ghost sent down thence Him who is on the throne of God, interceding for us as cleansed by His blood, and gone to prepare a place there for us. The heavens were opened not merely for Him to enter as the victorious Savior, but they are open still where He is exalted. This is the way in which He is now revealed to us. They will be open until the Lord has brought us there. I do not say that they will be closed after that, but that judgments will fall thence. In grace they are open for us to look now into. He whose blood opened them for us is the One on whom they opened, not for judgment, as we read once in Ezek. 1 but, as in the very beginning of the New Testament (Matt. 3:16), that God might express His delight in Him, His Son, the perfect man withal here below.

Let us remember then that we too are identified with God's great starting-point for Abram; we are called out, and blessed, to inherit and to be a blessing. Does the grace of it (and it is not the richest part of our blessing) fill our hearts at all times? Take for instance our ways as members of Christ's body, the church, &c. It is not merely that we come together to acknowledge His mercy to us, which of course we do. Thankfulness should be the first thought of the heart that has been opened by the grace of God. Who are we that now speak to God, looking up and singing praises? Sinners brought out from guiltier evil than that out of which Abram was called. I can understand those who never had sin celebrating His praise, where sense of personal delivering grace is not the special character of their thank-offering before God. But who can understand a soul that is redeemed presuming to begin with anything but hearty thanksgiving for the mercy that has plucked him from destruction, and put him so, that he can look up to God and magnify His Savior? But whatever we begin with should not be the end for us. It is very right that we should feel evermore what it is to be the object of the tender mercy of God, in awakening our hearts and lips to thank Him; but we should go on to praise Him for what He is as well as own all He has done. For now we see how

worthy He is, and can delight in what He is even apart from ourselves. The heart can thus go out in adoration of another and a higher character, in praise and blessing as well as thanksgiving.

But I was going to dwell upon another point. It is not only that we are blessed, and that the spring of thanksgiving is touched, and that praise flows forth from those that are blessed; but there is more than this, an activity of love that looks around according to the goodness we have learned in Him, as well as love breaking out in praises as we look on high and see Him who in our midst praised and taught us to praise before He went there. So we see here: “Thou shalt be a blessing,” and “in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.” Take the occupation of the Lord's-day. That which calls forth our hearts, is it only when we gather round the Lord at His supper? Has not such grace and truth as His furnished special occupation all through the day? I should say that its entire course has its calls and place no less than the assemblage at His table, and I say it the more because there is a danger of a little reaction. Time was when men used to think the chief thing worth hearing was a gospel sermon, and when they used often to bear a great deal that tried them to get what was not even a good sermon, longing to hear something that might help, comfort, and strengthen their souls. There are many Christians in that state still. Are we in the enjoyment of better blessings from God? Have we the sense of what His grace has done for us in heavenly places? But do we, as well, keep up the activity of His love in our souls? or are we settling down, content simply to give thanks for the blessing that we possess as children of God?

Do you suppose that a person can be at the spring of blessing without also knowing more or less of joy in the power of its active going forth? Depend on it that this is of great importance to the Christian as such and to the assembly; for it will always be found true, that if we are not going forth in the power of blessing, the world in its power of evil steals in upon us. There will be a withering influence that will show itself under perhaps fair forms. Do you say, why should I go and listen to the gospel? What have I to do with the message to the unconverted? You have, you ought to have, a great deal to do with it. You may not be a preacher; but is there no such thing as fellow-working? or even loving interest if not positive help? Are there no hearts that go forth with every word that is said by the evangelist, none to pray with him for every soul that listens, and especially for those awakened by the Spirit? I do say that we are called on, not to be as we once were, with our heads down and our eyes anxiously looking out, if haply we might get something to satisfy our starving souls. By grace we now know God to be no hard master, and we can in our measure see and enjoy the rich provision of His glory. We of all men then should not appear like the beggar-man that hexing got his morsel goes off therewith content. Can it be that this, is what it has come to with any of us? Or that any of us would sanction such selfishness? Take care that we never seem to come short in this respect. Let us look to it that we put far from us every semblance of heeding only our own things but the things of Jesus Christ as to sinners as well as saints. If we value the things of our Lord in the church, so also let us not be slack in the gospel. Let us have this simply and fully before our hearts, to remember that we too have Abram's portion, not only as objects but as instruments and channels of blessing. For indeed it is meant that we should draw from the very spring of grace that is ever flowing, whether for the help of those who are already Christ's or for those in that darkness out of which we have been delivered by infinite mercy.

There is a fresh point I should point out. “The Lord appeared unto Abram” —He not only spoke but “appeared,” language to me not casual, but intentional. “The Lord appeared to Abram and said.” How it was done, we do not know; but we do know what is written. All that we read the first time is

that “the Lord had said,” but now we find “the Lord appeared to Abram and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land.” There is nothing vague any longer, but precise. It is not “a land that I will show thee,” but “unto thy seed will I give this land.” What is the consequence? There he builded an altar unto the Lord,” and not this merely, but “unto the Lord who appeared unto him.” It is quite evident therefore to my mind that in this was the needful preliminary to worship, which necessarily awaits the manifestation of the Lord. Worship follows, when He has appeared, and the heart knows Him as He has made Himself known. So Abram, when the Lord had not merely spoken but also appeared, builds an altar to Him.

Do we not know how blessedly true this is in our Lord Jesus Christ? This was precisely what He showed, but what the disciples were so dull to take in. You remember Philip saying, “Lord show us the Father,” when the Lord Jesus had been showing them the Father in His own self all the while here below. It was what the Holy Ghost soon after made real, not when Jesus was there, but after He was gone, that it might be completely a matter of faith, and that we who never saw but believe might have the joy no less. Need I say, that what the word of God gives us of our Lord Jesus Christ is incomparably more to us than if we had but seen Him ever so long with our bodily eyes? I hope we all really understand this; for it is of no slight moment. We can easily imagine what a wonderful thing it was to have looked on Him and to have heard Him; but no intelligent believer need hesitate to say that we have far more of Himself in and by the word than if we had seen and heard Him all through His life and ministry on earth without that word. Do we not appreciate this? If we believe it, let us give God thanks now as we shall forever.

I will explain why this is so. Are your eyes and your ears as good as those of God? The word is not merely Peter's or Matthew's or John's impressions of the Lord, but God's truth, though no doubt He employed them to write it. Then think of the advantage we possess in having it not only perfectly but permanently, not left to the shifting sands of memory under the ebbs and flows of the heart, still less to anything before the eye for a passing moment. Here we have God's mind about Jesus imperishably, faultlessly and completely, in the word of God.

And now is sent down the Spirit that we might see the Father in One who alone could make known the Father. What is the consequence? Wherever the heart surrenders itself to God as He manifests Himself, there is an altar built. This is by grace the way and the effect. It is not therefore the fact, observe, that we had the worship all at once. Not the least trace of it appears till now. Possibly Abram may have built altars on his pathway from Ur of the Chaldees to and in Reran; but this I do say that, if so, God makes nothing of it all. The only altar up to this He mentions is now in Canaan after He had appeared to Abram. It may well be, in point of fact, the first altar that he ever erected; but of this we must be sure, that it was the first that God thought worth naming to us. What a lesson for our souls!

Abram was now in what answered to the heavenly land, and there the Lord gave a fresh manifestation of Himself. It is when the soul has reached this in faith, when not merely His word and His work but the Lord Himself is personally known to us, brought nigh to Him (for this is the point that it sets before us as a principle), that one truly worships. If He has brought me near Him and shown Himself to me in Christ, what can I do but use the altar built for His worship? For “we have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle” —they who prefer Jewish forms and shadows to Christ, now that He is come and has wrought redemption and

placed us as children before His God and Father.

But there is more than this. Abram “removed from thence;” but if he pitches his tent elsewhere he none the less worships. Move or not, Abram has his altar, wherever he finds himself in the land of Canaan. “There he builded an altar to the Lord, and called upon the name of the Lord.”

Alas a new scene opens to us. “There was a famine in the land, and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there.” Did he ask the Lord before going there? Did he spread the circumstances of the land before Him? Not a word is said implying it; and I think there is the strongest reason to gather from the silence of scripture that he did not. For its silence, if we are familiar with it, speaks to us no less than what it utters. God brings before us now the sad slip into Egypt of the man who, once called out in the face of difficulty and spite of hindrances which his own unbelief had brought in or allowed, had at last found himself in the place of blessing with God; but there getting into trial, he goes unbidden into the place of the world's plenty. “There was famine in the land.” Why did he not then lay all before the Lord? Undoubtedly Canaan was not yet as it should be according to God; but had not He called him there? and could not He keep him there? Abram goes down to Egypt to sojourn there without a word of guidance from the Lord. It was the direction of common sense. “For the famine was grievous in the land.” God states the fact without reserve; He never withholds the truth, albeit to the shame of those He loves.

“And it came to pass, when he was come near to enter into Egypt, that he said unto Sarai his wife, Behold now I know that thou art a fair woman to look upon; therefore it shall come to pass, when the Egyptians shall see thee, that they shall say, This is his wife; and they will kill me, but they will save thee alive. Say, I pray thee, thou art my sister.” How solemn it is when a saint takes and perseveres in the downward path! It is not only now that he departs from the land that the Lord had shown him, and given to his seed; that he is distressed just like a Gentile by the famine, and bound for a country, (Egypt, figure of the world, as Canaan of heaven) where there was abundance without a word from God; but now, further, having put himself into these circumstances of nature, he falls even from its proprieties. Indeed, I may ask, do you ever find a child of God taking the ground of nature without going below it? When the Christian deserts Christ to stand on character, wonder not if his character utterly fails. Is God with him in it? A Christian is called to be a witness not merely of justice and right but of Christ. Do you look for no more than honesty in a Christian? Where then is his testimony to the grace and truth of Christ? He is content to give up Christ if he is content to be only an honest man. “He does not want to be always praying and singing, preaching and bringing in his religion.” To slight Christ thus is a solemn thing. I did not ask for his religion, but that he should manifest Christ. Is he ashamed of Him? Is his conduct such, his bearing such, that it would not do for Christ to be named by him? Is it not to be feared so? He does not like to name Christ, lest persons should ask, Who is this that talks so about Christ? He who by faith behaves in a way that becomes that excellent name does not shrink from speaking of Him. But the unfaithful Christian is content to be known among his own class as an honest man. Will this last since God is not with him? God upholds those who humbly confess Christ. To speak of Christ is to sound the silver trumpet of the Lord, who thereon will own and be with you; but you who do not sound His name, have you the Lord to protect you? Assuredly you will fail.

So it was with Abram at this time. He goes down without the Lord directing his way, as he seems not to have called on His name: and in Egypt, sad to say, the father of the faithful is guilty of

equivocation, with no purpose higher than that of protecting himself at the expense of his wife: not a noble place for a husband, nor a worthy use to make of his wife. But so it is, when one who ought to have been walking in faith falls back on the slippery path of his own judgment and the world's resources.

See another result. Everything now flourishes outwardly. Abram had never been so rich. He had never prospered before as now. Was it not the marked blessing of the Lord? “He had sheep and oxen, and he-asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she-asses and camels.” We do not read of this in past times. But how was it all gained? Oh, if Abram had only now got before the Lord, if Abram had but placed himself before Him that appeared to him, not a single acquisition but would have been a wound in his heart, and the keener too as it was through the denial of his wife. Was this to live Christ?

The Lord nevertheless dealt in His own marvelous way; for He did not plague Abram, or even Abram's servants to thin them down, but “he plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues.” How striking are the ways of the Lord, and how full of instruction for us! The righteous government of God was at work; for Pharaoh knew well enough that he had no right to take the woman, even if she were Abram's sister. He was taking advantage of his position to claim what did not belong to him. The issue is that, struck by the evident hand of God, Pharaoh calls Abram and finds out the truth. Now it was Abram's turn to feel. If Pharaoh was plagued, Abram was put to the blush: what a humiliation for him! The very world reproaches Abram. And what can he say? He came without God, and he went without honor.

Abram quits Egypt. Pharaoh had learned somewhat of God's righteous ways: what could he think of Abram? Were his riches to his credit? He had gravely compromised himself, and been rebuked by a heathen; but at least he is on the right road again. “He went up out of Egypt, he, and his wife, and all that he had, and Lot with him, into the south,” and afterward goes to Bethel “unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first (chap. 13:4), and there Abram called on the name of the Lord.”

Yet surely, brethren, that passage in Abram's life had not been in vain. Did not grace then as now cause all things to work for good to those that love God? No slight work was that which went on in Abram's soul. He had been compelled to review his conduct, and we see clearly that it was the Lord who brought him back to the point whence he ought never to have departed. Repenting before His sight he returns, and in due time and place is found again a worshipper. But it is in Canaan, not in Egypt where scripture says not a word of either tent or altar.

Lot now comes before us. If I do not dwell more on him now, let me remark at this juncture how nobly Abram comes out. There was a strife among their respective herdmen; and what does Abram do? Lot was the nephew, he the uncle. Abram was the one to whom all was promised; nevertheless when dispute arises, he stands up for no rights of his. He had learned too well his wrongs. He had been down before the Lord, and is as far as possible from taking a high place, even with the one who ought to have been subject. But mark the blessedness of bowing before the Lord and of refusing to fight for our rights—so natural to the heart. The moment that Abram gives up to Lot, the Lord appears again; and never was a gift in such distinct and large terms to man as that which He now gives to Abram. Lot “lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan,” and chose the best of it. Now the Lord says to Abram “after that Lot was separated from him, [that is,

after he had taken possession of his ill-gotten gains,] Lift up now thine eyes” —how blessed are the words of the Lord!— “Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward; for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.”

How sweet for Abram to have trusted in the Lord, leaving all the question, though apparently with Lot, really with the Lord! When shall we learn to be thus simple and confiding? Assuredly we shall also learn at the same time that there never is a giving up of self that is not answered by the Lord, in His grace and in the sweet assurance of it to our souls, by a better gift still through Jesus Christ our Lord!

Abraham: Chapter 14

I have now contented myself with reading the remarkable scene with which the Spirit of God closes the public history of Abram. We may, if there be time, look a little at the beginning of that which is of a more private and personal nature; but we must follow, up the close of Abram's call with its consequences. It was intended to be of the most public nature in its effects, if not in the fact itself. As already shown, it was not that the secret choice of God was a new principle, He had always acted on the ground of election in His own mind; but Abram was a person chosen and called out to be a publicly separated witness. This helps us a little more to see the force of that often misunderstood chapter, Rom. 11, where we have the figure of the olive tree introduced. Its root is the divine call of Abram into a separate place of privilege, and consequently of testimony on earth—testimony that might be of an outward character simply, as in the case of the children of Israel or rise to a higher object as Christians are responsible for now. But the Jews, were what the chapter describes as the natural branches of the olive tree. Nevertheless it is plain that God's glory was for the time being connected with that very testimony; and our Lord Jesus Himself was pleased to go into it as minister of the circumcision, and we ourselves now form a part of it, grafted in there by the grace of God. It must be remembered that this is not at all the highest part of our testimony; and it is only referred to now for the purpose of illustrating the difference between what we have had, and what we may have in what follows.

From the beginning of Gen. 12 to the end of chapter 14 is this more public part of Abram's history, which illustrates the dealings of God, not so much with his soul, as bringing him out into a place of testimony for the glory of God here below. He is here seen therefore soon put to the proof; for this is a discipline from which no person escapes here below. It will presently be shown how this bears on the chapter just before us. But I mention it in order to remark, the more definitely, the difference between what we have had already, ending with this chapter 14, and what, begins in chapter 15.

Here the results soon appear of that which had already come out in the respective ways of Abram and Lot. What took place in the land of Canaan might seem to have not the smallest connection with the struggles of these powers of the earth. But a witness for God, let me remind my brethren, is a very important thing, both to Him who raised it up on, the one hand, and to the enemy on the other. Now we are slow to learn this. The first great lesson of a soul—and that which our hearts feel most (at our starting-point at least)—is when the mercy of God arrests us in the path of our folly, awakens us to our excessive danger, brings us to Himself through our Lord Jesus, and gives us then in peace to enjoy the grace wherein we stand. And there, practically, many of the children of God stop. But there is much more than this, and indeed this is not the first thing that comes out. For the main lesson we have here, is very different from what we might have anticipated. If we had had to do with the history of Abram, I do not hesitate to say, we should have begun with chapter 15. Ourselves believers, we might have thought first of his soul's need, and so of bringing him out distinctly as one quickened and then justified by faith. But God show s us here another thought. It is not as if all this and more is not all-important, and the gospel now makes it quite plain. But here God is pleased to give us first of all a general sketch of the public place of Abram. By “public” I

mean what Abram was called out to be as a witness for God.

Now Lot, as we know, had chosen for himself. He coveted what seemed to be, and what I suppose really was, the fairest in the land. For as a single eye is very quick to discern that which concerns the glory of Christ, a covetous one is sharp enough to see its own interest. But there is a truth, beloved friends, that some of us have to learn, deeply it may be, that it is better to trust the Lord's eyes than our own; and that although no doubt in the world shrewdness may discern much, yet the world at its best is but vanity and assuredly deceives those who love it most. Nor is it only true that God will expose its folly and evil in the day that is coming; for one of the precious lessons we have learned from the word is, that now is the time when God deals with us in the way of government, just because we belong to Himself; and being in the public place of testimony for God brings us peculiarly under it. Hence, to illustrate practically what affects ourselves in connection with this, God has been pleased in His grace to put us who believe in His Son in a place not merely to gather blessing for our souls, now that by faith we are enjoying His salvation, but in our little measure to be identified with the glory of Christ in the world. Do we know what it is to be in the place of testimony for the truth of Christ? What is the consequence of it? That things which might once seem little become great, as the great have dwindled wonderfully. Thus the old definitions of great and little well-nigh disappear. And no wonder, as we find while God brings us, little as we are, into connection with His greatest things, on the other hand our little things (or that which flesh, when it wants its own way, would call the least) become of importance because they concern Christ and represent Him either truly or falsely.

Now it must have seemed to Lot a very natural thing to choose what would suit himself, as Abram appeared wholly indifferent where he went. At any rate thus he may have reasoned. Evidently there was not a thought of testimony for God or of faith in this. Abram on us in general one who walked in dependence on God. There was this difference in their character: not that there was not faith and practical righteousness in Lot, nor that there was not failure sometimes in Abram, for we see how clearly scripture has laid both before us; but for all that there was generally this marked difference, that in Lot we see one who profits by his opportunities, wherever he may be, while Abram shows us one who went out, as it is said, “not knowing whither he went.” Would Lot have done this? I cannot conceive it. Lot, on the contrary, took good care where he was going, first with whom, and next, when alone, he looked well out for what would be useful to his cattle, that is, to himself. As Abram did not seem to be so very particular, Lot thought he would be; so he chose the best he could see. After all he made but a bad calculation, as men always do in such cases; just because they have come into the place of the testimony of God. Lot never thought of that. It did not enter his account; but God had Lot before Him, and He does not forget it.

And allow me to remind you, brethren that we too are there. No doubt there are some that understand the truth better than others, having a graver sense of the conflict, and a more solemn feeling of responsibility to the Lord: but whether we have thought of it or not, whether we have weighed it sufficiently or not, there we are. And what is more, the world feels it, and one may add further, Christians feel it; and therefore they are concerned and occupy themselves with all who are testifying to Christ in a way altogether disproportionate to their apparent importance. It might be a very simple person, and perhaps ever so young, occupied with work of the humblest kind; but they feel, all of them, that there is a person distinctly and avowedly identified with Christ before God and man. Consequently what might pass with others, and what might produce no remark at

all, at once draws out the judgment of those that see and bear us. So we find in this very case: only here it is a more solemn thing, for in this chapter we have God marking, by what He brought about, and by, what seemed altogether remote from what is before us, His decision about the matter.

This comes in, it may be observed, very abruptly. God leaves us to form a spiritual judgment as to the connection of it with what we have had before. For it is always by the Spirit of God, simply following His guidance, that we are enabled to form a distinct and (in the measure of our faith) an assured judgment as to the lesson that God is showing us. Be this as it may, it came to pass in these days that there was war between the kings named. War doubtless was no such uncommon matter; but there was something very unusual in the results of this battle. God indeed ordered things so as to draw unmistakably the attention of all to Himself. There was a lesson thereby shown to the world, as there was a lesson now taught to Lot, that ought not to be forgotten. I do not say that Lot did not fail afterward; for he did. But there was a lesson in this which, if Lot overlooked it afterward, God has preserved for our instruction now.

These kings then came to a conflict, which raged not at all in the far distant east of some of those engaged in the strife. God's witting hand brought it close to that which was near to His witness. We see them in the vale of Sodom. It was there that things came to an issue, and there, as it is said, “the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled and fell there, and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their victuals, and went their way.” Now comes the connection with our story-verse 12. “And they took Lot, Abram's brother's son.” Here we find no particular stress laid on nor express reference to any part of Lot's previous life. Why so? Because God looks for a spiritual understanding in His people. He has not told us the previous tale of chapter 13 in vain. He looks for our understanding why it was, without further explanation. Yet we may ask here why not Abram? Why Lot? “They took Lot, Abram's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods and departed.” This might seem natural enough; but we shall see whether all could be merely natural before we have done with the chapter.

I do wish to impress it strongly as on my own mind, so on yours, my brethren: never forget that we as believers have to do with what is supernatural every day. In no case allow yourselves to be beaten out of the true groundwork of faith for yourselves, nor permit men of the world to drag you down from God's word to what they call “good common sense” —an excellent thing for the world, but wholly short and misleading for the Christian in that which concerns God. And the simple reason is, that we are bound to walk by faith. It is our call. We are entitled to confide in God and His word. What to man looks so foolish as that? God is still “the unknown God to the world;” but His ear is open to His children's cry. There is a word which perhaps you may never have weighed well, never have had it so before you as to make an impression on your mind; and that is where scripture tells us that “every creature of God is sanctified to us by the word of God and prayer.” It is not the ordinary word for “prayer.” There is a reason for that; because in 1 Tim. 4 it is not merely the expression of want. This indeed is not the idea at all. Ordinary prayer is the drawing near to God, and asking Him for what we have not got; but in this case it is clearly not that, because it is supposed we may have the thing in our possession. But is there therefore to be no going out of heart to God about it? Suppose now it is what we have actually in the house. Common sense would say, “You cannot ask God for what you have got.” The fact is, the word is the expression of

a heart open; not only for God to speak to us, which was always true, but for us to draw near to God. It is intercourse with God that is the point, and not only the expression of want: free, simple, happy, communication with God—such is the idea. And this should be our thought and feeling and way in partaking of anything that God's mercy grants to us, whether we have it at the present moment or not. If we have not it before our eyes, it is before His eyes. He loves us, and cares for us; why should we trouble? Does He really hear us as we speak to Him? We have only to bethink ourselves for a moment in order to rebuke our unbelief. But suppose we have the things needed: are we to be independent? God forbid. If there be no wants to present to God now, have you no wish to speak to God now? no sense of the blessing of God on you? Do you not want to tell Him how greatly He loves you, how truly He is caring for you? That is what is specified here; and it is in this sense that “every creature of God is sanctified to us by the word of God and prayer.” The word “prayer” here, you may not have perceived, is the opening of this intercourse with God by which we can speak to Him about anything and everything—even the commonest matters which concern us day by day. I refer to this because all this is very intimately connected with the strength of our testimony. Abram know its principle well; but now God has revealed Himself incomparably more fully than in the days of Abram, and our familiarity with God ought to be in the measure of His communications to us. As it is said, “every creature of God is sanctified by the word of God.” It must begin with Him. It is first He who speaks to us then we speak to Him; this is the consequence of His speaking to us, that we freely speak to Him. It was just the want of simplicity and vigor, if not reality, the want of living thus before God, that enfeebled the testimony of Lot. Assuredly all power of public testimony depends, after all, on the faith that is unseen, and the resulting intercourse that goes on between God and our souls.

Here it comes out plainly. God reminds us that Lot dwelt in Sodom. This would at once disclose or recall what Lot's behavior and unbelief had been; how little his soul could taste in daily life of “the word of God and prayer.” Was there not the very reverse? It was not Lot standing in God, but striving to care only for himself. The consequence is, when the strife and turmoil of the battle between the powers of the world take place, there is an end of Lot's settling down for the present. But that which was no small rebuke to Lot was the occasion for Abram to come out as one who walked with God and confided in Him; and who shows us, too, that power of grace which rises above whatever had been personally wrong. There was no doubt about Lot's failure in testimony. But Abram thought nothing about his faults now. What he looked at was a righteous man (for no doubt Lot, spite of all, was righteous) swept away by the contending potsherds of the earth. This drew out his feelings of loving desire for Lot's rescue. “When Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan.”

We must not misuse such a fact as this. No doubt we do find, in the history, not only of Abram but of Daniel and others, that which could be no kind of direction for the Christian now. Most of us know that to use the superior mind or the strong arm to deal with the world would be anything but suitable for a Christian; but then we must carefully remember that there are things which, though right enough morally, would be quite wrong for the Christian because he is brought into heavenly associations in Christ. This I hold to be a very important consideration for practice, as it is a grave principle to understand in scripture; because otherwise we get either into capricious laxity or into undue severity of judgment. We may begin to reason and conclude that this was a wrong thing on

the part of Abram, because it does not become a Christian. If a line of action is clearly outside the path of Christ, does not this decide for us? What were the ways of our Lord when He was here, and what suits Him now (for it is with Him as He is that we are united) is the question for us. We have thus to use the light of Christ to see what is suitable for a Christian now; but it would be altogether a wrong measure to judge Abram by. God had not yet brought in any such unfolding of His mind as we have. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ; it was not fully uttered before. The true light had not shone, before which darkness fades away. Hence there are ways that not only were not wrong in Abram, but that God Himself led and blessed him in, regarded in those early days without even a sign of disapprobation; and no doubt this was one of them. I see no ground whatever to suppose that Abram had made any mistake, or acted wrongly in employing these three hundred and more trained servants, that were born in his house, with whom he pursued the retreating kings to Dan.

“And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursed them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.” Have we not a very marked fruit of Abram's testimony here? Just as Lot had borne to nothing, which was the end of his lending himself to his own thoughts, and of his desires unjudged; so on the other hand here was the power and honor of God with Abram. It was, I need not say, far from being a natural affair. Here were victorious kings marching home with their armies; and a private, individual, a pilgrim and a stranger, was so led and strengthened of God, that the victors are vanquished in their turn and the faulty believer rescued.

Abraham: Chapter 14

But this gives the occasion now for a closing scene of the deepest possible interest in another way, and for one of the grandest types of that which will be displayed in our Lord Jesus at the end of the age. The New Testament makes grave and interesting use of it. “And the king of Sodom went out to meet him after his return from the slaughter.... and Melchizedek, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God.” It will be observed, there is an intentional abruptness in the introduction of the royal priest. It is with distinct design that the Holy Spirit introduces him without the slightest previous mention. He comes forward and he disappears from the scene in a like mysterious way. What are we to gather from this? That Melchizedek was an angel? That Melchizedek was an apparition of the Son of God? No more than it is Shem under a new name. There is no hint of such a disguise here or in any part of scripture. Melchizedek was a priest, as he was also a king; scripture says so. But there is no ground to suppose that the peculiar manner in which he is here named indicates that there was more than a real, and royal, and priestly personage in Melchizedek himself. It is the way in which he is introduced by the hand of the Spirit of God that is so remarkable. There is no hint of anything angelic or divine in his person. And one whose ancestry or descendants are expressly hidden stands in full contrast with Shem.

Again, he who met Moses on his coming out of Egypt, and who, under very important circumstances, counseled him in the wilderness, was both a priest and king. It was therefore; in early days, by no means so uncommon a combination. Prophecy shows that it will be so again in our Lord Jesus, when He reigns over the earth. We may see the principle of it at any rate in David

when he wears the linen ephod, and dances before the Lord. This was of course short of the reality; but it showed that oven in the days of his throne in Israel, the glory of Jehovah was dearer to him in that which concerned the sanctuary than anything which touched his own person, about which Michal showed jealousy of unbelief fatal to herself. All these might be shadows, but the great and abiding reality is coming for the world, and the Lord Jesus is the one who alone will display it unfailingly. But still, as a matter of fact, there were men who were both kings and priests in those days of yore, and Melchizedek is one. Further, I see no reason to doubt that he was then living, a real king and priest, at this very time, and in this very quarter; but the Spirit of God introduces him in a way that becomes typically most striking, appearing on the scene, and vanishing from it after a singular sort.

All this combination of facts was ordered of God for the purpose of making him so much the better a shadow of the glory of the Lord Jesus as the sole royal priest. The very meaning of the word is “king of righteousness,” as the apostle Paul insists in Heb. 7 and after that “king of peace,” referring to his place of reign. The person, of course, was before the place. The name of the person was Melchizedek, that is, “king of righteousness,” and his relation to the place was king of Salem, which means peace. These facts the Spirit of God, by the apostle Paul, uses beautifully for a prefiguration of the glory of our Lord. It is true His person, of that which is come and seen now; and this was particularly telling to a Jew, because the story is introduced in that part of scripture which every Jew acknowledged to be divine. If there was indeed any part which to his mind had supreme place in point of authority, it was the five books of Moses; and here in the first of them, in the earliest section of the word of God, stands out this marvelous intervention of a person who appears after the stirring scenes of the defeated kings, and blesses returned and victorious Abram. Now, the father of the faithful was no small personage in a Jew's estimation; he had naturally and rightly a very great place; but here comes one who, suddenly and strangely appearing, occupies an incontestably greater. To him Abram pays tithes, as he also confers blessing on Abram; and, beyond controversy, the sacred homage from the one and the blessing from the other alike imply the stranger's superiority over the patriarch.

The bearing of this can scarcely be exaggerated. It is a prophetic type. In that land there will be a mighty conflict at the end of this age; and in it the guilty people of the Lord will be involved; and when the victory seems to be won that sweeps them away, the mighty power of God by a greater than Abram will interfere. Then that blessed One whom we await, not merely for our own joy and glory in the heavens but for changing the face of the earth and all things on it, will answer both to the victorious Abram, and to the blessing Melchizedek. It is our Lord Jesus at His coming again, and this at the issue of the world's conflicts when all will be reversed to the glory of God.

This closes, we may see, the public testimony. Then will be another scene not as much of testimony as of the application of God's kingdom in power. For the Lord will bring in the kingdom when He comes in His glory. What is going on now unseen, to be then displayed in the kingdom, is proclaimed in testimony. It may be well to say so much here, as often the thoughts of many a child of God are not distinct about the place of Christ as the true Melchizedek.

It is plain that the priesthood in question is altogether peculiar, for Melchizedek offers no sacrifice, nor is there anything of intercession. He brings out bread and wine for man, without a word of sprinkling blood before God. And it is remarkable that, in the Epistle to the Hebrews which refers to

Gen. 14 and Psa. 110, the moment we come to the exercise of the priesthood of Christ, Melchizedek is dropped, and Aaron is brought forward, and this is what makes the difficulty, though not to a spiritual mind. First of all our Lord is brought before us as the true priest. This is done as early as the end of chapter 2. In chapter 3. It is still pursued. Our Lord is evidently alluded to as answering to the type of both Moses and Aaron: In the end of chapter 4. Moses entirely disappears, and Aaron remains a type of Christ. But the point there is not at all what Melchizedek was doing, but intercession grounded upon sacrifice. It will be noticed that in this scene of Abram and Melchizedek there is neither one nor other of these things. Melchizedek does not offer up a sacrifice, whatever the ignorance of Fathers or Romanists may dream; it would have been entirely inappropriate here. Nor is there any such thing as intercession in a sanctuary. It is all public. We have seen throughout that the testimony had been public, and so here the action of the royal priest is of the character; whereas the very point of propitiation is that it goes up to God; and the efficacy of it simply to Him, though it may be for man here; and intercession is that which proceeds within the veil, in the presence of God. Neither of these had any place in the scene before us.

But let us pursue for a little moment what we find in the epistle of the Hebrews, to profit by this instance Of the beautiful interlacings of the truth, and the way in which Old Testament facts are handled by the Holy Ghost in the New.

Aaron beyond doubt is prominently before the mind as the type of our Lord's priesthood in chapter 5. This closes with a digression, which goes through chapter 6, and then in chapter 7. Aaron is dropped, and Melchizedek introduced. What is the reason of so remarkable a break in the chain? It seems to me plain. The apostle wants to show the incontestable superiority of the priesthood of Christ to that of Aaron, although Aaron might be the great high-priestly type of Christ. This he proves by the fact that another royal priest comes out to Abram, who gave him tithes of all, and received his blessing. The head of a family like Abram was superior to his descendants by the common acknowledgment that a father is above his sons; so the fact that Aaron was only a branch of Levi, as Levi was of Abram, and that it was Abram himself who paid tithes, showed therefore his subjection to a greater than himself. Nay further, not only did Abram pay tithes to Melchizedek, but more than that, Melchizedek blessed him; and, as we are told, “without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.” The person that confers a blessing is greater than the person that receives it; and so it was that Abram did not pretend to bless Melchizedek. There was and act on Melchizedek’s part which implied superiority to Abram, giving a double illustration and witness of surpassing dignity. Such is the argument in Heb. 7 and nothing can be more complete in its place as against those who cried up the Aaronic priesthood to deny Christ. For now the apostle shows that Melchizedek was not merely a conspicuous personage of old, of the highest authority and with evident glory attached to him, a king and a priest; but further, he is introduced by Moses in a most striking manner. As far as scripture tells about him he has “neither beginning of days nor end of life.” Not that he was not born, nor that he did not die, but that scripture says not a word about either; never alluding to children, any more than to his father or mother. So far as the history goes there is a blank as to all this. Scripture treats it with absolute silence in order to make him a type of the one, who, as Son of God, clearly had no father nor mother; though He might, as born of the Virgin Mary, still be Son of God, as in fact He was; yet He would not have been Son of God, as born of Mary, if He had not been so in His own divine right and being independently of that. And thus it is evident that there was a deeper glory in the person of the Son of God, on which all the

glory that was seen in this world hung, that this glory was eternal, and that it belonged to Him in the title of His own divine nature and person from eternity to eternity.

But the royal Psalmist also takes up the same truth hundreds of years after this scene of Abram and Melchizedek was over. Psa. 110 speaks of a certain person in quite as extraordinary a way; a man, David's son, whom nevertheless his inspired father, to the contradiction of mere human nature, owns as Lord, and calls Lord. And He whom David thus calls his Lord, though (as our Lord reminds the Jews) really his son, (the great and insuperable difficulty to unbelief,) takes a place quite peculiar to Himself on the throne of Jehovah.

And He is not merely there on the throne of God, but acknowledged to be priest. “Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek.” He is a priest like Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron: a truth of all-importance to rightly understand the Epistle to the Heb. 1 purposely dwell a little on this, because it is so extremely momentous that we should have simple faith in it, and due understanding of what is meant by it. The meaning is clearly this:—in Aaron's case there was a succession, for his was a priesthood of dying men following each other; the clean opposite of what is said of Melchizedek, (viz. “that he liveth,") not a word being said in Genesis or elsewhere of his death. The apostle uses this as a, type of One that ever lives in the fullest sense. Hence Melchizedek is brought before us, as a suited type of Christ, who is forever after that order, instead of dying like Aaron and his sons. Christ stands alone an undying Melchizedek and so needs no successor, the sole and sufficient priest, as the Christian knows.

Melchizedek is, however, soon dropped again. We have him introduced simply to show the glory of his person, and his superiority, to Aaron, whether in life, not dying, or consequently alone, as needing no transfer of his functions to successors. But the moment we come to the actual unfolding of priesthood in application to the believer, the apostle takes up Aaron again, and drops Melchizedek. Why is this? The reason is obvious. Though He is the great Melchizedek, He is not acting in that quality yet. What is He doing now? He is interceding in the heavenly sanctuary before God, and this grounded on the propitiation once for all offered for our sins. What has this to do with Melchizedek? Nothing.

Thus you see how perfectly the truth hangs together, and how God uses the person for His own purposes, and then takes up an exercise wholly different. The truth is that the application of Melchizedek, not to the person of the Son in His superiority to Aaron, but to what He will do as Melchizedek, will be at the end of the age, and not before. The force of his bringing out bread and wine to Abram has nothing at all in common with our eating bread and drinking wine in the Lord's supper; and it is extremely important to carry this in our minds distinctly and to understand the ground of it Popery, being blind, has an immense hand in thus leading the blind into this ditch. One of the chief errors of the catholic system of old was applying things to the church which were promised to Israel, and so antedating the dealings of God: It is on this ground that Popery now claims to put down and rule the governments of the world. There is a time coming when the Lord will do so, reigning in Zion, but it will be when Christ takes the reins. The church is incompetent to do it in its present state, as it is also wholly, foreign to the grace which is characteristic of the Christian. To suffer with the rejected Christ, while espoused as a chaste virgin to Him who is on high, and looking to reign with Him at His coming, suits the heavenly character of the church of God.

But when our Lord Jesus appears as Melchizedek by-and-by, then will be the day for our glory with Him; and the various traits here prefigured will coalesce in Him, not merely the sole dignity of the priest but the exercise of the priesthood in its character of blessing. Then will be the answer to Abram's putting down of the victorious powers of the world, the deliverance of the poor though faulty people of the Lord (shown by Lot), and finally the bringing out the symbol of what God gives not only for the sustenance of His people, but for their joy—the bread and the wine of that day. So it is that the Lord will then act; for this will be one of the wonderful differences between the Lord Jesus as the priest on His throne and all others that have ever governed in this world. It is the sorrowful necessity of those that govern now, that they must take the means of maintaining their dignity and grandeur from the people whom they govern; that even the poorest contribute to that which the world owns as greatness and majesty. It must be so; it is the necessity of earthly glory which never can rise above its source for the haughtiest monarchy of the world is after all founded, whatever the sovereign gift and ordinance of God, on the least contributions of the least people on the earth. But when creation is arranged according to the mind of God, and when His kingdom comes in its proper power and majesty, how different! It will be His prerogative to supply all. The instinctive sense of this was what made the people wish the Lord Jesus to be king when He was here below. When He miraculously fed the multitudes with bread, they as it were said, That is the kind of king we want—a king that will give us plenty of bread without our working for it.

And doubtless the day is coming when the kingdom will be so ordered. That which the corrupt heart of man would like very well now, to avoid toiling in the sweat of his face, the Lord will give, according to His own goodness, when man is bowed down as well as broken and the riches of His grace are no longer made the cloak of his selfishness to God's dishonor. This is one of the great distinctive features of that future kingdom, and Melchizedek shows it here. It is not only that there is food for the hungry, but he brings out bread and wine for the conquerors. That is, it is not merely the meeting of the necessities of man, but God acting after the victory is won according to His bounty and as is due to His own glory. And so it is that in the great day of the coming kingdom God will do these wonderful things on man on the earth. But mark His wise and righteous way—not before the cross, the mighty work of the Son, is a fact; not before the Spirit of God has wrought to bring the souls of those very men into the acknowledgment of Him that wrought it, and into the appreciation of the value of that atonement which was accomplished on the cross. God will have wrought this work in the remnant of His people whom He will make a strong nation, when the day arrives for the Lord Jesus to manifest Himself in the exorcise of His Melchizedek priesthood—not merely to be the antitypical Melchizedek, for this He is now. But now He is not yet bestowing His Melchizedek favors; but when that day comes, it will be, I repeat, for the exercise of the priesthood, and not merely the glory of that one sole priest. The need of man too will be secured in that day. The people will be prepared for blessing. If there will be power and glory, it will be the portion of a people poor in spirit, confessedly contrite and broken down, sensible of the mercy that God had shown their souls, and made honest enough by grace to confess their sins, a people in short that will have found all their boast in that Savior whom they once despised and in that which was their abhorrence. Then it will not be a base and selfish seeking of what merely suits themselves and allows them to vegetate in idleness. Not so; but it is the day for the King to lavish what He has Himself wrought, and for God to manifest what was ever in His heart. For God has always longed to bless men; but He awaits the day when He can righteously as well as freely bless them. Alas! man has never yet been in the state wherein he can be blessed. For to bless him

when his heart is at enmity to God, where would be the good of it for man, not to speak of God? Would it not be, on the contrary, the grossest mockery to pour out blessing on man who, being unrenewed and unrepentant, must after all be cast into hell? Such is the state of every man naturally; no showers of blessing from above, if this were all, could change the soil. In his natural state he is not fit for heaven, nor even for the earth under the reign of our Lord Jesus, but only to be cast into the place that is prepared for the devil and his angels. But in the day that is coming the Lord will have a people born of God, washed every whit clean, and rescued out of the hand of the spoiler, by His own redeeming grace and power, and then we see the Lord Jesus bringing out all that will manifest the goodness of God and glory of God, making the heart of man to rejoice before Him, and his face glad forever. Then shall man know what is the God he has to do with, when he sees reversed and set aside and rooted out every vestige of Satan's old lie that God does not take pleasure in goodness and in lavishing the fruits of it on man here below.

This then is the scene that is soon to open, surpassing fable indeed, and yet true. Mark too how all confirms it in the context. Christ is the antitype of Melchizedek, the king of righteousness and afterward of peace. Then will be the day of peace founded on righteousness. But further He is the “priest of the most high God.” Glorious title! It is not merely “Jehovah,” nor merely “Almighty.” The almightiness of God comes out in protecting His poor pilgrims; and His character of Jehovah, as of old in judgment when the people were under the first covenant, so under the second, particularly when He shows Himself the unchangeable God, who cleaves to His purpose of blessing a people that were alas changeable more than all others &the earth. But “the most high God” —what is its force? Just this. When all other oracles are dumb, when every false god becomes like Dagon, a fallen and dishonored stump before the true ark and Him whose glory dwells there, then and then for the first time, since Satan foisted idol-worship into the world, shall every idol vanish out of it, and their worshippers be ashamed before the only true God. Then shall God have His place as “the most high God.”

Yet He is not only this, but “the possessor of heaven and earth.” When will that be, and what will display His possession of heaven and, earth? We all know He is now in real title; but when is the due testimony to it on the earth? Where the power that enforces it? As far as one sees, man is the possessor of the earth now; and if one bows to scripture, who can deny that the devil is the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air? It is only faith can say that God is really so; but in that day it will be evident to all. His possession of heaven and earth will be manifest when the Lord Jesus comes. For whence does He come? Not from Bethlehem then, but from heaven! He will come from God's right hand and put down all contrary powers here below, and the heavens and earth, long severed, will be manifestly at one. The mind of heaven will be no longer as now in contrast with the mind of the earth. Then will come the reconciler, the blessed One that will unite; for God's glory and under His own sway, “all things, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth” —even in Him “in whom we have obtained an inheritance.”

This then is the evident meaning of the glorious fore-shadowing brought before us in this divine tale of Melchizedek.

I need dwell no more on the history, except to point out one moral feature, the beautiful manner in which Abram, thus blessed, and deeply affected by both God's dealings on the one hand and this remarkable confirmation of his faith on the other, answers the king of Sodom, who, feeling all

thankfulness for the mighty intervention of divine power through Abram, offers generously to give Abram the goods. But Abram at once shows us that faith is more generous still, knowing what it is to be rich toward God, and refusing to tarnish His testimony by anything that would enable the king of Sodom to say “I have made Abram rich.” At the same time he pleads for the others. Whatever may be the self-renouncing grate of Abram, he in the largeness of his heart forgets not what is due to those who had not his faith. He pleads for Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre who had helped him. It was only and quite right that they should participate in the spoil.

I need not spend many words in exploding the petty and nauseous hypothesis which regards the whole chapter, the battle of the kings and the interview of Melchizedek and Abram, as a traditional patch worked in at this point. Certainly there is a discriminating use of the divine names in the different portions of Genesis as everywhere in scripture even to the Revelation of John in the New Testament; but only the credulity of an infidel could have thence been induced to believe that Genesis, any more than the Revelation, is a compilation of distinct documents by differing writers,

A rationalist may be learned; but he is necessarily ignorant of God's mind in scripture, as his false principle leads him to deny it, and hence not even to seek it, as the believer does who sees in the word of God the Spirit's testimony to Christ.

Chapter 28

Abraham: Chapter 15-16

Gen. 15; 16

There is a sensible difference between the portion we are entering on now, as compared with the chapters we have had before us. They have given not only a distinct, but also, as it appears to me, within their own line, a complete view of that side of the truth which it was in the mind of the Spirit of God to convey. In this way chapters 12, 13, 14 form a whole; and, as we have already seen, the great thing there before God was the call of Abram, and its consequences from first to last, the public step that He was Himself taking in His own ways, in having a man, not only walking by faith, as others had done before, but set apart openly to Himself as none had ever been before. I do not mean merely separate spiritually now for no doubt Abel was so, to begin at the beginning. No one can doubt that, before the difference between him and Cain, or the terrible issue came out into view, the moral distance between the first brothers had been existing, and was felt, not only by themselves, but by every one else. It is plain that Cain's own spirit found it intolerable; and it was just this conviction which he resented, and which carried him to lift up, first his hand in violence against his brother, then his voice, in irreverence and rebellion against God, as his heart had been a stranger to Him all through.

Here is another thing. For the first time we see the efficacious principle of a separate witness, to whom God conveyed a promise, and a promise too that had to do not only with what was unseen but with what all could see. After coming out at God's word, the latter was indeed the earlier of the two; for what Heb. 11 shows is that, first of all, Abram was acted on by faith to leave the country to which he belonged, and when he came into the land that God promised to give him, then his eyes were lifted higher still. Thus does the Spirit of God show us the introduction of the great principle which God has never given up since, but has always been carrying out. He set it publicly before Israel in an earthly way, and now He is giving it effect after a heavenly sort. This seems to be the subject of chapters 12, 13, 14. That it is concluded there is manifest from this, that we have a scene which brings distinctly before us the last great conflict—the battle between the kings of the earth, and the victory which the man of faith enjoys by the power of God, even over the powers previously victorious. In short, it is there we have the type of the great “Priest upon his throne” in Melchizedek, active toward God as well as man, blessing man in the name of the “most high God,” and blessing the “most high God” on the part of man. All this will assuredly find its due place and season when Christ appears in glory.

To this I have referred in a brief summary, to show you that there is a complete whole in these chapters, starting with the call, and ending with the glory; so that we have the general public picture of the life of faith, with its worship, its drawbacks, failure, and recovery: the disclosure of the earthly mind too, its covetousness, and its disasters; faith's triumph over the world it had left behind, and the sudden appearing of Him who will display the glory of God in the blessing of man, and the harmony of heaven and earth; all brought before us within the compass of these three chapters.

But what follows seems rather to come back again, and make a new start. That this is true is most evident from chapter xv., as compared with those before it, and indeed it relieves one of no little difficulty when seen to be so intended by the Spirit. For if it be viewed simply as a: continuance of the former chapters, would it not be very extraordinary to hear now that Abram is justified by faith? There is naturally, therefore, a fresh beginning. Of course, it is not denied for a moment that what took place at this time did literally occur after the scene with Melchizedek; but we are now speaking of the ulterior and deeper aim which the Spirit of God had in recording these matters. It is a question not only of facts, but of God's mind in His word; and we are seeking to regard it as a divinely given source of profit for ourselves, and of gathering from the Lord why it is; for we may with reverence inquire, and indeed are bound to inquire, seeing this is the way in which we grow in the knowledge of the mind of God.

Why then, we ask, does the Spirit of God introduce this theme at this particular place? It appears to me that here we have a fresh start, and another course of divine lessons for our souls, in looking at the new dealing of God with His servant. And it will be shown further that there is a series, as it is not merely an isolated fact; but, just as we saw in what went before, a chain of circumstances all connected one with another, and completing the subject as a whole. A similar principle governs here as there. There is this remarkable difference, that here we come to what is far more personal, as one may call it. We have no longer public testimony. What we have had bears this character right through, from first to last. But here another thing is impressed on us, and very important in its place—that we are not merely witnesses. Here, accordingly, personal faith comes first before us.

Some of us must be more or less aware of the danger to the soul from being so occupied with that which is public as to neglect what is personal. Take, for instance, the gathering together of saints to the Lord's name—our assembling around His table. Who does not know that, however precious the privilege, however closely bound up with the Lord's glory, however full of comfort, and blessing, and growth to our souls, if used aright, there remains much which is not a question of testimony, but of the exercise of faith individually, carrying one more into God's presence, and intercourse between Him and our souls?

Here, at any rate, in the wonderful book before us, begins a new series of instruction. God is showing His dealings with the soul of Abram, and not viewing him so much as a witness for Him before others. He is viewed alone as in his house, but, above all, with God. Every one could see when Abram had left his country, and set out for a promised land: they could see, too, that he sometimes failed for a season to accomplish what was before him. And it is all most instructive. Then, again, his pitching his tent, or rearing an altar, was all visible, and meant to be so: so, further, the victory over the powers of the world was that which men generally could not only hear of but feel—it was a real and public testimony. But had this been all, it would not have met what God meant to give, and what He loves to give, for the blessing of the soul. There is such a thing as living too much in the public walk and activity of a saint, to the neglect of that which is more personal. This seems precisely what the Spirit of God enters into here from chapter xv.—the dealings of God with the soul individually, beginning with its wants, but leading on to a far deeper communion with Himself.

The first thing to notice by the way is, “After these things.” This is the usual way of marking off a new division or a fresh subject. You will find a similar expression at another and similar section in

chapter 22. There clearly begins a line of things quite distinct from what preceded. So it is here. “After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram.” We have not had this expression before, although we have had “the Lord said to Abram.” What makes it more remarkable is, that in the counterpart of it in the Acts of the Apostles (chap. 7.), we are told that “the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham” at that very time. Thus it is the more striking, because, although He did appear, it is not so said in Gen. 12 It was according to the mind of God only to speak of His speaking to Abram. Of course it remains perfectly true that He did appear, but not a word of it is mentioned in the history, which adds indeed to the point of it, by the seventh verse of the same chapter, where it is distinctly declared that God appeared to Him; and worship is thus grounded on it, that is, on the positive revelation of God to his soul, and not merely on a revelation from God. Such, too, is the form in which God presents that which has come out now in Christ our Lord. There the Father was showing Himself in Him. We are called to the knowledge of the Father and the Son, and truly our fellowship is with both, the Holy Ghost being the power that gives the enjoyment of it. Thus it is not merely His words we have, but the showing of Himself. So one of the disciples said, “Show us the Father,” though, this indeed He was ever doing, but they were dull to see it. An hour was coming, however, when they should see it. This was the hour for Christian worship, which is the answer of the heart, the precious and spontaneous, effect of the revelation of God to the soul.

Here then, as one sees, is a new form we have not had before. It is not merely that the Lord “said,” still less that the Lord “appeared,” but, suitably to the fresh lesson of the Spirit of God, “After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abram.” What “the word” calls for is faith. There we discern at once the reason of it; and faith is the groundwork of all dealings between the soul and God. As, on the one hand, it is “the word of the Lord” that came to Abram; so, on the other, faith answers to His word; and this is the point of truth illustrated here.

But there is another trait noticeable, the wisdom of God in not always putting—indeed we may say never, but of Christ, putting—the highest truth first. This is of great moral interest. Even if it were the Lord Jesus from heaven speaking to Saul of Tarsus, still after all He is dealing first with his conscience, though by the light of the glory in Himself. There might be that which Saul, afterward pondering, enters. into far more deeply than when he was converted; but the thing that was blessed to his soul was a divine person, yet a man, in heaven, judging all yet in perfect grace, and not something that supplied merely a wonder for the mind to be occupied with. This was not the point. He was made nothing of before the Lord. No flesh may glory. One can glory, but only in the Lord. And so I find here. This scene may not be at all so deep, high, or large in its character as what follows, but it just marks the way of the Lord in dealing with the soul to justify it.

The truth is, when the “word of the Lord” comes to a soul, it not only finds, but awakens, wants. Such is its just fruit. It is not only that we are needy. The present case of Abram was not that of one disturbed and anxious about its condition. Abram, long before, was quickened of God, and indeed had been in His ways, as we know, for many years before this; but God was pleased to make the chapter that comes before us the first of a new series for the opening of His truth in the more hidden and personal life of His servant. The first thing seen here is that He sets him in perfect confidence in Himself,

“Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” No doubt there was a beautiful suitability in this revelation after what had just passed. Abram had refused what the world had to give, and God graciously owns this with complacency, and announces Himself his sufficient reward. If God wore his shield, Abram need not fear the jealousy of the Canaanite, nor even the hostile reprisals of the kings he had defeated, nor yet from any other quarter. “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” God would be true to His own word. There was a bulwark of protection, and source of supply, at once secured to His servant. But mark the effect. It awakens the sense of wants, and draws out, bp, the expression of those wants. If Abram had long felt in secret any such desire, there is no reason to suppose that he had ever told it out to God before. Now he does. God had given him the land of promise, but he was not content with that, and God meant that he should have more. His unfolding Himself to him in this new way leads Abram to breathe out what he had perhaps never defined to himself before. He was not content with the general terms God had hitherto used to him. He says, “Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?” Where was the value of God's being ever so great a reward, if after all he was childless, “and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?” What matter the lands he might have, if all was to go to his servant?

Now I do not say that this is by any means the highest point of Abram's faith; on the contrary, it seems to me far from what we see not long after. But still there was reality, and this is assuredly one point of moment for us here—that God would always have us in the truth of our state, whatever this may be. Suppose a person is not at ease about his sins, let him not gloss it over. If God is dealing with his soul, He brings it clearly out. If to be fully blessed, the person is made as unhappy as he can be, and it is the same grace which gives to the soul the assurance that God blots out and forgives which brings the soul to look at its own sins to the very depth. So again, yet more, supposing a person is clear enough about his forgiveness, still he may be troubled about the sin that dwells in him. This is another exercise for souls. But, whatever the occasion, God will always have reality; and though He encourages in grace, that He begins with it is what we find in His dealing with Abram now. He sounds Abram's wishes and thoughts, and He brings out from his lips what was at the bottom of his heart. He who had the promises was not satisfied, because he had not a son to inherit all that God had given him. And so he takes this place— “Behold, to me thou hast given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir.” Soon the word of the Lord comes to him again. “This shall not be thine heir, but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.” And then he is taken abroad, and bid to “Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the Lord, and he counted it to him for righteousness” —that very fruitful scripture, which the New Testament uses over and over again for the most important purposes. In all these, however, it will be observed, that the object is to meet the soul at the starting-point individually, which is exactly what I am showing in the account of Abram, though in fleet the thing occurred in Abram's history after he had been a believer some time. Still, even the New Testament shows that life is not justification, so that the truth abides substantially alike everywhere. But even though quickened, a person cannot go on steadfastly, or enter into the mind of God fully, until he is clear as to the grave point of righteousness. This too gives us an instructive lesson for ourselves in having to do with others. It makes us feel the incomparable mercy that God has shown us in this respect; for if there is one thing that He has been pleased to bring out into distinctness, and to give the simplest souls to enjoy through faith in Christ and His work, it is that personal freedom, and

deliverance from every question, which it is our privilege now to enjoy; and I believe that a greater mercy there cannot possibly be for the believer individually.

Very likely what first arrested one was something quite different. It may have been with us as it was with Abram. Many of those called out in our day were brought into and occupied at first with the public ways of God. What we had understood as the church was learned to be a mere ruin. We had received from God truth as to His own will and counsels about us, as Abram had; but God wrought, and powerfully too, in another way. Not of course that any one could assume in such a state to have more than a very partial insight into God's mind in that respect. But this one may say, that unless a soul be at one time or another—perhaps not always at the start—brought into clearance, into thorough enjoyment of its own place by grace through faith, the public walk of faith in testimony and worship will not always possess its charm, still less will the soul always hold it in power for the Lord's glory. The real reason, one will find, why souls (and not infrequently, grievous to say) slip out of the place of witness to Christ, is, that they have never been thoroughly broken down as individuals. They have never really been brought into that which would make the preciousness of Christ alone, and liberty by and in Him, enjoyed by their souls. They have slurred over the great matter of personal clearance with God. The public life, in short, has been not only that on which the soul first entered but where it abides, and this entails an unconscious escaping from the question of finding and getting the answer to our wants personally with God.

Now this seems to me of no small moment, not only for ourselves, but also in dealing with the persons we meet from day to day. Were it only a question of what is public, it would not bear the stamp of the truth of God. It might be true, but still there would be something wanting for spirituality of soul, I believe it, therefore, to be a matter of profound thankfulness to our God that He has not only brought out from His word the path of faith in worship and public walk, and given some few to enter into it more or less, but He has brought the same souls into the liberty with which Christ makes free. Doubtless there are differences of apprehension, and there must be so among the people of God; we are not all equally spiritual or simple. But it remains true that God has of late wrought so that we should by grace enjoy both these aspects of the truth, the public and the personal, and that the very same testimony which on one side of it has made clear to us what is publicly for the glory of the name of the Lord Jesus, has brought the word of God into our souls to establish us in His righteousness more clearly, and with greater power, than we ever knew before we trod that public place of testimony. Can I not appeal to the souls that read these words for the truth of them?

But as some despise what is public in desire for the supply of personal need, so others may merge all in what is public. There is danger, therefore, on either side. The general testimony may expose to the danger of neglecting the more personal part of the truth. As we see, it was not so with Abram; and it is of great consequence that we should look to this for ourselves, if we are not in perfect peace, and for souls generally.

Never assume that those who bear the Lord's name in Christendom are personally clear before God. If they are in thorough departure from the mind of God ecclesiastically, they are just as ignorant and unestablished as to the soul. It is a good thing to bring them out of that which hinders them; but seek far more than that. Do not fail to probe the soul as to the consciousness of its place with God. Do not be content that they should hear a little of what is meant by the assembly; that

they should see the importance of what it is to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. This is well, and also most important; but there is a nearer want, which may never have been fully faced and met. Can the person take the place now of standing before God in calm and constant confidence, without spot or stain? Does he know what it is (for that is the form the truth takes for us) to be not only justified by faith, but dead to sin, and crucified to the world? Sometimes, through unwillingness to offend, or assumption that a believer must know, we are apt to slur over these matters, just as if, because they have taken a public stand, all the rest must be settled. Often it has never been so; and very generally, if not always, it will turn out that those who have slipped aside from the testimony are men that never enjoyed the individual clearance of their souls. “That day” may show that all who have departed from what is due to the name of the Lord Jesus were weak personally. Indeed, if we ourselves come to search, looking back, and weigh that which they have talked or (it may be) preached, do we not see ground enough to infer that there had always been a lack there? No wonder that the public walk failed, if the personal faith was never according to the just measure of the truth of God.

This, then, is the prominent point here; and you will observe that in this chapter Abram does not rise above the answer to his wants. Let none slight what is so needful and important in its season. It is no use to be asking for great things, if there be an unsatisfied want that is near the heart; and this was the case with Abram. God, no doubt, meant all through to have given him a son; nevertheless, He would have Abram's heart thoroughly searched, and sends His word purposely to bring out what was there, meets him where he is, answers the faith that was exercised, and gives him further enlargement, with a token by which he should know that he should inherit the land. Thus his heart is first drawn out about a son, and if a son, then an heir. The inheritance follows, though alter intervening sorrow and trial.

Accordingly we find what was very appropriate as a sign of this— “a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him.” You see it is not one that stands in the light of God, but one that was still in the region of his own wants, and of all the sorrow that belongs to wants connected with such a world and such a state. Ultimately we find that the land is secured to Abram as punctually as in a map. The Lord knew what was in Abram's mind, and so He enters into this covenant— “Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates, the Kenites, and the Kenizites,” &c.

Throughout the chapter, then, it is what man wanted, and this made it a suited scene for illustrating justification. It was not God appearing, but the word that came, and Abram believed, and his faith was counted to him for righteousness. Jehovah had adapted His word to bring this about by saying, “I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.” Then Abram asks, and has the promise of a son and heir out of his own bowels, his seed to be as the stars for number. The pledge follows whereby he should know his inheritance of Canaan. It is sealed by a sacrifice; and the horror of great darkness which fell on sleeping Abram seems to me in keeping with the prophecy of affliction for his seed in a strange land, however surely the Lord would judge the nation they should serve, and they should come again to Canaan when the iniquity of the Amorites was ripe for divine vengeance.

A smoking furnace and a lamp of fire passing between the pieces point to the same, while the same day Jehovah covenants with Abram, marking the limits of the laud and the devoted races of

Canaan. Throughout it is the wants of man on the earth, and God securing the answer, in His grace, by sacrificial death. It is the earthly people to be delivered by judgment on their enemies in and out of the land.

But Abram did not know how to wait; and Sarai takes no happy part in the action of chapter 16. It is first “that which is natural,” though we can also add, “afterward that which is spiritual.” Flesh is impatient, and seeks at once the accomplishment in its own way. She proposes her Egyptian bondmaid, Hagar, and Abram hearkening, instead of walking by faith, the maid conceives, and her mistress is despised. The Epistle to the Galatians gives the certain clue to what we else might never have understood. It is the covenant of Sinai which she represents, answering to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. The law works not peace, but wrath; not the accomplishment of the promise but fleshly pride, and a child born in sorrow who cannot be heir. What a contrast to blessing and praise through the royal priest in chapter xiv., or the altars of chapters 12, 13! If the justified man take up the law (save to convict others), no wonder if the issue be disappointment on all hands. Such is the solemn admonition of chapters 15, 16.

Abraham: Chapter 17

(Gen. 17)

But now we come to another scene of a wholly different nature. “When Abram was ninety years old and nine, Jehovah appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect.” What a change We see here that it is no longer Abram bringing out what was concealed in his own heart, but God unfolding Himself with a greater fullness than He had ever been pleased to do before with Abram or indeed any one else. Here is the then characteristic revelation of Himself, and farther than this none of the patriarchs over advanced. El Shaddai (God Almighty) is the substance of the distinctive truth on which the fathers flourished. Here was that which especially became their joy and their source of strength. This they learned in the face of all difficulties and of every foe. “I am the Almighty God.” We must not look at these words merely from the blessedness into which we are brought. It were well to reflect how such a revelation must have told on Abram. He had just before this been proving how feeble he was, and how little he could see before him. He had experienced the danger of listening to his own wife. What ill-feeling followed as the immediate consequence and what trouble there was likely to be in store! Now we have God revealing Himself, though of course in a grace suitable to those He was blessing. Still it is not in view of man's wants on earth, as in chapter iv. There, as we have seen, Abram had been faithful, he had not only conquered the enemy's power but refused the world's honor in his jealousy for the Lord who thereon speaks to him, and, if one may so say, rewards him. Abram accordingly asks according to his own measure. He thinks of what would be sweet and comforting for him then—but it was connected with himself; and so, again, what the Lord shows him is a vista, bright in the end, connected with his seed and with the land which was to be their own. It was all, consequently, of a comparatively narrow character, gliding into prophecy as to Israel and the land. Not so here, and for this simple reason, that now there is a still deeper lesson to be taught.

It is not failure by the way; this we have had in chapter xvi. It is not merely want supplied, most true and important in its place, and useless to be slurred over. How vain to ignore what we do lack, and talk of things we do not feel! Abram brought out what he felt and God met him there most abundantly.

But now there is far more than this; not what Abram feels or wants, but what God wanted or him and loved to give him. God therefore imparts the richest revelation ever made known up to that time. “I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.” What was the consequence? No horror of deep darkness follows now, no deep sleep falls on him here. “Abram fell on his face;” nor was this all: “God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.” Those enumerated in the end of chapter 15 were the enemies, the races that had usurped the land, and were to be subdued; but now a far higher range of things opens. Abram should have a child, and be the father “of many nations.” It is evident therefore that the circle is immensely enlarged, and all in pure grace. Abram has not asked a word; nor does he

seek any pledge or token. It is not Abram now that presents what God had, as it were, suggested and drawn out of him, what was then in his heart, and what was of importance to be forced out because it was there. For other things are here. Abram had been humbled, feeling his weakness and his foolishness, and Sarai's too. Accordingly God now, out of nothing but His own grace, unveils Himself in this special manner “I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect.” If He was the Almighty God, it was not merely a question of enemies now. Not a single word is said about them. It would have been unsuitable at this time to have talked of putting down this or that people. They do not require God's almightiness to deal with them; and Abram had already counted en His power upon this fresh revelation of Himself; and surely not in vain. But He needed to be the Almighty God to bring about this blessedness He is here speaking of. The connection of El Shaddai, I repeat, is not with putting down foes, but, wonderful to say, with Abram's walk before Him! “Be thou perfect.”

What an introduction of Abram to new blessedness! What a groundwork to go on. There he was, a stranger, surrounded by those who wished him evil, and after having just proved his own weakness. No matter what all else might be: “I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect; and I will make my covenant between me and thee.” Is it not intensely personal too? All the questions that could rise up as a matter of trial, all thoughts of disappointment, have now disappeared. God had already met his wants, as a man; and if these had not been perfectly met, would there have been the same suitability in this fresh vision? But they were; the void for his heart would be filled; nothing in this respect could trouble more. The one thing that remained lacking for Abram's present comfort, a son and heir, God would take in hand. His wife's expedient had only brought sorrow on them all by her haste. He had everything else. But now he leaves all this in the hands of God, who here speaks after a wonderful way.

After God has brought in Himself in His almightiness before Abram, He speaks of the land forever given to him and to his seed. But not a word of this in the first instance. It was of all-importance to Abram that there should not be a word about his prospects till after the revelation of God Himself. God does not even say “I am thy God.” He does not connect Himself with Abram in any such way. The first word here was the simple revelation, “I am the Almighty God.” Abram's heart rests on this. It is not Abram seeking this of himself with God, but God unfolding Himself to Abram. Such is the great thought, and this as “the Almighty.” “I will make a covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.” How it was to be, He does not yet explain; but it follows in due time.

Then see the effect on Abram. He never felt so overwhelmed in the presence of God, just because he had never been so near Him in spirit before. “He fell upon his face, and God talked with him.” And Abram is in the dust before Him. It is not worship at the altar, not a sacrifice to secure a promised gift, but communion: God deigns to talk with Abram. His falling on his face is not conviction of sin, or darkness of soul, but lowliness before God. He is really far nearer God practically than in Gen. 15, and can confide more simply in His word. Then he had unsettled questions: then too a horror of darkness; and failure ensued in chapter 16. But here is the blessing of Abram personally, the establishment of an everlasting covenant between himself and his seed, and the promise of many nations and kings.

Notice further the expression of communion. “God talked with him.” It is so put purposely by the Spirit of God; for He had nowhere else used this language before. It serves, I have no doubt,

expressly to show nearness of intercourse; and a very weighty thing it is. Such is the force we see in 1 Tim. 4, where we are told of the wondrous place into which we are brought, far beyond that of Abram (though the scene we have before us may be viewed as a kind of premonition and shadow of it), that “every creature of God is good,” — “for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer,” that is, free intercourse with God in His grace.

Here in Abram's history we have it. If the “word of God” comes in Gen. 15 and in the chapter which follows as we have seen, now we have this familiar intercourse with God in chapter 17. The word “prayer” there, as is well known, is not the ordinary expression of wants. It is not the word for supplication; which has its own place and a very important one too. However blessed we may be, we never get out of that need here below. Were any one to assume now that, because we have intimacy of fellowship in Christ, we cease to be in the place of need, and no longer are called to persevere in prayer as the expression of our dependence on God, need one say what a dishonor to Him is done, and what a downfall must be at hand? But still there is something more than prayer; there is the enjoyment of intercourse; and where souls do not enter into that, where they cannot get near enough to God, so to speak, and do not habituate their souls to His talking to them in His word, and their free pleading before Him, which is what the Christian is entitled to now (I am not speaking of formally kneeling down and presenting our needs, but of being able to draw near to God and speak about everything), there is a great lack in the private personal life of the Christian.

It is well to note that, the intercourse in the scene before us is the fruit of God's revealing Himself more perfectly to the soul. Thus all was founded, not on a fresh start taken by man, but on His gracious ways with the soul. It is far from the vain idea of a self-consecration, or the higher life that men prate about, however one may share their protest against the habit of others to go on sinning with a measure of content or at least with a sense of necessity that so it must be. The reverse is seen here; even God's unfolding Himself by a fuller revelation of His name. He was making Himself known in a way that never was heard of before. It is one thing for man to summon up from his own mind what he would say to God; quite another what God says about Himself as the suited revelation for the blessing of a man's soul. Here there can be no doubt about its character. He appears to Abram, and says “I am the Almighty God.” He does not even say He is the Almighty God to him It was not called for. When a soul is young in the ways of grace, God links Himself with him, vouchsafing various helps to the soul that yet knows Him feebly, unable to enjoy Him unless He stretches out His hand to help the straggling sinking soul. But it is not so here. Abram did not want it at present. He had learned both about himself and about God, and he shows the profit of it here. Now that God says “I am the Almighty God,” it is enough for Abram. No doubt He adds, “I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly,” but the way in which He reveals Himself is not so much what He was to Abram, but what He is in Himself. When justified by faith, we are entitled to enjoy this. We can joy in God (not only in the blessing but the Blesser) through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore it is that, though in the first dealings of God with our souls, there is no one that has not found it an immense thing to know Him as Father—the “babes” (1 John 2:18) being distinguished by this very thing, they “know the Father,” and there being no Christian who does not enjoy Him as such, no matter how long he may be in the ways of the Lord—yet I am persuaded that when a soul advances in the knowledge of divine things, there comes out, not merely the cleaving to Him as Father, but the ability to “joy in God.”

But if one has to do with worldly men, they do not know what you mean when one speaks of God as his Father, save as the Father of everybody. They use this which is true to deny His special relationship to the Christian. It is then no small thing for the soul to know that “God is my Father,” to cry in the Spirit Abba, Father; but it is another thing, where all questions are settled, and we are able peacefully to enjoy Him as God. This is assuredly of great moment and will be found to be true in the ways of God with our own souls. It is evident that our Lord Jesus meant that we should find and enjoy it; for if we refer to the message on the resurrection day, He says, “I ascend unto my Father and your Father” —but this is not all— “and to my God and your God.” I do not believe it is possible to enjoy “His God and our God” until we have known what it is to look up with perfect rest in Christ and in conscious relation to God as “His Father and our Father.” In short, all true, real, believing, enjoyment of God as such follows the enjoyment of the Father.

As long as there remains a single question unsettled, there will always be a shrinking from God as each. Note the calmness of Abram here. He can enter, without anything to come between, into what God is in Himself as “the Almighty God.” But further, it is said, “God talked with him,” not “the Almighty” nor “Jehovah,” but “God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.”

Not merely has the patriarch a new name given him, but mark how everything rises now. It is not merely the land where the Kenites and others dwelt, but “I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee; and I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant.” It is not then only that there is such an immensely greater sphere opened out for the hopes of Abraham, but the time also is unlimited. It is an “everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger.” God had not forgotten the lesser gift in presence of greater things— “all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God.”

Observe too another thing that goes along with this. No longer now does Abram ask for a token whereby he should know that he is to inherit the land. Not a word of the kind is dropped. But God speaks of the seal of circumcision. It is not now something outside him, as we saw in the dead animals of chapter 15, but “Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man-child among you shall be circumcised.” What does it mean? Flesh mortified before God; the sentence of death put on man in His sight, and this in Abram's own person as well as in his seed afterward.

Circumcision here accordingly is not introduced in a legal way, any more than the sabbath in Gen. 2 It is really the answer in man to the grace of God. It is that which God has made the Christian's portion in our Lord Jesus, that “circumcision without hands,” which God has given us in Him, for in Him we are circumcised. It is not the death of a victim now, but every child of Abraham takes the place of death by this sign, which typically sets forth our death with Christ, the perfect deliverance of the individual as dead with Him. Until one knows what it is to be thus dead, there is no possibility of knowing what it is to be free unto God. What a precious thing it is that this is precisely what God has made true in an incomparably better way to us now, bringing us into the calm and peaceful

enjoyment of Himself, with the certainty that everything that is offensive to God—our very nature as children of Adam—has the sentence of death on it, not only pronounced, but executed! This is what one knows now as a Christian. It is no longer a sign, precious as this was to Abraham (and I pretend not to say how far he entered into it), but we are entitled to understand its truth; it is a part of that wonderful blessing in Christ that God has given us. It is not merely His meeting our wants; for I do not believe when it is a question simply of wants, that a soul ever enters into this sense of personal liberty and deliverance. But after having Christ for all our need and wretchedness, there is the further blessing that He is bringing us into, living intercourse with Himself now. We require some solid basis for this; and God has given it to us in our death with Christ.

But this also you may observe: it is not our asking for a token. Who would have looked for such a thing as to be dead with Christ, or risen with Christ? Never did such a thought enter the heart of man. It is all God's grace, His own perfect wisdom and goodness to our souls. Yet is it all the fruit of the work of Christ Jesus our Lord. It is not merely a man risen; there were persons raised from the dead: but what was that to Christ being raised? They would all have to die again. But now we have got to the knowledge of resurrection in a wholly different and far superior way to this, for Christ rose breaking the power of death for us, and we shall experience it soon as the consequence of that which He has done already. As dead and risen with Christ, we are waiting for a resurrection like His from among the dead, or a change, which is the same thing practically—when we shall be with Him, and be like Him, endued with the same incorruptness and glory according to the power of His resurrection.

May the Lord, then, give our own souls to enter into these wondrous lessons of God, whether they be the public ones for a life of testimony, or the individual ones for personal intercourse with God.

Chapter 30

Abraham: Chapter 18:1-15

(Gen. 18:1-15.)

THE portion read now is founded a good deal upon the previous chapter, and the general train runs on to the end of chapter 21. We can see at a glance that chapter 22 introduces a series of truths altogether new. The distinctive mark already mentioned, “After these things,” makes a decided break, a fresh start in thought; and you will observe how completely this is the fact, because there it is not only an altogether new train of communications from God, but also of a different character. The death and resurrection of the promised son are brought before us in a figure, and all the other dealings of God that are founded on this grave fact; as, for instance, the passing away for the time of the covenant of grace with Israel in Sarah, and the call of the bride in chapter 24. Of course, I do not mean to enter on these subjects just now; but I make the remark in order to help persons to read the scriptures for themselves, that they may have a clearer understanding of the order of these things, and have more fixed in their souls the consciousness that it is the word of God, and not the thoughts of ingenious men, really a matter of divine truth, and altogether independent of anybody's fancies. This I hold to be a capital point for the children of God, particularly in these days; that they may have a distinct ground to go upon, not only for their own souls, but also in case of being challenged by others. For there are those who, not knowing the truth, are the more ready to doubt the reality of the blessing that they do not themselves enjoy. They have the miserable desire to spoil the happiness to which they are themselves strangers. Hence we cannot be too simple. Besides this, we do well to seek to be thoroughly established in the truths that we receive—to see how it is all bound up with the personal work of Christ, as well as revealed in the word of God, foreshadowed in the Old Testament, and clearly out in the New.

In this case, then, the communication is in a measure founded on chapter 17, which we saw introduced an unfolding of God's name in a way that was an advance on all before. But in this case it was not as with Jacob, where he sought to know the name of God, who withheld His name. Indeed the difference is remarkable. With Abraham there was more ease, and God begins to speak out plainly. Not but Jacob was afterward brought to hear God unfolding the very same name of “the Almighty God;” but to Abraham it was brought out at once. There was no such thing as the desire—still less was there any “wrestling.” Abraham, on the other hand, intercedes with Him; and indeed “wrestling” is not exactly the word that would be suitable to the character of Abraham's intercourse with God. It was both more peaceful and of a higher character. In Jacob's case there was immense activity of nature. I do not mean sin, of course, but nature in its best sense, that is, domestic affection. The love of family was exceedingly strong in Jacob's case. No one of the patriarchs seems more marked by it than Jacob. It is not meant, of course, that either lacked in this way, for they did not. Witness in Isaac a character remarkable for his home attachment, with a life more equable than Jacob's.

Abraham, however, had this distinguishing feature, that he was a man who very simply went to God about everything as it rose. Consequently God could act more freely and immediately in His

dealingsmwith him, There was not so much that required first to be broken down, as we find in Jacob's case: how often he must be made nothing of before God could be revealed! Therefore it was comparatively late in the history of Jacob before God made His name known to him. To Abraham, as we saw, Jehovah appeared, and opened out His name, unasked, as the “Almighty God;” and there followed the making of the covenant, which supposed the death of the flesh, the express figure of that which we now know in its truth and power in Christ; would that so wondrous a weapon of deliverance from all on that score were well wielded by all saints! What a source of trial, difficulty, and perplexity, do the great mass of God's children find through not knowing it! For, as many know, it is not in their case a question so much of the faith that overcomes the world, as it is really doubt about their own personal clearance before God. He that is dead is justified from sin, but this they do not perceive. They are as yet under law. But we have seen that here circumcision is not at all connected with the law, but, on the contrary, with that covenant God made in grace long before it. It is the sign of the blessing God was to give in Christ Himself. Circumcision is viewed as the type of the complete setting aside of the flesh before God. This is what we have had in Gen. 17. Now we enter on a further activity of God, and its consequences, which are carried on to chapter 21.

Here again the Lord appears, though we may notice this special feature about it now, that He leaves it to Abraham to find out who was visiting him. There is no outward token of the majesty of His presence—no special intimation betrays who was there. It is also to be noticed that on this occasion the Lord personally came, attended by two others, who, no doubt, were outwardly much like Himself. He deigned to take the appearance of a man; as it is said, “He (Abraham) lift up his eyes, and looked, and lo, three men stood by him.” We have no reason to suppose that it was in such a manner that God was pleased to appear to His servant on former occasions. It was dealing with Abraham, founded on what went immediately before in chapter 17, but, having its own distinct character. This is preserved throughout.

“When he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door.” He was one of those who, like Lot in the next chapter, had an ungrudging hospitality, which had its reward in this, that, ready as they were to receive those who looked but strangers, they were really entertaining “angels unawares.” Nay, more: this present occasion was the most remarkable entertainment ever enjoyed by any on the earth until Jesus came. Some might count it even more wonderful than that; because the Lord Jesus, being pleased to become a man, by being born of a woman, and to tabernacle amongst us, came down habitually into human circumstances, as a man with men. I do not doubt, however, that in all these manifestations of the Lord in the Old Testament, we are to understand the Son of God was the one manifested. Not only was He pleased to come in the appearance of a man, which may have been the case on other occasions also, as seen in the history of Noah, Gideon, and others; but here it is said there were three men, meaning by this, of course, what they seemed to the eyes of men. The peculiar privilege here was that God Himself deigned to be the guest of Abraham: yea, and more than that, for He treats him as His intimate, stamping on the patriarch forever that remarkable designation, “the friend of God,” which is founded on this very chapter. Assuredly the circumstances are such, that we do well to look into them with care.

Abraham then “bowed himself toward the ground” —as far as we are told, at first not knowing who the three were. But God is gracious to His people, and leads on step by step. We can see at a glance whose grace it was that put into the heart of Abram the habit of what we might call

indiscriminate generosity and kindness; and this readiness is the more to be observed as it was the part of one called out to be separate to the Lord. A grave and important lesson it is for us in this respect, that the man who was most of all separate is the same whose heart went most of all out towards others, and that strangers.

There is nothing in the most complete separateness to the Lord to hinder the largest and most active kindness, not merely to the people of God, but to all men. Abraham did not know at this time who or what his visitors might be; he merely saw three men, and his heart was at once towards them. Not strained nor scanty was the flow of divine goodness; there was a heart ready at once to meet and even seek others, desirous of their blessing. Is it not in the highest sense so with the Lord? Does He not constantly pour blessing into the heart of, the man that was intent on the blessing of others? In this case, too, there was a greater honor in store, though the object of it knew it not.

Though we must not suppose that at first Abraham knew the divine dignity of one of “the three men,” there is the remarkable fact that he addresses himself to one, and I can hardly doubt to which of the three. However that may be, he says, “My lord, if now I have found favor in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee from thy servant; let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet.” He does not confine himself to the one to whom he had at first addressed himself. He is thinking of that which was needful, not only in courtesy but in love. “Rest yourselves under the tree, and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts.” We can scarce doubt, I think, that he is treating them according to the appearance in which they stood, though we shall find that it is not long before he learns more. “After that ye shall pass on, for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said.”

Abraham accordingly hastens, making Sarah the partner of his kindly toil, and soon after stands by them under the tree as they eat. Then comes their turn before us. They said to him, “Where is Sarah thy wife?” Perhaps it was then that the first word, intimating the divine power of Him who deigned to be there, fell on the attentive ear of Abraham. “I will certainly return unto thee.” It does not become man to talk of certainly returning. Was this lost on Abraham? Assuredly not; more particularly when his long-cherished hope is about now to enjoy the promise of a specified, and, I may say, dated accomplishment. “I will certainly return unto thee according to the time of life; and lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son.” If it appeared vague before, it was henceforth distinct and defined. But the one who was immediately concerned had not the same sense as Abraham of the presence of God. There was not the same preparedness of heart for it. Sarah, no doubt, was an honored woman, but her state was spiritually different from that of Abraham. We hear of her during this conversation behind the door. I dare say she ought not to have been there, but there she was; and if she was where she ought not to have been, need we wonder that she indulges in feelings that little became her? She laughed in her doubt of the word. Could any of us imagine Abraham behind a door? Was there not a simple dignity in Abraham incapable of hiding and listening behind a door? We can understand easily an Eastern wife's temptation to conceal herself in more modern times, when woman was more of a prisoner, and otherwise degraded; but it is evident that in those early days no such reason operated, and no excuse could thence be for anything of the kind, For we find Rebekah, and others far later, going to the well, without any idea of impropriety. Sarah must no doubt have enjoyed no less degree of freedom, but would have from her circumstances much more. She, the matron, by no means young now, was under no conceivable custom of

keeping out of sight. Wherever such manners as those before us are resorted to, never expect anything good or worthy. It is no light mercy to be brought out of all the darkness and all the pettiness of nature, and to be brought to walk in the light as God is in it. It is sweet to think of it as the Christian's place, but it is what we all want to learn more of. What else enables one to stand so simply in the presence of Man? Not that we begin with man, and then know how to stand before God, but just the other way. God gives us the root of the matter first, and this is where we are brought in virtue of our Lord Jesus Christ. He could not do more, nor would He do less. He has brought us by and in Himself near to God. This is what in its spirit was true of Abraham; and he was one who enjoyed much of the conscious presence of God; and it is this that I am persuaded had its reward now. He had a conviction of who it was that was addressing him in words which could not fail. There was a sort of instinctive feeling, a growing conviction, in Abraham's soul who the guest must be he was entertaining.

It is remarkable, however, that he hears these words quietly. No astonishment is expressed. How happy when the soul is thus kept calm before God! We are not then taken by surprise: we expect good, and not evil. Instead, therefore, of stooping to the ways which let out how mean the flesh is, the sense of His presence preserves, and true dignity is associated with the utmost, simplicity. It is not in this case self-possession, nor the pride of being anything, nor the vanity of desiring what we have not; but all is founded on the deep sense that it is God with whom we have to do, and whose voice we hear and obey.

Abraham, then, as I have said, stands in marked contrast with Sarah hiding behind the door, and laughing within herself. But when charged with it, she is ashamed to own the truth, which she felt an ignominy to herself. But He that was on the other side of the door soon chews that such an obstacle could not keep Him from seeing and knowing what passed in the heart of Sarah, as well as where she was. “The Lord said to Abraham, Wherefore did Sarah laugh, saying, Shall I of a surety bear a child, which am old?” How surprising it must have been to her, and how sharp the rebuke, though conveyed without a harsh word! “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” How blessed to accustom ourselves, beloved brethren, to this one answer to all difficulties! For this we are called to walk by faith, not by sight. God never had a thought of a Christian, or of His church, being exempted from difficulties. To hinder this is the main effort of man after the flesh. Directly they look at the church as a human institution, they want to smooth its way, to put it on the ground of natural rules and arrangements, and thus reduce the Christian to a walk of mere prudence and common sense. They forget it is God's habitation through the Spirit, and cease to walk in dependence on the. Lord. No doubt morality is quite according to the law of God. I quite admit it. But all that is entirely distinct. Supposing a person were to walk within the letter of the ten commandments every day, he never would behave in a single particular as a Christian ought. The doing of all the commandments would not meet the will of God about the Christian. It would be very proper for a man, and excellent in a Jew; but far from being Jews, now that we are in Christ, we are no longer sons of Adam but according to His grace, His children by faith. We are born of God, and brought into a new place by redemption, and are blamed if we are walking as men. This is the very complaint of the Apostle Paul against the saints at Corinth. He reproaches them because they “walked as men,” not as bad men, but “as men.” It was unworthy of grace that they should be on mere human ground. If a brother offended another, is one to have him up before the law-court? We can understand that the Christian might easily reason about it, and say, “For my part I cannot

but feel that a Christian is a great deal worse than a man of the world if he is guilty of a wrong, and therefore I must have him tried and punished by the magistrate." The premise is true; the conclusion false. For it is not at all a question of wrong or right, but of Christ. I perfectly grant that a Christian may do wrong, and that the assembly, should judge it; but to do right is not enough for a Christian. He is sanctified to the obedience of Christ, to obey God as the Lord did. It is a question, not of doing the law, bit of obeying like Christ. This is what is written on us, as the law was on the tables of stone. Israel ought to have represented the law graven upon stones. We have Christ on high, and are called to walk and witness accordingly. This is the point of the apostle's words in the chapter referred to. The Christian is the epistle of Christ," and, nothing short of a manifestation of Christ can satisfy the mind of God as to him.

Here we see Jehovah as man in a beautiful way: So it was, I believe, in this case, although not of course as yet the Word made flesh, yet the nearest approach to it; and just as we shall see in the series that follows (chap. 22.), the resurrection of the Son of God in type, and the dealings of God founded on that great fact; so here we have, as far as it could be, the coming down of God to be among men, and the grace that accompanied His presence here below. So I read this very scene; and that is the reason why here, and here alone, the Lord takes the place of a man.

How beautiful to look back, and see how suitable it is that, before the series that introduced the work, there should be the series that introduced the person, in as near an approximation to His taking flesh as was possible to be beforehand. If there be one thing that marks a man with others, it is sitting at the same table in social intercourse. This is what the Lord does here. It in one of the very things in which an unbeliever finds an enormous difficulty: but what is poison to an infidel in the food and joy of faith. Accordingly, where faith receives it, we rejoice in so blessed a thing as God thus deigning to be at Abraham's table, and partaking of his hospitality, with His angels round Him; but this in the guise of men.

After He has thus put Himself along with His servant on familiar terms, He speaks of that which was nearest to the heart of Abraham. He knew that he was surely to have a son; but he had waited long, and wanted to know when the son would come. Now it is fixed; there is a distinct time allotted, and for the first time. God here too shows Himself considerate of Abraham's feelings. As we saw, Sarah was not up to the mark yet; she needed a rebuke. The communication that God makes brought out what was not according to the proprieties of the presence of God. She was not used to it, like her husband, in spirit, day by day; and when the Lord did come, she did not know how to behave herself; but Abraham did, and there is nothing more remarkable than the ease, and calm, and comeliness of Abraham in all this scene.. He was in no way thrown off his balance when it begins to dawn upon him who it was that deigned to talk and eat with him; the wonderful fact that he stood before the true God, the Lord of heaven and earth—the pledge of the incarnation, when He should take flesh and dwell among us.

The Lord brings all out plainly now. "Is anything too hard for the Lord? At the time appointed I will return unto thee, according to the time of life, and Sarah shall have a son." But Sarah laughed in her incredulity, and thou, convicted, she denied it, saying, "I laughed not" —denied it for the same reason that some of us may have had to reproach ourselves for no less. "She was afraid!" How often these sad departures from the truth arise from nothing but the want of moral courage! What would train up the soul in unflinching and most scrupulous truthfulness is exactly what Abraham

cultivated, and what Sarah failed in habitual acquaintance with the presence of God.

There is no safeguard so efficacious, even supposing we be ever so disposed to exaggerate, uncareful, quick to speak, slow to consider and weigh what is said. There is nothing that would keep and form the soul more simply in truthfulness than this very thing, the constant sense of the presence of God. This it is that characterized Abraham more than most; not that we may not find failure, for Abraham was not Christ. In this particular, too, under solemn circumstances, Abraham broke down, and, sad to say, twice about the same thing—once in the earlier part of his career, and once later. For God would give the terrible lesson, that flesh in no way over improves, and that Abraham needed the presence of God to keep him towards the close of his career, just as much as at the beginning.

Now we see that as the Lord convicts Sarah for her own good, so He blesses Abraham more and more. But though it is sad that a saint of God should fail in truthfulness, it is no small mercy that God should make that untruthfulness felt where the soul has been guilty. I do not know anything worse for anyone who has fallen into untruthfulness than that such a one should go without the discovery of it, and without its being painfully brought home to the soul by God Himself: Here we have it. The Lord does not do in this case as in so many others in the Bible; for one of the remarkable features elsewhere plain is that we have cases of untruthfulness, and other things equally bad, found in God's people, but they are left, either without conviction, or with the fact simply stated. Here it was brought home for Sarah's profit, and we know that she gained it. But we must turn to the Lord's way with Abraham.

This is the very thing that perplexes unbelievers. It is not so to faith. God disciplines and exercises the hearts of His people in judging these things from their acquaintance with His own character, and with His word in general. In this particular case there was a lesson to be taught, and therefore God does not pass it by. He does not permit that Sarah should simply say, “I did not laugh;” so He says, “Nay, but thou didst laugh.” The sin is brought home by the unmistakable voice of God. Oh, what a thought for Sarah afterward, and how humiliating, not only that she lied, but that she ventured on a lie to God Himself, and that, as her last word with Him, poor Sarah should have told a lie. It was the last word that passed between her and God Himself.

This, no doubt, is a serious thing for our own souls, worthy of reflection, yet full of comfort also. For what a God we have to do with! What patience, long-suffering, goodness! and this with not a human being merely, but a child of His! And His way is to let a word from Him act on her conscience. Never do we hear of any repetition of the evil on Sarah's part. It was a lesson not to be forgotten, yet how gracious!

Abraham: Chapter 18:16-33

We read next that “the men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom.” Here we enter on another part of the Lord's action at this time. We have had Him coming down in richest grace, and dealing with the utmost possible tenderness, even with such a failure as that of Sarah. But now we have to see the manner in which all this operated spiritually on the heart of Abraham. “And the men rose up, and looked toward Sodom, and Abraham went with them, to bring them on the way.” Here is another beautiful feature in Abraham, which also had its reward. His was not a mere hospitality that receives like a patron without going farther. There was nothing of what we may call the condescension of a great man in Abraham, which is scarcely to be called true, or at least Christian, hospitality. He in whom that is found will, on the contrary, be found filled with the importance of himself, his family, and his position; he scorns to act below the idea he has, and would impress on others, of his own dignity. Who that reflects could call this grace? “This did not Abraham.” Genuine humility was there, and yet withal an unmistakeable stamp of dignity in his character, yet none the less of true kindness, of lowly and persevering love. Thus he hangs upon their steps; and no wonder. At this time it was not merely the ready heart for a stranger, but a sense of the glory of his visitors, and among them of One especially. Who can be surprised that Abraham was loath to see them depart, and accompanied their way? But again, let me say that scripture speaks of such a reception of strangers as though it were no unwonted thing for this generous man. I do not suppose that it was the first time for him to bring such forward on their journey, after a godly sort, any more than to receive them into his tent, and treat them as he did.

“And Jehovah said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment; that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.” What a character! But I would ask myself, as well as you, beloved brethren, is that what the Lord can say of you and me? Does He really know this of us? I do not mean that He said it to Abraham, but in His word about Him. Now He has written it for us; and for what purpose? That we should merely know what He felt towards Abraham? Nay, but that we should search ourselves, and see whether there are grounds for the Lord to speak so about ourselves and our households. For you generally find that a saint's ways are shown, not merely in his own personal conduct, but even more in the relation of his family all round to the Lord, as the fruit of his faith or the lack of it. This is the reason why (in the New Testament), no matter what gift a man had, no matter how much he might be personally excellent, if his household were unruly, if not in subjection, such an one could not be an elder or bishop. How could a person rule the church of God, if he could not rule his own home? Because, where moral power would be shown most is, not in a discourse, or in company, or in a visit, but where a man unbends, where he is no longer the teacher or preacher, where he can either familiarly bring in God or habitually leave Him out, where he can have a free and constant circulation of that name, with all its fruitful consequences, in the family, or he proves that his heart is in ease. Show or money for them is really for himself.

The Lord assuredly looks for a reflex in the household of the ways of God with the head of it; because there it is that God should manifestly be owned, and habitually govern; and there it is that the one who stands at the head is responsible to God for showing what his mind and heart value. It may be done with great simplicity, one need not say, with tender attention and care and interest in what goes on with each member of the family. And I do not mean merely the children, though the children have the nearer place; but servants also, supposing there are such in the house. Servants, it is true, are not mentioned in 1 Timothy expressly, possibly because some of the elders might be among the poorest, and perhaps servants themselves. Therefore God puts the matter in a general way; but where there are such domestics, just the same thing should be found. For that which sheds blessing among the children secures blessing among the servants. At any rate there should be godly order, even if the children or servants be not yet brought to the knowledge of God. So it most assuredly was at this time, and ordinarily, trim of Abraham's house.

“For I know him:” was it ever so said about Lot? It would have had a sorrowful meaning in Lot's case; it has a blessed one in Abraham's. For this is the knowledge of approval, of divine complacency; it is the knowledge that prepared the way for his being the depositary of the secrets of Jehovah—the one to whom He could communicate that which no angel knew, save those who had their orders from Him and were just about to be the executioners of His judgment. But the angels in general, I venture to presume, knew little or nothing of it. It was enough for them to learn it when the thing had taken place. Thus it is that they learn about the church, and the wonders that God has shown to us. The church of God is His living lesson-book for the angels (Eph. 3); it is by the dealings that He carries on with individual Christians, and with the assembly above all, that He is instructing them in His ways; as He did already by our Lord Jesus Christ in the highest degree, when He was here and exalted on high. He was not pleased to tell them of Christ beforehand; whereas one of the most remarkable privileges saints of old had was the revelation, as far as it went, of the sufferings of Christ and the glories after these. And now we know things to come, as well as the things of Christ above. “Ye, therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before.” This is, or ought to be, one of the cherished privileges of the Christian. For every child of God now really has, not only a priestly place in the grace of Christ, but what may be called a prophetic one. He is not, of course, a prophet, in the sense of giving out inspired communications from God. This the prophets did, as part of the foundation of the church, and it might be in what is called prophesying. But all ought to enjoy the reality of seeing, and testifying the things that are not as though they were, according to divine revelation, giving us to enter into the mind of God before His word comes to pass. The whole of the New Testament supposes that a part of what the Holy Ghost is come down here to do is, not only to “take of the things of Christ, and show them to us,” but to show us “things to come.” John 16

In this chapter, and in the fresh scene that I am dwelling upon, we have the very pattern of Christ when He was present here; I do not say when the sacrifice of Christ was offered in sign, which comes before us in chapter 22. But here there is a remarkable anticipation of the presence of the Lord—of God's presence in Christ, when He tabernacled as a man among men. Hence the wonderful opening out of that which was in His own heart; just as the Lord did in John 15, which may be viewed as the counterpart of what we find here., He had, as we know, been with, the disciples in the tenderest love. There, it is true, it is not courteous furnishing of water for His feet, but (wondrous way!) His washing theirs. Supper-time was come for Him and them: and He would

stoop down and wash their feet, as a witness of His work of love when He should leave them; but before He goes, He would tell them what was in His mind. He is treating them as friends; so He lets them know what the Holy Ghost is about to do when He Himself is absent on high. “It is expedient for you that I go away, else the Comforter will not come.” But He went, and the Holy Ghost came and more than made up for His absence. So we find in measure with Abraham. The angels proceed; the Lord remains behind with Abraham, who enters into a phase of communion with Him far beyond what he had enjoyed before.

“And Jehovah said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know.” He is speaking here just after the manner of men. Jehovah adopts the familiar language of common life, and deigns to adapt Himself to that which every one could understand in a man. It is wholly above our comprehension how God knows all things at once, without inquiry or investigation. He condescends here to speak so that Abraham might be thoroughly free in His presence.

“And the men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before Jehovah. And Abraham drew near, and said.” How precious is this access to Him who had thus come down! Abraham shows no shrinking behind the door. He has confidence in God. “Abraham drew near.” The Christian can understand it all, now that redemption has been accomplished, and sin has been judged, and we have been left, according to the word of God and the work of Christ, without a single spot or stain to arrest the eye of the Judge. Such is the efficacy of the blood in which we have been washed from our sins, even as we ourselves are a new creation in Christ before Him. But is there always in us, as here in Abraham, a real readiness to draw near to speak to our God? Are we happy in making due use of the privileges we possess? This is a serious question for our souls. We see how it was with the patriarch.

“He drew near,” and says, “Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” Now mark, it is no longer a question about himself, or about the son. The son was soon to come. All this was settled. He rests upon it, his heart is perfectly free. He has no longer a single want for himself—not one suit remains to be spread before Jehovah. His heart is drawn out in a spirit of grace, which answers to the grace of the Lord towards himself. He entreats Jehovah about others. He does not yet mention the one that no doubt lay heavily on his heart. His nephew was in Sodom. Lot was there. Who was there living that knew the faults of Lot better than Abraham? but Abraham entered, in his measure, into the feelings of God. For if faults, if blots, could have turned away the love of God, where should we be? Lot had done Abraham no little harm; he had been the source of considerable trouble. It was a case of risking life itself on one occasion never to be forgotten.

All this however made little or no difference to Abraham. But now he could only think in sorrow of Lot as in the very midst of the doomed city. We need not suppose that he had only mourned over Lot for the first time. Could it be an entirely new thought to Abraham that Sodom and Gomorrah were nests of wickedness, and utterly unfit for the sojourn of that righteous man, Lot? Why should he “vex his soul” there? It was certainly not God who had called him into it. Was the old man hankering after wealth or honor in town, as once for the well-watered plains of Jordan near it? He had not learned his lesson, and now a far more serious chastening was at hand. Now he was only going to be saved so as by fire. Soon must he abandon that seat of honor in the gate of Sodom he

too dearly loved. Lot must now taste the bitterness of what he had chosen. Whatever is our wrong must in the long run be our chastening.

But look at Abraham. “Wilt thou also destroy the righteous with the wicked?” All his heart is moved, now that he has a glimpse of the destruction so swiftly coming on the plains which had beguiled his kinsman. “Peradventure there be fifty righteous within the city, wilt thou also destroy, and not spare, the place for the fifty righteous that are therein?” Such is his plea with Jehovah. He pleads as one whose heart felt deeply; and when our hearts are engaged, the work is not done badly. That is the real secret of it. We may do things simply—and we cannot be too simple—but we see the mark clearly where the heart feels aright. It was so with Abraham. He intercedes earnestly and with perseverance, giving expression to that sentiment which the New Testament brings forward under the hand of the Apostle Paul— “Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?” Of course He will, and here we have the answer of grace: “Jehovah said, If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.”

Then Abraham ventures to take a little more courage, and brings his request down to forty-five, to forty, and to twenty. (Vers. 27-31.) At last he says, “Oh, let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak yet but this once. Peradventure ten shall be found there. And he said, I will not destroy it for ten's sake.” Why “this once?” Alas! our faith never reaches up to the grace of God. We weary and fail, not He. We get enough, through His grace, for our blessing, but rarely do we venture into its depths. Sound as we may, we certainly never get to the bottom. It was to be proved so here; for although the Lord answered to the full all that Abraham's faith and confidence in His grace essayed, His grace far exceeded, for it descended after all to that one person who lay on the heart of Abraham, though he had not the boldness to say so. But the Lord knew it; and while He surely did not spare that wicked place (and it was according to His righteous government that it should be made an example of divine judgment), none the less did He rescue that righteous soul, spite of his faults.

But I refer to this now in order to note the gracious effect on Abraham's spirit of being brought into the knowledge of God's mind about the future. For it issues not merely in prayer, but in intercession for others. It may be well to ask, beloved brethren, whether we are given to similar intercession, who know that the Lord is soon coming to judge the habitable earth? There are few persons in this room who do not know a great deal more of what is coming to pass on the earth than those who have the credit for learning and theology in this day of ours. We know how great are our shortcomings, and how little we know; but still, as a matter of undeniable fact, it is certain that we are accustomed to look into the future, that we are used in spirit, where God has removed the veil, to enter into that to which He points us. We have no doubt what is coming on the world, and on the different parts of the world, as clearly as if we saw it on a map—one painted blue, and another black. We know perfectly well that there is a land where the eyes of the Lord rest, and He will surely magnify His name. On the other hand, we know of other lands that shall be given up to desolation. The future is thus a matter of settled knowledge to us, though of course in different degrees.

But I ask again, what is the present effect of all on our souls? Does it draw us out in intercession? Are we pleading with the Lord? Ought it not to be, if we really believe what is coming to pass on the flower of Christendom? Has it engaged our hearts in intercession? Are we sufficiently alive to

the way in which God's children are at this moment dishonoring Him by unworthy, mistaken, unbelieving thoughts? or to the great danger from this to their souls? Can any of these things be without loss or peril to them? They are deeply injurious, these false expectations. This trifling with the word of God, this blotting out from the future of God's warning, have present consequences of the most serious kind; but do they stir our hearts in desire for the saints of God? We know of course, that nothing can stay the judgments that are coming on the ungodly, and that God will shelter the righteous in that day; but are our hearts going out to Him about His people? We see how Abraham interceded. The Lord give us to be like him! It supposes hearts at rest in His grace as to all that concern ourselves before Him. But that very grace gives us confidence in Him for others dear to Him; and their failures, or dangers, should draw out intercession; yet beyond all that we ask or think.

Abraham: Chapter 19

The connection of the solemn history which now opens before us is one of contrast, especially full of instruction for us who find ourselves on the eve of a judgment of incomparably larger extent. Our Lord Himself pointedly applies it no less than the catastrophe in the days of Noah to present warning. “And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; But the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.” (Luke 17:26-33.) It will be a judgment of God, not merely in providence, but directed by the Lord, and as none of the wicked shall understand, so shall none escape. It essentially differs from such scenes as the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, to which the commentators so perversely refer it. The intimation of verse 84 seems expressly added to refute such a notion. Let us turn to the fact, as scripture records them.

“And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing them, rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night. And he pressed upon them greatly; and they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat.” (Gen. 19:1-3.) Jehovah no longer deigns to accompany His messengers, nor visits Lot, like Abraham. He would have been ashamed to be called the God of Lot, who “sat in the gate of Sodom,” instead of running to meet them “from the tent door,” like his kinsman pilgrim. Yet was much in common: no less courtesy, perhaps, but a little hospitality. Nevertheless, we see a certain shrinking on the part of the angels, as we have already noticed the absence of Jehovah. Not even He, much less they, said Abraham Nay, or proposed to stay without. To Lot, even though it was, they decline his proffered shelter, and propose to abide in the street all night. At length they yield to his pressure, enter his house, and accept of his unleavened bread.

Their visit gives occasion to the open and unnatural depravity of the inhabitants, “both old and young, all the people from every quarter.” (Ver. 4.) They foam out their shame shamelessly (ver. 5). Lot goes forth to plead for his guests, to remonstrate with his fellow-townsmen (alas! he calls them “brethren"), and offer his two daughters (ver. 6-8). For he has lost the simplicity of faith, and instead of looking only to the Lord in this scene of difficulty, and danger, and surrounding wickedness, he chooses in worldly wisdom what he conceived the lesser of two evils. Could we expect better from a righteous Lot which “sat in the gate of Sodom?” “And they said, Stand back.

And they said again, This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge: now will we deal worse with thee than with them. And they pressed sore upon the man, even Lot, and came near to break the door." (Ver. 9.)

How often had Lot flattered and excused himself, as he gradually drew nearer to guilty Sodom, that his was the wise and right course, not like his exclusive uncle, Abraham? What is the use, what the duty, of a good man in the world, if not to improve it Was there not a haughty and self-righteous stiffness under the lowly guise of Abraham, who kept himself apart from all his neighbors in the land? Separate from the present world, he in his tent declared plainly that he was seeking a better (that is, a heavenly) country. But did not Lot's conscience ever smite him, lest under his assumption of a more active and benevolent zeal there might lurk an unjudged unbelief of God's estimate of the present, and promise of the future, which left room for the rank growth of covetousness, and the love of ease, honor, wealth, and power? Abraham had not a question as to God's favor and kindness, any more than as to His purpose of blessing and glory by-and-by: as little did: he doubt that the world, and, above all, the races in the midst of whom he pursued his stranger path, were damned to divine judgment, though there might be a defined delay in it; execution: Lot had no such clearness of vision. He anticipated better things. He had more confidence in human nature, more assurance of the moral influence of a good man like himself. He hears too late the rebuke of his folly from the lips of the most unclean in Sodom: "This one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge." They felt that a righteous man had no consistent place in their midst; and they were not so blind to his motives as himself. What had Lot gained, with his position, but vexation to his soul, as he saw from day to day their filthy conversation and lawless deeds? Certainly he had not pleased the Lord, whose will and lessons he had despised: how had he fared with the world to which he had held? How different it was with Abraham before the sons of Heth! (Chap. 23.)

But the hour of destruction was at hand for the cities of the plain; and when the miscreants came near to break the door, the angels "put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house to them, and shut to the door. And they smote the men that were at the door of the house with blindness, both small and great: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: But we will destroy this place, because the dry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and Spoke unto his sons-in-law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city. And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his Wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him; and they brought him forth, and set him without the city. And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed. And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord: Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, Which thou hast showed unto me in saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest sortie evil take me, and I die: Behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my

soul shall live. And he said unto him, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing also, that I will not overthrow this city, for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither; for I cannot do anything till thou be come thither. Therefore the name of the city was called Zoar. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt." (Vers. 11-26.)

Even in the hour of deliverance, it is humiliating to read how Lot "lingered," though he might not, like his wife, "look back," and become the lasting witness of the truth of the warning. No wonder there was no power in such a preacher of righteousness. Dwelling among the men of Sodom is the way neither to glorify God, nor to win their souls to the Savior. Even the last fatal night he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons-in-law," as we have seen what a storm he brought on himself from his townsmen. What a contrast with him of whom Jehovah said, "I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of Jehovah, to do justice and judgment; that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him !" Yet, to worldly philanthropy and wit, did Abraham seem a useless person in his day and generation; to faith he is the man of whom God said, and of whom faith is sure, "thou shalt be a blessing, and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Just so, there are many Lots; but where are those blessed, and a blessing, with faithful Abraham? If content to be less: we certainly sink below even this sad level, like Abraham's seed, who were not Abraham's children. (John 8) We may, in the pure and sovereign mercy of God, be "delivered" men, like Lot: but are we even now, like Abraham, men separate to the Lord, and knowing these things before? (2 Peter .) Is it enough for us to be snatched, as it were, out of the fire, when the word is, "we will destroy this place; Escape for thy life, lest thou also be consumed"? Or do we covet the portion (which indeed it is the Christian's shame not to covet) of being with the Lord before a sign of doom appears, morally far apart from all that cries for divine vengeance, sharing His mind who deigns to open His secrets, and treats us as His friends? Are we interceding for others in love, as Abraham, in chapter 18; or deprecating what we dread, as Lot, in chapter 19? "Oh, not so, my Lord; behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy which thou hast shewed unto me in saving my life, and escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die: behold now, this city is near to flee unto, and it is a little one: Oh, let me escape thither (is it not a little one?) and my soul shall live." So it is always. The saints who live like others in the world share the world's fears. Their prayers savor of its state. Its troubles oppress them, as its successes ensnare them. This did not Abraham. "The mountain," which was the source of fear to Lot, was the scene of communion between Jehovah and Abraham. There he had prayed, with touching importunity for the righteous endangered by the approaching judgment, and not in vain; for God did better than he asked. He did destroy the guilty cities, but He delivered less than ten righteous found there, righteous Lot himself, who was here begging (and not in vain) for the least city of the five.

And, now that the blow is struck, the difference between the heavenly-minded man and the earthly-minded is still kept up as strikingly as ever. "Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord: and he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all

the land of the plain, and beheld, and lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham, and sent Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in the which Lot dwelt. And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters." (Vers. 27-80.) Was not Abraham even here, where it could be least looked for, not only blessed but a blessing? Nothing could be done to Sodom and Gomorrah till Lot came to Zoar; but was it not for Abraham's sake? It was even then and there, because "God remembered" not Lot but "Abraham."

This then was the end of the place where Lot had lived and labored, or at least talked. He was as little in the secret of the Lord as the men of Sodom, though no doubt he was vexed, or rather (as scripture so pregnantly tells us) the righteous man vexed his righteous soul from day to day. But God never called Lot to Sodom, as He had called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees to Canaan. Abraham's groans were gracious, and had profitable fruit; Lot's were not without his own fault and torment, and barren even for himself. Abraham is attracted to the place where he had enjoyed the presence and converse of Jehovah, and looks down on the scene of desolation which attested in its solemn way what it is to hate the Lord, and what to love Him. And there Lot too goes up out of Zoar afraid to go at God's bidding when there was no ground for fear there, afraid longer to stay in Zoar, and not afraid to go where and when he had feared most of all, had he been aware into what a snare he was about to be caught by wine and women—alas! his own daughters. Such was the end of him who would needs be a judge in Sodom, but only the beginning of those who should inflict sorrowful results on the children of Abraham throughout their history, till that day come when Sodom's doom finds its antitype, and the Branch out of Jesse's roots shall reign, and Moab, with Edom, shall be the laying on of Israel's hand, and the sons of Ammon their obedience.

Abraham: Chapter 20

Nevertheless a signal time of favor and blessing may precede a great humiliation through unwatchfulness and sin. So it was now with Abraham, as he sojourned in the land of the Philistines. Was it that he too, as well as Lot, feared to abide under the shield of the Almighty in view of the scene of the recent judgments? This were to tempt God, as Israel in the desert when they questioned His presence in their midst and His care. Certain it is that he journeyed from where he once stood before Jehovah in intercession and a little later in awe-inspiring contemplation of the judged land of the plain whence the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace. Long before it the pinch of famine induced him to journey toward the south, even to Egypt, and to sojourn there. Now he dwells between Kadesh and Shur, and sojourns in Gerar; and now as then he denies his true relationship to his wife. “She is my sister” says Abraham of Sarah, among the Philistines, as at an early day he told her to say so among the Egyptians (Gen. 12:11-13; 20:1, 2). What! the father of the faithful? And this again, after all the times which had passed over him? Alas! “all flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the Spirit of Jehovah bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand forever.” No difference in this respect distinguished the first father of Israel. Abraham sinned now, like Adam at the beginning; and he who taught his wife to prevaricate before they entered Egypt falls into the like snare himself in Philistia.

Christ has never denied the church; though I would not weaken the warning that if we deny, He also will deny us; if we are unfaithful, He at least abides faithful, for He cannot deny Himself. But the church in spite of His warnings and His faithful love has denied her true relationship to Him, has denied it because of fear of the world or the world's seed that borders on the heavenly land, utterly failing in faith of His unseen presence and that power which would assuredly arm her where He did not call on her to glorify. Him in suffering or death.

But where sin abounded grace super-abounded. For if Abimelech king of Gerar sent and took Sarah, God came to him in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art a dead man for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is married to a husband. The Philistine king, however, could plead the sincerity of his heart and the innocency of his hands, identifying his people with himself. “Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?” Abraham and Sarah were both guilty of deceit. Yet is it to be noted that, while God allowed the plea, intimating indeed that He had kept the king from actual sin, He maintains the special place in which Abraham stood. “Now therefore restore the man his wife: for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine. Therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and called all his servants, and told all these things in their ears: and the men were sore afraid.” (Vers. 7, 8.) This is a principle in God's ways, and as evident in the New Testament as in the Old. Thus the Lord may reprove, however graciously, the Baptist who inquires through his disciples whether He was the Christ pointing simply to His irrefragable proofs; but He turns round and at once vindicates the place of honor given to John beyond all born of woman. So

here it was unquestionable that Abraham was wrong, and that far more grievously now than nearer the commencement of his course. Yet Abimelech must restore him his wife, “for he is a prophet and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live:” otherwise he must die with all his.

“Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What hast thou done unto us? and what have I offended thee, that thou hast brought on me and on my kingdom a great sin? thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that thou hast done this thing? And Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake. And yet indeed she is my sister; she is the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother; and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is thy kindness which thou shalt show onto me; at every place whither we shall come, say of me, He is my brother. And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and gave them unto Abraham, and restored him Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before thee: dwell where it pleaseth thee. And unto Sarah he said, Behold, I have given thy brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved. So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and his maidservants; and they bare children. For Jehovah had fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife.” (Vers. 9-18.) It is a sad picture when the believer has to own his fault as Abraham was now doing not only before Jehovah, but before the power of the world; and when his account of his motives is but the laying bare of unbelieving fears, the more guilty because the deception was planned and agreed on between man and wife. But when does one sin stand dime? and where is sin so ugly as in saints of God? It was an early fear, the root of it was not thoroughly judged is Egypt, and as lack of self-judgment exposed them to it in Gerar, so it was attended with severer abasement the second time than the first.

It is even so with the Christian. It is not that he who is bathed loses the virtue of that divinely given privilege: the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost are not at all the working of man's will, ephemeral as this is, but of God who begets sovereignly by the word of truth. But he does indeed need to wash his feet. Defilements from walking through the world must be removed; else one has no part with Christ. In His incomparable grace He thus keeps clean the cleansed, or removes whatever grieves the Holy Spirit. This Peter had to learn, though reluctant in his haste and folly, first in word, that the Lord should stoop so low for his sake and then in all the depth of the truth. How little did the disputing apostle anticipate that he would so soon feel his own need and bless his Master for the active constancy of His love! It is grace suited to the saint as necessary as that which the sinner wants. (1 John 2:1)

Here Abimelech restores Sarah to Abraham with many a sheep and ox, manservant and maid, and gives him express leave to dwell in the land where it was good in his eyes, yet not without a severe reproof to Sarah and indeed to her husband. The Philistine had paid his reparation price; but what a covering of the eyes had the husband been for the wife to all that were with her and with all others! Is it not humbling when the Gentile can thus justly rebuke the people of God for failure in holding fast their privileges till it ends in a breach of common truthfulness? Nevertheless God listened to the prayer of Abraham, and the judgment which had fallen on the house of Abimelech was removed. “When they went from one nation to, another, from one kingdom to

another, he suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved kings for their sakes, saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." If He was thus watchful of the children, He cared no less for their father. He would only relieve an Abimelech at the intercession of Abraham; but Abraham must first be put to shame before the Philistine, and make confession of the sin which had exposed him to the censure and rebuke of the uncircumcised. How often has fear of the world been thus a snare, and equivocation on the part of those who should have been a faithful witness (as being elect and called) thrown the portion of faith into the hands of the world to the confusion and danger of all! But God is faithful and knows how to extricate for His own name's sake those who should have walked in separation to Himself.

Abraham: Chapter 21

The power of God was now accomplishing what His mouth had promised, The child is born of Sarah, the son given to Abraham, type of Him, the Son, whom God sent forth, when the fullness of the time was come, to effect redemption, and be the center of all His purposes for heaven on earth, and the judge of all He will cast into hell.

“And Jehovah visited Sarah as he had said, and Jehovah did unto Sarah as he had spoken. For Sarah conceived, and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of his son that was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac. And Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him. And Abraham was an hundred years old when his son Isaac was born unto him. And Sarah said, God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me. And she” said, Who would have said unto Abraham, that Sarah should have given children suck? for I have born him a son in his old age.” (Vers. 1-7.)

Thus was Isaac's birth the occasion of joy in measure, as his very name imports, when Sarah laughed no more in unbelief, as once (Gen. 18:12-15), but in gladness of heart, as in the fellowship of all that hear of the goodness of the Lord. It is a lovely witness to the power of grace when faith thus gives the victory in what had been one's weakness, and sin, and shame. And so, if Abraham gives the name to his son, Sarah needs, no prophet, but explains the mind of God in it for herself, and forever.

But another sight of the family of faith is next vouchsafed to us. “And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking. Wherefore she said unto Abraham, Cast out this bondwoman and her son: for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac. And the thing was very grievous in Abraham's sight because of his son. And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bondwoman; in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called. And also of the son of the bondwoman will I make a nation, because he is thy seed.” (Vers. 8-13.) Of this incident, which our light hearts might quickly pass over, the Holy Ghost makes a great deal in the two Epistles of the New Testament, which either assert or vindicate the fundamental truth of justification by faith.

The first occurs in Gal. 4, where the apostle is convicting the bewitched Galatians of their folly in departing from grace to law. If they desired to be under the law, why not hear the law? The two sons of Abraham should have had a voice to every believer. One was by a slave, the other by a free woman; one born after the flesh, the other by promise, as the mothers answered to the two covenants, Jerusalem that was in bondage with her children, and Jerusalem which is above, the free mother of the free. But this, though much, is not all; for after citing from Isaiah a marvelous testimony to the reckoning of grace during the desolation of Jerusalem, the tale of the child of promise is again used to show (1) that as he that was born after the flesh then persecuted him that

was after the Spirit, so it is now; (2) that the sentence of scripture is, Cast out the bondmaid and her son; for the eon of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free-woman. Grace refuses partnership with law or flesh. The child of promise alone inherits.

It is the more instructive and important to note that in this transaction Abraham was weak, and Sarah strong. He did not give glory to God as she did; hence God called on Abraham to hearken to Sarah's voice, whatever might be the natural subjection of wife to husband—a subjection in which the Apostle Peter expressly cites this very Sarah as an admirable pattern to Christian women generally. But here the weaker vessel was by grace the stronger of the two, and Abraham must not regard Sarah's feeling as the mere affronted pride of the mistress who could not brook the airs of aspiring and mocking Ishmael. She was in the secret of Jehovah more deeply than her husband; while he was allowing unduly the claims of flesh, and was grieved at the proposal of expelling the bondmaid's son from the house...But so it must be according to God. Sarah was right. Her child was of promise, as the word was which declared Jehovah would return at the time appointee, and Sarah should have a son. It was not so with Hagar and Ishmael, though God would make a nation of him because he was Abraham’s seed,

But there must be liberty in the house for all that are of God, and no entangling with the yoke of bondage. Every remnant of law, world, and flesh must be expelled, and what was of promise alone abide. But is it all ever thus judged till the day of “a great feast?” Then comes the decisive moment, and what is of the flesh persecute what is of the Spirit, and grace gives the Sarahs to speak out, and God will have it heard and acted on, though an Abraham may be grieved: but then, and not till then, is the bondmaid cast out with her son. The Sinai covenant that genders to bondage and her child after the flesh can be no longer tolerated in the household of faith.

The second quotation is in Rom. 9:7. The apostle is combating the pretension of the Jews to enjoyment of the promises by natural or national descent, so as to exclude Gentiles. This he establishes in the most conclusive way by an appeal to Abraham's own seed, Ishmael. If the promise necessarily falls to the seed of Abraham as such, the Ishmaelites must be let in. As no Jew would allow of this, he must abandon his principle. It is a question of promise, not of fleshly descent but of His own sovereignty who had limited the call to Isaac. “In Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Sovereignty therefore is the only source of hope for Israel, which is reasoned out still more fully in the chapter, and applied to Jacob, to the exclusion of Esau, though of the same mother as well as father, and even twins. But the same sovereignty of God is shown to be the sole resource for Israel at Mount Sinai, when all else had been ruin for the people as a whole by their worship of the golden calf: so completely were they silenced on the score of their own righteousness. Driven thus from the ground of law, as well as of lineal descent, on what could they fall back? On the sovereign mercy of God. This alone did, or could, save a sinner or a sinful people in entire accordance with Ex. 33:19; but if they owned this, who were they to dispute that sovereignty calling Gentiles too, as indeed the prophets expressly declare that He would, when Israel became for a season Lo-ammi by their idolatry and their rejection of Messiah? But here we go beyond the passage which has given occasion to the apostolic argument. Still, looked at in the narrowest point of view, how fruitful is scripture, and how marvelously does He who wrote in the Old Testament use the facts and words in the New Testament! How self-evidently divine are both! Ishmael, like Israel after the flesh, cannot take the inheritance by law, but are cast out, though preserved of God.

It does not come within my present scope to dwell on God's dealings with Hagar, the comfort He gave her then and afterward as to Ishmael, or his subsequent history (vers. 14-21); though we may notice in passing that, as the bondmaid mother was an Egyptian, so the wife she took her son was out of the land of Egypt: law, flesh, and world go together.

But in the next section we see Abraham in his true place and dignity. “And it came to pass at that time, that Abimelech and Pichol the chief captain of his host spake unto Abraham, saying, God is with thee in all that thou doest: now therefore swear unto me here by God that thou wilt not deal falsely with me, nor with my son, nor with my son's son; but according to the kindness that I have done unto thee, thou shalt do unto me, and to the land wherein thou hast sojourned. And Abraham said, I will swear. And Abraham reproved Abimelech because of a well of water, which Abimelech's servants had violently taken away. And Abimelech said, I wot not who hath done this thing; neither didst thou tell me, neither yet heard I of it, but today. And Abraham took sheep and oxen, and gave them unto Abimelech; and both of them made a covenant. And Abraham set seven ewe lambs of the flock by themselves. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What mean these seven ewe lambs which thou hast set by themselves? And he said, For these seven ewe lambs shalt thou take of my hand, that they may be a witness unto me that I have digged this well. Wherefore he called that place Beer-sheba; because there they sware both of them. Thus they made a covenant at Beer-sheba: then Abimelech rose up, and Phichol the chief captain of his host, and they returned into the land of the Philistines.” (Vers. 22-32.) The servant abides not in the house forever: Ishmael and his mother are dismissed. The son abides ever: Isaac is there, the heir of all. The Gentile king, who once inspired Abraham with guilty fear, and became the occasion of a foul snare, not only seeks favor of the father of the faithful but is himself reproved. The power of the world acknowledges God to be with Abraham, and asks for a covenant between them. (Compare Zech. 8:23.) Earthly righteousness is now asserted, as before we saw heavenly long-suffering, save where a corresponding pledge of the coming kingdom came before us in Gen. 14, which concluded that series, as this concludes the later series. Here therefore the well of the oath is recovered and secured, and a grove or orchard is planted there, for the wilderness shall be glad, and the desert blossom as the lily; yea, there shall break out water and brooks, and there shall walk the redeemed. And Abraham “called there on the name of Jehovah, the everlasting God. And Abraham sojourned in the Philistines' land many days.” (Vers. 83, 34.) He is in type no longer the pilgrim, but the head of the nations, and heir of the world.

Chapter 35

The Blood of the Lamb

(Ex. 12)

On the paschal night, when Jehovah struck the firstborn of the Egyptians, and passed over those of Israel, a groundwork was laid for the deliverance of Israel from their bondage to Pharaoh, a lively image of Christ, the Passover sacrificed for us; for we were slaves of Satan, as Pharaoh, king of Egypt, was prince of this world, and the people of God his bondmen. But God was taking notice of the state of His people, visiting them, and about to deliver them.

In one sense Satan has rights over us as sinners, and the justice of God is against us, because He had said, In the day that thou eatest [of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil] thou shalt surely die. Thus Satan can accuse man, though he had said on the contrary, Ye shall not surely die; your case is not so utterly desperate as those Christians say. Satan is always the same liar as he was. God cannot say to the sinner as such, Thou shalt not die; but to deliver He must take notice of sin, and lay a righteous foundation, of which faith can avail itself by grace.

Pharaoh had power enough to keep the Israelites, and the more as they were accustomed to slavery, and latterly of the bitterest kind. Pharaoh had no real rights, any more than Satan. Meanwhile he deceives. Such is the state of the world. This is so trite that, the higher one's place is in the world, the more one is really enslaved. A poor man may do many things in the street without any one taking notice of it: the rich man dares not to wound its conventionalities and usages. Our will contributes also to our slavery. If one were to tell us that we are directed, led, retained by Satan, we should not agree to it. In fact he employs the things of the world to drag us into sin. Judas was drawn into his sin because he loved money. Satan entered into his heart to harden his conscience, and to strengthen him in sin, by taking away from him all hope of the mercy of God. Thus there is first the lust, or desire; next the enemy furnishes the occasion or moans of satisfying it; then he enters into us. Satan tries to retort the sin on others, and teaches us to do the same. So Adam said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat, making of his heart an excuse for what his hand had done.

In Egypt Israel became the object of controversy between God and Pharaoh, who represents Satan. The enemy says God has no right to claim them, for they are sinners. It is true that they are sinners; and it is necessary that man should completely bow to the justice of God which condemns him. If one is convinced of being lost, it is impossible that one should. not seek salvation, perhaps blindly; still one seeks it every time that conscience is awakened. Without this, people content themselves with saying that God is good, that is, that He must take no account of sin. But ought God to make heaven like what the world is? And is not this just what would be if sin were to enter heaven? Could one give a measure to indicate up to what, and how much, people might sin? But our consciences also accuse and tell us that we cannot get rid of sin; and sin begets death.

God has already been dishonored by sin, and it is in this world from day to day that God is yet dishonored. It is here, on the earth, that the angels learn what it is that God is dishonored. It is

here that we see Satan degrade all the creation.

Jehovah says (vers. 12, 13), “I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast, and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am Jehovah. And the blood shall be unto you for a token upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” This was not the deliverance of Israel, like the passage of the Red Sea, but it was the ground of it; and of the two the passover was really the more solemn morally, though the Red Sea displayed God's saving power more gloriously on behalf of His people and against their foes. But on the paschal night it was a question how God could pass over the guilty, even if His people; and the blood of the lamb sprinkled on Israel's doorposts declared that God, though expressly judging, could not touch those screened thereby. His truth and justice were stayed and satisfied before that blood. The destroyer was kept from entering. Not an Israelite perished within the blood-sprinkled lintels. It was a question of arresting God's judgment here, of destroying power in the type of the Red Sea; but the blood of Christ laid the foundation for the victory displayed in His resurrection.

Once the Red Sea is crossed, Israel are pursued no more. They are redeemed—they can sing. It was not so when they supped on the lamb in Egypt; yet were they screened from God's judgment of their evil. Their deliverance from Pharaoh followed.

But must not I see the blood? says many a distressed soul. It is well for me to estimate its value aright, and growingly; but no person could have solid peace on this ground. Nor was it what God told His people. It was indeed a token to them; but their assurance was built on this, that “when I [Jehovah] see the blood, I will pass over you.” The Israelite's business was not to look at it for his safety, but to keep within the shelter of the sprinkled blood to which God had thus pledged Himself. It is He who sees the blood and passes over. God alone estimates perfectly the blood of the Lamb; and faith means not our estimate of it, but our confidence in Him. The blood is the token which recalls to us the love of God, as well as His righteousness, but what is shed for sin looks to God and is for God to look on.

Christ thus presents God to us under three aspects: His righteousness that strikes the substitute for us; His love that provides the Lamb for us; and His glory that has raised Him up when all was clear for us. There is thus entire deliverance. We are in Christ before God. The greatest expression of divine hatred of sin is found in His cross. The stroke of judgment fell; the thunder and lightning are exhausted; the sky is pure and calm for those who believe.

But he who is under the shelter of the Lamb's blood must eat of the Lamb's body. It is no question of appetite for it. Doubtless he who has appetite for it enjoys more; and it is so much the worse for him who cares not for it. But it is no condition to do so. What accompanies the act of eating the lamb is the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread. On the one hand repentance attends faith and characterizes the new life, as it takes cognizance of all one has done and is; and in Christ one tastes, on the other hand, of what is absolutely without sin. One delights in the holy One; one judges self, and it is a bitter thing.

There is need also of having the loins girt, shoes on the feet, and staff in hand. The attitude of strangers and pilgrims is the only one for those who are under the blood of the lamb. Whilst we are

here in the world, we cannot let out all that is within. There is danger within and without. We must be ever on the alert and watch. We have no longer a home in the Egypt world. We are bound for the heavenly land. But we are no more slaves. It is the Lord's passover we are keeping, and we are His forever, though not yet in the rest that remains but only on the way, while in another sense we are seated in Him in heavenly places.

The fact that the passover was to be eaten at night and burnt, or nothing left to the morning, seems to intimate that it was entirely apart from the whole course and scene in which nature and sense are conversant, a matter between God and the soul, abstractedly in the undistracted claim and holiness of the divine nature. No circumstances entered into it, no question of compassionate apprehension of sin and misery. It was sin, and the holy judgment of God, where nothing else was.

So, as a sign of this deep and infinite truth, all was darkness for three hours with Christ: nature hidden; all between God and Him.

Then all was to be burnt. There was no mixing the lamb with anything common. Israel were sanctified by it, like the priests; so that they ate it; but it could not be mixed with other food.

Chapter 36

Christ the Door of the Sheep

Being Notes of A Discourse on John 10:1-10.

It is on the latter words of the Lord Jesus in the passage just read I wish to say a little at this time. What did. He mean the souls who then heard, or those who afterward should hear, to gather from the remarkable clause, “I am the door of the sheep"?

There is a change in the employment of the words. In verse 2 He represents Himself as the Shepherd, but does not yet call Himself the good Shepherd. He takes up a well-known figure of the Old Testament in which the kings of Israel were frequently designated their shepherds, the Messiah of course pre-eminently.

In this part of the chapter accordingly speaks of the sheepfold. There is not as yet an allusion as in verse 16 to the sheep which do not belong to the Jewish nation: “them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice, and there shall be one flock [not, as is familiarly known, “one fold"], one shepherd.” Those who conceive (and it is a general error) that there is now a “fold” go back in heart and mind to Judaism. The Lord has really a flock in immediate relationship to Himself. The Jewish sheep, as He tells us, He would lead out, others pot of it He would join with them; and these should form not two companies, but one flock round the one Shepherd.

The chapter begins with telling us how the Lord first in the case of Israel showed He was really the Shepherd. He had come in by the door, in the appointed way, at the proper time, and subject to all divine ordinances. So when to be baptized by John He says, “thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.” Afterward He performed the miracles and manifested that character of mission which the prophets had predicted. He had come in by the door as the Shepherd, He only; others might claim it, but they were thieves and robbers. Not that some before the Lord Jesus had not sought the good of Israel. Josiah, Hezekiah, Jehoshaphat, David, were far from being thieves and robbers; but they were witnesses to the coming Messiah, not usurpers. But those who had claimed the sheep as their own while in truth they were god's, what could they be called but thieves and robbers? And the Messiah was very jealous, as was Jehovah, over Israel, His people reserved for His Shepherd. But now Messiah was come, and they alas! have refused Him. The blind man had been cast out, because he, no longer blind, confessed Him. Some in the same hatred had before this taken up stones to stone the Son of God. In spirit He, rejected Himself, was now leading His sheep out. That murderous prelude on the part of His people was but an anticipation of His own death; and as with him once blind who now saw, so it would be with all who worshipped Him. Jesus would lead His own outside the world's religion. It was no question of staying to improve or reform, as think the infidel school of progress in every age; grace was calling out from what is sentenced to judgment. He was not going to work now as they expected. Israel's blessing and the glory of the earth await another day. A yet deeper task was in hand to be sealed in His blood. Therefore He would lead the sheep out and go before them Himself. He show s Himself as the Shepherd come in the due and long predicted manner which God's word had led them to expect, as the Seed of the woman and of Abraham, as the Son of David and of man. He had seen their

hatred of Him and His Father, and this would be soon apparent in His cross. There was no course but one open to Him; and He was not only going outside the fold but about to lead His own out too. The blind man who now saw was cast out by men blinder than himself to be with Jesus.

The sheep follow Him; for they know His voice. A stranger will they not follow; for they know not the voice of strangers. The ears of Israel were heavy; they could not understand. Yet there is not a hard word in what the Lord uttered, Why is it that people, then as now, do not understand the scriptures? Not really because of difficult expressions. It is the truth that grates on the reluctant will of man. This is the source of all unbelief. It is resistance of the will to face the terrible fact of man's ruin; it is the pride that rejects God's grace and will not bend to one's own need of it. Hence the guilt of unbelief, not because man has a feeble understanding, but because he fears not God and believes not His love. Yet is not the truth good in itself and, full of goodness to man spite of his evil? Is it not the only means of blessing, or of salvation? Is it not by the word of God that he is begotten, and nourished, that he can serve, enjoy, or worship God? be happy with Him now and forever? Why then does not man love it? Because he has departed from God and refuses to return in God's way. He indulges himself in the fond delusion that he would like some time if not now to serve God; but he really likes nothing but His own will. Yet if God is to be served at all, it must be according to His will, which alone is holy and good. But there is a deeper question than of his serving God. Some souls before me may flatter themselves that they would rejoice to serve God; but are they willing to take the place of having no good thing in them, of being lost and not merely in danger? not merely that they have done evil in the sight of God, but that they are all wrong before Him? It is a serious thing when the heart of man bows to the solemn sentence of God, when one stands and confesses oneself lost before the God whose love and will have been slighted habitually. What then is to become of the soul? what of the body when resurrection to judgment comes?

Such then was the state of Israel, the fold: the Shepherd was obliged to go outside. The test that any were His own was that they heard and knew His voice. The crisis was at hand: when He has put forth all His own, He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him. It was the sentence of death on the best religion of the earth. The only persons who can boast of divine religion for the nation are the Jews; but here, solemn to say, the Lord virtually sentences the Jews, and their religion. In the fullest love to them already had He gone into the fold; and they would not hear Him; so He goes out and leads His own out after Him. He always takes the first place, in sorrow as in all else; in the deepest of all He suffers for them, just for unjust. Then He goes before His own sheep, whom He knows by name and leads out.

In truth all is in ruins, the world and man; the true Light has been put out, as far as man could. God Himself who came in love is gone. They felt not the sin. They believed neither His glory nor His grace. They could not understand His words; nay how few did even the disciples then understand! It was not merely the Jews who were blind and deaf: the disciples were half Jews and half blind still. Men do not understand what they do not like, not because there is not adequate, yea, abundant light vouchsafed of God, but because their own will is at work, producing darkness in the heart. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.” It is an unerring test: with Christ the object, our soul is full of light. Have I darkness as to this or that? If so, and so far, my eye is not single. Why do I say it but because it is the truth, and that you and I may look to Him who alone enlightens and makes us light? In vain look for divine light till you receive Him, and rest on Him,

who will show what He is for you and to you in the smallest need of every day, as in the greatest for eternity.

But there is more than this that follows (ver. 7): the Lord Jesus takes an entirely new place now outside Israel. He introduces this truth in the same solemn manner, not the sentence of death on Judaism, but the opening out of life and salvation to sinners. “Verily, verily [says Jesus], I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.... by me if any man, enter in, he shall be saved.” How blessed! He speaks to the same souls. What love! to the souls who could not understand Him! If the true Messiah was going outside His ancient people He would save sinners. Ah! they were sinners, and till the sinner feels that he is a sinner, he feels nothing aright, least of all as to God or His Son.

This is the beginning of wisdom. The first lesson of goodness is that I know and confess my badness. Nothing a man likes so little as to know and own that he is good for nothing before God; the grace that came by Him who is full of grace alone effects it in any. It is most true that I cannot have true faith in Christ unless I repent toward God. Never seek to divorce the one from the other. It is not only a human error but a snare of Satan for simple souls, where they are severed, for God has joined them in receiving the gospel. God would have souls feel and confess their sins. Repentance is when a soul no longer ignores God, cheating itself as to its own evil; he repents who by grace is willing to receive God's sentence on his own sinfulness in the sight of God. What a change! It is a man who abandons himself, because of his evil as judged by God, and looks with horror on himself as before Him,

Christ is the test of this as of all else. Thus in the case before us what could be worse in His sight than the self-will that refused to receive the Messiah? They did not like Him when they knew Him after a sort; they would have liked one to flatter them, and give them power and glory, making them the most exalted people on earth and crushing all their enemies. This will all come in due time from God, who will yet raise Israel from their fallen estate and put them on the pinnacle of greatness. But they as we must be put down first in their own eyes as sinners. By-and-by they will be brought to God; they will then own that they pierced Him, that it was their guilt though by lawless hands of others. In fact no man can have the blessedness of the truth or the grace of God unless he bows to Jesus as himself a sinner. This is the necessary controversy of God with every soul of man as he is. It is not faith to confess truth in an abstract manner, though in this way Satan often cheats souls. They own the forgiveness of sins in a creed, or as a dogma; but are they forgiven? They do not pretend to any such thing; it would be presumptuous on their part! O senseless souls in the face of God's express message! Faith feels the truth about itself more deeply than about others. Unless I believe the reality of God's grace and truth for my own soul, it is worse than a form. It is the hour when God will have reality. (John 4) The Lord had come to the fold, the place of forms; but He has led His own out, and He must have them in the truth. True worshippers, they must worship God in spirit and in truth.

The reason souls are not really saved is that they are not in the truth for their own soul's need. I must meet God about my sins in this world or at the judgment-seat. No man can be saved in the day of judgment. It is in the place of my sins I must find salvation; where I am lost, I must be saved; where I have been an enemy of God, I must be reconciled to Him. The Savior is come, yea is gone again, and the work is done. What would not Israel give to know it! Their eyes are blinded and they see Him not. They are strangers to Him; not His sheep, they did not know His voice.

There they remain outside, waiting for the Messiah who is come. They know not that the Victim has been offered, and is accepted on high. We by grace have believed without seeing, and know that, His blood having been shed for sin, He is gone into the holiest of all.

Thus, if the Lord opens a new figure, it is for a new truth. “I am the door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” Whosoever pretends to bring man to God, to step between God and souls on earth, to claim Israel, the church or any souls as his own, as his people and his flock, is a thief and a robber. What! man stand between souls and God! Is he not himself a sinner? Does he not need salvation? “All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers.” Jesus is the door. He gives us to see what He was about to do after leaving the fold; He would save sinners. Now accordingly the door is open to any. “By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” Grace and truth came by Him; man has neither. And the law can only condemn him; for he is a sinner. He needs salvation. It is no longer a question of being schooled even by the law of God; man is too far gone. As long as there is life, he will tell you, there is hope. But man has not life toward God. Earthly religion may try to remedy the disease by keeping up hopes before mankind; but it is all vain; for the patient is dead. There is no hope, no life for man in his natural state; and he has proved it by rejecting the Son of God. But if His death be the great sin man has done, it is the infinite grace of God there to meet him in the gospel. “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” There is more than hope now, there is present salvation in Christ. There is in Him everlasting life. Those who believe, as He declares, shall never perish.

Do you draw back fearing this is too great grace? Who then, and what are you to give God the lie? If you are a great sinner, is not the Son of God a far greater Savior? Are you afraid to trust Him? Afraid to trust your soul in the hands of Him who died for sinners and rose again? It is the express mission of the Son of man to seek and to save that which is lost. Granted that man is dead; but is not Jesus the quickener of the dead? By-and-by He will raise the body. Now it is the hour of quickening the dead who hear His voice. He quickens the soul, and brings salvation. When He comes again, He will change the body into the likeness of His glorious body; Now He blesses the soul. How proper is the order! How blessed for those who repent and believe the gospel; but how dreadful for sinners to be raised sinners, raised for eternal judgment, raised to be cast into the lake of fire! But He is now come to save, having done the work needful for it.

Thus is Christ the door; and now, thanks be to God, you are invited to enter. Will you not come in? He is calling; do you not hear His voice? He may have much for you to do when you enter. He gives each of His servants his work. He leads even now into more and deeper blessing. But if you have not come in, this is not what you want. The sinner cannot serve the Lord till He has served the sinner—till He has saved him. Why then do you hesitate? To delay is most dangerous. It is now loss incalculable; it may be ruin irretrievable.

I do call on you to weigh with all seriousness these words of Jesus which evidently apply after He left the Jewish fold. He speaks as the rejected Son, He was going to the cross. He knew all that was coming, He required no prophecy about Himself, or God, or man. “Lord,” said Peter, “thou knowest all things;” and so He did—all things; excepting only, where as servant He waited for the word of His Father. (Mark 13:32.)

I invite and urge you then to believe in His name on God's testimony. He is the Savior, the only Savior of sinners; and you need a Savior. Believe Him to be what He is. Rest on the work He has

done. The Savior and work will perfectly suit your need, as they do the glory of God. Were He one hair's breadth less than He is, I could not trust Him for either. He could neither have glorified God nor save sinners. But the truth is that there is an infinite distance between Him and the highest of creatures, were it Gabriel and Michael themselves. For they are creatures and He is the Creator. He is God, even as the Father and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead; whatever be the difference of person and of function, scripture is plain. Man is blind and unbelieving; and the worse, the less he suspects it.

Such then is the Savior: can you trust Him? Seeing that the Creator of all the world came to save from sin, yea became Himself a man to save them righteously by His death for their sins on the cross, do you hesitate? Had it been only man, there could be no salvation, as far as such an one was concerned; but He that was God became man in order to it. No doubt He was Messiah and rejected. But God turns His rejection to our salvation, and opens the door to sinners. It is no question now of a Messiah for the Jew, but of a Savior. And are there not some here awakening to His voice, some souls that answer to Jesus? Is He not now saying, “By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved?” For what is He as the door? Does He refuse any? Not one. “Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” He invites you. “By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” He is not looking for qualities of which He approves, but for sinners that need Him to save them; and there is no man now who hears His voice and remains outside but because of the self-will that refuses to bow to His word. Salvation and every other needed blessing are in Him. The first call of God, the first obligation of man is to believe in Him; the first blessing for my soul is to have life in Him and be saved.

Shall I tell you why men say no man can know that he is saved? They think that God is such an one as themselves. They attenuate Christ's glory, seeing neither His person nor His work. When He bore God's judgment of sin on the cross, did He procure an uncertain salvation? Let none say so who fear God or honor Jesus. How could a divine person fail? It is His glory, at all cost to Himself, to bring in perfect salvation, and this He now gives freely to the believer. To bless is what God loves. Only sin made Him a judge. He does not judge His counsels, nor salvation, nor the saved. Judgment has been borne by Christ for the believer. And the Spirit seals them, instead of doubting them. Thus does He fill the heavens even now with due praise and adoration. God is love and light, not a judge, in His own nature; but He will deal with all that is contrary to His nature, and so much the more solemnly with those who prefer self and sin to Christ. Judgment will be Christ's vindication on the unbeliever and ungodly, whatever grace may do at the end of this age.

In point of fact, if an unconverted man were brought to heaven, no place would be so irksome to him. It is so now to be where others sing of Christ and pray, and you are anxious above all to get away and have done with it. What would heaven be to you with not one feeling in harmony with Him whom all praise there? No place could be so unsuited to the sinner.

How can one then be fitted for heaven? “By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” What is implied in salvation? Two things at least, whatever more may be: a new and eternal life, and a propitiation for my sins. That life you cannot win, and no creature can give it you. Shame on those besotted enough to say, even if they do not believe, that water sprinkled on one can give life? Do they not accept a fiction as baseless, and if it be rested on quite as ruinous as his wafer-god is to the poor papist? If the one trifles with the Lord Jesus, the other surely does with the Holy Spirit. But

no: in Christ is life. Here is the Shepherd, here is the door, here is salvation. The only boast then is in Him and His cross. And no wonder; for He is the alone worthy One and your Savior. We hear and know His voice, we know not the voice of strangers, nor follow them. The propitiation too is once for all in the Savior's blood. The mass, or anything equivalent, is Satan's cheat for it.

Oh fear not, doubting one, to trust in what He has shed to blot out every sin. Are you not hindered by those around you who believe not? Do you not slip into their thoughts and words? To have the dead with the living is a dreadful combination. It was so in the Jewish fold; but Jesus led His own out. Go not back to that which He has left forever. You that have come out to Him, cleave to Him; know that the only security is Himself, the one joy of saints is to be with Him. He not only has life in His own person, but He died that He might give that life to sinners. Sin must have been an everlasting barrier, but He died for it. Here is the One to look to and confide in; and He invites you. “By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” There is no question as to the result; you have the positive word of Jesus for it. Do you believe in Him? Can you not trust the testimony of God who sent Him and raised Him from the dead? This is the One I commend to you. Rest all your weight on what He is; you can trust Him. He has suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust (without this all were vain), that He might bring us to God. This blessing comes not when we die but now in this world when we believe the gospel.

Ineffable blessedness! to be brought to the God I dreaded, left, and was cast out from! And is every barrier removed? It is, God says so, and who knows as He? But again, if I believe, there is nobody that I know like God, not even my wife or my child, He alone has told me all His heart; and I am sure of God, not of any other: my best friend may fail me, He never will. And Christ makes Him know He is the One God calls me to confide all to. He gives life to me; He died for me: the moment you believe, life in Him is yours. It is altogether wrong to think life-giving is a process, though the conviction of it may be. But to have life eternal is the simple consequence of faith in Christ. How do I know? He says it Himself, and there is nothing so good or true or sure as the word of Jesus. It is most humbling too, for it makes everything of Him and nothing of me or of any other child of Adam. Is not this as it should be? Or are you not prepared for it? Beware of dishonoring Him.

Man likes to be occupied with himself. If I receive life, propitiation, salvation, yea, all in Christ, is it not the annihilation of self? He is faithful too, and will make all real and living in the soul of the believer. Let your heart then be occupied with Him. It is a false gospel that sends you to look at yourself for proof of life. If God tells me to look at myself, it is to humble me. It is reversing the gospel, to judge of His grace or of my standing by myself. If God gives blessing, He wishes it to be enjoyed. People in this world seem to grudge what they do for others. Indeed it was the Greek or heathen idea of God, that He was jealous of man's happiness. The true God delights in the happiness of those He has called; and though men have sinned irreparably in the death of Christ by their lawless hands, it is by that death He blesses any in His own mercy, and this righteously. The moment I look to Jesus and His blood at God's word, my sins are gone. And this is only the beginning of the Christian's career.

But, besides salvation, there is another rich blessing— “he shall go in and out.” The truth makes free, the Son makes free. It is the essence of Christianity-liberty to do as God likes. It supposes responsibility to Christ. I am Christ's bondsman, but free to serve Him. You who look to Jesus, are

not you at liberty also? Do you say that you are still tied and bound with the chain of your sins? Such is not the Christian state but rather a denial of it. “He shall go in and out.” This is the liberty in which we ought to stand fast: so says the apostle to the Galatians who had let it slip. Anything short of it is not Christianity, though it may be the state of souls born of God. It is not merely your gain or loss that is in question, but the Lord's glory. For God has Christ before Him, and He blesses you by leading you to think of Christ as He does. Nor can you duly serve as Christ's bondsman unless you know what it is to be His freeman. It is liberty to please the Lord, no longer like the Israelite under law, still less bound to the world or its conventionalities, its hopes or its fears, its pursuits or its pleasures. We are free to serve Christ, delighting in Him now. Having heard His voice, we shall serve Him in a changed body on high, as well as in these bodies made the temple of God by the Spirit dwelling in them.

But the Lord adds that the believer shall “find pasture.” He will feed us according to His own heart. “For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.” We need to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But He will surely see to it and does. What a blessing to have such an One to care for us! This is the Savior I call on you to believe in and to confess. You that confide in the Christ of God, will you not confess Him? There is not for a starting-point a sound from a man's heart so sweet as a poor sinner's confession of the Savior when he casts himself upon His grace and God's free justification through His blood.

May the Lord make it yours even now. His forever, may we serve Him, seeking only to do His will: He will show you how, for you will hear His voice, as you follow Him. He will care for you, as He binds Himself to give not only salvation but liberty and pasture. “He 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?” “Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come: all are yours; and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's.”

Chapter 37

Dr. Lightfoot on Christian Ministry

This is a dissertation of 86 pages on the Christian ministry, appended to a revised text and comment on the Epistle to the Philippians.

It is an industrious and sufficiently exhaustive treatise on the origin and progress of episcopacy. Dr. L. repeatedly demurs at the office considered uniquely, much more at the order of bishops being found in the word of God.

He derives it, as most modern authors do, from a presidency—a primes inter pares—originally and perhaps necessarily given by the presbytery itself to some one of its members, which afterward developed itself first into the office of a bishop, then into the right of ordination, and eventually into sacerdotalism, in which form it at present exists. As this is an important question of the day, we shall briefly pursue the line, not of argument, but of history, followed by the author, and state wherein we think he fails as to his acceptance of the office or order in its present circumstances, and as to a real discrimination of what true ministry is.

Not only do we need no better witness than Dr. Lightfoot for the fact that episcopacy as an order, distinct in itself from the presbytery, is not of God; but also we could not have a more explicit testimony, as to the time at which the change was made. It was between the closing of the canon of scripture, and the period in the writings of the early Christian fathers, namely, from about the year A. D. 70 to the beginning or middle of the second century. Let us bear what Dr. L. says on the subject. “History seems to show decisively that before the middle of the second century, each church or organized Christian community had its three orders of ministers, its bishop, its presbyters, and its deacons.” (Page 184.) Again, “As late therefore as the year 70, no distinct signs of episcopal government have hitherto appeared in Gentile Christendom. Yet unless we have recourse to a sweeping condemnation of received documents, it seems vain to deny that early in the second century, the episcopal office was firmly and widely established. Thus during the last three decades of the first century, and consequently during the lifetime of the latest surviving apostle, this change must have been brought about.” (Page 199.)

Again: “Nor does it appear that the rise of episcopacy was so sudden and so immediate, that an authoritative order issuing from an apostolic council alone can explain the phenomenon. In the mysterious period which comprises the last thirty years of the first century, and on which history is almost silent, episcopacy must, it is true, have been mainly developed.” (Pages 203-204.) Once more: “In this way, during the historical blank which extends over half a century after the fall of Jerusalem, episcopacy was matured, and the catholic church consolidated.” (Page 205.)

Nothing more need be added to these extracts to show that, when church history opened, a departure had already taken place from scriptural order. “The bishops [or presbyters] and deacons” of Phil. 1:1, and the elders or presbyters of Peter (1 Peter 5:1-3) which was the apostolic order, had changed into bishops, presbyters, and deacons. However lightly, as will be seen farther on, Dr. L. may think of this change, to our mind it exhibits a grievous departure from scripture truth.

Two circumstances appear to satisfy Dr. L. or to reconcile him to the change. The first is that he thinks James the Lord's brother to have been a bishop “in the later and more special sense of the term.” (Page 195.) Again: “The church of Jerusalem, as I have already pointed out, presents the earliest instance of a bishop. A certain official prominence is assigned to James the Lord's brother, both in the Epistles of St. Paul, and in the Acts of the Apostles. And the inference drawn from the notices on the canonical scriptures is borne out by the tradition of the next ages. As early as the middle of the second century all parties concurred in representing him as a bishop in the strict sense of the term.” Again: “Hegosippus who is our authority for this statement (namely, that Symeon was appointed in his place) distinctly regards Symeon as holding the same office with James, and no less distinctly calls him a bishop.” (Page 206.)

This occurred of course in the church at Jerusalem. As to the rise of the office among the Gentiles, he supposes that it took place in Asia Minor under the auspices of the Apostle John he writes: “Above all these notices establish this result clearly, that its maturer forms are seen first in those regions where the latest surviving apostles (more especially John) fixed their abode, and at a time when its prevalence cannot be dissociated from their influence or their sanction.” Without a trace of it in his writings, nay, with much in them against such a supposition, it is thus traditionally affirmed that John the apostle had a hand in the establishment of episcopacy. This is serious, because it connects tradition with an apostle, and throws us off his inspired writings, in which latter alone we ought to find an unerring guide. It is thus that Dr. L. evidently connects himself with an apostolic succession. We must again allow him to speak for himself.

“Here we find (that is, in Asia Minor) the widest and most unequivocal traces of episcopacy at an early date. Clement of Alexandria distinctly states that John went about from city to city, his purpose being in some places to establish bishops, in others to consolidate whole churches, in others again to appoint to the clerical office some one of those who had been signified by the Spirit; and much more to this effect from the works of those fathers who had notoriously imbibed episcopacy, their writings being full of the subject.”

Now if James and John be thus brought in as sanctioning episcopacy, is it not well with a view to check such assertions to examine their writings? Do they verify such a statement as the following? “Nor again is Rothe probably wrong as to the authority mainly instrumental in effecting the change. Asia Minor was the adopted home of more than one apostle after the fall of Jerusalem. Asia Minor too was the nurse, if not the mother, of episcopacy in the Gentile churches. So important an institution, developed in a Christian community of which John was the living center and guide, could hardly have grown up without his sanction: and, as will be presently seen, early tradition very distinctly connects his name with the appointment of bishops in these parts.” (Page 204.) Once more: “We have seen that the needs of the church and the ascendancy of his personal character placed James at the head of the Christian brotherhood in Jerusalem. Though remaining a member of the presbyterial council, he was singled out from the rest, and placed in a position of superior responsibility. His exact power it is impossible, and it is unnecessary, to define. When therefore after the fall of the city, John with the surviving apostles removed to Asia Minor, and found there manifold irregularities, and threatening symptoms of disruption, he would not unnaturally encourage an approach in these Gentile churches to the same organization, which had been signally blessed, and proved effectual in holding together the mother church amid dangers not less serious. The existence of a council or college necessarily supposes a presidency of some kind,

whether this presidency be assumed by each member in turn, or lodged in the hands of a single person. It was only necessary therefore for him to give permanence, definiteness, stability, to an office which already existed in germ. There is no reason however for supposing that any direct ordinance was issued to the churches. The evident utility and ever pressing need of such an office, sanctioned by the most venerated name in Christendom, would be sufficient to secure its wide though gradual reception." (Page 205.) But let us see whether in the Epistles of James or of John a trace can be found that, if they remained true to their writings, such an event could have occurred under their auspices.

We willingly admit at Jerusalem the salient position which James (whether an apostle or not) occupied. Paul alludes to this, when in Galatians he associates him with Peter and John. "And when James, Cephas, and John who seemed to be pillars," and still more so when he says of Peter, "For before that certain came from James he did eat with the Gentiles" (Gal. 2:9-12); but when we look at James's writings, he calls himself simply "a servant of God," and throughout his Epistle remarkably seeks to connect the" souls of those he addresses with God Himself, not at all through any bishop; and on the only occasion in which he makes any allusion to church officers, he desires the sick to send "for the elders of the church." It is plain that by this recommendation he owned a body of elders in any or every church; in other words a body of bishops, for we learn their identity by a comparison of Titus 1:5 with verse 7, and of Acts 20:17 compared with verse 28, to say nothing of other passages used quite fairly by Dr. L.

Whatever prominence therefore James had, it was not by way of establishing a new office, still less a new order, for himself; however this may have been done for him by others after his death.

In the Epistles of John nothing is more significant than the way in which those to whom. he writes are made personally responsible for the truth. They are to "try the spirits whether they are of God." (1 John 4:1.) They were to be on their guard. "Little children, let no man deceive you.". (1 John 3:7.) Again, "Little children it is the last time, and as ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists, whereby ye know that it is the last time." John wrote these testing Epistles as owning the last time. He did not hint at any apostolic or episcopal succession, to whom the case or conduct of any person was to be relegated. Moreover, if upon the one hand there were the many antichrists, upon the other he could say, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things." (1 John 2:18-20.) They were not left without abundant provision.

In his second Epistle he more fully owns, and that to a lady, the fallen condition of things— "many deceivers are entered into the world" —and says, "Look to yourselves [not to a bishop] that ye lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward." In the third Epistle (to Gains), he informs him that he had written to the church, but that "Diotrephes who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them receiveth us not." (Ver. 9.) It is clear that every evil principle was at work in apostolic days, and with the example of Diotrephes before him, he is not likely to have given his sanction to a supposed successor, more especially when full directions were given to the saints in this state of things. Is it likely after this that, according to Dr. L., he should have sanctioned, not a prima inter pares, not a president of a board of elders, but an established bishop of an order superior to the presbyters?

But here a very interesting question meets us. It is well known that discrepancies exist as to the succession of the early bishops so-called, although plenty of lists are found. Dr. L. says, of those

at Jerusalem, that Symeon follows James—then, “The episcopate of Justus, the successor of Symeon, commences about A.D. 108; that of Marcus, the first Gentile bishop (of Jerusalem), A.D. 13C. Thus thirteen bishops occupy only about twenty-eight years” (p. 206). In like manner of the Roman bishops proper, it is observable although their occupancy of the see is not so short, yet their names are mingled together in a confused way, more especially the nearer they are to the fountain head. Thus they run—Linus, Anencletus, Clemens, Evarestus, according to Irenaeus. Eusebius in different works gives two lists, both agreeing in the order with Irenaeus, though not agreeing with each other in the dates. Catalogs are also found in later writers, transposing the sequence of the earliest bishops, and adding the name Cletus, or substituting it for Anencletus. But although not instanced by Dr. L., Tertullian says, “As the church of the Smyrnean relates that Poly-carp was placed there by John, so, in like manner, the church of the Romans relates that Clement was ordained by Peter,” so that here was confusion anew. How simple is the solution, if, in the discrepancies as to the position of the names at Rome, as well as in the suspicion attached to the shortness of the occupancies at Jerusalem, we recognize a presbytery with a chairman, whose place, when he was absent owing to other important calls, was filled by another, and reoccupied by him on his return

We take leave of Dr. L. with one more notice. It does him credit that he does not force into his service the angels of the churches in Rev. 2; 3, as do too many of his contemporaries. We give his view of these angels, because it comes so near to what our judgment of them is. “Whether the angel is here conceived as an actual person, the celestial guardian, or only as a personification, the idea or spirit of the church, it is unnecessary for my present purpose to consider. But whatever may be the exact conception, he is identical with, and made responsible for it, to a degree wholly unsuited to any human officer... In one passage especially the language applied to the angel seems to exclude the common interpretation. In the message to Thyatira, the angel is blamed because he suffers himself, to be led astray by his wife Jezebel. In this image of Ahab's idolatrous queen, some dangerous and immoral teaching must be personified; for it does violence alike to the general tenor, and to the individual expressions in the passage, to suppose that an actual woman is meant” (p. 198). But to conclude our notice, as far as Dr. L. is concerned. The steps alas! are easy from even the chairman of a body of presbyters to the functorial order of a bishop, thence, through the right of ordination to sacerdotalism, and onwards to the pope. Candor obliges us to say that Dr. L.'s easy acceptance of modern episcopacy is at variance with the premises he lays down of its irreconcilableness with scripture. But he contrives, unfairly as we think, to connect the names of James and John with it, but only in the latter case through the untrustworthy channel of tradition, and thus he satisfies himself. Always objecting, yet in the end he assents, and gives in his adhesion in the language which follows.

The power of the bishops, as a question of practical importance, being the subject, he says: “Such a development involves no new principle, and must be regarded chiefly in its practical bearings. It is plainly competent for the church, at any given time, to entrust a particular office with larger powers, as the emergency may require. And though the grounds on which the independent authority of the episcopate was at times defended may have been false or exaggerated, no reasonable objection can be taken to later forms of ecclesiastical polity because the measure of power accorded to the bishop does not remain exactly the same as in the church of the sub-apostolic ages. Nay, to many thoughtful and dispassionate minds even the gigantic power

wielded by the popes during the middle ages will appear justifiable in itself (though they will repudiate the false pretensions on which it was founded, and the false opinions which were associated with it), since only by such a providential concentration of authority could the church, humanly speaking, have braved the storms of those ages of anarchy and violence" (pp. 242, 243).

Is all this reasoning anything but a simple begging of the question? Has Dr. L. proved that the order of bishops, as one superior to presbyters, is found in scripture? If he has not found the order, how can it be "entrusted with larger powers?" It is just this departure from the word of God—this finding by tradition what cannot be found in scripture—which has brought Christendom into its present position. If God has thought proper to lay down distinct landmarks in His word, what authority have we to depart from them If the bishopric be an order superior to presbyters, why are there no administrative instructions given for its exercise The end is that Dr. L. is obliged to condone the very office of the pope, productive as it was of a condition of Christendom during the middle ages far worse than that of heathenism. By giving the church an earthly head, we effectually shut out association with Christ as a heavenly one. Dr. L. thus derives his sanction to preach through the tradition that John the Apostle set up the first bishop, whence comes the pope, and also through him Dr. L.'s successional right? all the time, be it remembered, that the pope himself denies that the Anglican church has any succession at all. Upon what a slippery foundation does all this succession rest Besides, is it not evident, from the farewell interview of Paul with the elders of Ephesus, narrated in Acts 20, that he looked for no succession? Did he not rather "commend them to God and to the word of his grace, which was able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among all them that were sanctified?"

A few remarks are yet needed as to a want in this treatise concerning the Christian ministry, or, in other words, early church government for this is really the subject, and not Christian ministry, which latter is provided for, as will be shown, from Christ Himself on high. Placed upon their trial, we believe that Presbyterianism shows more proofs in its favor than Episcopacy [though it wholly fails in the vital point of valid power to choose or appoint, where Episcopacy is right theoretically in insisting on a superior authority].

But both sides, as now existing, equally develop the clerical orders, and both equally restrict ministerial office, properly speaking, to those who have been ordained by the laying on of hands. Surely, on the supposition that their ordination is lawful or necessary, there should still be room left for the manifestation of those gifts which are independent either of bishops or presbytery. "He gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers."

Here let us digress, for a moment. The treatise of Dr. L. is at the least valuable on this account, that it substantiates a point of departure, a "mysterious period," during which the action of the Holy Ghost, as "dividing to every man severally as he will," was set aside, and clerical order was set up. During the period between Paul's departure and the first Christian uninspired writer, a child might discover how deep the fall had been, so manifest is the difference between the canonical scriptures and such writings, not only in their feeble hold of positive truth, but in their determined, though often puerile and erroneous assertions. The fathers are indeed no safe guides. We have in measure to be thankful for this. The gulf is narrow, but very deep, between their writings and the scriptures. There is no possibility of adjusting the two. There is a clear line of separation between the scriptures and the earliest church writers; and as to the matter we have in hand, nowhere is it

more distinctly seen than in the negation of the prerogatives of Christ, and of the person of the Holy Ghost, in the question of ministry. The error of all modern church history is, that ministry is confined to local officers. Be the system what it may, there are no connections in the way of ministry, properly speaking, with God or with Christ outside of this local channel.

But if we study the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, we find that there was a great deal of gift, and no eldership (that is, no local government); in fact, elders were made for the Church, and not the church for elders. Minute directions are given by Paul as to the use of gifts (1 Cor. 14), and as to the observance of the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11); but there were apparently no elders, and everything was left to the church's own sense of divine suitabilities. We know, indeed, that there was failure, but the failure was not corrected by the creation of a bishop. Even Dr. L. seems to recognize that there is something besides local government, when he says (p. 194), “The apostle, like the prophet or the evangelist, held no local office. He was essentially, as his name denotes, a Missionary.” If this be the case, where is now the evangelist? Do parochial arrangements allow of traveling evangelists, we might say of traveling curates? The truth is, that elders (that is, bishops), as well as deacons, are local. They were of apostolic appointment, chosen for an office, and may or may not have been gifts also; but such appointments offered no restraint to the free current of divine life in the assembly, as we see in the Epistle to the Philippians, nor to the divine prerogative of Christ, who gave apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, not one of which are in themselves necessarily elders, “till we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man,” &c. It is this confusion between local office and gifts for the universal church, or body of Christ, which has been the fruitful source of apostasy, and the poisonous sap which has dwarfed the growth and spread of truth everywhere. It has eventuated in an earthly system, with the pope as chief, and has dethroned our Lord Jesus from all positive action as Head, “from which all the body, by joints and bands, having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” (Col. 2:19.) In secret and in silence, blessed be His name, all goes on (for the counsels of God must come to pass); but, speaking of visibility, speaking to those and of those who assume a corporate condition, a discussion on Christian ministry can never be perfect which throws the sources of it into local organization, and omits the engagement of Christ according to Eph. 4, and the action of the Holy Ghost in such language as “All these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit dividing to every man severally as he will.” (1 Cor. 12:11.) See 1 Peter 4 Dr. L. simply ignores all this.

It is in vain to say with some, that these gifts, those we mean for the edification of the body of Christ (Eph. 4), were not lasting, and were therefore superseded by elders. They are to last “till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man;” and this is not yet accomplished. It is true that apostles no longer remain. They were the foundation: “As a wise master-builder,” says Paul, “I have laid the foundation” (1 Cor. 3); but prophets, not foretellers, but forth-givers of truth, still remain, and will do so, with evangelists, pastors and teachers; until at the Lord's coming (may it be Very near 1) we pass into glory W. W.

Chapter 38

Irving on the Christian State After Death

In this place we cannot pass over, though it cannot be treated as a mistake, passages in the preface to Ben Ezra highly injurious to the work and honor of Christ, and in it the just, holy, and influencing comfort of believing saints. It is alike indicative of the same hasty pursuit of a single idea. I shall quote but one concentrating sentence—but the observations will apply to the whole spirit shown from pp. lv. to lxv. of this preface. The haste, the very culpable haste (for the promises and hopes of God's people are not thus to be trifled with), is shown in this. In evincing (the truth of which we do not now inquire into) that the resurrection at Christ's coming is the substantive hope of the church, he attempts this by throwing every cloud upon the hope of the dying Christian. “Death,” his words are, “is a parting, not a meeting; it is a sorrowful parting, not a joyful meeting; it is a parting in feebleness and helplessness to we know not whither,—into a being we know not what.” This sentence is singularly unfortunate in its statements; and, indeed, scripture and the hope of the gospel ought not to be thus made the slave of men's momentary thoughts. “I have a desire,” says the Apostle, “to depart and to be with Christ.” Death to the believer is not a parting but a meeting, if our central and supreme affections are with Christ. I am not questioning here, be it remembered, the hope of Christ's coming, but Mr. Irving's statement respecting death. Death is not a sorrowful parting, but a joyful meeting; for it does not become us to sorrow as those without hope. For why?—they that sleep in Jesus go to Jesus, and God brings them with Him. For indeed “he that liveth and believeth in Jesus shall never die.” If, indeed, he values earthly things more than Christ's presence, then sorrow will accompany his death. But it is the proper distinction of Christianity to have neutralized that power of death which Mr. Irving is preaching: “for the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law;” but both are dead to the believer in the death of the Lord Jesus Christ the Savior. It is a parting, not in but with feebleness and helplessness, we know whither—that is, to Christ. If He be true, we know whither we go, and the way. As to “a being we know not what,” the scripture affirms it equally of the state of the risen body, and of that only. “It does not yet appear,” saith the apostle, “what we shall be,” speaking expressly of that state. As to the promise, Mr. Irving is writing against his own opinions; for, if he hold that Christ will come again, he believes that He will bring His saints with Him, so that they which are alive and remain have no preference. He is indeed himself witness that scripture is conclusive as to a paradise for the separated spirit; but he says we know not what it is. Is there nothing, then, in being with Christ the Savior, who loved us and gave Himself for us—that hope that brightened the thoughts and quickened the expectations of many a dying and many a matyred saint? Is there nothing in being with Him, to throw holy influence and triumphant character on the relinquishment of this yet evil and Satan-deceived world? Sure I am, there was that in it which made the Apostle Paul prefer death to life; for death was no death to him, but parting from trial to Christ, from perseverance through surrounding evil to that blessed presence, where all doubt, sorrow, and death would have passed away to him forever. He had a desire to depart and be with Christ; he was not comforted only by the building of God made with hands; for he was always confident, desiring rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.

We must say that this is a most unholy misstatement of scripture, and destructive of that which is the glory and influential power, as well of the resurrection of the saints, as of their present hopes; and that, if the Lord's presence be not a paramount blessing, prevailing over death now, it never will be at the resurrection or at any other time. It shows the folly of man in his thoughts; for, in attempting to show the importance of his views above another's the sole thing which is of power in those very views and can alone realize them is undermined and destroyed, and this in the face of the fullest and most anxious statements of scripture, and to the dishonor of Christ and the faith of the saints of God. Satan reigns by death; Christ has brought life and immortality to light by the gospel. And to argue from the circumstances of His death is folly; for it was because He so suffered, and (having overcome in full conflict with the very power under which it is here stated we rest) rose again into glory, that we have not that trial, that we are delivered and triumph, and that its power is passed away towards us. The observations from the Apocalypse are a total misapprehension of its force. This might call for much and varied animadversion; but my object is not to condemn or accuse (God forbid that it should be!) but precisely the contrary. But these are the sort of statements which have awakened the impatience of observant Christians, and occasioned a natural, though indeed an unjust prejudice against the persons who hold those views they are urged in maintenance of, and a hasty rejection (still more foolish) of the views themselves. For in this they are making themselves servants to the unguarded precipitancy of others, not judges of it, and masters of the truths which they confound with so many mis-statements. In a word, they are allowing Satan to do just what he meant to do by the partial ignorance of inquiring men.

But it must be confessed, it is a bold word to say, that when Christ said to the thief on the cross, “Today shalt thou be with me in Paradise” —that which made Paul always confident, giving him, upon the common faith of God's people, a desire to depart—that what the Lord comforted and assured the thief with, and the apostle built on, was, “a day of death, from sight of which the soul shrinketh, and a void beyond it, so vacant and unintelligible, as not to be available for any distinct end of faith, hope, edification, or comfort.” “And this notion of blessedness with Christ, upon our leaving this tabernacle, is a vague notion which Satan hath substituted.” Christ substituted it as something nearer to the dying thief, when he proposed that on which the writer so much insists; and it was because it was a distant hope, and there would have been a vague void without this revelation, that we were given the assurance that that was revealed in. great mercy, which is thus now thrown to the dogs. The hope of the individual is being with Christ; the hope of the church is His coming: doubtless the individual is deeply interested in this hope likewise. On the whole, throughout this preface, Christ's present glory is not duly seen, nor its perception by the believer as manifested by Him, as it is not to the world.

Chapter 39

Cleansing by Water and Walking in the Light: Part 1

I have carefully compared with scripture, I trust before God; the system now pressed upon many as the desirable Christian condition of liberty and holiness. I have done it in His fear, not willing to lose any profit or advantage which faith in divine power could give me. However happy, I am too poor and weak not to be glad to have everything I can of Christ and of His Spirit. I admit that mere knowledge is far from being all, even when correct in the things of God. Power by the operation of the Spirit is needed, and the evangelical world is very unbelieving as to this. Still we are sanctified through the truth, and hence the question is—Is this system the truth, the truth of God? It seems to me to fail entirely, if examined by scripture as to the true standing of God's children—their real place in peace before Him; it has not learned this place, nor the character, extent, and means of holiness. It comes wholly short of the state of conscience produced by the Holy Ghost consequent on redemption, and as a necessary consequence lowers the character of holiness, and eclipses the place Christ should hold in the heart. There is more than one thing, I think, true in it, and important to Christians in these days; and it is because these are obscured by false teaching, and spills are thus misled, that I take notice of it. I desire to speak soberly, net slighting what is true, but guarding the soul of my reader, if God graciously permit and deign so to use it, against what obscures the truth. I shall first state what I do not oppose, that I may give no handle to those who might reject the presence and operation of the Spirit of God, and give all due credit to those who look for it.

In Mr. R. P. Smith's last work, “Walking in the Light,” there are counsels which are useful, such as, when temptation is there, to look at once to Christ, One who has overcome. I have no doubt that, when we do, the enemy will flee, so to speak, as a frightened bird. It is not simply as if we were better, but the thing is gone. We may have sometimes to wait where there has been any giving way, but if we resist the devil he flees from us. And this is important for assailed saints; there is positive strength in Christ and grace sufficient for us. I repeat, it is not merely an improvement or change, the assailing evil is gone.

Doubtless there may be other just and useful remarks; but my object is not this book but the system, and I have met many who hold it. I go on with what I admit and fully receive. I fully receive that sealing by the gift of the Spirit, founded on the precious blood of Christ, which sets at liberty, by which the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts and we cry “Abba Father” in the consciousness of being sons; know we are in Christ and Christ in us, loved as Jesus was loved—a wonderful place in which rest of heart is found. This I not only admit, but have pressed it some fifty years. Indeed it has distinguished characteristically the labors of that) with whom I am associated. Not only so, but a multitude of souls in receiving it have found the power and presence of God more sensibly than at their conversion. I recognize fully that “there is no necessity and no excuse for sinning.” Christ's grace is sufficient for us, and “God is faithful not to suffer us to be tempted above that we are able.” Mr. Varley's tract showed evidently that it was this deliverance and conviction that he had never had before and now received; and that was all. It is because this state of bondage is so common that the deliverance taught in this system is attractive. The normal state

of the Christian is to live in the unclouded and conscious favor of God, and if he lives in the Spirit to walk in the Spirit. In fact, in many things we all offend.

That God often heals the sick in answer to prayer is clearly taught both in James and John: in the former according to ecclesiastical order, though by the prayer of faith; in the latter as an individual matter, and I have seen and assisted at the clearest examples of this both in England and on the continent. In two cases, at the request of the parties, prayer was accompanied by anointing.

There is danger of the mind being turned to, and stopping at, what after all is only a testimony, though a blessed one. The professing church has lost the sense of that which characterizes Christianity—the present living power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. It is not the end; for He leads us to the Father and the Son, and is the present power of our condition. But it is of all importance not to separate the Spirit from the word of God, as it is not to separate the word from the present power of the Holy Ghost. The word is the sword of the Spirit, and what it reveals is spiritually discerned. The pretension to use it by the power of the human mind, or judge it by conscience, is really rationalism—to speak plainly, infidelity. And taking the power of the Spirit apart from the word lays men open to take every wild imagination of man and even an evil spirit for the Holy Ghost, as the word plainly shows us.

Those who know the early history of Friends know the excesses to which some ran. It will be said, you cannot attribute this to the body or to those who were esteemed leaders among them. I admit it.; but I do attribute it to the principle adopted by them: that the Spirit in them was superior to the word, a name which indeed they would not give to the scriptures, and this has been openly avowed to myself now by those who looked to the present special operation of the Spirit and its power. It will be again said, this is not countenanced by those active in the movement. I do not deny this, but the way they leave aside the word and look to present power and experience as adequate testimony has led to it. I do say that this is the tree that fruit has grown on, and avowedly so; and this is very serious.

I admit further the difference between conversion, the power of the Holy Ghost in life consequent on the resurrection, and the coming down of the Holy Ghost from heaven, now known in the sealing and anointing of believers. The last two cannot be separated now that the Holy Ghost is come. Of this Rom. 8 is a plain proof. They may be considered apart, but in the fact they are one. The same Spirit that is life bears witness with our spirit that we are sons. The Holy Ghost when given distributes to every man severally as He will. He may be looked at as power, as in 1 Cor. 12, power which is regulated in its use by the word there and in chapter xiv., and here there is no promise of continuance; or these gifts maybe looked at as given by Christ who is Lord in the administration of them in 1 Cor. 12, and in this case only what is needed for the work of grace is spoken of, (Eph. 4, compare ii. 20) and there is promise of continuance. It is Christ's care of His body in gathering and nourishing it. In this aspect the apostles could confer the Holy Ghost, but there was also the general promise of Acts 2:38. I do not go farther into this, interesting as the subject is. I do not resist faith in present operation and power of the Holy Ghost, provided scripture has its place, and the present condition of the church in the last days be borne in mind.

Further, I recognize that Jesus the Lord and Savior can and does manifest Himself to us, as He has promised, when we walk obediently, so that what shall be our everlasting joy in heaven fills our souls here. It may be according to the weakness of the vessel, but still truly. This John 14

clearly tells us. Scripture sanctions such experience, though the passage may go further than this. The love of God withal is shed abroad in our hearts. The Father and the Son make their abode with us. It is a blessed and unspeakable privilege. This, as the chapter cited clearly shows, is connected with our obedient walk. keeping Christ's words. The whole of this part of John is not sovereign grace to sinners, but the Father's dealing with His children as responsible as such.

My objection to the whole system is, that it subverts the true liberty and perfectness of conscience of the child of God; and, perpetually recurring to this point, as if the perfectness was lost and incomplete, it applies to clearing the conscience in view of this what in the word is a question of communion and holiness, lowering and falsifying this last also.

It will have many supporters in this, because unbelief as to it is the prevailing state; but it is sorrowful when the pretension to a higher life is the support of unbelief.

The ground they go upon is the common ground of unbelief in the offering of Christ—the doctrine of continually cleansing and recleansing in Christ's blood. This is wholly unscriptural, and subversive of true Christian standing according to the word—that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. Nothing can be clearer or more positive than the teaching of Heb. 9 and x. on this subject, where it is elaborately argued, in contrast with the repetition of Jewish sacrifices, and as giving us boldness to enter into the holiest. The question raised is of a perfect conscience; and a perpetually unchangeably perfect conscience is elaborately taught, with a declaration that otherwise Christ must often have suffered, but that His work has done this once for all. He was once offered to bear the sins of many, and appears a second time without sin to salvation; a repeated cleansing of the conscience by blood is herein formally negatived. Christianity is contrasted with Judaism on this particular point. It is the offering, the blood-shedding, which clears the conscience and that could be only once, and so that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins; that hence, while the Jewish priests were always standing, because their work was never done, Christ, having offered one sacrifice for sin, is sitting constantly at the right hand of God, having no more to do as to the worshippers' conscience, because by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified—by one offering, note, and thus we have no more conscience of sins. And this word forever is here; ε■ς τ■ διηνεκε■ς not ε■ς τ■ν α■■να, that which is continuous and uninterrupted, as Christ now sits at the right hand of God, constantly, till His enemies be made His footstool. And remark that it is not merely the putting away of sins efficaciously, true as of course that is (see Heb. 1:8), but the perfecting of the conscience; Heb. 9:9; 10:1, 2, 12, 14; and see 12, 19. The Epistle to the Hebrews teaches clearly, unequivocally, insisting on it as characteristic of Christianity, a conscience constantly perfect, as sure as Christ is ever sitting on the right hand of God; perfect, not by repeated application of His blood, which is being imperfect, and cleansed again and again, but no more conscience of sins, perfected forever, and that by one single act in contrast with repeated cleansings, This blessed truth and state is ignored and denied by the system I am commenting on. The whole place is lost for the soul—the very truth God is pressing on His saints for their deliverance.

This error is founded on an entirely false application of 1 John 1, to which I will turn just now. But another point must first engage our attention—sin in us. This Mr. Smith is now obliged to take notice of. Scripture is plain as to it. I admit that the existence of sin in the flesh does not rest on the

conscience. It is the allowance of its acting for which our hearts condemn us. But here all is confusion through the ignorance of no more conscience of sins." We are told that which brings a sense of "condemnation or impurity." Condemnation and impurity are very distinct things. Is it here condemnation on the part of God? This can never be the case with the believer. If it be self-condemnation, although free communion be not restored, yet a holy judgment is; I condemn what I had allowed. The whole operation of God in restoring the soul is lost by confounding the state of soul, and a perfect conscience. This system brings back into imputable evil, needing blood-shedding or cleansing by blood, what is a question of holiness, of state, of water-cleansing; and the perfectness of standing, and holy dealing with the state, are both lost. But I turn to what scripture states as to sin in the flesh. That of which I have already spoken refers to the fruits of the old nature, and the perfecting the conscience as to them by Christ's one offering of Himself. He has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, all of them. If all are not forever put away, they never can be: He cannot die over again. Were this the case, as it is said in Hebrews, He must suffer often, bear the sins, drink the cup; but this is done once for all, and through faith in His work the conscience is perfected; if He did not bear all my sins, nothing is done; if He did, I am clear forever. But this is not all. The first part of Romans, to the end of chapter v.11, treats this question. But there is more. Not only are the sins of the old man all put away for the Christian, but he is in Christ. There is a positive acceptance in Him. He is in a new place according to the value of all Christ has done for God's glory. There is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus. Now this is directly connected with the power of a new life, the possession of which, founded as it is on the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, sets us free from the law of sin and death. There is no captivity under the law of sin, no necessity of ever sinning. But this, again, is based on the condemnation of the old man in the death of Christ. What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. It is not forgiven as sins are. The only remedy against it is its death; it has been condemned when Christ died, so that there is none for me. But in His death I died, being crucified with Him; that is, as there is no condemnation, so I have died for faith in Christ's death. In that He died, He died (not here for sins) unto sin once; in that He liveth, He liveth unto God; so reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, in Jesus Christ our Lord. God accounts the believer dead (Col. 3.) faith counts us dead, crucified with Christ (Rom. 6; Gal. 2); and (2 Cor. 4) it is practically carried out by always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.

But this is the Christian standing and position. "Ye are dead," "ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you; and if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Mr. Smith's notion of getting back into Rom. 7 is all false. That would be ceasing to be a Christian. There it is said, "when we were in the flesh;" in chapter 8, "ye are not in the flesh." It is the state and standing redemption has put us in. "Ye are not in the flesh." This is God's estimate of the believer: he is in Christ, and Christ in him; and such is faith's estimate. "Reckon yourselves dead." If Christ be in you, "the body is dead because of sin." It is a new state of existence, though yet in an earthen vessel. Realizing it in practice is of all-importance, but I must be in it to realize it. But this Mr. Smith has absolutely nothing of. His perpetual cleansing of the conscience with blood denies it. He is, with thousands alas! on Jewish ground. Our being dead to sin is for faith reckoning ourselves so, because Christ has died to sin once, and the sin in my flesh has been condemned

then once for all already, and if I yield myself to God, it is not that I may have this or that, as they would teach us, but as one that is “alive from the dead.” It is the Christian state, the basis of yielding myself to God. The sins are borne, and before God I have no more conscience of sins, and have perfect divine favor, as in Christ before God; sin in the flesh is condemned, but for faith dead, because Christ died, when and wherein it was condemned. “I am crucified with Christ.” This is known by the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” He may be on the way, but he is not in the Christian state.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 40

Cleansing by Water and Walking in the Light: Part 2

I turn to 1 John 1. The whole use of it is false. The case of actual sinning is in chapter ii. The first chapter is entirely abstract. Fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ is the joy and privilege of the Christian; but this must be according to the nature of God, who is light. Mr. S. speaks of bringing everything to God without evasion. Now this is most right and important. I would press it, not weaken it in anywise; but there is not a word of it in this chapter. “Walking in darkness,” and “walking in light,” are contrasted, as in Paul's mission to the Gentiles, “To open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive remission of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in me.” So in chapter ii., the darkness is passing away, and the true light now shineth. God is light, and walking in the light is walking in the true knowledge of God; the new man is “renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Light came into the world in Christ. He who follows Him has the light of life. And note here, what is spoken of is “walking in the light as God is in the light.” It is not according to the light, but in it. There is no darkness at all in God. This is the revelation afforded, the message heard.

The question is not raised if we walk according to it or not. We are in the full revelation of God without a veil, or in darkness, having no knowledge of God. It is not the question how far we live up to it. But the Christian is really walking there. If it was my consistency, how could I say, walk in the light as He is in it, and then speak of cleansing from sin? There would be no need of it. It is upon the face of the passage the true Christian position, in contrast with ignorance of God, It is as much as to say, if you are a Christian—have been turned from darkness to light. But it is no partial light, but as God Himself is in it—the unveiled light of God's nature, as revealed through redemption in Christ. If this be so, two other things accompany it; it is not mine and thine, but communion in full blessedness in God revealed. Further, to be there we need to be as “white as snow,” and have a “perfect conscience.” for if the conscience is evil, the heart is never free. And this Christ's blood gives. It is its intrinsic value.; as I should say that medicine cures the ague; it is not, goes on by repeated applications relieving details, but cures it.

Failure, I repeat, comes in in chapter 2: 1. Chapter 1: 5-10 takes up the details of any possible self-deception in the matter, as to sin and sins, and where we are as to them; but verse 7 is the abstract, absolute, statement as to Christian standing. In the, light as God is, fellowship with one another, and under the efficacy of that blood which cleanses from sin. If it be our consistency, walking in the light as God is, then speaking of cleansing is absurd. Of bringing our state to God there is not a word. It is absolute and abstract.

But it is alleged that “cleanseth” is going on cleansing. It is not has cleansed, nor will. If people will take a continuous present, for which there is no ground, it must be continuous, not repeated, as “I am writing.” But this has no sense. Particular failure, as I have said, is in chapter 2: 1, where we have no application of blood, but the contrary. It is perpetual righteousness in Christ, and propitiation which was once for all. But a continuous cleansing is absurd and unchristian; it is

self-contradictory.

Of repeated application of blood scripture knows nothing. I must be redeemed over and over again, justified over and over again! And let us see what it comes to in this system. Mr. Smith tells us that “trusting Christ for cleansing is only through the constant supply of blood from the heart, and guidance from the head. Lessen the current of blood, the corrupt matter from the flesh is imperfectly carried off, and disease ensues.” (Preface, p. 7.) Now, I appeal to every Christian, to every one really taught of God, whether scripture ever so speaks of the efficacy of Christ's blood as cleansing the sinner. It would not be cleansing, but preserving in health. But the idea is wholly foreign to scripture.

“If we walk in the light,” is walking in the true knowledge of God, fully revealed as He is in His holy nature without a veil, as contrasted with ignorance of God. Christianity is in contrast with a God who could give commandments but was hidden behind a veil. This brought fellowship in common joys, and we can stand in the light; for that which revealed it, the cross, the blow which rent the veil, put away every sin, every stain, and I am in the light, as white as snow. All is the present condition of the Christian as such. It is not, will cleanse us if we fly to it, or if we bring everything to God without evasion. It is “if we walk in the light,” not even according to our capacity in realizing it (all these details are foreign to the verse, and come after), but if we walk in it as God is in it. The very expression, “all sin,” or every sin, shows us the same thing; it is not a question of details, but its universal and absolute value.

Then comes what the truth in us makes us know, and what we have to do if we fail, and the ways and government of God, and what Christ does if we fail. The righteousness and propitiation being ever there, our failure awakens the advocacy of Christ. But here there is no reference to the cleansing of Christ's blood. A repetition of blood-sprinkling, or blood-cleansing, is a thing unknown to scripture. The worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins. (Heb. 10)

But there is a cleansing which may be repeated, and which this system everywhere ignores, and of which we have a precise account in scripture—washing with water. “Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” “Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word.” “Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth;” so indeed we are born of water, and begotten by the word of truth. The water came out of His side, as did the blood. When the Lord spoke of their having a part with Him now going on high, because He could no longer have a part with them, it is of this water-cleansing He speaks. Nor, as to the substance of it, can this be repeated. He that is washed (λελουμ■νος), his body bathed, as the priests were in their consecration, needeth not save to wash his feet (ν■ψασθαι, wash hands or feet, &c.), but is clean every whit, and “ye are clean, but not all,” for Judas was there. When sanctified and renewed by the word with the truth Christ's death and heavenly revelation give to us, still we pick up dirt in our walk, and the Spirit (Christ being our advocate) applies the word to the conscience. We are humbled, confess, are cleansed as to the state of our souls, morally, purified in thought and heart, and communion is restored. We have the same in the ordinance of the red heifer in Num. 19, the book which gives us the journey through the wilderness, to which this kind of cleansing applied, and not in Leviticus, where the sacrifices inn their proper value are described.

Nor in the case of the red heifer is there any cleansing by blood: this was always by blood-shedding, no remission without it; and that has been done once for all. The ashes in the running water were the testimony that the sin had been all consumed in Christ when the offering was made, but communion was interrupted, and the sense of what sin was, according to the death of Christ, brought home to the soul.

Thus this all applies to the state of the soul, to holiness, and to our judgment of sin. All this instructive and heart-searching truth is not only left out, but denied, in the system which, in these cases, applies the blood, not the water. And this is not merely a mistake in the terms, but denies the efficacy of the blood as that which perfects the conscience once for all, and the repetition of which is unknown to scripture. And so entirely is the use of water set aside that, in speaking of the consecration of the priests, Mr. Smith says, “first the blood, then the oil,” whereas the first thing was washing with water, and by this he was consecrated to God, though the blood and the oil were absolutely necessary to perfect him in his place. Mr. Smith adds, “God's order is the blood for pardon, the Spirit to enlighten; the blood for cleansing, the Spirit to fill the purified temple.” Now the blood was never repeated with the priest; nor indeed the oil; but he washed his feet and hands on every service he rendered, to which I doubt not John 13 makes allusion: only now it is only the feet.

Let me add here, that so far from the present tense in verse 7, on which so much is insisted, being repeated cleansing, when he comes to details and forgiveness in the present ways and government of God, in verse 9 he leaves the present tense, and says nothing of blood-cleansing. My anxiety has been to show what the system deprives us of. Of the system itself I need not speak. Mr. Smith has avowedly brought it down to what I estimated it at from the beginning; that it is simply deliverance from legal bondage, which is captivity to sin. He says (p. 107), “The better life we seek to portray differs from the former Christian life, as the sixth and eighth of the Romans differs from the seventh.” Now this deliverance is of great moment, and it is a distinct thing from forgiveness. On this I have so largely insisted elsewhere, and for so long a time, that I say nothing more of it here. I quite trust that Mr. Smith's and others' insisting on this will be useful. To the end of Rom. 5:11 he speaks of forgiveness; from thence to the end of chapter of deliverance; in one, of the sins of the old man being pit away; in the other, of our not being in the flesh, but in Christ, and free. Only one thing Mr. Smith has not noted, that one not in Rom. 8 is not recognized as in the Christian state. “Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.” Now “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” The final result is quickening this mortal body. Before having the Spirit, they may be on the way but are not in the Christian state, any more than Israel were out of Egypt till they crossed the Red Sea, though this is not exact, but is of no consequence here. The blood was on the door-posts. There God had the character of a judge; at the Red Sea, of a deliverer. Mr. Smith makes it a difference of degree, “erased blots on an early page, in a book scribbled on every page.” Scripture makes it the difference of having the Holy Ghost or not, of being in the flesh or out of it, of being of Christ or not. I do not suppose Mr. Smith would deny this; but not knowing the true ground on which it rests in scripture, he obscures it all, lowering it down to experience. Yet he speaks of cleansing from all sin, that deep evil of our nature which is antecedent to sins.

Now what is cleansing from a nature, and that by blood? Cleansing from a nature by blood is unknown to the word. Sin in the flesh is condemned, and any cleansing there is is by our having for faith died to sin. Cleansing is from some actual defilement. Prom a nature we are delivered by death. All this cleansing from the evil of our nature is unscriptural, and arises from an attempt to reconcile, an unscriptural system with what cannot now but be recognized as the truth of the word. Elsewhere Mr. Smith uses these very words for cleansing from actual defilement.

I must refer to another practical point in connection with the substitution of the blood of Christ for the washing of water, for repeated cleansing. They hold that, where we have failed, instantly recurring to the blood cleansing us, we are as happy as ever. All is right in a flash, rest of soul at once restored; and this I have found current among those professing to have attained this state in various instances, and in one very striking case published by an English clergyman.

Now in cleansing with blood this is so, because it is pardon and forgiveness of an act committed, or say even of a thought. It is gone, I am forgiven, and the joy of God's goodness in it is in my soul. I confess my fault, and, as to forgiveness, there is no question remains between me and God, and the sense of His goodness is deepened in my soul, because it is a question between me and God, and is perfectly settled by the precious blood of Christ. Mr. Smith puts the case of impatience with a workman, and confession to him.

But when my state and God's glory are referred to, it is another case. Mr. S.'s conduct was most Christians and right, and the blessing which followed easy to be believed. But supposing Christ's name had been dishonored before the world by some act or word of mine, where no confession to an individual had anything to do with it, I have no idea of anything being imputed to me; actual present forgiveness my soul may find; but am I to take it quite coolly that I have dishonored the name of that blessed One before the world? Let every Christian's heart answer it.

Nor is this all. This wretched doctrine of repeated cleansing by blood hinders all self-knowledge and true growth by it. It is not a question of pardon: this is settled; nor doubting divine love: the Father loves us as He loved Jesus. But when the Lord looked on Peter, he went out, and wept bitterly. Was he wrong? But more, when the Lord restores his soul, He never speaks a word of reproach as to his denying Him, nor refers to it. It was put away by the death of Jesus, but He does say, “Lovest thou Me more than these?” He goes to the root of it in the heart of Peter—self-confidence. “If all deny thee, I will not.” That is, there is no hint of remaining guilt, but there is a probing to the root of the evil, of which the actual failure was only a fruit. Now this cool return to rest and ease of heart loses all this. There is no searching of the spring of evil, unsuspected perhaps in the soul, for growth in true spiritual life; and the soul is never thoroughly restored and blessed till this is done.

A man may be taken in a fault, but a fall is never the beginning of evil. Take Mr. Smith's case; he was impatient, and spoke so to the workman; he owned it; all well, but how came he to be so? Neglect of prayer, of keeping in the sense of God's presence, with the seriousness and self-restraint it gives, too much setting of heart on the arrangements which were spoiled, a spirit too much engrossed with them, a tendency to, impatience not adequately subdued by the habitual sense of God's presence. Here it is not a question of forgiveness, but of holiness of heart, of its depths, of the state of my heart. All this is lost on the system of cleansing anew by blood. It is a superficial system; it takes a low standard of what should occupy a Christian's heart; it makes a

question of mere pardon of what should be a question of holiness; it denies the perfectness of conscience belonging to a Christian; and by raising this question in an unscriptural way, contenting the spirit with ease and rest through pardon, blinds it to the further exercise of soul, which seeks holiness, and judges everything that hinders it as well as actual failure. It is not a doctrine promotive of holiness. There is levity in it. Individuals may escape the effect; or in the first fervor and tide of deliverance the soul may be above the shoals and banks; but in the long run it leaves the soul in a superficial state.

There is only one more point which I feel called upon to notice—temptation, so called, not being sin. I have heard those under the influence of this system talk of suggestions, and slur over what passed in their hearts. Mr. Smith (p. 105) says, “Let us beware of one special snare of Satan—that of trying to persuade us that temptation, or mere infirmity, is sin. Christ was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. His temptations were actual and real pressures to evil. He yielded not, and was without sin. Neither is the unwelcomed, unindulged, rejected temptation sin to us.” This is very bad. Mr. Smith must forgive me for speaking plainly. He has fallen into the snare of Satan. Mr. S. is so exceedingly loose in his statements, that one has to make all sorts of necessary distinctions before there can be any answer.

Temptations and infirmities are not the same thing. Paul gloried in his infirmities, certainly not in sins, and if we do put them together, the sense of temptation is at once defined. Infirmities in this sense are the persecutions, and difficulties, and reproaches a Christian has to go through, if he will be faithful and devoted, and which would tend to hinder him in holding fast his faithful course (see 2 Cor. 12:9, 10).

Mr. Smith might see that the “yet” in the passage he quotes [from Heb. 9] is in the Authorized Version in italics, that is, is not in the original.

Any such application to Christ as is involved in Mr. Smith's statement, that is, is carefully guarded against. He was tempted according to [the] likeness [He took], that is, as a man, as we are in this world, sin excepted. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities—was, and is still, for us, sensible to all that human nature can feel from outrage, reproach, desertion, unrighteousness, isolation, and the want of sympathy. The word of God discerns the thoughts and intents of our hearts, judging their true character in us according to His holy presence. In all our trials and difficulties we have Christ's full and tender sympathy. What does Mr. Smith mean by actual and real pressures to evil? From within or from without? Were they (the Lord forgive the word!) lusts in that blessed One, suggestions of His own heart, sin in the flesh? Was there anything in Him which was not to be indulged because it was evil? Let Mr. Smith explain himself. What did He not yield to? When Satan succeeds in “touching” us, he awakens the thought of evil, even if we do not yield to it. Did he succeed in doing this with Christ? “The thought of foolishness is sin,” says the word. Was this in Christ? In His temptation He was hungry. This was no sin; it was a human need, and He felt it, and Satan sought to lead Him to do His own will as to it. But He lived by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God. All the glory of the world from without was offered, but it awakened indignation, not any question. God's word was His motive for acting, as well as His rule. He was led of the Spirit to be tempted. We are tempted when we are led away of our own lusts.

All this flows from the damnable doctrine that lust is not sin. What is it? Is it holiness or righteousness? Where does it come from? It is the fruit of the sinful nature; “sin taking occasion by

the commandment wrought in me all manner of lust." Those who rest on fruits in James—and I do not call it a strawy epistle—find no sin till it has conceived and brought forth. Those who go to the root with the word of God know that there is sin in the flesh. If Satan were to suggest to eat a handful of mud and dirt, would any one be inclined to do it? If he succeeds in touching us, it is because there is a desire in the sinful nature to which he adapts himself. If we are full of Christ, he will not succeed; but if the suggestion is awakened, in our hearts, sin is awakened into the activity of desire, though we may rightly resist it; and if we look to Christ, we shall be victorious: Was any such suggestion awakened in the blessed One? All this loose insinuation as to Christ, to excuse and cover sin in ourselves, is very bad indeed. Was anything within in Christ which He had to resist? It must not be covered over with loose words, as "temptation or infirmity," which words have professedly in scripture a double meaning. (See James 1)

The word judges thoughts and intents, the priesthood takes notice of difficulties and trials, Was the pressure of evil in Christ from within or without? From without He was spared nothing, but it only brought out a sweet savor. Within there was nothing but what gave the sweet savor in life and in death. I know of nothing more horrible than thus sacrificing the holiness of Christ to excuse and allow "suggestions," suggestions of sin in us. Instead of taking Him as the living standard of holiness, holiness is lowered in us, so as to allow of evil suggestions, and Christ is brought down to this level, that sin in us may be passed over. I do not rest on the word peccable, applied to Christ by some of those in these views; evil and unholy, I should say, unintelligent as the thought is, because it is not the real question.

Mr. Smith speaks of "that deep evil of our nature which is antecedent to sins or sinning" Was there anything of this in Christ? Mr. Smith would surely answer, No. It was not an innocent thing which was born of the virgin Mary, but a "holy thing." Could Satan introduce anything of it in Him? He takes the love of money in Judas with subtle wile to betray the Lord. It was a suggestion, a temptation from without, but met that which was within, awoke it, and then there was a suggestion, in which the thought of the heart had apart—even if judged and resisted. There may be suggestions of blasphemy or despair, which are fiery darts of the enemy, when there is no lust. But there were never even such as these in Christ; if forsaken, He could say, "My God," and, "Thou continuest holy." Did the enemy succeed in arousing evil thoughts in Christ, which He resisted? I ask of any honest Christian, are not these suggestions thoughts in his heart? If they are not evil, why does he resist them? It will not do to talk of pressures of evil. From without? Yes. Did those pressures awake in Christ's heart suggestions which He resisted as evil? If so, He ceased to be absolutely "that holy thing" —really never had been. He was a holy man, not an innocent man, and ever maintained His holiness—met Satan by obedience and dependence on God by the word. The wicked one did not touch Him. There were no suggestions; there are, or may be, in us, because the flesh, sin in the flesh, is there. Others, under the influence of these doctrines, I have heard say, He was imperfect, alleging His growth in wisdom and stature. He was a true real man, and, as a child, was perfect as a child; the vessel grew as ours does. But this shows the way this doctrine works. Was He ever anything but perfectly holy? That is the question. If there, were evil suggestions in His heart which He had to resist, He was not.

I seek, then, a fuller, more assured, unchanging ground and state of acceptance, and divine favor, than this system gives me. Here it fails and goes back to the common evangelical ground, which God is leading us beyond. I look for a deeper character of holiness, of which the false doctrine on

the other point deprives us; and I see it depriving Christ of His holy glory, and me of a Christ who can be the treasure and food and light of my soul, and fixing the attention on self instead of on Christ.

I admit fully the work of deliverance distinct from forgiveness. The Epistle to the Romans elaborately teaches the two. I believe all this stir as to a higher life has done good, in awakening souls to the need of something better than current Christianity, and I bless God for it.

I trust there is nothing which has the form of attack in what I have written. I not only disclaim any such thought, if such there be, but regret and recall anything which may seem to have this character, save what concerns the holy nature and person of Christ; on that there can be no compromise. This dragging of Christ down in doctrine to excuse the evil suggestions of our hearts, as if there were no sin in them, is intolerable to every godly heart. The perfection was found to be imperfect, and Christ lowered to make it pass as no sin. This is intolerable.

I only add, it is not looking back to past experience that is our strength, though it may occasionally have place, but living on Christ now in the path of God's will. I deny Paul's talking about himself and his experiences, save where he says he is a fool in doing it—they had compelled him. “I say again, let, no man think me a fool; if otherwise, yet as a fool receive me, that I may boast myself a little.” (See 2 Cor. 11) He does personify great Christian truths in his own person, as at the end of Gal. 2, as I have done a hundred times myself, with it suspicion of any particular reference to self. “I am crucified with Christ” is the only true state of every Christian; and he is pressing it as such in rebuking Peter.

J. N. D.

Chapter 41

Discourse on Colossians 1

Besides the person of the Lord coming out fully in this chapter as Head of His body the church, and Creator of all things, the main subject that is developed in the epistle is life, much more in its detail than in the Ephesians, where we have rather the glories of the church of God, in contrast with the previous heathen, or even Jewish, state. Here, in Colossians, it is the life of Christ in us, and does not go as far in regard to privileges. The apostle gives us the saints risen with Christ, and then takes this life and shows what it is. But in doing so be puts the Christian fully in his place with God in that life. The Christian is taken as indeed risen, but yet on the earth, just simply having life, but not sitting in heavenly places. He puts the Christian in the power of resurrection, and the life of Christ in resurrection in the Christian, but heaven is looked at still as a matter of hope: you are looking up to it— “your life is hid with Christ in God;” but you are not seated there yet; whereas in Ephesians we are there in Christ. In Colossians he looks at what the power of that life is, and the Christian as risen, put in this place before God, and then he shows the power of this We in the details of daily life.

“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that crested him.” The knowledge which we have in this new life is renewed after the image of God Himself. A life has come in which has overcome the world, and I get into the new place which Christ is in as man before God. Thus we have Christ's place, but still down here; then what the power and character of that life are practically, as passing through this world just as Christ did. He was properly a heavenly man passing through the world, overcoming everything, and having all His joy in His Father, and He puts us into that life, both as to its acceptance and as to its power. (You do not get here all the privileges that flow from it.) Consequently the only proper place of one looked at as risen with Christ is the place He has before God.

You have the Head largely brought out here, the object and source of it all. “For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” In Ephesians we are the “fullness of him that filleth all in all,” for we are looked at as His body. On the one side all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him, a real man, and on the other you are complete in Him and have everything in Him. The fullness of the Godhead has been revealed in Christ, and we are complete in Him before God. He sets us in connection with Him in virtue of Christ who is at God's right hand, and we are waiting for the hope which is laid up for us in heaven.

“If ye continue in the faith, grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.” Speaking of the Christian in Christ, you never get any “if.” I could not say, “If I was at C——,” for here I am. There is no “if” to your place in Christ, no condemnation. But there is another aspect in which we may look at the Christian; he is running a race towards glory. You have it especially in the Hebrews:, the saints are viewed there as on earth, Christ the Son of God and man as in heaven; and so you do not get the truth there of their being united to Christ—the body to its Head. Whenever the Christian is looked at in his path through this world, then the “ifs” come in; only with them you get the Messed testimony to the faithfulness of God in carrying us

through to heaven. With acceptance and the value of. Christ's blood, there are no “ifs;” but when I am running the race, then I say I must get to heaven. When Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, there was no “if” then: so the one offering has perfected forever them that are sanctified. I am “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation;” but why do I want to be kept? I find this revelation that I have a need of being kept, so that I am, constantly in need of being entirely dependent every instant upon this grace; but with it the positive revelation that the grace will not fail. Therefore dependence is maintained, and it is very blessed to be kept in dependence. A man has to learn his entire dependence, as the Lord says, “Without me ye can do nothing.” This man does not say, but thinks he can do a great deal; and so we have to learn dependence but at the same time the blessed truth of the unfailing faithfulness of God. “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous;” He Always has His eyes on them for blessing, though He may have to chasten them.

“Neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” Why do you say that? Because the devil would pluck them out if he could. Before we come into the effect and result of all in glory, it is the wisdom of God that I should be called to lean upon Him, So He puts one throne), this process where one’s faith is constantly exercised; and then I have to learn, too, that He never fails me. I have to learn myself, and to learn God. It is painful to learn oneself, but then there is the blessed truth of the unspeakable condescension of God in taking, notice of our state and circumstances. Interested in us every moment, as I said before, “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous,” Intercourse with God is maintained; it is the path we have to walk in as being redeemed. Supposing we were to give up Christ and have done with Him, then we should not have life, or peace, or anything. Some of the Hebrews seem to have been in danger of drawing back and are warned accordingly.

We will see, where God has set the Christian. Seeing we are risen with Christ is more than seeing we are forgiven. Forgiveness is the perfect clearing away of every spot (the first thing we need). It is all gone in the work of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, where we had no part but our sins and the wickedness that crucified Him. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission.” If we were not perfected in conscience before God, Christ must have suffered often. What is to put sin away if it is not put away now? I may hate it and judge it more (that is the work of the Spirit in me), but I speak of the putting it away once for all. “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” He came the first time to bear sin; when He comes the second time, He will have nothing to do with sin, He comes to receive us to Himself. We stand between the first coming of. Christ, in which He wrought redemption on the cross and gave Himself to put away sin, and the second coming of Christ, when, in virtue of that work, He comes to receive believers to Himself; and the Holy Ghost is come down meanwhile to give me the fall sense of what He did the first time, and the bright and blessed hope of what He will do the second time. We have nothing between, except of course the operations of. the Holy Ghost, for the work of the Spirit is going on, most blessed in its place, to lead us on to grow up unto Him in all things; but, as regards the work of Christ, He sits in the presence of God because all is done. There is no progress in the value of Christ's blood, nor in the righteousness of God which we are in Christ.

The first thing, then, is redemption—a work which delivers us from the place we were in, and brings us into the new place that Christ is in before God as man. God takes away the sins, and gives us all Christ besides. It belongs to uses being in Christ, though in this epistle it is more Christ in us.

As for the glories of Christ that are to come—all things created by Him and for Him, and—He taking them all up as man—we read that He is going to reconcile the whole state and order of things in heaven and earth; but you “hath he reconciled.” The Christian does not wait till then. I am perfectly reconciled to God. There I was a stranger and an enemy, away from Him; and here I am, my sins entirely gone, and my heart, by this wondrous revelation of love, brought back to delight in God. I am reconciled; and a great and blessed thing it is. If I am reconciled to a person with whom I have been at enmity, well then, there is nothing more between us; if there is anything, then I am not reconciled. If you have an after-thought, a misgiving, “after all I do not know whether it is all right,” then you are not reconciled; the heart is not free. But we do get perfect liberty with God through the precious blood of Christ, and the power and presence of the Spirit of God giving us the consciousness of it in our souls. “You hath he reconciled.” He makes this difference between us and reconciling the things around us, which will not be till the new heavens and new earth. The state of things will be reconciled, which is not so now, for the world has rejected Christ, and will never see Him in that way again; but we, believers, are reconciled to God. It is God's estimate of Christ's blood that is the measure of my acceptance with Himself; it gives me peace. I have been reconciled to God in the consciousness of the perfect love that gave Christ, but beside that I am brought into perfect favor with God, the favor which rests upon Christ. It is not merely that the old things are swept away, and my sins washed out in the blood of Christ, but the perfect love of God is revealed in doing it. I come back to God in unbounded confidence and infinite love. This is the place of the Christian. Christ, being in us, teaches us, and conducts down into our souls this love of God; and the heart is thus reconciled in blessed peace and righteousness, resting in the consciousness of this perfect grace towards us.

If you look up to God and get into His holy presence, do you feel perfect liberty with Him? Poor unworthy creatures we certainly are in ourselves (and in the light I see more how worthless I am); but God spared not His own Son. There is no doubt or cloud as to that which He is for our souls, because it has been perfectly revealed to us in. the word of God, as it has been proved in Christ Himself and the cross.

Redemption and forgiveness is the first thing; reconciliation is the second. Then mark another thing, beloved friends; “who hath delivered us from the power of darkness.” The world is blinded; where God is not known, they are in pitch darkness. They may be very clever on everything else, but this has nothing whatever to do with it. Man's mental powers may be great; he may be full of science; but the moment his breath goes forth, all that is gone. “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not” —that is, on Christ's coming into this world. Wherever the light does come in, wherever God is known, what is the effect? It reaches the conscience. If man's mind were capable of judging what God is, or of knowing what He ought to be, then he would be master of the subject. Do you put God in that place? When God comes in, it is to put me in my place, and Himself in His place, as with the woman of Samaria in John 4. All true intelligence of God comes in by the conscience. The heart, no doubt, is attracted by His grace; but all true knowledge of Him comes in by the conscience, though it may be developed afterward. It is not only light but unspeakable love has been revealed, and He has delivered me fully and brought me into the very place in which Christ is before God. I am “translated into the kingdom of the Son of his love.” It is the operation of grace which does come in, and make us know what we are—true moral light in the soul; but the effect is to take me out of darkness, and put me “into the kingdom of the Son of

his love."

There is another thing in which many feel more difficulty. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Here we are told of meetness. For what? For the inheritance of the saints in light—that is, in glory. But, as a Christian, I am not looking to get at it. He "hath made us meet." May I not say, See what a work God has done? Yea, I am to give thanks for it too. The thief was fit to be Christ's companion in paradise that day. Christ was there for him on the cross, and the value of the work of Christ was proved in taking that man straight to be His own companion above that day. Did God put him in unfit? Of course not. Fit for what? Fit to be with Christ in paradise. Exactly so am I, having "redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins," then reconciled to God, and delivered from the power of darkness, and made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. All that is done, that it may be known now by faith. By grace I do value the death of Christ; but God values it a great deal more. There is where my sin can be fully estimated: I hate it, and confess it; but after all a holy God sees it a great deal more deeply than I do, however sincere I may be. God knows all my sin, and He knows that Christ has put it away. I am left here for two things—to learn a great deal about myself, which is ever humbling; and to learn of God in Christ, the unutterable patience and love and goodness of God.

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." I have not merely, as in the law, what a man ought to be; I have now been taught of God, and know what God is and that I am His child—brought to Him by redemption. He says that you are a partaker of His holiness; He is making you enjoy His love: now you must not do anything that would hinder your enjoying it, or that would grieve the Spirit. You are brought into the light, and everything that does not snit the light must go. It is not merely avoiding crimes and positive sins, but you are to be filled with the knowledge of His will. God has a thought, and a mind, and a path for His children; and this is Christ's path, that we should walk in His steps. "He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself to walk even as he walked." Did you ever see Christ avenge Himself? Did you ever see selfishness working in Him? or trying to get rich, or seeking for pleasure or amusement? Then you go and walk like Him, as a person redeemed to God by the precious blood of Christ. It is a great mercy that God has a will about us and a path for us. "I am the way," says Christ. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." It is following His steps, walking in the spirit and temper in which He walked. "I have set the Lord always before me."

You will see how the apostle brings that out, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Here am I called to-day and to-morrow to walk worthy of the Lord—nothing that I do, say, or think, which should not be worthy of Christ Himself. Here it is all growth: I have got the life. I say to a child, You go and walk worthy of your family;" but if he has no sense of what his family is, it is no use telling him to walk worthy of it; but, if he has the sense of the integrity and standing of his family, then he knows how to walk worthy of it. "In all things behaving ourselves as the ministers of God." You get the word "worthy" in three ways. In Thessalonians, "Walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory." In Ephesians it is the same thing practically: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." Here, in Colossians, it is, "Walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." Did He ever do His own will in anything? No, He did His Father's. Are you content never to do your own will, but to take Christ's will as that which is to be

the spring and motive of all you do? Then communion is not interrupted; and it is joy and blessing beyond all human thought. You say, “Am I never to do what I like?” Like! Do you like not to be always with Christ? This detects the workings of the flesh.

Then comes the activity, the growing acquaintance with God, “Increasing in [or rather by] the knowledge of God.” The fall joy of heaven is the knowledge of God. If I am going after the world, will this be increasing by the knowledge of God? It tests what I like. Do you like to be away from God, and do your own will sometimes? But He says, “I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart.” Do you delight to do it? Oh, what a thought it is, that in this dark world God has perfectly revealed Himself in Christ, nay more that He dwells in us “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Christ, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.” There is God by His Spirit.

Now mark how this works. “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.” I shall find plenty of difficulties in the way, and temptations of all kinds—possibly death, as has often been the case in some countries; but we are strengthened with all might. There is the strength. I have been brought into close relationship with God, and there I get this power. Unto what “Unto all patience.” This sounds a poor thing, but you will find it is just what tries you. “Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” And again, “The signs of an apostle were wrought in me in all patience.” Are you always patient? do you not want divine power for it? I may want setting right in the church of God, or in the Lord's work, or in a thousand things; but I must have patience. I must wait on God. Supposing my will is not at work, there comes meekness and gentleness. I can take things gently and meekly and quietly with others, and then he adds, if that is the case, my life is in full display before God, and there is the enjoyment of God. I enter into all this blessedness and not merely “made meet,” but “giving thanks,” because I am in the positive and blessed enjoyment of all. When I am walking in patience of heart and long-suffering, my soul is with God. I get the blessed enjoyment of what He is, and I grow by the knowledge of Him; “To him that hath shall be given.” If I am honest, I say, “I do not know what his will is;” perhaps there is something in myself that I have not yet detected. Here I have all these exercises; but it is in the sense of the divine favor resting on me with the consciousness of a child of God. The more a child is with his father, and delights in him, of course the better he will grow up, understanding what his father likes. It is so with us before God.

Later on we are told, we “have put off the old man with his deeds;” and then it is added, “Put on, there fore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering” —the graces belonging to the Christian. You must have the consciousness of what you are as the elect of God, and then put them on in that blessed consciousness. It was thus Christ ever walked as man.

“Strengthened unto all patience.” You will find there is nothing that tests the strength of your soul like waiting for God. We think we must do things that we think right; we must rather learn to wait. Take Saul, for example, in 1 Sam. 13. He ought to have waited, and said, I can do nothing. We have but a little while more to go through the wilderness, but it is with God.

And now, beloved, I only ask, and earnestly ask, you, Are your souls free with God, reconciled to Him? Are you before God in virtue of the cross? or will you pretend to stand before Him as a Judge? “Enter not into judgment with thy servant,” says the psalmist, “for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” He who will be the Judge first died on the cross as the Savior. When I appear

before Him, I find the person who Himself put away my sins, and in whom I am now resting.

The cross of Christ is—where everything is morally perfected. There the whole question of good and evil was solved. The world despises the cross; and God meant it to be a despicable thing—a gibbet. “But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, that no flesh should glory in his presence.” There, on the basest thing in the world, He has hung salvation; but the moment I am inside, I find everything in the cross—the uttermost sin of man in enmity against God, all the power of Satan, but the perfect man in Christ. “The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me;” but, on the other side, God is there in perfect righteousness against sin, and in perfect love for the sinner; and as you go on, you find that the new heavens and the new earth—all things in short—will be perfected by the cross. There I have perfect righteousness against sin, and perfect love towards the sinner; and I find peace and rest, not merely rest but God's rest. For He rests in His love, in the blessedness of those He has brought near in Christ, and He will bring them into His rest in glory.

The Lord give you fully to see the place where He has brought you, and, in the consciousness of your relationship with God, to set it forth,—and walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing. Surely we have to give “thanks unto the Father,” when we see the unutterable love that is in it all: He not sparing His own Son, but delivering Him up for us all, then follows the suited Christian walk. The Lord give you to see, beloved, with the eyes of faith what God was and wrought in Christ, so that you should be before God according to it, as reconciled to Him, and then seek to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing by the knowledge. of God.

Chapter 42

Reply to Mr. R.P. Smith on Consecration

Dear Brother in Christ

A friend at B——d has forwarded me the note you wrote him, in which you say (upon my letter, in the Bible Treasury of January), “I hope you cannot endorse p. 207, col. 1, where consecration and trust are spoken of as turning back to Judaism.” A bare extract like this, on such an important subject as consecration and trust misleads, and would be as shocking to me as it can be to you, for nothing is further from my thoughts, and I venture to add from the letter as such. It is due to yourself and the truth in question to connect this bare extract with what precedes and follows it in that column. For myself, I am content on its re-perusal, to leave it without alteration to the candid consideration of all. The letter does treat a kind of consecration, which you put in connection with other things, such as trust in mere promises, a momentary cleansing by blood, and a re-adjustment of nature, and calls this “a turning back to Judaism, and reducing Christians to an inward realization of a lower purity.” The letter puts in contrast with this a believer's present position as united to Christ, the second Adam, in life and righteousness, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved, in Jesus Christ, and called.

As regards “scriptural holiness,” and our separation to God, I suppose Christian circumcision to be “the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ;” and further, as to the world, we are unsettled and crucified to it, by nothing less than the death of Christ. Carried thus outside the flesh and the world by death and resurrection, “our life is hid with Christ in God; and we set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth,” and are settled with the Son of man in heaven. A holiness and a consecration which unsettle nobody from their worldly or ecclesiastical surroundings surely go in the face of this Colossian epistle, which says, “wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world are ye subject to ordinances?” &c. Is it not a solemn thing to say to those who are inclined to come out, “The worst thing you can do is to leave your church?” What must a person do who follows this advice, but accept for a basis the earth and its national establishments, “after the commandments and doctrines of men,” and so give up the distinguishing ground of real Christianity, “not holding the Head from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, increaseth with the increase of God.” If “scriptural holiness” be a separation from the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, and likewise from the world and its rudiments by the death and resurrection of Christ, how can that be called holiness which unsettles nobody in their ecclesiastical and political surroundings? Will you take this query into the secret of your own soul with God, and judge it according to the light of His word, in the power of the Holy Ghost? There was, and will be, a consecration and trust in promises, with other things which characterize Judaism, as they are enumerated in the opening verses of Rom. 9, but they have a millennium for their display in permanent blessing upon earth. The position in which Paul then stood was one with the ascended Lord, outside all these privileges and covenants which pertained to his “brethren according to the flesh.” He was identified with a rejected Christ in his pathway on the earth, and united to the glorified Son of man in the heavens by death and resurrection, under the anointing of the Holy

Ghost.” “A man in Christ” has died to all besides, and must be unsettled practically as to himself and all his surroundings below, if he would be in correspondence and communion with Christ as the Head of the new creation of God. “He which stablisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” Moreover, as touching “the promises of God, they are all made yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us.” They are made sure to us as a present portion in Christ, and are ours in the title of heirs and joint-heirs with Christ! Having said this much upon our true Christian circumcision, and the unction and anointing of the Holy Ghost which we have received of the Father, and which abideth in us, allow me to make an extract or two from “The Higher Life,” simply to show another consecration and trust taught by the author which is something worse than a turning back to Judaism. As to “political surroundings” Mr. Boardman asks, “Is there anything in the office of our civil police, if discharged honestly, prayerfully, boldly, to grieve the Spirit of God, or cause the frown of the most High? No more is there in being a soldier or sailor.” (Seep. 60.) Again, Havelock's enlistment was as hearty under the banner of the tribe of Judah as under the lion of Britain.” His biographer says “of his second conversion,” that “the scriptures opened to him in yet greater fullness, and his consecration to his Master's service assumed yet greater intelligence and force.” (Page 62.) As to “holiness and consecration” Mr. B. further writes, “It would be useless for Satan to ply us Protestants with the peculiarities urged on Romanists; we could not be driven into petticoats, dignified as robes,” &c. Satan “plies us with notions more Protestant, but not one whit less fictitious and deceptive. Would you be a whole-souled disciple of Christ? He says of your person, You will have to conform all your personal habits to a rigid rule first of all. You must put on the straitjacket of propriety tight-laced. It would ill-become one wholly consecrated to God to wear ornaments or elegancies. Gold and jewelry and costly array must be wholly eschewed.” (Page 122.) Again, “the truth is, we are never really entirely the Lord's freemen until we are free from the trammels of all these trivial questions, and at full liberty to follow the Lord in whatever dress, or position, or business, or company, or circumstances, the providence of God, and our own judgment of proprieties, and our own ability and taste, may dictate or require.” (Page 125.) Solemnly, and as followers of Christ, we may well question this range of “consecration” and of “scriptural holiness,” whether it be yours which unsettles nobody, or Mr. Boardman's which settles people down in their “gold and jewelry and costly array,” and if disturbed in their conscience told to attribute their disquietude to Satan's deceptions upon Protestants! I must ask you in conclusion, Can this kind of teaching be brought into the light of the New Testament, except to be condemned, much less tested by the example and ways of Christ and His disciples, or the formative power and baptism of the Holy Ghost? Is this end of consecration and holiness what is meant by, “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body?” or is it not “a turning back to Judaism” or something worse, and “reducing Christians to an inward realization of a lower purity?” I will not reply to these questions myself, but in brotherly love, and in confidence in the Lord, leave the answers for you to make to Him whom you are seeking to serve, so that you may be able more skillfully to guide the many souls who look to you into the true way of holiness and personal consecration. Yours affectionately in Him J. E. B.

Chapter 43

Three Letters to a Mother and Her Daughter on Death for a Christian

(No. 1.)

Dear Sister,

Yes, doubtless, the loss of your dear daughter will be a sorrowful blow and a great gap in your family: but in one way or another I have for a long time accustomed myself to death in Christ; and as far, as Christians are concerned, to, my mind it comes with smiles—in itself a terrible thing, I fully own, but now a gain. God will have us in the perfect light. For Christ, because of us, the way of life was through death. It is not necessarily so for us, because death is completely overcome; but Christ, who has overcome, is there with us, if we have to take that way to get out of evil and defilement, to enter into the light and the perfect joy of His presence. If there is something that has not been settled with God, there may be a painful moment; for the soul must respond to the joy which is prepared for us. But in itself death is only the unclothing of that which is mortal and the passing of the soul into the light, into the presence of Jesus. One leaves that which is defiled and in disorder what a joy that is Later on the body will be found again in power and in incorruptible and immortal glory: we have but to wait a little while.

Salute with much affection all your children. I feel truly for them the loss that they are about to sustain. Your dear daughter would have been the joy of any family where she might have been found; she is going to be the joy of that of Christ, for we are entitled to say this. It is a comfort for those who are still journeying here below. God prepares us for heaven by cutting little by little the ties that still attach us, as children of Adam, to earth. Christ takes the place of everything; and thus all goes on well and for the better. May God deign to bless to the whole family this so real sorrow of heart, in which God ever good has mingled with the bitterness of the cup so much of that which is compassionately sparing and gracious.

I send this short letter for your daughter; I have been afraid it might be too long; but I feel sure that through the goodness of God she will enjoy this little word, reading it at leisure and when her strength allows of it. She will think of Christ and be refreshed, May God bless you and make you feel His goodness even in this loss.

(No. 2.)

Dear M-

I would have much liked to see you once down here before your departure; but He who directs all things with perfect love has ordered it otherwise. You go to heaven before me. Death is not an accident that happens without the will of God; it has no more dominion over us; the risen One bolds the keys of it. How immensely blessed to know that He has won a complete and final victory over death and over all that was against us, so that there is entire deliverance! We are delivered, save as to the body, out of the scene where evil has its power and transported where the brightness of God's countenance ever shines in love, where there is light and love only, where

God fills the scene according to the favor that He bears to Christ as to the One who has glorified Him in accomplishing redemption, according to the perfections which were shown forth through that work.

There was a needs be for God to be manifested in these perfections in answer to the work of Christ; it was due that He should respond to the work of Christ in love, in glory, in the expression of the delight that He found in it. The name of His God and Father in love was unfolded in all its splendor; “Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns.” He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. He then declares that name to His brethren, and Christ praises Him in the midst of the congregation.

This is where I wanted to bring you by these remarks that might otherwise appear somewhat abstract. All this favor shines upon you: what God has been for Christ as man, because Christ glorified God as regards sin that dishonored Him; what God has been in bringing Christ into His presence in glory, that He is for you, who are the fruit of the travail of His soul. Think of that, dear sister. Moreover, Christ has become infinitely dear to us because of what He has done for us. He gave Himself because He loved unboundedly. There is nothing in Christ that is not yours; He cannot give more than Himself, and what a gift that is!

I wrote to you, some time ago, that it is in thinking of Him—of Himself—that one has joy. You are not a joyful Christian. I understand it, I know it: there is discipline in that! Christ has not had the place that He ought to have had in your soul. You see, I hide nothing from you. But that is not all: you have not confidence enough in His grace. Own all that might be a cloud between your soul and His love. You do it, I know; but the grace, the deep perfect love of Jesus, the love which is above all our faults, and gave itself for all our sins, the love which took occasion of our very weaknesses to show its own perfections—of it you do not think enough. That love divine but also personal of the Savior will fill your heart; Jesus will fill it; and you will be then not only in peace but joyful. I attach more importance to peace than to joy. I would wish to see you habitually in a joy more deep than demonstrative; but if Jesus is in the bottom of your heart, that Jesus who has blotted out all trace of evil in us, in whom we live before God, then your joy will be deep. May it be so.

Oh! that your heart may be filled with Jesus Himself, and with His love, and with the sense of His grace. He has saved you, He has washed you, He has become your life, in order that you may enjoy God. What could you have more than Himself? You can see His goodness in the peace that He gives you and in the way in which He surrounds you with such care and affection.

For me, it is only a member of the family going a little before where the whole family will soon dwell. Anywhere else one is only en passage. Soon all will be over for us. How blessed, when every trace of that which has kept us bound in some way or other to this world of misery and evil will have completely disappeared, and when we find ourselves in that light where all is perfect! Therefore trust yourself to His love. I repeat, that He has completely overcome all that is between us and the pure light, as He has perfectly blotted out in us all that which did not suit that light. How good He is! What grace! And you are going to be with Him! How blessed! Rejoice therefore, dear sister; soon we shall all be there. Yet a little labor and all will be over in the pure glory and in love. You go before us, and in heaven you will have to wait, while the others wait and fulfill their task upon earth.

God be with you. May the presence of that faithful and all good Jesus sustain you and rejoice your heart; I trust that such a long letter will not have tired you. I could say many more things yet to you: soon you will know them better than I do; it is a great cause of joy and an immense grace. Peace be unto you. I ask God to bless you, and that does good to one's heart.

(No. 3.)

Dear Sister,

So your dear daughter is already in heaven! I thank you, dear sister, for having given me these particulars. Not only did I love her very sincerely, but I also see in her so true a picture of the work of the Spirit in connection with her whole life. When I say “true,” I mean that it was not feelings only, such as friends reproduce to enhance the piety of a deceased person, but just what show s a genuine work of God, such as He produces in a soul, with the real experiences of that soul. That is worth much more than a few artificial flowers spread over a grave. I feel indeed that the death of your dear daughter will make a great gap in her family, for you and for all. But God disposes of all, and He does all things well. And she is going to be laid, at least her mortal remains, by her father. Well, they will be raised together. We shall not go much before one another in leaving this world; we shall all be together, blessed be God, when we are raised from the dust. With pleasure I think of that dear brother, that he will awake where there is no care and no pain. He will be near his Savior, then his daughter with him, and then all the rest, on whom the grave has closed and who have disappeared from this troubled scene.

It seems to me that there is a certain change in my way of feeling touching those who die younger perhaps than I am. There was a time when I used to say to myself, Why, it ought to be your turn, since these go. Now I have more the sense of being dead and of seeing them file off before me to reach the Lord's presence; young or old, what matters it? And I remain here to serve, perhaps until the Lord comes, poor in service (I own), but giving my life to it, and to it alone. Immense privilege I if one only knew how to realize it, a privilege which makes us to be strangers everywhere, and that is, on the whole, a true gain even for the time being.

Chapter 44

Development

I deny absolutely development in divine things. In the human mind there is development; in the present truth there cannot be, for God has been revealed. There is no revelation more, nor meant to be any. Individuals may learn more and more, but it is there to be learned. The scriptures give two positive grounds for this—that I am to continue in what I have learned as the only true ground of safety, and that I know of whom I have learned them. There is a negative ground of proof—the apostles committing us, when they should be gone, to that which would be a security for us. If the person of Christ be the foundation truth of Christianity, as scripture declares it is, as the Son revealing the Father, it is clear there can be no development. His person cannot be developed.

I quite understand it will be said, Of course not; but the revelation of it can. Equally impossible. He Himself is wholly fully revealed, and reveals the Father. The Holy Ghost has revealed, and is, the truth. Hence John, who treats this subject, declares that was to continue (abide in them) which they had learned, and they would so abide in the Father and in the Son. They could not have more. If any doctrine other than this, or "παρα," (beyond or on one side, besides "what he preached,") says Paul, "was preached," neither the doctrine nor the preacher were to be received. If the church did not possess fully the revelation of the Father in the glorified Son by the Holy Ghost, it did not possess Christ at all as there revealed. If it did, it could not be added to nor developed. If it did add to it, it falsified Christ. That men speculated about it, and their foolish and irreverent speculations had to be rebuked, repressed, corrected, this is true; but whatever was more than returning to the simplicity of the first revelation, or went beyond its fullness, was pure mischief. Either the apostles and first church had a full revelation of Christ, or the church never was founded on it. If they had, there was no development of it. So of His work. It is complete, or the church is not saved; it was completely revealed, or the church had not its ground of justification and peace. If it had, there was no development. That much was lost I believe. The greatest stickler for church authority does not pretend the church receives a fresh revelation. He merely says that the church pronounces on truth as having been revealed. But then there can be no development. Till revelation was complete, there were further truths unfolded, but it was by revelation. Once that complete, all is closed; and Christianity completes it. The word of God is fulfilled, completed, says Paul to the Colossians. We are to walk in the light, as God is in the light. It was an unction of the Holy One, by which we know all things. "The Spirit," says the apostle, "searcheth all things, even the deep things of God." And then the apostle tells us he spoke by the Holy Spirit, in words which He taught. The true light now shines. We have the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost may guard the saints against error, and show it is error; but the apostles were guided into all truth. Thus John, in a passage quoted, "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning abide in you, ye also shall continue in the Father and in the Son." We have "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." So Paul: "Continue thou in the things that thou hast learned, knowing of whom thou hast learned them." Paul, in going, commends them to God, and the word of His grace, as sufficient. Peter writes that they should have, after his decease, these things always in remembrance. As Tertullian

justly says, “What is first is the truth.” If Eutyches introduces error, Eutyches may be condemned, and truth stated; yet this is not development, but maintenance of the truth as it had been revealed.

It is plain then that the church does not teach; the teacher teaches. The church abides in and pro fosses the truth she has learned. She is, or ought to be, the pillar and ground of the truth: but she does not teach it. The mystery of iniquity began in the apostles' days: the last days were already come. The Truth was there; but men, like Satan, abode not in it. But abiding in it, walking in it, in the truth perfectly revealed in Christ, this was the duty of the saint, even if the professing church would not, and the time should come when they would turn away from the truth, as Paul declared they would.

Chapter 45

The Disciple and the Assembly

My Dear Brother,

Our Lord searched the heart of Peter (in John 21:15-17) with three questions, which brought up to Peter's mind the roots of his failure, rather than the overt act of denial. And He graciously closed up each probing with a word of comfort: Feed my lambs (ver. 15); Shepherd my sheep (ver. 16); Feed my sheep (ver. 17); thus breaking the self-confidence of His servant, both in himself and man, ere He confided the sheep and lambs of Israel to his care. Then He adds, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou west young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest, but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee where thou wouldest not.” (Ver. 18.) What a Lord He is, and how admirable in all His ways! Many of us, too, when young, thought of “what we could do for Him,” and we, too, have had to learn that the happier question is, “What will He do with us?” You will, I am sure, go along with an aged pilgrim in admiration of this wisdom and these ways of our common Lord and Master. He did not turn Peter off and send him away as a failed hireling, but used the failure as a means of fitting him for a more important service and place; and He would not accept Peter's rejection of the crown of martyrdom, but would take His own way of putting that honor upon him; no praise to Peter. Counting that, as an aged one, on reviewing your course from England, through India, England, and hither, you must have made your experience (in a long residence here, too) as I have mine in other scenes, I have selected you as one to whom, in grace and love, I may fairly address a few thoughts connected with the work of the Lord in New Zealand. I will only add that, in doing so, I desire to remember, and myself to act upon the Lord's own words to Peter, “Follow me,” (ver. 19), and “Follow thou me.” (Ver. 22.)

There are, as men speak, very many gatherings in New Zealand to break bread and drink wine together, weekly, and professedly, in memory of Christ and of His death until He comes. (1 Cor. 11:17-33.) To interfere in the house and at the table of any one would be wrong for me and unlovely. And who, or what, am I to venture to dictate at the Lord's table? I would beware of so doing: the Lord keep me from it. But my place is at what is His table, as a guest; and if in any measure I can guard others from sinning at it, or, in my little measure, after the line of Paul's conduct, can stay the Lord's hand from sending weakness and infirmity upon many and cutting a good many off in discipline, by arousing the attention of the guests to any existing cause for His discipline, I would desire to do so humbly but freely. The Lord was indeed in discipline cutting off many, that they might not be condemned with the world (ver. 30-32), and Paul knew it ere he wrote his first letter, calling attention to sins, and among them to the awful one named in chapter 5. I would also, as one desiring to find grace to the faithful, warn the simple ones as to what are the marks of His table; and so, also, arouse the attention of some who assume their table to be His, while there is still cause to question its being so. And, indeed, God is the God of reality, and, if I and others go to a table and call it “the table of the Lord,” we should expect that He will make manifest to all what it really is in His sight—whether it is His table, or whether it is not—and so, I think, He is wont to do; as well as, if it be His, to make all that is at it manifested, for He is light and

is present there.

And now, firstly, there is an expression connected with our being together in His name, which is important as connected with His assembly, and is, if understood, helpful to us. It occurs in Matt. 18:18, 20, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

The Gospel of Matthew gives us the history of our Lord's life here below, when looked at as Son of David (securer of the sure mercies of David) and Son of Abraham (father of the faithful, having promises for earth and heaven). Himself, the heir and alone holder of all promised blessings and the object of faith, was to have a kingdom and a church also. And it is by reason of this, as I judge, that the church, or assembly, is brought out here as in none of the other gospels. See chapters 16:13-28; 18:15-20. The word “church” never occurs in the Gospels, save in these two contexts; the word occurs here, though the church was not set up until Pentecost. Now, in the second of the passages the words I have cited are found, “Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them.” In verses 15-17 we learn how a private injury of one individual brother against another is to be met: Christ gone to heaven, there could be an appeal to the church, which would have responsibility and authority (not infallibility, but authority), heaven-sustained, verse 18; then verse 19 a promise as to prayer; and after that verse 20. To me it is clear that this last verse contains the strength and limit of the whole and that which qualifies it: it must be in His name, whether the gathering together or the prayer. And here I must remark that the term “name” in scripture, as applied to God and the Lord Jesus Christ in their various titles, is not merely a conventional sound without meaning. The name of “God” (Elohim) had its illustration, as first recorded in the pages of scripture, in the first chapter of Genesis. Creation made manifest and stood forth as witness of the eternal power and Godhead of the incorruptible Elohim. (Rom. 1:20.) Chapter 2 brought out to light another part of His glory, namely, as “Jehovah” —God, in His provision for and association with man in Eden. The meaning of the word Jesus is “Jehovah-a-saving,” (compare Matt. 1:21); He was made Lord (Acts 2:36 and Phil. 2:9-11) and Christ (Acts 2:36), “Anointed,” with a glory as such in heaven, even as He is to have a glory as “Anointed” on earth, under His Hebrew name of Messiah. (John 1:41.) And what is the manifestation, now, from the throne of God and heaven of the Nazarene, once crucified, now ascended and seated on the throne under these titles, “Jehovah-a-saving for heaven, Lord of all things, the Anointed Son of Man?” This is His name, and those who come unto Him, and shelter there, find every need met. A company being, in whatever humble measure, in the liberty and life-giving power of this manifestation which God has made by Jesus, and is ours through faith and the Holy Spirit, is a very different truth (for truth it is) from man's thoughts, when, from whatever motive, be merely spreads a table and sits down at it with others on the first day of the week. I judge we should all do well to stand under the light of these rays shining down upon us from the newly announced name (or manifestation) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. It is a flood of blessed light, making all manifest, and of love telling itself out as none but God, who is love, can tell it; and the people into whom it shines know the hallowing effect of it on themselves as to the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Secondly. Before coming to certain tests of the table and company at it, which the scriptures give, and in the very nature of things, suppose (or take for granted); tests, therefore, which they who accredit it as the Lord's table in any place, are bound, by their allegiance to their Master and as His friends met to remember Him, to look for—let me say a little word as to what they (the guests) are

supposed to be.

Does it not suppose, as being given to disciples (who were first called Christians at Antioch), that the guests at it are a people who have been separated unto Himself in heaven (John 17:19) from out of the world, as not of it even as He was not of it? (Ver. 16.) His death stands between them and the world and worldliness as the Red Sea divided between Israel in the wilderness and Egypt, the house of bondage and land of captivity. He who dwells in them now is the spring and regulator of their life here below, as the flesh once was. And now, instead of being deluded by Satan and led down to destruction by him, body, soul, and spirit, they know and have been owned by Jesus, the mighty conqueror of Satan as His own, and they have found in Him, risen from death and the grave and glorified, an object of joy and rejoicing. They sing His victory and enter with joy into His, having triumphed gloriously, and anticipate the songs of His triumph and the rejoicings of that day. One man has been found who has done nothing amiss; and He has won, by His lowly and perfect obedience unto God, a place from God, a place and glory which He has opened unto them. His complete self-surrender when here below, “Lo! I come to do thy will, O God” (the whole of that will, and nothing but it); and the beauty of His ways and thoughts and the marvelous moral display He has made of His Father and God have laid hold of their hearts, and (forgetting all that is behind and looking forward to meet Him) they live to Him and Him alone. Dust of this earth they think not to collect as their portion; the old selfishness of flesh they have judged; Satan they resist, knowing that he will soon be bruised under their feet. The supper is a feast in the wilderness pilgrimage of life, in the entering into the land and amid the wars thereof; but they at it are the church militant and are fighting, through grace, the good fight of faith. Many a fall and many a wound they each may have had, and yet they can sing, “In all things more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Is it not so, beloved? The church is the house of God, the body of Christ, and serves as exhibited down here, for the nursery, the schoolroom; the guardroom, the hospital of God's own heavenly people. But it is only for those who on credible testimony can be received at first as already His. And here, observe, that (in scripture) the seekers and the inquirers were not as such called Christians. The saved were those who could take their places in the company that owned the apostle's doctrine and fellowship (Acts 2:42); and they were of one heart and of one soul (4:32) through the presence and power of the Spirit.

Christ never forgets His Father's choice of us, nor His own call, nor the faith and purpose of the Spirit in us—even in the days when we were not self-judged; as we should have been, surely. He is the alone faithful and true One, and His ways change not. He has, too, for you and for me, little as we may be, tokens of His love and good pleasure just suited to our littleness and low estate.

Thirdly, there are the habits and ways of His people and assembly down here, to which attention will have to be called if we come to trace the way back to their original position of those who have wandered from it. These I leave for the present, and turn to

MARKS WHEREBY THE ASSEMBLY OF GOD WAS AND IS TO BE KNOWN.

It is the assembly called out of this world; one and holy.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven was what Peter preached at Pentecost when be called on those that believed: “As many as the Lord our God shall call.... Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” (Acts 2:39, 40.) The apostles' doctrine and practice and fellowship were

clean outside of Judaism. (Ver. 41.) The church was formed through faith upon Christ gone up out of this earth into heaven and made Lord and Christ there on the throne; it was thoroughly worthy of Him as being there, and had been formed and was sustained by the Holy Spirit come down to dwell on earth among the poor sinners who believed in the Messiah martyred and rejected, as now alive and on the throne in heaven—the fountain of all grace. Paul was called out of all earthly and worldly blessing by a Lord gone into heaven; and he called people to go out to Jesus the crucified and ascended, Heb. 13:12, 13 and Gal. 1:4, and vi. 14; it presents one body and one Spirit, and it is holy in principle and practice, sanctified to God.

As to the one body and one Spirit: a few remarks may suffice to show how far the one body and one Spirit are essential characteristics of the church or company called out of earth for heavenly places and blessings, even as Israel and saints before had been called out of idolatry for earthly places and earthly blessings. A king is yet to reign upon earth center of government and worship on God's behalf. A king supposes both a kingdom and “subjects.” The king is the higher party of the two; the “subjects” are the people who are blessed by relationship with him, members of his kingdom; not members of the king. The word “subject,” not “member,” answers to the word king in the official relationship of king and people in a kingdom. On the other hand no Englishman would say, speaking of—a human body, “the head and its subjects,” but the head and its members. A human body has but one head; and many “members” are required to make up the complement of the body. Our Lord Jesus Christ has had all things put under His feet (Eph. 1:22, 23), and has been given. to be Head over them to His assembly; but then, likewise, (and the truth is distinct from that of His being Head over all things in the sense of His causing all things to work together for our good,) He is Head of His body, which is the fullness (or complement) of Him that filleth all in all. May [we] grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ from, whom the whole body joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplied), according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love (iv. 15, 16, compare 1 Cor. 12:7-27). There is but one such Head, but one such body.

It is not that there is but one Spirit in this one body, which is all that we need to remember. He is God, a person in the Godhead, the Holy Spirit who had wrought in creation, in providence, in government, who now in eternal salvation and redemption takes a new place and comes down to dwell in the body the church; the alone power that ought to work in it too. The apostles had to wait for Him as the promise of the Father, Acts 1:4, 5, 8. In Acts 2 He came down and made their company to be the church, and gave out a bold testimony for the Lord on the throne high, forming a company and a teaching and a fellowship and practice which were new. Note the word Spirit through verses 4, 17, 18. This He continues in chapters 3 and 4, adding certain things, however. In chapter v. He is the power of discipline inside the assembly and putting Peter forward (verses 3, 9, 82), making the place a terror to the unrepentant. In chapter 6 He shows Himself as the One, fullness of whom would fit a man for diaconal care, or for the work of an evangelist (vi. 8, 5, 8; vii. 51, 55); leading on to (7.) Stephen's becoming, through Him, an adequate testimony against Israel; that, as they had rejected a Christ in humiliation upon earth, so they rejected Him now in glory, and giver of forgiveness of sins and of the Holy Spirit. In chapter 8, when the twelve apostles, under the first persecution of the church, tarried in Jerusalem, He used those that were scattered abroad to go everywhere through Judea and Samaria preaching the word. He was with them, and verses 17-28 met new difficulties. Read, too, chapter 9 Saul's conversion, and mark

verses 17, 81—(compare 13:2, 4, 9, 52, &c.) I will not write more, but I commend the careful reading of the Acts, as showing how the presence of God, the Holy Spirit, and His using men, and working by men, is stamped in divine grace upon every part of the narrative.

Fourthly. Ere I come to holiness, I would say a few words on the church as a depositary of the scriptures, and, so, of truth. Isa. 8 gives us part of the trial of Israel; and there we read of the word "being sealed up among His (Immanuel's) disciples." Verses 12-20 are very important and apply to Pentecostal times as also to the hour yet to come to the remnant. The term "disciples" is a name new, and marks a relationship new to the Jewish mind as a line of blessing. The old line of blessing to them was that of lineal descent from Abram. The one new was, "You have His word." This is more developed in John 15 than in xvi., where their relationship in the Spirit is given. Study John 17 and Rom. 11:12-24, as giving very different connections of the same truth about the word of God, and in His people down here. Also John 14, Acts 20:32, 2 Tim. 3:14-17, &c., and 1 Tim. 3:16.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the revelation, of God and the Father. Christ is the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15); the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4); in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col. 2:9); the man that is Jehovah's Fellow. (Zech. 13:7 and xi. 12, 18.) He that has seen me has seen the Father also (John 14:9; read from verse 6 to 20, and in John 1:18.)

The written word is the place where alone all about Him can be found by those that are taught of God. (John 5:37-47 and vi. 45.)

The scriptures may be said then to be, in a certain sense, God's letter to the assembly; and believers and the assembly are responsible to be His letter to the world.

Fifthly. The assembly is responsible by privilege and calling to be holy.

For our sakes the Lord has sanctified (or set apart) Himself on the throne on high, that we may be set apart (sanctified) by the Father through the truth. (John 17:17, 18, 19.) He is, as it were, the vow of our Nazariteship. We are to beholders forth of the word of life. (Phil. 2:16.) But more than this, He is there as the Head of the body, the church. If Christ is Head of the body the church, if God the Holy Spirit indwells it, is it unable to find out, to see and to judge of, evil which may be in it? To be unwilling to admit sin and sins in one's own family, and to tolerate it in the assembly, is to cast dishonor upon the Lord Himself; making Him out to be more indifferent about sin than we are. A very awful sin it is too. This has been done by many, avowedly, too, as to doctrine, morality and spirituality; and where tolerated, and in principle adopted and sanctioned by any company, it ceases, if it perseveres in so doing, to be part of the Holy Catholic Church. If my principles are such, the sooner I were separated from the better.

On the other hand, there may be infantine weakness and excessive ignorance in an assembly—and the more of these there be, the more would the Spirit of God and of Christ recognize there all that is of God—all that makes the company to be part of the church and so ought I, too, to recognize it and seek to make it consistent with Christ's mind about it. But what if I find a company whose principles might be, 1st, the denial of the one body and one Spirit; 2ndly, the maintaining the independency of the churches; 3rdly, the setting aside of responsibility as to the truth and pleading against holy discipline in word and doctrine and walk of life? Should I accredit it? Nay, I ought to leave it as an assembly to its own principles, as antagonistic to

scripture and to mine; and (counting it neither heavenly nor divine) leave it alone. To their own master, they, in it, will individually stand or fall, and I would pray for them each and all, and try to help each into a better position. But why waste time through giving them credit for being that which they are not, for being that which they disclaim? The state and condition of individuals may be very low in an assembly which owns Christ in His Headship and as Head, which owns and recognizes the living God the Spirit to be with and among them; which desires to purge out all leaven that it may be an unleavened lump, &c.; in such case I own the assembly and try to help the individuals. But if the assembly is anti-scriptural and anti-Christian in principle as an assembly, I say the word applies to them in it, “Come out of her, my people.” I cannot own such assembly as God's. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come, mark that which pastoral power now-a-days should seek to bring forth among God's people down here.

I mean not, dear brother, to tax you for an answer to this. I publish it without your having seen or heard of it, so that you can in no wise be looked upon by any as responsible to repudiate or approve any part of it all. Glad shall I be, if we do meet, for any remarks you may kindly make to me upon it, if you feel it worth while so to do.

In respect and affection, as in God's presence, I write it,

Yours in Him,

V. W. Christchurch, March 14th, 1874.

P.S.-Read 2 Cor. 5:14-17; if it has hold over me, “I know no man after the flesh.”

Nor human kindness, nor leaven, can be allowed in any sacrifice—they would spoil and corrupt it; but the salt of our God, in plentiful measure, will preserve.

As to one's labors among the professing world, take Jer. 15:19, for your motto; and, for those in the gospel, Rom. 1:1-7.

Chapter 46

The Drink Offerings

Drink-offerings, like burnt-offerings, were known amongst men before the giving of the law. At what period they were first introduced, or on what occasion a drink-offering was first poured out, are facts shrouded in obscurity; for we read not of them till the days of Jacob, and then not till his return to Bethel from Padan-aram, where God had on a former occasion spoken to him. There, on the stone he set up for a pillar, he poured out, as far as we know, his first and only drink-offering. In this action however there was method and perception. He knew evidently when to erect a pillar, and when to pour out a drink-offering thereon.

He set up pillars several times in his life—a favorite practice, it would seem, with him. He erected one by Galeed, east of Jordan, to stand as a witness of divine intervention on his behalf, and which served with the heap, raised by him and his brethren, to point out the boundary, across which neither he nor Laban were to pass to the injury of the one by the other. (Gen. 31:24, 45, 52.) He set up another on Rachel's grave, in the way to Ephrath (Gen. 35:20), an abiding memorial to point out the spot where the body of his beloved was laid. But neither at Galeed, nor at Rachel's grave, did he pour out a drink-offering. It was not the fitting time, nor were they the places for such an expressive action, and doubtless he understood that.

His action in erecting a pillar at Galeed betokened his sense of the propriety of having a monument pointing heavenwards, to remind all whom it might concern of that eventful passage in the history of Isaac's younger yet favored son. The pillar on Rachel's grave, erected by her sorrowing husband, attested his deep concern in what had there taken place. Years however before he had thus left his mark at Galeed, a pillar had been erected by him at a place afterward to be known by the name of Bethel, that is, God's house; a name which he on that occasion gave it, where God had just bestowed on the benighted traveler (Gen. 28:11) promises of the land, of a numerous seed, and of divine protection. Here he did not content himself with raising up the stone for a pillar, but he anointed it likewise, owning thereby that to him it was holy and consecrated ground. Yet he did not then pour out a drink-offering thereon. Had he trusted God implicitly, he might have done that; but evidently, from the compact Jacob made with Him, to be fulfilled if He realty brought him back to his father's house in peace. Rebekah's son manifested a want of trustfulness in the promises of God.

Galeed and Rachel's grave were places he ever remembered; so was Bethel, but with this difference, not only was it henceforth to be connected with the fortunes and history of the patriarch, but he had learned to look on it as God's house, where He had—unexpectedly to Jacob—discoursed with him. Years passed away before he re-visited that spot in Canaan. The sanctity of the place however was indelibly impressed on his mind. It was to Jacob like no other spot on the whole earth. His act of anointing the stone on the first occasion that he visited it makes clear what he thought of the place; and his command to his household, and to all that were with him, to put away the strange gods that were among them, and to be clean, and to change their garments, when he was about to re-visit it, showed that his thought about it had remained

unchanged.

Arriving there he built an altar, which he had not done before, and during the night God appeared to him, and confirmed and even amplified in detail what He had on the former occasion promised him. So now, his heart being full, the patriarch sets up again a pillar; but this time, before anointing it, he poured out a drink-offering upon it. It was one thing to start forth on his journey from Bethel to visit lands to him unknown, with God's promises given, but as yet unfulfilled; and quite another thing to be there on his homeward journey with wives, children, and a plenitude of earthly possessions, such as one engaged in postural pursuits would most value. What then he did not do before that be does now. It was fitting to erect a stone for a memorial, of that be felt sure. It would be proper, too, to repeat his former act, and to anoint the pillar in token of the place being to him and his family a holy one.

But more than that was needed. God had confirmed promises made on the occasion of his first visit to Bethel, and the patriarch could see in his altered and improved outward circumstances proofs in a measure of the fulfillment of that which awaited its complete accomplishment. Hence in his eyes the time had come to pour out a drink-offering in token of his joy in that which God had so graciously bestowed on him. So he poured out his drink-offering on the stone, and that before he anointed it.

On his first visit to Bethel, the holy character of the place struck him—God was in it. On his second visit the grace and faithfulness of God were prominently before him; so his first action after again erecting the pillar was one expressive of the feelings of his heart, called forth by what God had just said to him.

Many years intervened between that visit to Bethel and Jacob's dying communication to his children in Egypt; but we never read of a similar act on his part to express the feelings of his heart. Halting on his journey to Egypt at Beersheba, he offered sacrifices there unto the God of his father Isaac (Gen. 46); the number and the character of which are to us unknown. It is evident however that he sacrificed with no niggardly hand, for more than one animal must have been slaughtered by him that night; but, though blood flowed freely, no drink-offering, it would seem, was brought by the patriarch on that occasion. He sacrificed at Beersheba before God spoke to him; he raised up the pillar at Bethel after God had appeared to him. A drink-offering with the sacrifices would have been, judging from the order at Bethel, an anachronism. For he poured it out, not to ask for a favor, but in token of his joy at receiving one.

Then too he had returned to the land, now he was about to leave it; so, though starting forth on his journey to Egypt by divine permission, with promises of divine protection and assurances of a return to the land given to him and to his seed, we can understand from the character of Jacob, as previously developed, that even after he had received God's gracious communication he was not in that condition of spirit which required for its manifestation, and to give itself vent, the pouring out a drink-offering, which told not less plainly what was in the heart, than the clearest enunciation of the human voice.

Turning over the pages of the word in chronological order, we read next of what Job was accustomed to do in the way of sacrifice for his children after their festal celebrations, each one of his day, and what God commanded his three friends to offer on their own behalf. (Job 1; 41) In

neither chapter however are drink-offerings mentioned. Nor is this surprising; for as we learn from the ordinance about them, subsequently given to Israel, they were never commanded to be brought when men sacrificed on account of sin. And it was on account of sin that burnt-sacrifices were provided by Job for his sons, and were offered up by his friends.

The patriarchal period ended, we next meet with sacrifices on the occasion of the visit of Moses' father-in-law to the camp of Israel at Sinai. That time Jethro officiated as priest (Ex. 18:12); but neither then nor subsequently when by the law-giver's command the young men offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace offerings under the hill, at the ratification of the covenant with the Lord by the congregation of Israel, have we any hint of the patriarch Jacob's example at Bethel having been followed by those encamped in the wilderness of Sinai. Certainly on the latter occasion, when the people had the blood of the covenant sprinkled on them in token of what they deserved and incurred if they failed in the performance of it, a drink-offering would have been quite out of place.

From the time of Jacob, then, till the erection of the tabernacle, and the consecration of Aaron and his sons to minister at the altar, that simple but telling rite is never mentioned in the word. From the date however that the Aaronic priesthood was fully established, no day was to pass on which a drink-offering could be omitted. It was always in season in connection with the morning and evening burnt-offering (Ex. 29:40-42); for there was that in type offered up every day on the brazen altar, which was fitted to cheer the heart of everyone who understood anything about it. And now we are taught of what the drink: offering was to consist—strong wine, to be poured out unto the Lord (Num. 28:7); and wine it is, se Jotham in his parable expresses it, “which cheereth God and man. (Judg. 9:13.) And surely there was that in type on the altar, which was eminently fitted to do this, the lamb of the burnt-offering, foreshadowing the perfect surrender of the Lord Jesus Christ to do His Father's will.

Let us pause here a moment to contrast the action of Jacob with the injunction of the law. Jacob out of the fullness of his heart, of his own voluntary will, without any divine command, poured out his drink-offering on the stone. God on the other hand enjoined the drink-offering as an invariable accompaniment of the daily burnt-offerings. Jacob's action was dictated surely by what be felt at the communication made to him, and the favor he already enjoyed. But the drink-offering under the law, being commanded by God, could not be considered as the measure of the people's joy in the sacrifice on the altar. It did surely portray what those concerned in the sacrifice might feel; but their measure of apprehension, and their joy in that which the lamb prefigured, fell doubtless far short of the mark. And we must admit that our apprehension of the work of Christ, and the joy therefrom derived, falls far below that which God discerns and has found in the sacrifice of His Son. The measure of the offerer's joy did not then govern the measure of the drink-offerings; but the drink-offering expressed the full measure of joy, which could be found in that which the burnt-offering prefigured. But as none but God could fully estimate that, He it was who prescribed in the law how much wine was to be poured out each morning and each evening in connection with the daily burnt-sacrifices. Jacob's drink-offering was unconnected with a sacrifice. Under the law the drink-offering with a meat-offering was the invariable adjunct to the morning and evening oblation, and we never read of a drink-offering commanded apart from a sacrifice. Jacob then gave expression to what he felt, the drink-offering under the law typified what those concerned in the sacrifice on the altar might feel.

Turning back to the law, we learn that, though at times we may concentrate our thoughts on the death of the Lord Jesus Christ in one or other of its aspects as set forth in the different sacrifices which typified it, yet to have n just estimate of its value, so as to share in the joy which flows from it, we must ever remember His life as manifested on earth before the cross. Of this the meat-offering, which accompanied the daily burnt-offering was a type. His death we should remember; but who it was who died, as evidenced by His life, must ever be kept in view. When both are before us, His life and His death, the drink-offering finds its place.

But no drink-offering was commanded apart from the sacrifice. No drink-offering was enjoined in connection with the meat-offering by itself. No drink-offering would the sons of Aaron have poured out in connection only with the animal on the altar. A whole Christ, as it were, must be before the worshipper before a drink-offering would be in place. When that was before the eye and the heart, the drink-offering was not to be withheld; the wine which cheereth God and man could then be poured out in token that in the Lord Jesus Christ, who lived and died, there was that which gave joy to God, and in which those by whom it was offered could share. And as redemption by blood had in type been accomplished, God made known that men could have joy in common with him, though only in connection with, and with reference to, that which the sacrifice on the altar prefigured. And this was to hold good for Israel, for those born in the land, and for the stranger which sojourned with them as well. (Num. 15:13-15.) Yet, never, let it again be observed, was this offering commanded to be brought apart from the sacrifice on the altar, though Israel, it would seem, did separate the two in their idolatrous rites.

But not only was the drink-offering to accompany the daily oblation, for in Num. 15 we are instructed that, after the children of Israel had entered their land, as often us any one, whether of the race of Israel or not, brought a burnt-offering of the herd or of the flock, a sacrifice in performing a vow, or is free-will offering, and at Israel's solemn feasts, a meat-offering and a drink-offering were to be the accompaniment for every animal offered up. In Ex. 29, where the daily burnt-offering was spoken of, the measure of the drink-offering was fixed at the fourth part of an hin of wine. In Num. 15 however we learn that the measure of the wine varied with the size of the animal. But, though it varied with the size and character of the animal offered up in sacrifice, it always corresponded to the amount of oil appointed to be used in the accompanying meat-offering. The offerer knew that he had to increase his drink-offering the larger the animal he brought; but the measure of oil, appointed for the accompanying meat-offering, was the measure of wine, which he must provide for the drink-offering. From this rule we read not of any deviation, and its propriety we can surely discern. For if the wine was the expression of joy to be found in the Lord Jesus Christ in His life and in His death, the measure of joy derived therefrom corresponded to the measure of the Holy Ghost within Him, of which the oil in the meat-offering was typical.

Thus corn, wine, and oil, products of the earth, were all called into requisition with the slain animal, either to delineate what He was, or to express what was found in Him. In Christ, and in Him alone, of all who ever trod this earth, was there no failure. His life, His ways, His acts, fully corresponded to the Holy Ghost in Him. Hence joy in Christ was, and is, exactly proportionate to the Spirit which dwelt it Him. In His life, and in His death, He acted throughout only as led of the Holy Ghost.

Such then was the drink-offering under the law, foreshadowing the joy which God and man could find in the man Christ Jesus. A common subject of joy then there is between God and us, but its

measure varies not with our apprehension of what there is in His Son to delight the heart, God has told us what the measure is which can be found in that perfect, spotless One, who was holy, harmless, and undefiled. What an idea of God's delight in His Son do the sacrifices of sweet savor bring before us! Noah was a perfect man in his generations. Job had none like him in all the earth. Abraham was called the friend of God, and on him, to order his house aright, God declared He could count. David was the man after God's own heart. But each of these, though thus described by God, fell short of answering perfectly to what a man on earth should be. The Lord alone has done that; and the measure of the drink-offering, varying, but always commensurate with the oil of the meat-offering, tells it us in type, as His life and His death afterward exemplified and proved it. Thus what the Lord was, as made known by the New Testament, sheds a bright light on the types and shadows of the Old.

And now for a time all such offerings as the law enjoined have ceased, to be renewed however when God again takes up Israel as His earthly people. Then sacrifices will be offered up afresh on the altar, and drink-offerings of wine be poured out again to the Lord. (Ezek. 45:17.) And Israel surely will have understanding as to their meaning, and partake intelligently in God's joy in Christ, as derived from His life and from His death. And then too will they see, as we can now, how abhorrent it must have been to the Lord, when that action, which expressed joy in the Lord Jesus, was made use of in connection with idolatrous rites, of which Jeremiah so often complains. They burnt incense, he tells us, and poured out drink-offerings to the queen of heaven, and to the false gods. Incense spoke of the merits of Christ, drink-offerings (as we have seen) of the joy to be found in the life and death of the Lord Jesus; yet the people by the incense they burned to idols, and the wine they poured out (Jer. 7:18; 19:13; 32:29; 44:17), professed by their action to have learned the merits attaching to false gods, and to have found joy in a rite which, little as they knew it, was really the worship of demons. (1 Cor. 10:20.) What an insult to God, and to Him who was represented in the sacrifice, it was for Israel to give drink-offerings to idols! We understand the heinous character of such a practice, when we learn what the offering, as appointed by God, really expressed. And we can enter into Joel's sorrow, when the meat-offering and drink-offering were withheld from the house of the Lord. It was true, as he exclaimed, “Joy and gladness are cut off from the house of our God.” (Joel 1:16.) C. E. S.

Chapter 47

The Effect Spiritually of Holiness Through Faith: Correction

The following copy of a letter to a Christian enquirer may be helpful to the reader.

Dear —, I have read the little tract, and it has made me clearer as to the ground these people are upon, and a curious experience I once had. Mr. V. was on the common ground of “low Christianity,” which leaves people open to this. “I have given up,” he says, “the expectation of being overcome with waywardness and sin.” No wonder Mr. R. P. S. had hold of him, if this was his state. I treated this as a non-Christian state fifty years ago. I may have been inconsistent with deliverance, but I do not see what more they have than what I got near fifty years ago, save that it is on false ground on which it is impossible to make real progress; or, at any rate, their state, progress and all, is what I should utterly deprecate.

It is not what frightens Mr. V. which frightens me, that is, the fact of communion not interrupted, or immediate consciousness of it, if it were. That is to me the normal Christian state (only not talking of it); and it may be a means of awakening your mind to something it has not yet got. But I am more convinced than ever, since I read Mr. V.'s tract, of its positively lowering tendency—I mean of leading to a sorrowfully lower style and standard of Christianity, than what scripture presents to us (what scripture calls beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord). I hold the difference clearly in my spirit. It may bring down Christ to give a quiet trusting spirit down here; but it never takes the man to Christ up there, so as to exercise the soul in conformity to Him there. It is a Christianity of grace for the earth, to make man as man rest here; not to make him sit up there, and have his conversation in heaven. It may be a peaceful, but it is a human, Christianity.

No one can read the tract of Mr. V. without seeing it is all about Mr. V., not about Christ. Look at page 13, and see how entirely it is a state down here, and a Christ for down here that he is occupied with. Now Christ is for us down here, and most gracious and precious it is; but it is not a Christ on high, to whom our affections are drawn up, and our holiness judged by our fellowship with that. I suppose Mr. V. never had been set free; of course as to that, it is deliverance to him; but, in making this an object which occupies us, it keeps the soul down here, perhaps undisturbed by positive evil, but not rising up to Christ; and, as the energy of the system declines, a constantly lowering standard; but at best it is a Christ known for what we want down here. Promises are realized, not Christ—and promises for us down here.

I cannot but think Mr. V. never really knew God's love. And what always strikes me is, the fuss they make about what I take to be the normal state of a Christian, varying in degree of fullness, but always the truth of his condition—unbounded confidence in unbounded love, and love known in Christ, and enjoyed for its own sake. Look at the promises referred to by Mr. R. P. S. in page 4: to what do they refer? realizing Christ and spiritual conformity to Him in glory? Not a word. They refer solely to life down here. When I turn to John 15, where alone what is spiritual comes in, I find a teaching totally foreign to Mr. S.'s. His is entering by an act of faith into this trust and confidence, believing a promise. What is in John? “As my Father hath loved me, so have I loved you, continue [abide] ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, as I have kept my

Father's commandments, and have abode in his love.” Then, “These things I have spoken unto you that my joy might abide in you, and your joy might be full.” If I take the context, I do not find a trace of what Mr. R. P. S. teaches. It is far and wide from it. Consequently I do not find in the Apostle Paul exactly the kind of quietness and constant triumph that Mr. V. speaks of and expects. I read, “I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; without were fightings, and within were fears, but God that comforteth them that are cast down.” He repented of writing an inspired letter.

I admit victory is ours, and in nothing to be terrified by our adversaries. I recognize peacefulness of heart in entire confidence is the Christian's path down here; but I do not think a Christian can seek Christ up there, nor in connection with His interests and His service here, without experiencing a deeper knowledge of self, and the subtleties of self, and the flesh, and distress through the craft of Satan and the mischief he does, than Mr. R. P. S.'s system knows anything of. I read of thorns in the flesh, messengers of Satan to buffet; I read of, “if need be ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.” I read of “great anguish of heart” —this I admit, in service; but you cannot separate the state of soul from service. It is peace in life, not the sentence of death in ourselves. And I hardly think rivers of water flowing forth means speaking of ourselves,—or one's own joy, though it may sometimes in the first overflowing of it be natural and right. But to turn grace into this channel, I am sure, lowers Christianity.

I have no disposition to give up what I have got and get assuredly in Christ for what I find here—assuredly not. I think I know what they have got better than they do; but it is their state, not what is in Christ, which is before them. I could say more than this, but I prefer resting it simply on scriptural ground. I recognize the joy of finding true liberty in grace, as I did in my tract. Very likely Mr. V. has found it. It may be you have not, so that it has a charm for you; but I am satisfied it is a system which lowers the whole character and tone of faith, and tends to keep the soul from all that is most precious in the revelation of God.

I know I am a poor workman, but I would not have the system on which they work for any consideration. It is too much a Christianity for oneself; and not oneself in, and for, Christ. The whole platform is a different one; but I must not go any farther.

Yours truly in the Lord, J. N. D.

Chapter 48

Answers on Ephesians 1

Verse 1. There is nothing very special in it, being used in 2 Corinthians, Colossians, and practically in 1 Corinthians.

4. 2 Thess. 2:13, is security in presence of the power of evil; Eph. 1:4 is the special calling of God's purpose in Christ as to our place before God, as verse 5 before the Father. ■ν ■γ■π■ should not be joined with προορ■σας. πρ■ κ. κ. is essentially the same with πρ■ χ. α■. but the former alludes to the absolute purpose of God's own mind as wisdom, as in Prov. 8, η. χ. a. compares it with God's dealings in all ages and its present revelation through the appearing of the second Man when probation of angels and men had been gone through.

7. ■χομεν means we have as a present thing in contrast with ver. 14. ■ν ■. however gives it as in Christ, not its application at any given moment. Everything is said to be in Him in a special way. The introduction of complete or incomplete is a mistake; it is what we have in Christ, not in ourselves, though we have it. All is viewed in the thoughts of God, in Christ. In Col. 1:14, the object was to show what we had and in Whom, not how; in Whom, who by Him, and He is before, &c. παρ■ρτωμα is more the actual offense against God, not the wandering from what is right. He deals as to these in the riches of His grace. Compare Rom. 5:17.

8. σοφ■α is the mind conceiving all things rightly φρον■σις is the activity of the mind seizing the objects presented to it.

. 10. ο■ρανο■ are the actual heavens; ο■ραν■ς; what it is.

11. ■κληρ■θημεν does not mean chosen as His inheritance (enfeoffed is the opposite of this, put in possession of a fee or feu). It means ‘have been made to have our lot or inheritance,' κα■ is the inheritance as opposed to calling. We have both, see verse 18.

13. “Trusted” is all right enough, or “pretrusted.”

14. περιποι■σεως is the acquired possession in glory contrasted with our being ourselves redeemed. Compare Col. 1:20, 21. The faith which you have, or which is found in you, is much more expressive; that is all. He realizes a set of people where it is.

17. These questions on δ■η are answered in verse 13. πεφ. τ. ■φθ. is quite simple, the eyes are the object of the πεφ.

19. δ■ναμις is competency to act, δ■ναμαι; κρ■τος, might, relative power; ■σχυς! mere bodily or actual strength. But the words are multiplied immutatively.

21.■ρχ■ is authority contemplated as the beginning or origin of acts; ■ξουσ■α one who has a title to act, a right over; δ■ωαμις power (see above) κυρι■της from one who is over or rules, lordship; but it purposely takes in all forms, not with the object of distinction but of Universality.

23. Divine filling of all things absolutely; compare also 4:10, which is not to be left out.

Chapter 49

Queries on Ephesians 1

1. Wherein lies the special fitness of the apostle's designation of himself here (■π. Χ. '1. S. θ. Θ.) and of the saints addressed?

4. What does the apostle mean by ε■λατο ■π' ■ρχ■ς, (2 Thess. 2:13) as distinguished from ■ξελ■ξατο ■. ■ν α■.? And how does πρ■ κατ■ κ. differ from πρ■ χρ■νων α■ων■ων (2 Tim. 1:9)? Should ■ω ■γ■πγ be joined with προορ■σας?

7. What is the proper force of ■χομεν? will it bear "ever needing and ever having," "never complete here below?" Why ■ν ■? Why in Col. 1 does the Spirit omit δια τ. α■? Why παραπτωμα■ων rather than ■μ?

8. Difference of σοφ■α and φρ■νησις?

10. What is the force of the plural ο■ρ. here and elsewhere as distinct from the singular?

11. Can ■κληρ■θημεν be taken here as "were chosen as His inheritance?" or "were enfeoffed ".? Does κα■ bear on it?

13. Construction of ■με■ς with what verb to be supplied?

14. τ■ς περιποι■σεως, form why? reference? Why ■ καθ' νμας π■στις rather than ■ π. ■μ.?

17. How are we to understand δ■η ■μ■ν Πν. σ. κ. ■ποκ. of those already sealed and anointed? Construction of πεφ. τ. ■φθ.?

19. Difference of δ■ναμις, κρ■τος, ■σχυς?

21. Difference of ■ρχ■, εξουσ■α, δ■ν. and κυρ.?

23. Precise force of τ■ π. ■ν π. πλ?

Answers on Ephesians 2

2. Because his power in heavenly places and his influence in heathen minds, specially in idolatry, was before the Spirit's mind.

3. Just wrath, but shows Jews, though nearer in dispensation, alike objects of it.

7. The word is used in contrast with the present time, but I do not doubt as a generality it includes all.

14. Because it is a great deal plainer thus generalized; to whom would ■μφοτ■ρτους apply?

21. The context shows that it means the whole building. The criticism is difficult. I am disposed to leave out ■. (■ has it as a correction. Chrys. in text); but I think π■σα ■ ο■κο■■/ι■ would not do, as it would be then built, and that the force is as a whole, all the building. Compare Acts 2:36: Ezek. 16:2. Moral words have not the article; in them ‘every’ and ‘the whole' run into one another, as “all righteousness,” everything so characterized. This is quite general: so used of δ■ναμις. We get all Israel as an army where it is Israel as a whole, not those of it; and where a thing which may be composed of many parts but is viewed as a whole, not as one, the article is not added. Often ‘every’ is tantamount. This is practically the case with π■σα γραφ■ θε■πνευστος where ‘all’ is as good as ‘every,’ or better. π■ς δ ■σρα■λ is one object, π■ς ■σρα■λ Israel as a whole. In Eph. 2 the church as a building is viewed as a whole (not yet να■ς ■γιος, it is growing to that); it is a building going on, the building grows as a whole. The following verse gives the particular present habitation in which the Gentiles συνοικοδομουωται.

Queries on Ephesians 2

chap. ii.

2. Why the twofold description of the enemy?

3. What is the precise idea of ■ργ■ς here?

7. Does the phrase τ■■ς α■■σιν τ. ■περχομ■νοις take in the eternal state?

14. Why τ■ ■μφ■τερα rather than το■ς ■μφ.?

21. Are we compelled either to adopt the R. T. insertion of ■ (with A,C,P, &c.) or to admit the later Greek usage and translate π■σα ο■κ. “the whole” or “all the building?”

Answers on Ephesians 3

6. ε■ωαι is the abstract thought; they were to be so.

8. It is a present sense: what he was accounts for his sense of it. Compare 1 Cor. 15:9.

9. The apostle everywhere speaks of a mystery which was in the counsels of God before the world and not revealed before the cross, when the responsibility of man, the first Adam, reached its climax (save Christ's intercession for the Jews on the cross).

21. Yes, it uses elaborate expressions to give continuance and forever.

Queries on Ephesians 3

6. Does ε■ναι here express not the design but the subject and purpose, “that the Gentiles are?”

8. Is it just to draw from τ■ ■λαχ. π. ■. not only the remembrance of the former persecution of the church but of his own sinful nature (1 Tim. 1:15, ε■μ■, not ■ν)?

9. How are we to understand ■π■ τ■ν α■■νων compared with Rom. 16:25 Cor. 2:7, as well as verse 11 following?

21. Does the last phrase take in eternity as well as the millennial age?

Chapter 54

Answers on Ephesians 4

1 - 4. The calling refers back to chap. 2 and what precedes, only enlarged by chapter 3. The unity of the Spirit is the realization, in walk down here by the power of the Spirit and in spiritual life, of the unity they have in Christ. The body is one and cannot but be; it gives character to the unity but is not it.

9. κατ■τερα does not mean anything particular but what is below, the apparent earth in contrast with above all heavens, so as to fill all things. It naturally suggests Hades, which gives no definite idea, and is not meant to do so.

12. πρ■ς is the proper object and purpose first in the apostle's mind, but then use reaches out to the secondary more collective ones.

13. The whole is Christ being fully formed in us and we after Him in soul, according to the revelation that has been made of Him, my soul formed into all revealed of Him.

22 - 24. The truth as it is in Jesus is the having put off and having put on; the renewing is constant, hence ■νανεο■σθαι, in Colossians ■ωακαιωο■μενον and in knowledge.

Chapter 55

Queries on Ephesians 4

1 - 4. What exactly is “the calling” here? and what the unity of the Spirit (ver. 3)? and what the connection with “There is one body” &c?

9. What is the exact meaning of τ■ κατ■τερα τ■ς γ■ς?

12. Are we to regard ε■ς-ε■ς as two members referring to the more immediate, πρ■ς to the more ultimate and final purpose of the action? Cf. Rom. 15:2.

13. What is the force of the various clauses “at the unity,” &c. “at the full-grown man,” “at the measure” &c.? Was it then, or will it be when all is complete?

22. What is the construction in verse 22 - 24?

Answers on Ephesians 5

13. I believe “what makes everything manifest,” though difficulty is made as to the voice of φαν.

14. I suppose Isa. 60:1·

19. “Hymns” were more especially festival praises to God. “Psalms” were chanted with instruments, but afterward, though in divine service, of a general character. “Spiritual songs” were not necessarily divine service, though spiritual with every kind of development of thought. But the object is not to define but to speak of every sort which saints could sing together in liberty.

21. The importance is the place it puts Christ in. The fear of God is not within the special circle of Christ's government as Lord. This is (so in Colossians), the grace of Christ and word of Christ are not the same surely but bring them close to the heart in the path in which we walk. The fear of God is a general moral state.

23. The connection of husband and wife is in the body though in the Lord, and His delivering power and blessing include the body.

Chapter 57

Queries on Ephesians 5

13. Is it “everything that is manifested” Or “that which maketh everything manifest?”

14. What Old Testament scripture is used, and how?

19. Difference of “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs?”

21. The best authorities have “fear of Christ: “what is gained spiritually?

23. What is the connection of “He is the Savior of the body?”

Chapter 58

Answers on Ephesians 6

2. He is showing the importance which this duty had under the law, and thus God's mind.

12. He refers to Canaan and Joshua. Ours is another kind of combat. “Blood and flesh” are not evil here, but men as such contrasted with wicked spirits.

24. ■ν ■φθ is the character of their state and affections. But I should recommend the enquirer to study the Word for himself before God, remembering that the things of God are spiritually discerned, and this too connected with the thought of God, the mind of Christ: qui hζret in litera hζret in cortice.

Chapter 59

Queries on Ephesians 6

2. Why this use of the law for Christian children? knowing what 1 Tim. 1 says of its application?

12. Why “blood and flesh?” and what is conveyed by the various designations of the power of evil?

24. The force of “in incorruption” and its connection?

Chapter 60

Substance of a Reading on Ephesians: Part 1

The nature of the Epistle to the Ephesians is quite distinct from that of Romans. In Ephesians we have nothing to do with the responsibility of man; we have with Christ, and man is looked at as dead in sins, and there is a new creation. Consequently the question of justification is not raised in Ephesians, but acceptance is. We have seen before these are the two great subjects in connection with the gospel; namely, the meeting of the responsibility of man, and the counsels of God before ever there was a responsible man at all. These counsels are in the Second Adam, not the first. The first man was the responsible one; the Second man is the man of God's counsels, the Last Adam, the Second man. In Ephesians these counsels of God are taken up; in Romans the responsible man, in grace, but still responsible, sinners, every mouth stopped, and a propitiation through faith in Christ's blood, the whole question of God's meeting us in grace in our responsibility and failure, were fully brought out. In the Ephesians there is nothing of this. It begins with the counsels and intentions of God, and puts us in Christ. Now the structure of the epistle is this. In chapter i. we have these counsels of God as to glory, as to Christ, and as to our inheritance; only at the end the apostle begins to unfold how far the foundation is laid for their accomplishment in what He has already done. So that, after stating the counsels, he enters on what God has done; that is, He has taken Christ from the dead and set Him up far above all heavens, principalities, and powers, and every name named. He commences, observe, with the raising of Christ from the dead. There you get not merely counsels, but the accomplishment, so far as exalting the Second Man into glory above all heavens. Chapter 2 shows how far God has accomplished that mighty work in us. We have been raised from being dead in sins and put into Christ, sitting in Him (not with Him, we are not there yet) in heavenly places. It is the operation of God putting us into His place. It is in Christ I am sitting, not with Him. This makes us God's workmanship; and then He brings us forth a step further in making both Jews and Gentiles one. It is still what He has accomplished or is doing so far. He has put down the middle wall of partition, and reconciled us in one body by the cross, that is, down here; and He is not only building a holy temple to the Lord (it is not built yet), but we are builded together Jews and Gentiles for the habitation of God by the Spirit down here. That is what God has accomplished. He has raised Christ from the dead, and set Him in glory; He has raised us up spiritually from the dead and put us into Christ; He has abolished all differences of Jew and Gentile, and He has not only made peace between Jew and Gentile, reconciling them, but He has reconciled them both in one body by the cross. They are reconciled to one another and reconciled to God, and they are going to be a temple, and they are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit, that is, down here. This is what is accomplished of His purposes, the foundation being laid for them all.

In chapter 3 follows another thing. It is neither God's counsels nor God's operation, but Paul's administration of all these, the dispensation committed to him. As to the substance of it, it is Paul's administration of the mystery, not God's counsels about it, but the apostle's administration of it; and at the end, as it refers to earth, there is the second prayer which is addressed to the Father of our Lord Jesus where Christ is looked at as Son. The first prayer, which is found in chapter 1 is

addressed to the God of our Lord Jesus as the glorified man; but this is addressed to the Father, and Christ is looked at as Son, a divine person. Therefore it is here not the object or the thing objectively, but rather that Christ may dwell in our hearts, that is, power brought in down here according to His counsels. So that there is to be glory to God in the church in all ages. This is a power that works in us, as the other was toward us.

Having the counsels and the operation and Paul's administration, the effect is looked for in chapter 4 as regards there being a habitation of God through the Spirit down here; and then, secondly, there are the individual gifts. This goes down to the end of verse 16. Verse 17 begins the ordinary exhortations as to how to walk. They were to walk together. All distinctions of Jew and Gentile have disappeared. He has brought them together as one habitation of God through the Spirit, and now they are to walk together and keep the unity of the Spirit. Then we go on to individual gifts, and in verse 17 we begin the practical exhortation for all saints, which is continued in chapter 5. At the end of chapter 5 occasion is taken from the case of the husband and wife to bring in the relationship of Christ and the church. After going into the different relationships in which saints are to be faithful, the conflict in heavenly places is taken up.

Now another thing may be remarked as to the epistle, that is, that everything refers to heavenly places; not that we are not upon earth, for we are, but that still to principalities and powers in heavenly places may be known through the church the wisdom of God. We are blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ, we are a testimony to principalities and powers in heavenly places, and we are fighting with wicked spirits in heavenly places. Our blessing, our place, our testimony and our conflict are all in these heavenly places. Now you will find that ministry here is connected with all these.

You get that God is working in chapter 2 is that the whole building effectually framed together groweth into a holy temple. It is only growing up to this end. But we have it “ye are builded together for a habitation of God.” This is taking place. The holy temple will be in glory. They are building for a temple like Christ saying, “I will build my church.” The temple that is to be is that spoken of by the Lord in Matt. 16, “I will build my church on this rock, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.” You get it also in Peter, “Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood.” There they are built up stone after stone. So in Ephesians, “and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” It is growing into a holy temple, but is not yet finished. The house that Christ builds is a perfect thing, it is not finished yet but what people commonly call the invisible church. But then there is an actually manifested thing by the Holy Ghost being here: “Ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit.” They are two characters of the assembly, the body of Christ, and the habitation of God now by the Holy Ghost. When we speak of the body of Christ, the members are looked at as united to the head in heaven; when we speak of the house, it will be a temple; when we speak of the habitation, it is by the Holy Ghost down here. It is the same thing as far as they went, but they soon ceased to be identical.

In verse 21 it is a temple not yet completed. When it is completed, it will be in glory. We are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit; this is the present thing. It is just the confounding of these two things that has made popery and ritualism. That is, they have attributed

all the privileges which belong to what Christ is building and has not yet finished to this thing that is built on earth. Now when you get a thing built upon earth, God sets it up all right; but like everything else, like man himself when he was created, it is put into man's responsibility. God carries on His own purpose, and against what Christ builds the gates of hell will never prevail. But always in the first instance whatever God sets up, He puts into man's responsibility; and then it is all ruined. Nevertheless God's purpose is all accomplished in Christ. This is true of everything. It is true of Israel. It is true of individual saints, and of the whole church. What Christ is carrying on, the gates of hell will not prevail against. The administration of it is on earth. In 1 Cor. 3 Paul says, “As a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” This is not Christ building. It is not Christ carrying out, “I will build my church;” nor the living stones coming and growing into a holy temple. In the latter case there is no agent but Christ. It is He that is building; and therefore of course Satan's power cannot prevail against it. In 1 Cor. 3 it is not Christ building; it is man's responsibility, as it is said, “Let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” Wood and hay and stubble can be built in; and if you attribute to wood and hay and stubble the security of what Christ is doing, you will be making a grave mistake. Papists and Puseyites are taking what has been built by man and confounding it with Christ's work, saying the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. They confound two different works.

God set up right even what is upon earth; “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” God's work was right; but soon false brethren came in unawares, Simon Maguses and I know not what, because man was put under responsibility, and the first thing he does is to sin. Noah had the sword put into his hands for governing, and the first thing he does is to get drunk. The law was given, and the first thing the Jews did was to make a golden calf. Priesthood was set up, and the first day they offered strange fire, and Aaron never went into the holy place with the garments of glory and beauty. When royalty was set up, the son of David loved many strange women, and his heart went after their gods. The church was set up and it failed. Christ will be the perfect man; Christ will govern the world in righteousness; Christ is the perfect priest; Christ is perfect as the Son of David; He will arise to reign over the Gentiles. He will be glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe. Everyone of the things put under the responsibility of man will be perfectly carried out. If I confound this accomplishment of purpose in Christ with what is placed under the responsibility of man, and attribute what belongs to the one to the other, I am justifying all the evil and corruption about us. That is the question now in the church of God.

The body is never looked at as incomplete in itself, it would spoil the whole idea. When the purpose of God is brought out, it is looked at as in that purpose. In chapter 1 He gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body. There it is looked at as complete when all things are put under Him. All things are not yet put under Him; it is not accomplished yet; it is in counsels. The moment I get it down here, I get both the house and the body.

Chapter 2:21 contains the same thought as Matt. 16:18, and also the same as 1 Peter 2.

Verse 22 is the house as set up not upon earth: only when God set it up, He set it up all right. “Ye are builded together for a habitation of God.” It is a present thing.

The dwelling of God with men down here is a distinct definite fact, and the fruit of redemption. God never dwelt with man apart from redemption. He did not dwell with Adam; He never dwelt, with

Abraham; He never dwelt with anybody down here until Israel was redeemed out of Egypt. No doubt this was an outward redemption, still it was in a certain sense redemption. God redeemed His people out of the bondage of Egypt, and in the end of Ex. 29 he says, “And they shall know that I am the Lord their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them.” The moment redemption comes in, He makes the redeemed people His dwelling place, and He comes down and dwells among them in the tabernacle. This was given up at the captivity when the times of the Gentiles began.

Since Christ's rejection and the accomplishment of the better redemption, the church is established on earth for God to dwell in. This habitation of God through the Spirit was set up, consequent upon redemption, but down here trusted to man's responsibility. What it has become now is Christendom.

The increase of the body is spoken of in chapter 4. It is merely the fact that here it grows. You afterward see the different gifts and all of them exercised, and you find the body grows up, just as a child grows up. There are persons brought in; but they come into it all as a complete thing. The individual persons come in and are a part of that growth. You get evangelists as well as pastors and teachers. Still when individuals come in, they are only part of the same body. So when I eat, my body grows. Of course they are mere figures after all.

But in speaking of these things, you get the individual before anything of the body or the house. You will always find the individual has the first place. The individual relationship is with the Father; the corporate relationship is with Christ as a man; and the house relationship is with the Holy Ghost come down. There are the three. The first is that we have the adoption of children to Himself; and then comes that He has given Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body. Here is our relationship with Christ as raised and glorified, but before that comes all about the individual. Then in the third place there is the Holy Spirit come down to dwell. It makes a wonderful scheme and plan to put all these things together.

If you look further to the application of all this to ministry, you see when he is beginning he says, “Unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ, wherefore he saith [it is the ground and basis that is given for ministry], When he ascended upon high, he led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men. Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that he might fill all things. And he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.” We first get the basis of all these gifts, Christ, but, not Christ on earth as the Jew had Messias. All that has disappeared from the apostle's mind; and he sees Him going down into the dust of earth, and then ascending far above all heavens, and he takes up the effects. He went down into the lower parts of the earth, the grave, but hades for his soul. He went into the under world, the lower parts of the earth, and then He is far above all heavens. He has been below creation, for death and hades are in a certain sense below it, and then He is above it and in this way He fills all things. We see Christ in His redemption power filling everything. All service and ministry have their place in that. They flow from it. He has come down where Satan had his power, death and hades (called hell). He goes down where Satan's power was, and breaks it, He leads captivity captive, and He puts man in the glory of God in His own person far above all heavens; so that He has met on the one hand the

power of evil, and on the other put man in the glory of God. As man He gets these gifts, as we were reading in the Acts “Being by the right hand of God exalted and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit” (the Holy Spirit is the promise of the Father), “he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” He has done that as man, not merely as God observe; but Christ, in virtue of this redemption by which He fills all things, receives the Spirit and sends Him to men whom He has rescued out of Satan's hands and builds up His church here. It gives a wonderful place to ministry.

Here in Ephesians we find the individual saints the first object, as it is said, “for the perfecting of the saints,” and then it is added “for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” The first thing is that each saint should grow up to Him who is the head, that is, Christ. There are three objects. One object is first of all distinct. There is a different preposition in Greek. He does all things “for the perfecting of the saints” (there He is the first-born of many brethren); and it has these additional characters, it is for work of ministry down here, and for edifying the body as a whole. You must not lose sight of the individual when you get into the body. He carries on the perfecting of the saints to the end of verse 15, and in verse 16 He comes to ministry and the edifying of the body. “Till we all arrive at the unity of the faith” (that is each individual of course” (and of the knowledge of the Son of God, as the full-grown man, as the measure of the stature of the fullness of the Christ” (nothing short of that); “that we be no longer babes, tossed and carried about by every wind of that teaching which is in the sleight of men, in unprincipled cunning with a view to systematized error; but holding the truth in love, we may grow up to him in all things, who is the head, the Christ.” There we see individuals; and they grow up to Christ. Then he goes on—“From whom the whole body” [now I have the corporate thing] fitted together and connected by every joint of supply, according to the working in its measure of each one part, worketh for itself the increase of the body to itself—building up in love.” That is the second thing, the second object. First, the individual saints grow up to the Head in everything, and, secondly, the building up of the body. It is the body building itself up; but still it is service and ministry. It is wonderful grace that He who went into the lower parts of the earth has gone to glory and has done this immense thing—put the saints in personal connection with Him.

The prayer in chapter 3 is wonderful, “that he might give you according to the riches of his glory to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” He asks that the power of the Holy Spirit might be in the heart of the individual, and that Christ might be in the heart of the man, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith,” that is, that Christ may be realized by faith. I have got now Christ—who is the center of the whole universe of blessedness—dwelling in my heart. Thus I have the center in me, and this is perfect love sure enough, for He is dwelling in God and God in us. And I am rooted and grounded in love. Being there my heart takes in all the saints, “rooted and grounded in love that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints.” You cannot leave them out, for they form part of this plan of God, the nearest circle to Christ. Then I get the whole scene of God's glory and purpose, I apprehend the breadth and length, and depth and height, that is, the whole scene of God's glory. All the glory that God surrounds Himself with I have got by having Christ in my heart, by faith realized in the power of the Spirit. But as I might be lost in this glory, I get back to Christ with whom I am familiar, and he prays that I may “know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge.” I find in this galaxy of glory I am perfectly intimate with the person that is the center of it all. He dwells in my heart, and I know the love of Christ. Then you see this does not

narrow, but really quite the contrary, because it passes knowledge. Therefore He says, “to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge, that ye may be filled up with all the fullness of God.” I have what surrounds God in the glory, and now having known the personal love of Christ I have got to God Himself. “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” This passage is generally quoted as referring to what God can do for us. People in their prayers say (piously no doubt; I do not attribute any harm) that God can do more than they ask or think. That is quite true, but it is not what is here. He says, “to him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.” Thus it is a very different thing. “To him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages.” We are carried out into all this of which we have been speaking; it is a power that works in us so that He is glorified in the church in all ages and of course now. That is where He sets us before He takes up the question of ministry.

The prayer is not that we might know the hope of His calling and the glory of His inheritance, but that the Father of our Lord Jesus according to the riches of His glory may strengthen us with might. It is according to all this thing in which He is glorified that He strengthens us. In the first prayer He prays that the eyes of our hearts may be opened and we may know the things that are ours. The glory is ours and the inheritance is ours. Here He comes not to what is objective, but to what works in us. The prayer is to the Father, not to God; and he looks for Christ dwelling in our hearts. He is looking for power in us, not objects before us, “that we may be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man.” He prays that this power may work in us, but it may not be working. He is not looking that we may know certain things that are ours, but that the things may exist. I may not be strengthened with Might in the inner man, though I may have the Spirit. It is a positive state He is praying for.

The first prayer is not a prayer for anything to work in us, but that we may see the things, and He puts the things before us as objects. The things are ours. We have got the calling; we are partakers of the heavenly calling, as is said in Hebrews, and if we have not got the inheritance actually, we are joint-heirs with Christ. He prays that the eyes of our hearts may be opened so that we may look at these things, but they are ours. It is wonderful that the Holy Ghost cannot show us anything of glory that is not ours. The power spoken of at the end of the chapter, which does work in us, is a power that has taken us when dead sinners and put us in the Christ where He is. But this is all settled. “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power which be wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come.” There we find that you who were dead in sins He has quickened. That is the power that has wrought and made a Christian of me. Here in chapter 3 he is praying that the power may work in us now. Practically it is the realization of it.

In chapter 4 is one of the three “worthys” in the walk. We are called to walk worthy of God who has called us to His kingdom and glory; we are called to walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing; and here we are called to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, that is, the habitation of God through the Spirit—the whole thing, but specially the last part. They are all brought into unity, reconciled to God, brought together the habitation of God through the Spirit. Here he tells them to walk worthy of that calling. It is striking how He goes on directly to lowliness and meekness. This is

the walk that is worthy of the vocation. We would feel our own nothingness if we thought of this place. It is very simple if we could take it practically. He has made us all one by the Spirit; we are all builded together like stones in a house; and He looks to us walking in that unity and spirit of peace. We are to walk in the sense of these great things and of our own nothingness.

There is threefold unity, one body, one Spirit, and ourselves called in one hope of our calling. We then get the outward profession, one Lord, one faith, one baptism; and afterward a still greater circle—one God and Father of all, above all, and through and in you all. In other words, we get unity of the Spirit, the unity of the Lordship, and the unity in connection with God and the Father. It is the Spirit, the Lord, and God, as you find it in 1 Corinthians where he speaks of gifts, diversities of gifts but the same Spirit, diversities of administrations but the same Lord, and diversities of operations but the same God that worketh all in all. It is not Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: this is not the thought, though it is connected with it, but the Spirit and Lord and God. You have the Spirit, the active agent down here, the Lord under whose authority the work is carried on, and after all it is a divine thing—the same God that works all in all. So it is in the Corinthians, but it is the same principle as here. There is a difference between the gifts there and here, and a very important difference, though here as there the Spirit, and the Lord, and God. We have the Holy Ghost down here; then Christ as man in glory (He is more than that, but still He is man; God has made Him Lord and Christ; He has got an official place. It is not that He has not a human nature, and a divine nature. That is all true, but He has an official place); one Lord, one faith, one baptism. Then follows a wider larger circle, one God, who is above all, through all, and (bringing it back to this internal power) He is in us all. Scripture is remarkably correct. Pantheism puts God into everything, and makes it all God, but Paul gives us the truth.

Next we come to every one of us. Each of us has his own special niche; we all fill some little service whatever it is. “Unto every one of us is given grace,” it is individualized. It is to every member of the body.

“Every one” is contrasted with that unity. He takes them first all as one thing, and then He takes them separately. It is according to the measure of the gift of Christ. We have Christ the giver now. You do not get this in 1 Cor. 12; and the difference is an important one practically. There it is the Holy Ghost come down and distributing divinely. The Holy Ghost distributes to every man severally as He will, and therefore in the Corinthians they are merely looked at as powers. Must a man necessarily speak with a tongue because he is able to speak with it? No, says Paul, you must think of the edification of the church: everything must be done to edification. If the gift you have does not edify, you must be quiet. If there is no interpreter, you are not to speak. That is, we have power, but power subject to the ordering authority of the Lord in the church of God. They were speaking two or three at a time. They said they were all speaking by the Holy Ghost, and they thought they must utter what they had got to say. “No,” says the apostle, “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” There must be order. There was power, but this power was restrained and authorized by the God of order. The possession of power was no proof that the person possessing it was to exercise his power; he was only to exercise it when it would edify the church. In consequence we find in the Corinthians what is called sign-gifts. There are no miraculous gifts in Ephesians, whereas in Corinthians appear healings, miracles, tongues and various signs of power, which you do not get here. There it is the Holy Ghost down here. Here we have Christ on high caring for His own body and looking for its edification, and hence have only

those gifts which are permanent for its good. The apostles and prophets were the foundation. The foundation is not being laid now; but the other gifts are given till we all come to the unity of the faith to a full-grown man. That is, it is not a mere question of power, but of the faithfulness of Christ to His own body, the assembly, which He nourishes and cherishes as a man does his own flesh.

The word gift has a double sense. If you do not see this, you might be apt to take it in verse 7 as if it was Christ that is given. It denotes the giving as well as the thing given. Grace is merely a favor given, as a special grace conferred in giving a man such a qualification from Christ for service. To everyone of us is given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. That is, I have got this grace, this thing that is conferred upon me, in the measure Christ has given it. You cannot say grace is given me to use a gift when the grace is given according to the measure of the gift of Christ.

The grace is the gift. It is according to the measure of the giving of Christ that He gave this. If grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ, everyone would have perfect grace according to the gift He had given.

It is character, it is God's grace given; but it is a gift whatever it may be. “To me is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.”

It is tantamount to every member of the body having a gift. Also He makes a distinction between permanent gifts and what every joint supplies. He does not give pastorship, He gives pastors. This is not unimportant, because Paul a prophet was not always prophesying, though always a prophet and he was an apostle, though not always exercising his apostleship. Therefore Christ does not give apostleship but apostles. Taking it as such given to him, it is a certain position and place of service given to him, and he is that. Christ ascends up on high and gives him. In Psa. 68 it is said, that, when He ascended up on high, He received gifts in man. The point is that Christ as a man has gone up and is a giver. It is the measure of the gift of Christ, not, of the Holy Ghost, though it operates by the Holy Ghost.

Supposing I say I give you to an act of pastorship to-day, and that is all about it. This is not the case here. He gives the man as a pastor, and he is always a pastor though God might deprive him of it if He liked. The man has that place and office. Paul was always an apostle. It was not a certain thing that came upon him and was gone, but he was an apostle always. When we get to the power of the Holy Ghost in Corinthians we read that God “set in the church first apostles, then prophets;” but it is much more an action of the Holy Ghost present down here as power. Here then we find what we have referred to already—we come to this immense truth Christ going down to the place of death, His soul to hades, and His body to the grave; and then going far above all heavens and filling everything. Having led captivity captive, He now comes in power and makes other men the instruments of this power. Then being so exalted, He gave some, apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, &c.

There are first the apostles and prophets. They are passed away, but we have their writings, and they are precious. I mean we have not their personal presence, we are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets; and of course there is no foundation to be laid now. Then he takes that which must come first to have the church, for you cannot have pastors and teachers till you have had an evangelist to bring people there to be pastored. You see the foundation must be laid first,

whence you have apostles and prophets first. Then how are you to get souls to be taught if there are no evangelists? “How shall they hear without a preacher?” Hence evangelists come next. It is a most blessed gift. I think more of evangelists than of pastors and teachers. They face the world more for Christ. Still I believe a pastor is a rare gift. The work of the evangelist is simpler. He stands in the face of the world for Christ. A pastor must be like a doctor; he must know the right food, and the right medicine, and the right diagnosis, and all the pharmacopoeia, and must know how to apply it too. In one sense it is a rare gift, and very precious.

Pastor and teacher are distinct things, but they are in Greek, and indeed in English, joined. They are connected, but not absolutely one, because a pastor includes in a certain sense the other; whereas a teacher has nothing to do with the office of pastor, as to care for souls. I might expound the scripture, and yet not really have wisdom to deal with individual souls as a pastor has to do. That of pastor is a wider gift. Still they are closely connected, because you could hardly profit an individual without teaching him in a measure. A person may teach without being a pastor, but you can hardly be a pastor without teaching in a certain sense. The two gifts are closely connected, but you could not say they are the same thing. The pastor does not merely give food as the teacher; the pastor shepherds the sheep, leads them here and there, and takes care of them. I think it is a thing greatly wanted, but I believe it is a rare gift and always was. Pastors must have a heart for the sheep. There are degrees of completeness in it, but that is what the pastor has to do. The testimony is in the evangelist, but his work is simpler. He carries the gospel to the poor sinner, whereas the pastor has saints on his heart and cares for them.

One has taken some comfort out of the thought that the evangelist was not so important, for God would be sure to do the work. But it is not the way the apostle put it, for he says, “how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent?” There is nothing like going to the word of God. God can do anything He pleases in that way, I have no doubt; still His ordinary way is by preaching.

The extent of an evangelist's work is to announce the glad tidings. It extends till they receive Christ and remission of sins. The evangelist throws the net into the sea, and it gathers of every kind, and then the fishermen put the good fish into vessels. It is the same figure in that parable. No distinction is made there. The net is drawn to shore at the close of the dispensation. Their business was good fish. They got a lot of bad ones into the net, and they put the good ones into vessels. Hence it is now a question of sorting. Then an evangelist distinguishes between those truly converted and those not. In that parable he speaks in general of all. Those that were pulling at the nets were putting in the vessels too.

But the evangelist has nothing to do inside the church as an evangelist. A man may not be a public speaker very much, but there will be evangelizing going on, if there is much life. Saints always rejoice in the truth. There is a great deal of the teaching gospel now. Saints want the gospel very often as much as sinners (I mean the clear plain gospel); and therefore what I call a teaching gospel really has its place. It is another kind of thing from what awakens the sinner.

It is a mixture of a teacher's and evangelist's work. You will hear one man praying and beseeching God to bring in poor sinners, and you will hear another praying that Christ may be glorified in His sheep; the one in principle has a pastor's heart, and the other an evangelist's. You thus see where a man's heart is. The one is for people outside, and the other's desire is that Christ's sheep may

glorify Him.

Owing to the perverse teaching which is abroad, you have to get converted people to the gospel. It is not the same thing as going out to the highways and hedges, and compelling them to come in. To such one would preach not only about their sins, but the grace of Christ for them in their sins. Rom. 3 comes before chapter 7; but I was in the seventh before I got to the third, because I had nobody to preach to me. The first thing a person wants to know is that he is guilty, and when he knows his guilt in his conscience and his responsibility, the blood of Christ meets it, and there is forgiveness and cleansing.

Recollect we are talking about preaching the gospel when all the world professes to believe in Christ. When Peter preached the gospel to the Jews, he says, You have crucified and slain Him, and God has raised Him from the dead. You go and tell a sinner in the street that God has raised Him from the dead, and he will say “I know that as well as you.” They preached facts then. I believe that the gospel is really a great deal more powerful when we preach or bring forward the great facts of the gospel. There is immense power in these facts, but at the same time in the ordinary sense they are admitted, and hence you have to press their power and value upon people. When they went to heathens first, they told them that God had sent His Son into the world, that the world had crucified Him, and that God had raised Him. If you tell that to people now, they do not deny it. We have now to take the other part, “Be it known unto you, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins.” That is the effect of it. I believe the more facts are brought forward by the evangelist, the more power will be in his testimony.

It is not always knowledge. If a man has just got his soul saved, he is sometimes more in earnest than a man a long time saved. You find persons just converted in that aspect. better evangelists than others. But then you must bear in mind that we are evangelizing in Christendom, we are not going to Hindus or Chinese. If you do not take account of that, you will have a very superficial gospel. Evangelizing in Christendom is not evangelizing in heathendom, it is in worse case if you please.

But take a fact, when a man's sins are brought forward and you press it upon him—you show him Christ. It is not the teaching that does the thing, it is a certain character of gospel that deals with the condition of soul, and after it they cannot go on with what they have got.

The parable in Matt. 13 is descriptive of the kingdom of heaven, how it goes on. You do not get directions how to do it, nor will directions ever do. If you want an evangelist, you must get a man that has love for souls; and counsel as to the manner of it would never do anything. Of course I may suggest to another: that is very well in its place. But the thing to be desired is a fervent spirit and love to souls.

The gospel is the glory of His grace. I get a much clearer gospel in its first elements if I know the glory. It is a more teaching gospel. I may say, How can you stand before God in glory? and Christ is in glory; and if you look to Christ, and He has borne your sins, they must be gone; for He has not got them in glory. This is the thing that gives peace to his conscience. I might take the coming of the Lord and present it as terror, and it might be used to awaken the conscience, and there is nothing done till conscience is awakened. It is a bad sign to receive the word at once with joy, unless there has been a previous work. You must have one consciously brought into God's

presence, or you will never have anything real. There is no bringing the soul to God except by the conscience; because a man cannot be in God's presence without his conscience being awakened. What a preacher has to do is to bring the light to bear on a man's conscience and make him thus find himself out in the light.

There may be a preliminary work—what the old Puritans call the common operations of the Spirit. There may be appeals to the conscience, which may have reached it, and the soul going on as before. The conscience may be reached, and a man may be quickened, or he may not: and the conscience may be reached and bring out the bitterest enmity against God. The consciences of the people whom Stephen addressed were reached and made them gnash with their teeth. When God quickens, the conscience is reached and the man is made to feel he is a sinner. The conscience may be reached, however, without that inward work as well as with it.

Wherever the Holy Ghost works, it produces a want. In Nicodemus' case, it went on to quickening. You have the words, “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” It is not His work in the sense of saving or quickening, but the conscience is reached. That is the reason why the Puritans call such the common operations of the Spirit.

There is a conscience in every man. The fall of a tree may alarm a conscience. If God accompanies it in grace as He did in the case of Luther, whose friend was killed by a flash of lightning, the work is effectual. You see men alarmed and plunge into greater wickedness to get rid of it. They are distinct things, though they may go together.

In the last of the seven parables the gospel is the net that takes the fish. But then they caught bad fish as well as good. It is all God's work, but He employs workmen. Not only God works, but He works alone as to everything good.

There is the casting the net into the sea. “How shall they hear without a preacher?” is what God says. I quite admit God will have His own. Scripture is plain upon it, but He has His way of doing things. His ordinary way is by the foolishness of the preaching to save them that believe. “Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.” This is the ordinary rule of God. I see two ways of God's love manifested. One is His own essential blessedness in Himself: He gives us to enjoy this in communion by the Spirit. There is another thing in God, and that is, the activity of love towards those that have no communion with Him; and He gives us a part in it too. And the fact that He acts by instrumentality, as He speaks here, is an enormous blessing. He gives poor creatures like us a part in this activity of saving souls. If it is man's work, it is good for nothing.

Chapter 61

Substance of a Reading on Ephesians: Part 2

Servants are addressed in Luke 14, “Go and compel them to come in.” And the point insisted on there is that, when the Jews would not come in, He would have the Gentiles. He first went and took the poor Jews, the poor of the flock, and brought them into His house; but they did not fill it, and then He sends to the Gentiles. He does not speak of whom He sends out.

But I do not think you will ever teach anybody to be a good evangelist; he must have it from God. He must have the love of souls in his heart. If he leans on the Lord, he will win souls.

You cannot have the church without the evangelist. Looked at as an evangelist, you see his point of departure is the church because he is a member. When things were right, the power went from the center and gathered into that center. “The Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” All gifts are independent of the church; they are all dependent on Christ. All service is simply to Christ. I quite admit discipline. If a man teaches wrong he must be disciplined; but the service is to Christ. They are all for the Lord, and I believe the Lord would add them to the church if things were in order. The church is what is formed upon earth in which He is to be glorified. It is where He glorifies Himself now in the world, and therefore the evangelist gathers people in. This is all true, but when you take the person of an evangelist or pastor, he is Christ's servant. He is a great deal happier if he goes in fellowship with the assembly, but the fact of evangelizing is not the assembly's act. The assembly will not go on well, unless there is a spirit of evangelizing in it, because the love of Christ will constrain them. I quite admit that which has taken place in connection with revivals: the action which converted and that which gathered have been in a measure disconnected. I see clearly in the operations at the beginning that they went together. The Lord then added to the church daily such as should be saved. This was the regular order of things.

At the beginning there was the church which God had set up and power was there. They commend Paul to God, and he comes back and tells what God has done by his means. There is action and reaction, but now this has all got dislocated. You are in an immense thing called the church. It has no more to do with Christ than the man in the moon, nor so much. Therefore there is this difficulty when a man feels pressed to go and speak to souls, and he does not know there is such a thing as the body of Christ. If a man was a heathen or Jew and became a Christian, he was added to the church, but that is not the case now; and therefore it requires more real power and wisdom to do the work rightly now, and not simple power merely which evangelizes the sinner.

We had most happy exercise of heart about it in —. When they first went out, they did not know anything about the body of Christ. They went and devoted themselves to people that were gathered, some going to the world and some to sects, as they knew no better. The work is going on slower, but a great deal more solidly. They did not cease to evangelize, but it was more connected with Christ outside the world. It told more healthfully. After all there is as much real work done and a better kind of work. A difficulty arises that we are not preaching to heathens. If you go to China or India, the persons converted to Christ come amongst those Christians that are there. If

you go and convert a man now, and be belongs to the Independents or Presbyterians or Methodists, he goes on with them. The man belongs to Christ, but the whole thing is lost in a morass. By a clear gospel, the person will get hold of things that will make it impossible to go on as he had been doing; be will be led to consider that to continue as he had been doing will not do. It is one of the reasons that hindered me from preaching in dissenting places, that the gospel I preached would break the whole thing to pieces. How can a man who believes me preaching that by one offering he is perfected forever, go and listen to a man that is dinning about the law every day? If he does, the condition of his soul is lowered. Though I may not have been talking of any particular doctrines or separation from the body to which he belonged—and never would so speak, yet the preaching of a really full gospel would (if received) bring a man necessarily to that center he speaks of.

If you preach a full gospel, it will tell in the way I have said.

What I said was that I never could and never did make one Christian leave the systems. I believe that there are people among the poor Roman Catholics that will go to heaven. But there is one thing wrong, and that is all those divisions; and I defy anybody to show me such a thing in the word of God as what is now called the church. One must come out of confusion. But, further, we are told to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The gift of a pastor is a rare one. Could anyone exercise the office of a pastor without having a gift, that is, do a pastor's work without being specially gifted? He will do it very badly if he has not got the gift. If he does it really, he has got the gift—he cannot do it really without that. It is possible that I did not quite convey what I meant. In the present state of things is the work of a pastor done in any way by one who has not the gift of a pastor, or can it be? Much depends on the spirit of the thing. You may have him in the place and office, but he cannot do the work of pastor because he has not got the gift. Supposing a person says, I do not profess to have the gift of a pastor, and yet I must look after souls as well as I can? One has no objection to that, for it is brotherly love. If you get a person in brotherly love doing what he can, it is very well: we all ought to care one for another. A very young Christian cannot do as much as an older one, but in a certain sense everybody ought to care for his brother. In verse 16 after the chief positive gifts, evangelists, pastors and teachers, which go on to the end, you get “from whom,” that is, Christ, “the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.” That is what you refer to. One has not a specific gift and office, but he does whatever he can do. “Fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying itself in love.” Here then all the members have something or other. They have all their place and service: one may exhort, one may have a little word of wisdom and never appear in public at all. There is that which “every joint supplieth.” It is real and approved of Christ.

It is connected with verse 7 of course: only there lie spreads that out into these gifts of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; and then lie goes on to what “every joint supplieth.” You first get the positive gifts. A person may evangelize, though he is not in the office of evangelist; he may take an opportunity of speaking for Christ. Compare Acts 8:4.

I leave every person to his own conscience as to places where he may be free to evangelize. At first I preached in every church or chapel where I was permitted; but I found it was not a good plan.

If I saw a man preaching the gospel honestly or fully in the streets and there was opposition, I could identify myself with him without asking who he was or where he came from; but this is a different thing from planning to go out with him. I could not; but I leave every person free. You cannot control any man's conscience; you may advise him. I do not conceal that I am outside the camp. It makes people angry sometimes; but I am deliberately outside the camp, altogether and totally, and I think I know what I am about from scripture. If I go there, I mix myself up with what is in the camp and I give an uncertain sound. My deliberate judgment is that in the present state of the church of God one should be outside these connections. I think it is all going on to judgment as fast as it can, and it is not charity to go on with it so as to enfeeble the testimony. I have seen it going on these forty or fifty years nearly, with persons attempting to go on with it; and I have never seen such persons either grow up into the truth or make others clear in their walk. After an experience of nearly fifty years I am perfectly clear in my judgment about it.

As to how far one could wish God speed to or have fellowship with any work going on outside, if I knew of a person preaching Christ from contention, I would rejoice as the apostle says. I could not go and join with a man that was doing it in contention, yet I am glad he is preaching Christ.

With certain preachers I would not have fellowship for special reasons. It is a matter of discipline. I separate between having fellowship with Christ preached, and co-operating with the men that preach. Do you think I should join with a man that preaches from contention? I am glad he is doing it in one sense, because Christ is made known by it.

In this way I can own all ministry where it is true, apart from recognizing a man in the sense of cooperating. It is the thing that gives a character to the evangelizing itself. My experience is that it is not the way to get souls on. I have seen both done.

I have seen brethren doing it; of course they stand or fall to their own master. I would go with them in preaching the gospel, but not with the camp. I think it is a great thing for our souls to get hold of you cannot expect the newly converted soul to get hold of it at once—that there is this immense system, “the camp,” which is not of God, though there are many people of God in it. Therefore you must leave individuals to judge in each case. But that which associates me with it I cannot do. It would be building again the things I destroyed. If I am to associate myself with it, why did I leave it? I never should attack anybody nor ask anybody to come. I never would and never did; but I am not going to be driven out of what is plain in scripture.

There is no true Christian that has not something or other given him for service in the body, merely perhaps a little bit of wisdom. Everybody has got something for service to the body, as a hand or foot or eye; but not everybody a prominent gift as a pastor or evangelist. Everybody has got something according to the measure of what Christ has given him, and if he goes beyond that measure, it will be mere human action or no good at all.

Chapter 62

Substance of a Reading on Ephesians: Part 3

We now come to the ordinary exhortation as to walk. He shows the state they were in—ignorance and sin. “As the truth is in Jesus;” it is not doctrine, though doctrine is contained in it. The truth as it is in Jesus is the having put off the old man and put on the new—this having been done by faith. Then he adds, “and being renewed in the spirit of your mind.” The putting off and the putting on are not in the present tense, whereas being renewed in the spirit of your mind is. The truth is, that you have put off the old man, but you do want renewing. In Colossians (chap. 3) it is distinct: “Lie not one to another, seeing ye have put off the old man with his deeds and have put on the new.”

In the epistle to the Ephesians he is not saying directly to them what they have done, but saying what the truth is in Jesus. So it is more abstract. The truth in Jesus is having put off and having put on. Being renewed is present—the renewing of the spirit of your mind is a thing that is always going on.

After this we get another immensely important principle in the new man which according to God, is created in “righteousness and holiness of truth.” That is the character of God Himself. The first man was innocent; he was not righteous but innocent. There was no evil in him. To be righteous and holy you must have the knowledge of good and evil. God is perfectly righteous and perfectly holy: He judges with authority what is evil and good; but innocence does not know good and evil. The new man is after God. You get another expression in the Colossians, which is of great importance— “renewed in knowledge according to the image of him that created him.” There is a positive knowledge of God. It is not merely that there is an absence of sin, but I have a positive knowledge of God Himself, and it is what God is that is the character and essence of my new man.

Peter speaks of being “made partakers of the divine nature.” It is not merely that a man is born again. It is the truth as it is in Jesus. Of course he is born again. Abraham had to be born again; but he did not know anything about putting off the old man and putting on the new. You never find this in the Old Testament. You find there the knowledge of sin working, but the Old Testament saints did not make a difference between the old man and the new. The moment that death came in and man took his place with God in Christ, I get the old man and the new.

We get here, I put on this new man created after God in righteousness and true holiness. I have put on this new man, but then I have put off the old. It is a totally new thing. It is Christ who has died so that the old thing is done with. For faith I have done with the flesh. I am not a debtor to the flesh; I am. crucified with Christ; the old man is done with. We are quickened together with Him. This is more than being born of God. Christ quickening as the Son of God, which He does—He quickeneth whom He will—is a different thing from being quickened with Christ as risen; because when I am quickened with Christ as risen I have left all that is the old thing behind me and have gone into a resurrection state. The old man is crucified with Christ. This is of all importance as being one of the two great elements of Christian walk. There are, first, the putting off the old man and the putting on the new; secondly, that the Holy Ghost dwells in us and we are not to grieve Him. These are the two grounds of Christian walk in Ephesians.

To be made partakers of the divine nature is the moral character of it. It is after God; it is the pattern of what God is. God is righteous and God is holy, and now it is not merely setting us up as innocent, but we being actually partakers of the divine nature, have a character according to what He is. It is after God, created in righteousness and holiness.

It is morally like God's nature, but still there might be rather a bold way of saying it. Morally it is the same: else you could not delight in Him. Morally speaking it is the same—it is “holy and without blame before him in love,” which is God's nature. He is holy, He is blameless, He is love. And so it is with Christ. If you look at Him down here, He was holy and blameless, and He was here in love. We get this, “he that sanctifieth,” that is Christ, “and they that are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.”

But this putting off the old man we had better not pass over. The Christian, in virtue of Christ's death, and having Christ as his life, as a Christian does not own the flesh at all. The mind of the flesh is enmity against God, but he does not own it. He has not to die to sin but to reckon himself dead, Christ having died and all being available for him. What Christ has done lie reckons himself to have done in this respect. How can you be alive? I say I am not; Christ lives in me. “I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” We have put off the old man (not are to put it off), that is, if we have heard Him and have been taught of Him. Then this new man is after God.

Observe the two in Rom. 8: “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus:” that is, the new man “hath made me free from the law of sin and death, for what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” When Christ was on the cross, He not only bore our sins and put them away, but God condemned sin in the flesh there, so that I see it is all put off. Faith reckons it. Christ died to sin—He is the only person that died to sin; so God reckons us alive unto God, not in Adam, but in Jesus Christ our Lord. My life in which I live is not flesh— “ye are not in the flesh” but in Christ. When you come to realize it, you take the putting off first; you say I have put off the old man—I am not a child of Adam—and put on the new man, that is, Christ. It is that I believe in the testimony of 1 John 5 where it is said, “this is the record [or testimony] that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” It is entirely a new thing in Christ, and as a proof that eternal life is not in Adam but in Christ, he shows the Spirit, and the water, and the blood—what cleanses, what expiates, and what has living power—all coming consequent upon Christ's death. The water came out of His dead side, as did also the blood, while the Spirit came after He was glorified. These are all witnesses that eternal life is not in the first man but in the Second. I reckon myself dead, I am crucified with Christ. Thus it is a nature that is after God Himself. Then we get another element—the Holy Ghost dwells in me, and I am not to grieve Him.

The, putting off of the old and the putting on of the new occur at the same time, really; but practically when you come to details, you find you have the one first, and then you realize the other. In real truth I put on the new man first. When you come to practice, you have to treat the old thing as dead, and the other leaps free. In point of fact we must get the new man in order to treat the old man as dead. If the old man was treated as dead first, I would have no man at all. When I have got Christ as my life, I come to look at myself, and it is all over with the old man. There are

many who own that they must be born again, but they do not recognize that they put off the old man. The moment I have got the death and resurrection of Christ, I say I am not a debtor to the old man. This is not merely the fact of being born again; it is not merely saying I am born again, but that the other thing I have put off, that is, to faith.

Of course the old man is part of the old creation. “If any man be in Christ, there is a new creation.” We are the first-fruits of His creatures. “He has begotten us that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures.” When he speaks of dealing with the condition I am in, which you do not get here but in Colossians, which is a little lower, he does not say mortify the old man, but your members which are. upon earth. He does not allow any life but Christ— “Your life is hid with Christ in God.” “Ye are dead;” now mortify, that is put to death, your members. This implies power. It is, never dying to sin, but that I am dead to sin and alive to God in Christ, and therefore I can mortify.

Rom. 8:13 ("ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body"), and Col. 3:5 ("mortify your members") are but a different way of expressing the same thing. In Romans we are not viewed as risen with Christ, whereas in Colossians and Ephesians we are. In Romans we are presented as dead with Christ, because the object of Romans never is to take us out of our place in this world. It shows us that we are in Christ, but at the same time still here; whereas in Colossians the apostle will not let them be alive in the world. “Why,” he says,” as alive in the world are ye subject to ordinances?” All this ritualism flows from not knowing we are dead.

Then we get another immensely important element, namely, that God dwells in us—the Holy Ghost; for we are told, “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God.” The Christian is to do nothing that displeases God that dwells in him. You have no mortifying the members here in Ephesians. It is a new creation and nothing else. Colossians does not go as far at] Ephesians. In the former you get us risen but not sitting in heavenly places as in the latter.

Romans puts us into Jordan, but it does not go on to the coming out of Jordan. Colossians puts us up on the bank; but Ephesians takes us and sets us down in Canaan to eat the old corn of the land where there is no manna any more. You cannot say they are a figure of that, it is going into details, which the figure does not. You get a figure of the whole thing that I have passed through Jordan. I am not in the wilderness but am in heavenly places, and seated there in Christ. And not till this do I get circumcised. You get this in Colossians. There are two things in the Romans: man is dealt with—looked at as alive in sin, and death is brought in—Christ's death. By Christ's death their guilt is gone, and by His death they died. They are in Christ, but they are looked at as persons that have died, though not risen with Him. In the Ephesians, although the fact is looked at, as to the doctrinal statement, they are not looked at as alive in sin; they are dead in sins, which is another aspect of it, but the same state. When I am alive in sins I am dead towards God—there is not a single movement of thought, heart, or feeling in that state towards God. God can create me over again spiritually. Ephesians looks at a man as dead in sins, and says we are created in Christ Jesus. It is not justifying sinners there.

The man is justified in Romans and a new creation entirely in Ephesians; while in Colossians you get both. In the latter there is death and the new creation, but not yet seated in heaven. They are looked at as on the earth, and there is a hope laid up for them in heaven— “ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.” In chapter 2 (vers. 11, 12) we read, “In whom also ye are circumcised, with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the

flesh by the circumcision of Christ; buried with him in baptism [there I get the doctrine of Romans] wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead [I have now got beyond the Romans]. And you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh hath he quickened together with him." There we get Colossian doctrine, but it does not take us up to heaven. When he speaks of that in Ephesians he says, "He hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Colossians is as it were between Romans and Ephesians. Therefore in Colossians you get, instead of sitting in heavenly places, "set your affections on things above," "the hope that is laid up for you in heaven," and such like expressions. He does not talk of the Holy Ghost in Colossians. What we find in Colossians is life, and this is as important in its place as the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. In Ephesians you get the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and therefore the body; whereas in Colossians you never get the Holy Ghost mentioned except in the expression "your love in the Spirit." For example, in Ephesians we read, "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another," whereas in Colossians he says, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." Instead of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, it is God's nature the measure of how we are to behave ourselves.

The Holy Ghost works in the new nature, but is not said to dwell in it. It is said, that "Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." The Holy Ghost operates in the new nature. Still the dwelling is never spoken of as in it, but in the body; we need Christ to dwell in our hearts by faith.

I have got a new nature, and of course have not to pray to get one. The effect of this is most striking. In the Ephesians we are brought to sit in heavenly places, we have put off the old man and put on the new, and we have the Holy Spirit of God dwelling in us. In Ephesians it is, "As God in Christ hath forgiven you." We have got the nature, the state that I am in to be able to walk; we have put off the old and put on the new; and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us, and then we are told to be imitators of God as dear children. Then if I say, How can I talk of imitating God (of course it is not Almighty power, it refers to moral things), how can poor worms such as we talk of imitating God? Well, is not Christ your pattern? You are to follow that. This shows the absurdity of making it merely the law as our rule of life. I am a dear child, and I am to have a sense of it in my soul and exhibit it in my walk; I am "to walk in love as Christ hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor." "Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren;" we are to go and walk as He walked.

Chapter 63

Substance of a Reading on Ephesians: Part 4

We have had the two subjective elements (that is, the state I am in) consisting of the new man, and the old man put off, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. Now follow as a measure the two essential names of God—love and light. That is what Christ was in this world. “While I am in the world,” He says, “I am the light of the world,” and He was the expression of divine love. You are to be an imitator of God, and if you ask, How can that be carried out in man you get Christ, that is, God manifested in a man. How clearly the thing is entirely above law. If law was carried out in the world, we would have the world all happy and righteous and peaceful, but that supposes the world to be all right. I am to care for another as much as for myself, but that will not do in this world, and therefore I get this, “He gave himself.” It is not taking love to self as the measure of love to my neighbor, but going beyond the law, and giving oneself up for others. If all went on rightly, the law would be your rule now, but it is, otherwise. As Christians, when you come to a world of wickedness, you have to follow God.

Let us look at the double character of this love, which is entirely practical. There are two kinds, what I may call love up and love down; and they are entirely different in kind. The care of a father and his child will illustrate the difference. The father loves down and the child loves up—the one is to something above it, whereas the other is in condescending goodness. If you take a case of loving up, the more excellent the object the more excellent the affection. If I love a base thing, it is a base affection. If I love a man of noble character, it is a noble affection. If I love God, of course it is the highest of all. Then on the other hand, if you take love down, the baser the object the greater the love. That is die character of God's love to us. I get both in Christ. He loved His Father perfectly as man (that was loving up), and He loved us when vile sinners (that was loving clown). And we are to go and do likewise. Therefore I read here “as Christ hath loved us and given himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” He gave Himself for us and to God. That is perfection. He had an infinitely high object, and an infinitely low one, and He was perfect both ways. We have to seek to walk as He walked. There is fellowship also one with another. Of course when we can see, the thing to imitate is Christ walking in love— “as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.”

That is the side of love that you are imitators of God. Then you get the other essential name of God, and that is, light; and he says we are it. We are partakers of the divine nature— “ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.” God is love, and God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. We were darkness, but now in Christ we are light in the Lord. “Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light.” I get the full light in Christ, as I get the full love. Thus are the two essential names of God brought out. I am a partaker of the divine nature, and the Spirit of God dwells in me, and I am to act as God acted, and that acting in Christ. “Awake, thou that sleepest,” that is, looking at Christians, not committing sins but gone to sleep in the world. In the world the people are all dead; but if a man goes to sleep, he is just as much alive as when awake, but he is as much as dead; he does not hear, nor speak, nor think; he is like a dead man. There is a Christian that is going on with the world—he is with the dead. What am I to do, then?

Christ is the light of the world, and “ye are the light of the world” He says to His disciples. It is a wonderful exhibition.

In 1 John it is said, “If we walk in the light,” that is, absolutely; but, realizing position, we walk in it. It is position we are actually there. It is not like standing in righteousness. Here he is looking at practice. Walking is a real thing. It is not as if I say, Christ is my righteousness. It is a real living place we are walking in. Of course he judges in detail all sins. All the Gentiles are walking in darkness—I refer to the passage in Ephesians. See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but wise.” Uprightness is not sufficient. If I have got a bog to go through, I may be perfectly sincere in seeking a house on the other side, but if I do not look about me I may sink in the bog. I must look about me. It requires wisdom to go through this world, I mean as a Christian.

The expression “redeeming the time” is apt to be always misapplied. It means seizing opportunities. You get it in Dan. 2, where the king speaks to the Magi, “I know ye would gain the time, because ye see the thing is gone from me.” They wanted to redeem the time. Here I am to walk in such a way, so full of Christ, that, when an opportunity offers, I can bring Him out. The days are evil. You cannot always have an opportunity; you might be casting pearls before swine; but you must be in a condition to embrace every opportunity. In Daniel it is “gain the time,” or buy the time; as it is in the margin. A thousand more opportunities would present themselves of bringing Christ before people if we were living in the power of the Spirit of God. The days are evil, we are told. The power of evil is there. You must not complain because the days are evil. The Lord can guide us through one day as well as another.

“Instant in season” is to the saint. The time will come when they will not receive sound doctrine. This applies to the dealing with the saints. It is often applied to the gospel; but the mischief is, that people take passages without reading the context. I am sure we could find a great many more seasons if we were faithful to Christ. “Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all, long-suffering and doctrine, for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears: and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.” He is evidently looking to Christians. Timothy was to go on earnestly pressing because soon they would not listen to him. Whether it was seasonable or not, he was to go on with it, because very soon there would be no season at all.

I do not think the apostle here means the gospel. The previous chapter speaks of the departure. He is speaking of the evil days. It is not that we are not to be preaching everywhere we can to sinners, but the special thing he has in his mind is that the church would get into such a state that they would not listen to truth. When we preach the gospel now, we preach to people that call themselves Christians. You may meet infidels, it is true. It is of the last days he is speaking. In John's time they were come in. It was the last time then, though morally developed since. Peter says, “The time is come that judgment will begin at the house of God;” and Jude says, that these men “have crept in unawares,” and also that these are they that the Lord comes to judge.

The latter times bring it up to the last days, being the more general term “In the latter days some shall depart from the faith,” and in Clio last days they shall have a form of godliness. It is rather more distinctly characteristic; because in John you get the last days marked by antichrists being there. He does not use them to say they are the last of the latter. In the latter days you get celibacy

and asceticism, as it is called: so the apostle shows in Colossians. He speaks of that system which was already dawning. God allowed it all to begin before the apostle went, that we might get scripture upon it. It ripened afterward. Therefore he speaks of the latter days as those coming in after he was gone. They are used in the Old Testament pretty much in the same sense. Still the last days are more definite: “You have heard that Antichrist shall come, and now there are many antichrists.”

We had before the oppositions of science, falsely so called, and the forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, and we all know it is going on since. In England you can hardly go into a cathedral without finding the monument of a bishop who lived forty days without eating anything. I have seen them when I used to go into such places. A. man may fast very profitably if he has occasion to do it. I recognize it; but to set about making a virtue of it, in the way usually done, is wrong, because it went upon the principle that matter was an evil thing, and denied the atonement entirely, for they said that Christ could not have a body. This is the reason the apostle John insists he is come in flesh, and that His disciples had handled Him. It was denied that He was really a man in that way, because they thought all matter was a bad thing; and therefore the great thing to be done was to get the Spirit, which was good in everybody away from matter. Therefore they fasted to keep the matter down. That was a torment to the church. Though some of them were very strict, a great many were grossly immoral. It spread everywhere and affected even the orthodox. The Gnostics died out, but they left their taint in the church, and the whole system of celibacy and monasticism continued. I used once to fast in that way myself. On Wednesdays and Fridays and Saturdays I did not eat anything at all, but on the other days I did eat a little bread. I said, If I fast three days, I can fast four, and if four five, and if five better six, and if six better seven; and what then? I had better die. I felt there was something that made it impossible to go through with the thing. I went on with it, but God delivered me.

The Spirit of God had them in view. They were dawning then, because it says, “The Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter days some shall depart,” &c. You see that evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, and that, when once the evil was introduced, it could not be put out.

It had been among the heathen before. The system of monasteries, and celibacy, and begging friars, was all in existence 540 years before Christ, and many think it was actually borrowed from the East. Certainly it is the same thing morally, but, as I said, many think it was actually borrowed from the East; as a great many of their doctrines were, I have no doubt. A Roman Catholic priest when visiting the East was perfectly astounded, and did not know what to think when he found among the Buddhists exactly the same things as Roman Catholics had at home. He told them he was a Lama from the west, and he was received in all their monasteries and everywhere.

Well, to go on with our epistle—another element comes in. When we have them all in, order, he says, “Be not drunk with wine wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Such is the joy they were to have, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” There are two things—my own will gone, and the perfect certainty of God's love. “Giving thanks always for all things:” take away my fortune and I say, “Thank God.” It is not easy, but of course the will must be broken; and on the other hand God

makes everything to work together for good to those that love Him. Then you get a spirit of grace, “submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” It is not submitting to do evil if you want me to do it, but that in faith there is no will. If you want me to do wrong, I cannot do it because it is not God's will, but in everything in which my will is concerned I give way to you. We are to submit to one another in the fear of God. It is what sitting in heavenly places produces upon earth. Christ when here could say He was in heaven, and He is given as our pattern, though to us it is purely by grace.

Then there are two other main subjects that follow—the love of Christ to His church, and the conflict of the saints with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. We have passed away from what we are with God, and now we come to the special relationship of Christ with the church. The main thing in His mind is the church. “The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church; and he is the Savior of the body.” This I believe to be our body.

I get two things He does in consequence of His love to the church. He gave. Himself for it out and out. That is the first thing He does in consequence of His love to it. Then, having taken it to be His own, He sets about to make it what He likes. He does not make what He likes to be His own, but takes it to be His own to make it what He likes. Next I got present sanctifying and washing by the word, and afterward His presenting it to Himself as a glorious church. This is special. It is not God loving poor sinners, but the special love of Christ to the church. The purification that we get here Is that which we have in heaven; as far as it goes, it is the same nature, and quality, and standard, and measure, and everything, as will be in heaven. He washes it here that it may have no spot there. “Beholding with unveiled face the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image [now] from glory to glory.” Looking at Christ in glory our heart gets filled with the motives that are there, and this effect is produced upon earth. The effect is produced here, but the motives are all above. He “loved the church and gave himself for it.” This is the starting-point— “that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” It is a great thing for us to see that the condition we are to be presented in to Christ is the power and measure of our sanctification here.

It is manifest that we find the same thing all through the epistles. For instance, “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; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” I know I shall be perfectly like Christ in glory, and I purify myself according to that standard. It is not that I am pure according to it. I take that measure and apply it now. Every step I take I see it clearer, and I may apply it to something else; but this is the only thing I am looking at to judge by.

In 1 Thess. 3 the same truth comes out in a striking way. “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: to the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” This is a passage that looks perfectly unintelligible until you get hold of what I have been saying. Instead of saying unblameable in holiness before God at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, we should have said, “unblameable in your walk down here.” He looks at their realizing their Christian position— “to the end he may establish your hearts,” and

draws the veil and there they are unblameable when Christ comes. That is where it is all measured.

This is evidently a very important principle for this day and every other. All the perfection which is spoken of, Wesleyan or whatever it may be called, is all gone. It does not come into the question, good or bad, because what I am shown is the perfection of Christ in glory. I do not get it till I am in glory, and there is no other object presented to a Christian as the standard but Christ in glory. We are to be “conformed to the image of God's Son that be might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Again, “As is the heavenly such are they also that are heavenly: and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Therefore the apostle said, he had not yet attained, but there was no other thing before him. He was always running on to it. We retain in heaven the impress got here; but, this is Christ. There may be degrees of realization. We shall be perfectly like Christ when we get there; all of us will be perfectly like Him. We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall bear the image of the heavenly. I am like a person in a straight passage with a light at the end. I have more of the light every step I take, but I do not get the light till I come to the end. When He shall appear, we shall be like Him. I get sight of this, and say, This is what I am going to be. It sounds strange to say that we cannot be as Christ was here, because He was absolutely sinless, and if I say I have no sin, I deceive myself. But I shall be like Him there, and that is brought to bear upon me now that I should have no motive working in my soul but Him there. This is what the apostle means when he says, “not looking at the things which are seen but at the things which are not seen.”

It has been said indeed that God would not give a measure that we could not attain to; but I take the bull by the horns and assert that He never gave one that a man could attain to. He made man innocent, and there was no demand necessary; but the moment man becomes a sinner, God put something beyond him, which he is to run after. God gives him a law when he is in the flesh, and he is not subject to the law of God. It is an unattainable measure. “Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.” This is our measure. Are you as perfect as this? When I get things fully developed I get Christ in glory. This is perfectly unattainable here, because God wants me to be always running on and having the one thing always before me. “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

The meaning of John 17:19 (“For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth") is, that for their sakes Christ sets Himself apart as a model man (though I do not like the expression), that we might be made into His likeness.

The passage in Heb. 13 (“Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus"), is more the difficulties we have to encounter he is looking at there. He says Christ has got there: you take courage and run on. It is just the same race exactly. It is wonderful that we shall really be conformed to the image of God's Son, when we think of what we are. But it has nothing to do with our responsibility as to salvation. You are not set in this path until you are saved. Our responsibility as men, God's creatures, is not affected: as responsible men we are lost. It is over in that sense. Take, by way of illustration, a man in business who has contracted debts; suppose I go to him and

tell him how he is to manage not to get into debt, he would tell me I was only mocking his misery, for he had got nothing to manage. Responsibility is over in that sense; not that a man is not responsible for all he has done, but that he is ruined already, and of that the cross is the proof, because the highest act of grace is that He came to seek and save the lost. As to the history in scripture, the whole system of probation concluded at the cross.

“Now,” said Christ, “is the judgment of this world,” as it is also said in Hebrews, “now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” When it is all over with man, sovereign grace steps in, and saves people out of their ruined condition. A person may get all his debts paid but be left without a penny to begin the world again. God has not dealt with us in that way. He has paid our debts, and has given us the same glory as His own Son. This was a matter of His counsels before the foundation of the world. That belongs to all Christians. There is labor which God rewards, for every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor; but in the likeness of Christ every saint will then be.

We shall all be conformed to the image of God's Son in glory. It was God's counsel before the foundation of the world, but never brought out till the cross. “Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works [that is responsibility], but according to his own purpose and grace which was given as in Christ Jesus before the world began, but now is made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ.” It was before the world in God's purpose about His people, but it was never brought out till Christ had laid the foundation for it in the cross. In the first of Titus there is a similar statement, “In hope of eternal life which God that cannot lie promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested his word through preaching.” All this glorious purpose, glorious for us and for God, never was brought out—never hinted at—until Christ laid a righteous ground for it in the cross. Then God brought it out and said, “That is what I am going to do.” This with much more is what we find here in Ephesians.

Chapter 64

Substance of a Reading on Ephesians: Part 5

(Chaps. 5 and 6.)

But we have to notice another thing also: “No man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church, for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones.” There I get not simply this purpose of presenting us to Himself, but how He loves and cherishes us as a man does his own flesh. It is present care of the church. “We are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones.” This shows that the church could not have existed at all till Christ was glorified, because it is with Christ as a man it is connected. It is not that Christ quickened us (though this is true), but that we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. There is another great subject in this Epistle, the conflicts of the saint. You will observe we do not find the conflict except in Ephesians. It is not a conflict of flesh and spirit, nor is it a conflict of conscience when a man is quickened. The Jews were slaves in Egypt as an unconverted man is in his sins. When God brought them into Canaan, what was to be their rest? There was conflict, and the proper sense of conflict with Satan is in heavenly places. In the Authorized Bible “high places” is inserted in place of “heavenly places,” which shows that the translators were afraid of other things, and so altered the word. A similar alteration occurs in Rev. 4. There we get One seated on a throne, and the four and twenty elders also seated on thrones, but though the word in the original is quite the same, the translators altered the thrones of the elders into “seats.” In our epistle they were afraid to translate “heavenly places,” and they made it “high places,” but the word they have translated “high” here is the same as the one they have translated “heavenly” elsewhere. People speak of Jordan as death, and quite rightly, too, for it is a figure of death; but then is it not strange that when they crossed over Jordan and got into Canaan Joshua met a man with a sword drawn, in his hand, and they had to fight? Is it not, strange that, as soon as heavenly places are entered, conflict has to be entered on? Now what is Jordan? After passing through death into these heavenly places we begin to fight. Thus it does not mean actual rest in heaven as supposed. If I say I have put off the old man, this is the same as that I am dead with Christ. I have passed through death, and been circumcised with the circumcision of Christ, and now I can fight the battles of God with Satan. This is what we get here. Redemption brought us into the wilderness. The wilderness is our passing through this world where our flesh is tested. Canaan is the other part of the Christian's life, where be reckons himself dead. Christ in spirit is there as the Captain of the Lord's host, and he has to fight the battles of the Lord himself. That is what we get in Canaan. I sometimes wonder that it does not strike people what an odd thing it is, that if Jordan means death, and Canaan heaven (which they do) fighting should characterize the place in Joshua, for the first thing he meets there is a man with a sword drawn in his hand. The whole book of Joshua is about the battles of the Lord. There we get death brought in, as we have been saying, reckoning ourselves dead—I am crucified with Christ. This is what Jordan is: “If ye be dead with Christ.” By-and-by it will be our place of rest. Yes, heaven will be ours. I am not quarreling with the use of the image in that way. Jordan is a type of death, and Canaan of heavenly places. In the account we get in Numbers, they are going through the wilderness and tested with God; and in

Canaan they fought with flesh and blood, which is a figure of spiritual wickedness in heavenly places. We do not get there till we have passed through Jordan, that is, till we are dead and risen with Christ. This is every Christian's place; but I speak of realizing it.

The Christian is in both at the same time, but not in experience, though his condition down here affects his power of fighting. He must have the armor on. I have to go through the world with the cares of family, or business, or meeting the contradiction of sinners. But this is not a moment in which I am fighting God's battles: I am then fighting my own, so to speak. We are with God down here, or God is with us; and we are with the devil in heavenly places. Until Rev. 12 he is in heaven. It is not where God dwells in unapproachable light; he is not there; but how could he be the accuser of the brethren if he is not in heaven? He went with the sons of God about Job, for we find Satan was amongst them. You could not have any accuser of the brethren, if he were not there. He tempts them down here but accuses them there.

Suppose a Christian was preaching the gospel: would he be in wilderness circumstances in that? No, he is rather fighting the battle there. He might be in wilderness circumstances in various things, but he is fighting the battles there, and he must use the wisdom of God against a subtle spiritual adversary. Suppose a man is attacked in the street and abused? You never get the question of the flesh away. When they did not consult the Lord, they made mistakes, as in the case of Ai and Gibeon. The contending with Satan would be against heresy, superstition and other things. Satan may raise up opposition and violence in the streets, and hence the Christian would need wisdom, but you cannot separate the idea from having the flesh, because you will be making blunders. Thus there are doubts, and things of that kind, which Satan brings into the mind—infidelity for instance. Satan in them acts directly; they are not mere temptations of an ordinary kind.

In this connection he adds, “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might,” We have no strength of our own. We have nothing to do with any carnal or fleshly weapons. “God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise.” As long as the saints lean upon flesh and influence, they are not leaning on God but flesh. The world has all the upper hand. there.

Take an example in our Lord in His conflict in the wilderness. There was no sin in being hungry. That is hardly the kind of conflict; still the Lord overcomes. There was more wilderness work; still it was Satan. He too hindered the apostle from going to the Thessalonians. If one were endeavoring to make void all this truth brought out up to this point, and say it was not true, it would be Satan's work. Infidelity, and heresies, and things of that kind, are referred to in this warfare. In a case of discipline Paul says, “we are not ignorant of his devices.” Satan was trying to divide Paul and the Corinthians, and he says, If you forgave it, I will forgive it. I see what Satan is at: he wants to make a split between us.” Error as to any doctrine is Satan's power. I merely took the other as an example. In Canaan it is not so much as a roaring lion, but he might be. “In nothing terrified by your adversaries.” In the case of Paul being prevented by Satan from going to the Thessalonians, God allowed it in His providence. He allows everything in His: providence. In the case of Job, it was God commenced the matter. He overrules all that. “We would have gone once and again, but Satan hindered us.” Opposition was raised up that he could not go. All that is conflict. We do not believe enough that there is this.

The rulers of the darkness of this world are Satan and his angels. The darkness of the world is ignorance of God, who is, light. Conflict of Satan is not characteristic of the wilderness. If there is anything of the kind, it is an attempt to go up and get beaten. They might have gone in at Kadesh-Barnea, but they did not; and when they found how foolish they were, they attempted and were beaten altogether.

It is not what characterizes the wilderness. God might give them a specimen of what they were to meet. He destroyed them unto Hamah. All our war is with the people that possess the land, that is, the devil and his angels. The wilderness is the patience of going through this world according to God. At Sinai is not the wilderness, it is totally apart. The general character of the wilderness is going through that where they had only manna and the cloud—Christ and the word and Spirit. They were to go through this world dependent on God. It is this characterizes the wilderness, and not fighting. In Canaan they had not any manna. It was characteristically the heavenly places, and the Lord set them to fight. In the type we get what characterizes it. The first thing is the wiles of the devil; it is not his power here. “Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” He has no power if you resist him, so far as we are concerned. His wiles are dangerous enough. “We wrestle not against flesh and blood” as Joshua did. We wrestle against wicked spirits in heavenly places. “And having done all to stand,” that is, to make good your ground, “stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth:” you must have the mind and affections tucked up with the word of God.

“Having on the breastplate of righteousness,” that is, practical righteousness. It is not before God, but with Satan here. If I have not practical righteousness, Satan has got something against me: I am afraid. It is a good conscience. I have my loins thoroughly tucked up and in order; I have a good conscience and am walking in the spirit of peace.

We have not got the sword yet; the defensive armor comes before the offensive. In that state, having a good conscience, and the spirit of grace and peace, I now come to the shield from Satan. I am to look up to God with entire confidence; that is the shield of faith. Then comes the helmet of salvation. I can hold my bead up. Having got all the offensive armor complete, I take the sword. The sword of the Spirit is God's word.

And then, mark further, when I have got the armor and weapon, I am thrown back in entire dependence on the Lord—praying always. The word is first of all applied to myself—I get girded with truth, and, having got the rest of the armor, the word comes into activity—the sword of the Spirit. Lastly I am cast entirely upon God.

When I begin to take the sword, it may be service among saints or in the gospel. People have sometimes fancied it is Christ as our righteousness; but this is with God. He is my righteousness with God. I do not want armor against God; it is armor against wicked spirits I need. There is only one offensive weapon—the word. It is wonderful how the Lord has provided everything for us in scripture. There is the love of Christ—He loves us like His own flesh—and the fighting with Satan follows. After we are put in our place, we get the love of Christ and then the conflict with Satan.

Watching is another element in it He says in this place, watching with prayer. If I am watching in my path in everything with God, it turns to prayer. If my heart is engaged about the blessing of the saints, I cannot get on without it. Watching in it is perseverance in it. The object of Satan is to keep us from realizing these heavenly things. There is conflict for the benefit of all, as well as for

ourselves. We have to put the armor on ourselves, but when we have got it on, we must fight for it. The first part of verse 18, namely, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication,” refers to the individual, then to all saints. It is for themselves, and then it widens out. It is a general principle first. You get this constantly in the Ephesians as for instance, “That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints.” The moment he gets to the thoughts and purposes of God, he cannot leave out the saints.

Confidence is in God known in Himself. I am not likely to go and ask you for something if I have not confidence in you. “The mystery of the gospel,” in verse 19, includes not only the church but the whole thing. Glad tidings take in really everything with Paul. He was a minister of the gospel in the whole creation under heaven, and a minister of the word to complete the word of God.

Chapter 65

Evangelical Protestantism and the Biblical Studies of M.Godet: Part 1

The following pages were hastily penned at the request of a person who was keenly affected by the teaching which M. Godet's books presented in a popular form to the Christian public. Others having read the manuscript requested that it might be printed on account of the extreme gravity of the false doctrines it exposes. It was not without some reluctance that the author yielded to this request, the evidence of which will appear in the opening lines of this little work.

Besides mentioning the imperfections attached to a work undertaken whilst traveling, and in the midst of the innumerable fatigues accompanying the ministry of the word, the author considered, that in order to form a correct idea of his system as a whole, it would have been needful for him to make himself acquainted with all M. Godet's works. He has therefore merely limited himself to noting three essential points, which will suffice in his opinion to warn the people of the Lord against a teaching that assails His word, His person, and His work.

M. Godet has many times answered the objections of rationalists, and this I acknowledge gladly. Had not the writings now before me falsified the very gospel itself, I should never have taken the pen in hand. I shall, in those writings, examine but three fundamental points relating to the gospel: The authority of the word, and inspiration: The person of Christ: and lastly, His work. I have during my life had too much of controversy to seek for it. In one's old age moral repose, Christ Himself, is that which the heart seeks beyond all else.

It is somewhat difficult to one whose thoughts have been derived from the word itself, to answer such a book as that of M. Godet, in which the author in serving himself of expressions used by that word, attaches to them some peculiar signification of his own. Thus the scriptures speak of redemption as the work of the Savior, and that according to the common acceptation of the word, although the means used to workout that redemption are not in accordance with the world's thoughts. The scriptures speak of redemption as of a deliverance effected by a ransom, and subsequently by a power producing a full result in behalf of those for whom that ransom has been paid. “In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of offenses.” (Eph. 1:9.) “Awaiting adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. 8:23.)

Redemption, according to M. Cadet, is but a positive interposition of God in the history of mankind—a work of education which has put on the character of a redemption. This word appears in the election of one family, and it is seen in development as that family gradually becomes transformed into a people. The manner in which M. Godet seeks to justify this definition of redemption is somewhat peculiar. He thus quotes 1 Cor. 1:21. “Since by wisdom the world has not known God in his wisdom, it has pleased God to save by the foolishness of preaching those who believe.” I confess that by no efforts of reflection have I succeeded in comprehending how this passage shows redemption to be a work of education. The quotation moreover is false. It is written, “since in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom hath not known God, God hath been

pleased, by the foolishness of the preaching, to save those that believe." One of the unpleasant things that occur in such of M. Godet's writings as I have examined is, that at least half the passages he uses are inaccurately quoted.

According to the author, promised salvation is, by Christ's advent, consummated in His person; the people, having rejected Him, perishes; and then salvation is proclaimed to the world by the elect of the nation. "And by this double result of Israel's history, the religion of redemption with all its antecedents becomes divinely sealed." Is this the redemption of which the Bible speaks? But let us proceed. "To this primary fact, a second is necessarily attached. The work of redemption, which we have just sketched out, has been accompanied by a work of revelation." "How has God accomplished this great work?" —that is, that of redemption— "He has made use of human agents for this work. And to effect, this, it was needful for Him to attract, to win, and to attach them to Himself. Consequently it was necessary to make known to them His projected work—to unfold the scheme, at least according to the measure in which they wore to come in the execution of it. He must also make them contemplate prospectively its glorious goal; in order that they might be enabled to interest themselves by acquaintance with the purpose, and be laborers with Him in it, in a manner worthy of the work and of God Himself, with conscience and liberty." "The phases of revelation also keep pace with those of redemption." "At the period when God called Abraham to found with Himself the work of redemption, He revealed Himself to him."

There are many things I might take up in the pages whence I make these quotations, but I abstain from so doing, my aim being to expose the basis of M. Godet's system. I shall, I trust, abstain from expressing my own sentiments with regard to all stated by the author. At this time, I shall occupy myself less with his manner of presenting revelation than with the views be presents in another work upon the Lord Jesus Christ. Possibly I may be wrong; but I fear offending that Savior by using expressions which might give occasion to believe I knew not by what spirit I was actuated. Therefore I shall confine myself to placing the views contained in these books in contrast with what is found in the word.

My reader might suppose that, in speaking of revelation and the work of the prophets, M. Godet occupied himself with the Bible. Not so. The Bible, as such, is to him no revelation, and this he formally avows. At page 10 he says, "The Bible therefore, notice it well, is not revelation itself; it is, properly speaking, the narrative given of revelation." "The statement" of those truths is "the authentic document of the redemption of the human race, as well as of the revelations by which that work has been accompanied." What then is revelation? It is "a fact which has its place between God and His agent; the place of holy scripture is between that agent and the rest of humanity." (Ibid.) With regard to the first part of the last phrase, I should have no difficulty in accepting it, were not the definition of the word revelation in question. Whether it be applied to the immediate communication God makes to the instrument He deigns to employ, or whether it be solely applied to the fact that that instrument through the Spirit announces to others what has been revealed to him, it is equally "a revelation from God."

But if one limits oneself to consider the communication made to the instrument employed then in that which concerns us (us, "the remainder of mankind"), the whole question remains unanswered. In fact, what have we got, we who are not the recipients of that immediate communication? We have a given statement—but given by whom? Is that given statement a correct one? "An authentic

document” is too vague a term to throw a true light on this point; moreover, this is all extremely superficial. It is, in fact, to us, no question of whether the document be authentic, but whether its entire contents be absolutely true, and given by God. The expression itself is very inaccurate. It is no given statement.

(To be continued)

Chapter 66

Evangelical Protestantism and the Biblical Studies of M.Godet: Part 2

THE BIBLICAL STUDIES OF M. GODET.

A very large part of the Bible, even on M. Godet's confession, pretends to give the words of the Lord, “All the writings and some part of the prophetic scriptures, have these words for title: Thus saith the Lord” (p. 42). Is it true or not? If that is true, there is no distinction between the revelation. and the Bible. The Bible is the revelation itself set down in writing. M. Godet says, “The veracious moment of the word of salvation” (p. 46). If it is veracious, we have, in all that it contains, the revelation itself; and that does not only apply to prophecy but to law. It tells us there, “And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying.” Is it true, or not? The history of the creation, that of Abraham, &c., are they a collection of Elohistic or Jehovistic legend; or is it a written revelation? Man should live by every word that proceeds out of the month of God. Where find these words if the account rendered and the revelation are not identical—if the Bible does not give us words from the mouth of God, that is, say, the revelation?

At the time of the temptation in the desert, all depended upon the fact that the Savior yielded not in that moment. The first Adam had yielded; thank God, the Second could not fail, while all depended upon His standing firm to conquer the strong man. How did He obtain the victory? By citing that which is written. The scripture was sufficient for the Son of God as divine authority, He referred to words which proceeded from the month of God. Scripture cited, one single passage sufficed for Satan, reduced him to silence; absolute testimony of his defeat. The Savior made use only of scripture, although Satan quoted it also—falsely if you will, but in order to cunningly avail himself of the written word of God. The Savior maintained His standing within that divine enclosure of safety, “It is written again.” By those words that proceeded from the mouth of God, the victory on which our salvation depended was won. Is the Savior they possessed a divine and absolute authority—and to Satan also—and that, in such a sort that he dared not reply. Had he done so, he would openly have betrayed himself as the adversary; and to man—to one Man at least—to Christ. Blessed are all they who follow Him.

But I anticipate somewhat. Let us bear in mind that the question concerns the communication from God to man; this we all recognize. In speaking of revelation, M. Godet says (p. 14), “They who receive it receive it not solely for themselves. The work of which it unveils the meaning has the world for its object.” It is clear that revelation was not given to be the property solely of him who received it. It might so happen, and has so happened; but, as a general proposition, revelation is received by an agent to be communicated to others. Revelation was not for the channel to which it was confided, but for the people of God, for the church, and for the sinful world.

We will now return to M. Godet's theory, that also of all who deny the inspiration of the scriptures, who deny it in the full, entire, ordinary, and common acceptation of that word. The Bible IS the word of God. God has revealed to certain chosen instruments His thoughts and His purposes

according as it seemed good to Him so to do, and, in thus doing, to use M. Godet's own expression, God had the world as His object. This communication was made from God Himself to the prophets. The communication is divine—partial it may be—but perfect. The communication is from God Himself, the prophet receiving it as given by God. But, although the world be His object—not the prophet—the world receives but a given statement of that revelation.) The prophet, to the best of his ability, communicates to others what he has received. Thais the world, which is the object God had in view, receives revelation only as transmitted with all the imperfections which pertain to the exercise of the human mind, and to human faculties in connection with divine things—to the memory, for instance—in fact to all the weaknesses pertaining to our poor nature. The world possesses but a transmitted statement of the complete, perfect, and divine revelation, supplied by the men who received it; nevertheless revelation was made and communicated, as having the world and its well-being for its object!

Is this a theory that bears the impress of common sense? and what is it as concerns divine goodness? God desired to communicate to the world the mighty efficacy of the truth. He revealed that troth to chosen instruments; but the world, for whom He destined it, and His beloved church, could and can only receive it spoiled and marred by the weaknesses of the channels of communication, for whom personally it was not designed! And this is called rational! Nor is this all. The question becomes yet more Serious, when the New Testament and more especially the Gospels are concerned, those given statements of events in which redemption was at least consummated, even though redemption be but the goal of the education of man. Manifestly this is of more importance than all beside& M. Godet speaks of it thus (p. 43): “The contradictions between the Gospel recitals. But our Gospels, as we have seen, are not revelation. Revelation is the fact related—it is Jesus, His work, His word. Our Evangelists describe that fact to the best of their ability; one or two among them, qualified from baying been eye-witnesses, the others from such information as they were able to obtain.”

But then, as regards the most important point, as regards redemption, there has been no revelation at all, because “revelation is a fact placed between God and His agent” (p. 16), whilst our Evangelists speak merely from their title of being eye-witnesses, or from such information as they were able to obtain. It is a matter of personal memory, and even of secondhand communication, since M. Godet relies on the legends of the primitive church, to which he often refers. Mark, for instance, according to M. Godet, has, at the request of the Roman Christians, given his own reminiscences of the remembrances of Peter Matthew has “edited the discourses,” but another has added the facts that link these discourses together as well as it could be done. Luke, having made use of documents already published, probably made some expeditions into Galilee during Paul's imprisonment at Caesarea, in order to collect together all the possible recollections which the memories of the Galileans could retain; and then from these materials Luke composed a history in the Grecian style, the only one which merited that name. (See “The origin of our four Gospels.” Biblical Studies: second series.) M. Godet also says (“M. Colani,” p. 38), “I agree to it without any difficulty. Many of M. Colani's objections appear to me weighty, and some decisive, against a certain manner of considering the Bible, which might confound it with revelation.” Thus we are left without any revelation, for we have but the Bible; and that, with such contradictions in its most important portion as to falsify the given statement, as to render it not from God but to base it upon the memories of Peter, of Mark, or of the Galileans, and thus raise positive

obstacles and hindrances to one's considering that which we have in the New Testament to be a revelation from God! And here we fall lower than ever. The greater part of the Old Testament was based upon communications from God to agents. Those communications were revelations. In the New Testament Jesus and His word are the fact, that is, revelation; and all that we get is only a matter of memory, bringing contradictions into the narrations! Our Evangelists describe the fact to the best of their ability. The Christ is a revelation, but, according to M. Godet, we have no revelation of the Christ!

It is important that I should here point out a certain method of presenting inspiration (a method common to M. Godet and to all who oppose inspiration, but which serves to lead the simple astray). He speaks thus (Biblical Studies, p. 48): “To require a Bible dictated word for word from heaven would be requiring a book that would supplant human thought instead of fertilizing it; a bookmaking a passive instrument of man, instead of calling his intelligent and free co-operation into request Would that be more divine?” We must not expect M. Godet to agree with himself. At page 44 we read: “When it is granted to a man to confer directly with Jehovah, two things simultaneously take place in him. Every creature, himself included, disappears into nothingness. God remains before him as the Being who alone is great, alone real.” This has certainly some appearance of “supplanting human thought” —has it not? Now, not being inspired myself, I do not pretend to define inspiration; were I so, I do not imagine it would be possible for me to explain it to one who was not. What I seek is God's thought; I neither seek to “supplant” nor to “fertilize human thought.” But to define inspiration as being “word for word dictated from heaven,” is but a human idea of the subject. When it has been written, “Thus saith the Lord,” or, “The Lord said unto Moses,” either He has said it, or words have been put into the mouth of the Lord, words which are not His own. God Himself makes a distinction in the form, but not in the authority of revelation. (Num. 12:6-8.) Tongues were spoken which the person who used them could not understand. This was truly “supplanting human thoughts;” but Paul preferred to speak with his understanding. God could fill his heart with glorious and holy thoughts, and so keep him filled with them that nothing should be there, and consequently nothing be expressed, but that which God had placed there. These were the thoughts of God, but through the power of the Spirit became the thoughts, the joy, of a man, creating in him an intelligence, molding his heart and divinely enlightening his conscience. God could in such sort possess Himself of the intelligence, the heart, and the conscience, that nothing could either enter in or flow out but what He had put there. This is also the highest character of inspiration, because all that is revealed belongs to us; whereas the prophets in searching into their own prophecies, found it was not for themselves they ministered those things. Be it as it may, is it not wretched in the extreme to put “a Bible dictated word for word from heaven” in contrast with human thought, instead of seeing the operation of the Spirit of God, and man's mind formed by the communication of purely divine thoughts, they being adapted to man, and also received by him through the work of the Spirit of God?

Let us now examine how the word presents itself to us; for its absolute perfection as a whole, and its intrinsic power cannot be known but by those in whom it operates. In the law it is, as we have seen, “God spake unto Moses.” Is this true or not? If it be true, we have the word of God, and not merely a revelation made to Moses, but the word of God such as Moses received it. Pass on to the Psalms of David. “The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His word was in my tongue. The God of Israel said.” (2 Sam. 23:2, 3.) If the given statement be true, the Psalms of David are the word of

God itself; if it be false, there is even no piety in them, for it is not piety but fanaticism to say, “The word of God was upon my tongue,” if it had not been there. Now, the Lord Jesus has on many occasions put His seal to the whole Book of Psalms; the prophets in their turn declare, “Thus saith the Lord.” The word of the Lord was with Jeremiah. This is Zechariah’s appeal to the conscience of the residue of the people who returned from Babylon (Zech. 1:4-6): “Be ye not as your fathers, unto whom the former prophets have cried, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye now from your evil ways, and from your evil doings: but they did not hear nor hearken unto me, saith the Lord; your fathers, where are they and the prophets, do they live forever? But my words and my statutes which I commanded my servants, the prophets, did they not take hold of your fathers?” These words were the words of the Lord, and they were proved to be such. The Lord also, and the apostles, have formally put the seal to that which the prophets have spoken, and mark it well, to that which they had spoken as we have it in the scriptures, and there alone. And mark also this important point—it is not the word in the scriptures, in the Bible, but it is the scriptures themselves as such. It is not simply such and such passage acting effectually upon me (though this may be the case), but it is the authority of Him who speaks by that means. It is not my mind judging the word, it is the word, God by His word acting upon me; it is His authority established over my heart. The Samaritan woman did not say, “What thou sayest is true,” but “I perceive that thou art a prophet.” Thus all that He had said had authority itself as coming from God. It is the operation of the Spirit of God that imparts spiritual intelligence by the conscience, by faith—faith with regard to Him who speaks. God is known as being in it, it is divine intelligence. I do not reason to prove that the sun shines; I do not light a candle to know it: the light acts upon me and lightens me. I not only see the object on which my sight is directed, but I know that the light shines.

Let us now see what the New Testament teaches. What was it caused the Sadducees to err? They knew not the scriptures. What did the Lord quote to enlighten the two disciples of Emmaus? Moses and all the prophets. And what did He quote to the twelve? The law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms, that is, the entire scriptures of the Old Testament according to the Jewish division of them, as we possess them now. To the Lord they were authority. He founds His teaching upon them. Then He opened their understanding that they might understand the scriptures (Luke 24), which would have been perfectly incredible and unintelligible had the scriptures not been the word of God. Would God give by divine power a special understanding to understand a human given statement, which was as correct as its author could possibly render it from such information as he had been able to obtain? or is there a divine revelation for the Jew, and no divine revelation for the Christian in respect of the accomplishment of the truth as it is in Christ? Peter said (Acts 18),” God hath thus fulfilled what he had announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets.” The Lord declared (John 10), “The scripture cannot be broken.” These, we are told, were Jewish prejudices. Did the Lord then confirm them in their Jewish prejudices in order to deceive them? It is impossible to deny that the Lord and His apostles quote, contemplate, and in every manner encourage no to contemplate the scriptures as being altogether the word of God, and invested with His authority. They may present us the history and the words; of wicked men, even of Satan himself, but it is God who gives us them, so that we know that which is according to God. So much is this the case that Paul fears not to say, “The scripture, seeing that God would justify the nations on the principle of faith, announced beforehand the glad tidings to Abraham.” The scripture to him is so thoroughly the word of God, that he personifies it, as though God Himself spoke; such in fact it was, by His Spirit. It is specially and expressly not a question of

what has been revealed to the prophet, but of that which has been revealed by the prophet.

The scriptures are in question. There may have been many communications we do not possess, as having been given only for some special occasions. That which concerns the people of God for every age is contained in the scriptures, forming a whole. “No prophecy [says Peter] of scripture is had from its own particular interpretation for prophecy was not ever uttered by [the] will of man, but holy men of God spake under the influence of [the] Holy Ghost.” When the professing church bears the practical character of paganism, “having a form of piety, but denying the power of it,” to what does the apostle refer us? To the holy scripture saying, “Every scripture is divinely inspired that the man of God may be complete.” Divine inspiration characterized that which has the right to be called “scripture” in its ordinary sense. That which Timothy was acquainted with was doubtless the Old Testament. If I call the New Testament “scripture” the New is inspired; if not, it has no title to the name of “scripture.” Peter also, speaking of Paul's epistles, says that “the untaught and ill-established wrest [them] as also the other scriptures.” Paul, speaking in general of the writings addressed by the apostles to the Gentiles, calls them “prophetic scriptures,” for such is the true sense of Rom. 16; 7. I know not if M. Godet would exclude the most precious portion (if one may venture to make a distinction in a whole, every detail of which is perfect in its place) of all the divine history, of the life, sufferings, and death of Him who loved us and gave Himself for us, of Him whom no human mind could portray, of Him of whom an infidel has said that it would have been as difficult to have invented as to have been Him. God has taken care, I venture to say, that He who was to reveal Him upon the earth for man's welfare and His own glory should not be falsely described, and thus could not be falsely represented before the world. He has taken care that, where alone it can be learned what God is, there should be no room for that which could have been unworthy of Him. He has taken care that that which was divinely lovely, His own Son, should be divinely and perfectly presented as He was. And who was able for this but God Himself? He was man, and, blessed be His name, He made use of man for it. He was God, and God formed men that they might present God manifest in a man who was the perfect man before God. He who is taught of God will discern God in every detail of the blessed walk of the Lord and of His expiatory death in this world.

M. Godet relates several legends on this subject, especially those of Papias, an infirm old man according to Eusebius who was a great lover of such histories. He quotes other Fathers of the church who themselves relate the legends that were current in the world one hundred or one hundred and fifty years after Christ. He quotes men who said that the church of Rome was founded by the labors of Peter and of Paul, for which M. Godet finds excuses, but which we know to be false.

He who has chiefly preserved the most ancient of these legends tells us that the church of Corinth was also founded by the two apostles. I notice this to show how little dependence can be placed on these men. I attach no importance to their legends: they may be true, or they may be false; one of them certainly is false—that which tells us that Luke edited his Gospel from what Paul had told him, for Paul did not know the Lord down here. The legends also state that Mark edited his Gospel without order, whilst in the recital of the Lord's labors in Galilee Mark presents them in order, which is also the case in Luke's Gospel. Matthew relates the whole in a single verse; then he edits his Gospel according to the subjects, not merely the discourses, but by grasping the chief points of the manifestation of Emmanuel, of the nature of the kingdom of heaven, and of that which, historically,

was to replace on earth the rejected Lord.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 67

Evangelical Protestantism and the Biblical Studies of M.Godet: Part 3

THE BIBLICAL STUDIES OF M. GODET.

IT is of the utmost importance to notice that, in the rationalistic system which seeks to render an account of all by the circumstances of the writer, GOD AND THE OPERATION OF HIS SPIRIT ARE WHOLLY EXCLUDED. The facts may be important if they be correct; but the revelation of God upon earth in the Son of His love is left to such an appreciation as we may have of the uncertain rumors which were current in Galilee, or to the feebleness of the memories of fallible men. One need but read the Gospels to discern the divine traits that abound in them; but if we study them, we shall discover unity of purpose in each, and in all combined a fullness as to the Lord's person, presenting of Him a complete idea and a perfect unity, thus affording an irrefragable testimony to the unity of the source whence all has flowed. Thus, in the four narratives of His death, we possess in each Gospel that which corresponds with its own special character, whilst all come in presenting the Lord complete in the perfect unity of His person—all. As a divine person in John, we have no sufferings in Gethsemane, nor on the cross. As Son of man in Luke, we have more of the agonies in Gethsemane, none upon the cross, but the triumph of His faith in His Father. As victim in Matthew, we see Him forsaken of God upon the cross, and find neither compassion nor anything except misery and malice in man, but Him perfect in all. Mark too much resembles Matthew for me to enter into farther details now; but certainly he who is taught of God discerns in them all the divine description of the Son of God and Son of man, the Word made flesh—Emmanuel—Jesus, in His life and death described by One only—by Him who is the Spirit of God, that God might be perfectly glorified.

Do the Gospels teach us that all had to depend on the memory of Peter, of Mark, or on the information which Luke might have obtained in Galilee? “The Comforter [says the Lord], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and will bring to your remembrance all the things which I have said to you.” (John 14:26.) He was also to bear witness to Jesus concerning heavenly things. The disciples likewise were to bear witness to Jesus, as eye-witnesses doubtless; but the Holy Spirit which had been given them held in His hand the testimony, both earthly and heavenly. He was to lead them into all truth; and what Jesus had been upon the earth “God in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself” —was not the least part of that truth.

It is monstrous to give me the legends of Papias, or the imaginations of Irenaeus, in the place of the promise of the gift of the Spirit, and of His testimony to the Lord's glory, to His life, and to His sufferings; it is still more monstrous, forasmuch as the Lord had expressly spoken of that gift for that purpose.

This is Paul's remarkable declaration concerning the new truths which the Holy Spirit come down from heaven has communicated to us; it cannot be more explicit— “God hath revealed to us by

(his) Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, even the depths of God. We have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which [is] of God, that we may know the things which are freely given to us of God: which also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom [or discourses], but in those taught by the Spirit. But [the] natural man doth not receive the things of the Spirit of God.... because they are spiritually discerned." Revelation was by the Spirit; the communication took place by means of words taught by the Spirit; and finally, the intelligence of him who received these words was given by the Spirit. Revelation, inspiration in the communication of revealed things, in fine, intelligence or comprehension—all was "by the Spirit."

In 1 Thess. 2:13 it is again said, "For this cause we also give thanks to God unceasingly, that, having received [the] word of [the] Spirit of God by us, ye received not man's word, but, even as it is truly, God's word, which also worketh in you who believe." Doubtless this had been proclaimed by word of mouth, but that which the Thessalonians had received was "the word of God." It was not merely to Paul it was such, but it was such as communicated through him [παρ■μ■ν] to the Thessalonians.

This decides the nature of the communication. It was not a more or less faithful given statement of the word of God. The assertion, that what he wrote to them that it might remain with them, so as to permanently establish them in the truth—the assertion, that what was to subsist for the whole church in all ages was not the word of God—is a matter I leave to the appreciation of the piety and common sense of each reader.

M. Godet's system, as regards revelation, is false according to the apostle. That which he had communicated to them was so thoroughly "the word of God," that it worked effectually in those who believed—it carried the power of God with it. It was, as Paul elsewhere states, a savor of death unto death where it was not a savor of life unto life. If his gospel were veiled, it was veiled in those that are lost, whose unbelieving minds Satan had blinded. The light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shined not only into the heart of Paul, but before the hearts of men; that light was veiled only to those who perish; for the God who, by His word, had caused the light to shine out of darkness, had shone into the heart of the apostle, for the shining forth [apes (πρ■ς φωτισμ■ν] of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The nearness of the vessel was so far from hindering its being the word of God for others, that that word was committed to feeble vessels, in order that the excellency of the power which worked through their means in others might manifestly be of God, and not of men. In fact, everywhere, and on every point, the apostle affirms precisely the reverse of what M. Godet states.

There is, then, a redemption, but it is "by his blood" —there is a work accomplished once and for all—there is a revelation by the Spirit of God—there is a communication made in discourses [or words, λογοις] taught by the Holy Ghost, and this given testimony is received [through the efficacious grace of the Holy Spirit] in him who hears. Divine things were revealed, communicated, and received by the operation of the Holy Spirit. The same apostle also says, "If any one think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him recognize the things that I write unto you, that it is the commandment of [the] Lord." (1 Cor. 14:39.) So far is he indeed from confounding revelation and inspiration with the thoughts which a high, degree of spirituality might even produce in him, that he carefully distinguishes the one from the other. (1 Cor. 7:6, 10, 40.)

Before proceeding farther, it is important to notice the manner in which M. Godet uses scripture. I shall neither produce all the passages quoted by M. Godet, nor all the errors consequent upon them. This would be tedious. Just a few examples suffice to show that the reader must accept nothing without examination. Some are but of small importance, but the habit once contracted, one must be on one's guard. Thus, at page 6 of “Biblical Studies,” second series, he adds, “in it;” “that. we report. to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us in it;” thus entirely altering the meaning of the passage. At page 36: “Thou art Peter, and on this stone” is false; π■τρα is not a stone. At page 49, “after having informed myself exactly” is a false translation, of which 1 Tim. 4:6, and 2 Tim. 3:10, are proofs. At page 49 it is not a quotation, but a false statement of what Luke says. The latter never says that his history was derived from what the first witnesses had stated. That was not the source whence he derived his history; but be says that he communicated the facts of the gospel as they were most surely believed, and as they had been delivered by the first witnesses, having himself had a perfect knowledge of these things from the beginning, which is a very different thing from M. Godet's assertion. “It is evident that he possessed more than one of those works, and that he used them to compose his own” (p. 53). Now all this is mere supposition, without the slightest foundation. Origen (if my memory does not deceive me), at all events, one of the fathers, remarks that the expression, “Many have undertaken,” skewed them to be human essays, none of which was satisfactory, but that it was otherwise with Luke I quote the sense, and from memory. At all events; there is no trace whatever in Luke of what M. Cadet speaks. What Luke does say is, that others having undertaken to give a relation of those things, he desired to make known to Theophilus the truth of it all, having himself had a perfect acquaintance with it all from the beginning. He writes his relation because others did not present the same certainty. it is the reverse of what M. Godet says. Now all his system respecting the Gospels is here in question; this is my motive in thus bringing forward these carelessnesses, whilst reestablishing the facts and the passages. He seeks to replace inspiration by patristic legends, and by human means of conviction. He uses this mistake at page 54. What he says at page 52 is pure supposition, and a very serious matter to nullify divine history by such inventions. (See also p. 66.) At page 105 he makes Jesus confess [the sins of others], because others did so—a complete invention. John would not baptize Him, and only did so on the ground of the fulfillment of righteousness. “Thus it becometh us.” This is that which, according to M. Godet, enabled John to discern the holy virtue in Jesus. It is altogether an invention! Moreover, Jesus did not go down into the waters of Jordan with prayer. (p. 106.) This was after His baptism, after He had in baptism publicly taken His place amongst the faithful remnant of the Jews—a difference not lacking in importance as regards the relations of man—a matter of infinite value to us. At page 106 we have also “a shining sign,” “prefiguring the communication of the Spirit;” then three perceptible facts for the inward senses of John and of Jesus. All this is pure invention, contradicting the simple narrative of the Gospel, which is to us of infinite importance) I altogether reject the explanations which follow; but I must avoid entering upon controversy on the meanings of scripture, and simply declare that M. Godet does not relate scripture facts, but that he makes a romance respecting the Lord—a romance which is founded upon his own ideas. I might take up false thoughts and false doctrines at every page, but this is not here my object.

Further on I will speak of his views concerning the person of the Lord. All that is stated at page 123 is a complete invention. I shall return to that later, also to what he says at page 129 concerning His tears; I shall also notice page 131. At page 149, Ex. 3 is quoted to show that God can change, and

be what He will, translating it thus— “I shall be what I shall be.” In his reply to M. Colani, he translates it, “I am,” making use of it then to prove He is the only real existence—Existence itself. All this is inconceivable levity in solemn things. At page 151, “being found in all things as a man,” is an entirely false quotation upon a capital point, in order to serve as a basis to the author's doctrine. At page 169 he says that “St. Paul speaks of a salvation which will result from the life of Christ realized in man.” M. Godet has full liberty to interpret the passage as he understands it, but none to state that St. Paul says so. He says nothing of the sort. For my part, in reading the passage, it is evident to me that this is not in the least degree its sense. All this suffices to expose the carelessness with which M. Godet quotes passages upon important questions, and how he presents to us as facts that of which there is not a trace in the Gospels—facts that are fiction. Now, all his reasonings generally depend on those false quotations and fictitious facts.

The first thing, then, that I take up as an essential point in M. Godet's system is that, to please rationalists, he formally denies the Bible to be a revelation, that, in the history of Jesus, he replaces inspiration by the legends of the fathers, which, as regards the historical circumstances, may be true, or may be false, but which present no divine certainty concerning the facts which should reveal God, and form the basis of Christianity and salvation. He robs the Gospels of all divine authority. In the place of a divinely revealed redemption, he gives me interesting reminiscences of John or of Peter, and that at the expense of the explicit promises of the Lord. It is true he admits a revelation, but he admits it according to a wise and rational system, thus explained:—Revelation has reached agents or channels in a divine manner; these were to communicate it to the objects God had in view when He gave it (be it the world, the church, individuals, &c., &c.). But that communication has never reached them at all. The objects God had in view have had of it but a given statement, which is no revelation at all; they who were the channels of it having corrected and contradicted each other!

Now, concerning the revelations which complete the history of Jesus, Paul declares to us that he has communicated them to us in words taught by the Holy Spirit.

In common with rationalists, M. Godet denies all that. They require man, but they do not require that God should reveal Himself—at least not to us. It is a revelation which does not go beyond the agents to whom it was committed, even if those agents understood it well. I pity these rationalists for having lost it!

The other subjects I desire to treat are the person and the work of the Lord Jesus. M. Godet is opposed to the doctrine commonly called grace. He will have free-will amongst men. I have no thought of engaging in these theological controversies, nor should I have touched on his “Biblical Studies,” had not Christianity disappeared beneath his pen. Inasmuch as the author bears the reputation of orthodoxy, this becomes an imminent peril to simple souls. M. Godet truly believes that Jesus is the Eternal Son; he recognizes His divinity, though in a vague and confused manner. According to his fashion, be recognizes His humanity, but it truly is according to his fashion; he also recognizes His work of expiation in his own manner. Had M. Godet been a candid rationalist, (that is an unbeliever,) I might have spared myself the task of examining his method of seeing things. All the world knows that rationalism is latent infidelity, and presents itself as being the only intelligent Christianity. However it may be, and notwithstanding the pretensions of the author to orthodoxy, Christianity has no existence in his book. It is replaced by a system which only exists in

the thoughts of M. Godet—by a thorough romance, of which the here is Christ, but not the true Christ, the Christ of the word, “the Christ of God.” According to the word of God, “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself;” also, “Him who knew not sin he has made sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in him.” According to M. Godet's book, Jesus is a man who, though moved by a filial sentiment toward God from the age of twelve years, had forgotten that He was Son of God, but recovered that truth by revelation at the age of thirty. He was always capable of sinning, though He never did so. Then, as man, born miraculously, and as innocent as Adam had been, He raised Himself from innocence to holiness, and in His person elevated humanity. This work was completed at the period of the transfiguration. He might have resumed His divine estate, which He had renounced; but in conversing with Moses and Elias, He communicated to them His intention not to resume it then, but to descend, in order to suffer. This He did. God's right having been recognized by Him (the right to put all mankind to death), and that right having been made good in the death of Christ alone, other men, profiting by that which He had done, and by this means placed in a position of liberty, can, if they will, attain the same divine condition into which Jesus has entered.

I ask, Is this Christianity? Is it not an infinitely solemn and serious matter to falsify truth on the subject of salvation, just where the glory of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ are in question? But is such truly M. Godet's system? I have merely put together the prominent points of this system. In examining it, we shall see whether that which I have now presented as such be not verified by quotations from his book. Other things also appear in it. My object in the preceding summing up is simply to show that by this system he sets Christianity aside, and replaces it by inventions and human doctrines. “God was in Christ, reconciling the world,” disappears. We get simply a man who sanctifies Himself during His life, in order that others may do the same, and. attain the same divine condition. Moreover, after a repeated and most careful examination, I do not find from M. Godet's book that the penalty of sin is anything else than death—bodily death, or death in its physical sense. This is all that sinful man owes to God's righteousness, and Christ did not suffer beyond that in man's stead, and for man. I do not say that M: Godet believes in the restitution of all mankind, nor that he believes that the wicked shall perish utterly. That which is certain is, that, to him, the wages of sin is simply bodily death, and this was all that Christ suffered.

Chapter 68

Evangelical Protestantism and the Biblical Studies of M.Godet: Part 4

THE BIBLICAL STUDIES OF M. GODET.

(Continued from p. 255)

We must now speak of two phrases of which M. Godet makes use: “Christ learned obedience” and “I sanctify myself for them.” As regards the former, it is not said, “He learned to obey.” Had He not at all times been perfect in obedience, He had not been the victim without blemish. “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God,” was the rule and motive of His human life and existence. At its beginning Satan sought to make Him depart from it; but Christ conquered him. At the close, Satan having returned with all that could turn Christ, from obedience, even to the prospect of being forsaken of God, all this became to Jesus but the occasion for a perfect obedience. “He was obedient even unto death, and [that the] death of [the] cross,”

He who, being in the form of God, had made Himself a servant, He had to learn what obedience was, and that in a world of sin. Now, the will of the Father was not merely a rule to Him, it was His positive motive power. “Man,” He said, “lives by every word which goes out through. God's mouth.” Such, ever and absolutely, was His life. He was now more and more tried, deserted, despised, betrayed. The human judge delivering over innocence to the malice of His enemies; the priests, instead of pleading for those out of the way, pleading against the innocent One; the hour of man was the power of darkness; finally, Christ was there forsaken of God;—nothing had power to arrest Him in the path of obedience. His piety could but make Him desire to avoid the curse (He was made a curse for us), but His Father gave Him the cup; we ought to know what that has been in result. But obedience was then consummated. By those things that He suffered He learned what obedience, absolute obedience, was. This to Him was all He had to learn. He had ever done the Father's will, and, I repeat it, the Father's will was His motive power. Had there been no will of His Father, there had been no motive of action in Him as man. This is what is called the obedience of Christ.

As to the other phrase, “I sanctify myself for them,” it is only necessary to notice the occasion when the Lord makes use of it. (John 17) He was speaking these words when about to depart. Then He could say thus, “I am no longer in the world,” and it is in this manner He set's Himself apart (sanctifies Himself) in the glory, that they might become changed into the same image from glory to glory. He does not say, “I have sanctified myself,” that is, during His life, but “I sanctify myself for them.” Christ—a man—set apart and glorified is the pattern and source of our sanctification. The Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ, and shows them unto us. “We know.... we shall be like him.... and every one that hath this hope in him, purifies himself, even as he is pure.” We are never required to be like Him down here. In Him was no flesh of sin. He who was born of Mary was holy. In us is the flesh. We are called to walk even as He walked, because we ought not to walk after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Our condition is falsified by M. Godet's system; no true

new life is communicated; it is by a free action of our own will that we appropriate to ourselves the Holy Spirit. The person and the life of the Savior are also presented in it in a false manner.

God's word presents us the Word made flesh—God in Christ; the Father so revealed in the Son, that He could say, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.” It presents Him to us holy from His birth—Emmanuel, God with us. It presents us man wicked, without any exception—without excuse for their sin, because the Son came and spoke, and did works such as none other could have done; but, in spite of all, they saw and hated both Him and His Father. Jehovah was there, come as man to receive the tongue of the learned, to make experience of divine life in a man, that He might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. But when He came, there was no. man; those who have received Him, John tells us, are born, not of the will of man, but of God..

Such a Christ wholly disappears from M. Godet's system. We have merely a man, innocent (not even holy), who had to attain to holiness by self-conflicts who had to acquire spiritual life (I have sufficiently quoted his own words)—a man who, having previously had certain elementary sentiments, felt Himself to be Son, solely at the time of His baptism (p. 156)—a man, who became again Son, as regards His conditions of existence, first by His resurrection, and afterward by His ascension. The italics are M. Godet's own. Man, endowed with an absolute perfectness, and being able now (that is, since Christ) to recommence his career of perfectness, which perfectness had been interrupted by Adam's sin, and to recommence it by the free action of his own will, little by little appropriates Christ to himself by faith, and gradually banishes flesh from him. It is thus that sinful man becomes another man, and like Christ Himself. Scriptural truth, with respect to man, has disappeared in this system, as well as the precious truth concerning the person of Christ.

Notice here, that if it be true that we shall be like Christ in His glory, it is no less true that the word always vindicates the personal glory of the Son of God during His days in the flesh. Moses and Elias appeared in the same glory as Christ, but the moment Peter would place them on the same footing, both disappear, and the Father's voice declares that Christ is His well-beloved Son. The heavens are opened to Stephen as to Jesus; not only is he sealed, but filled with the Holy Spirit. But Stephen looks up, and becomes morally like Christ. Christ never looked up in order to become anything; it is the heavens which look down because Christ is there, and that the Father recognizes Him as His Son, sealed according to His own personal perfection.

If one is to believe M. Godet, Jesus recommences the career of fallen man by starting from the condition of an innocent man who acquires holiness and attains spiritual life; who, in fact, again becomes. Son; in His state of existence human nature is elevated to the possession of divine life.

In the word Jesus is the Holy One of God; born holy, He has life in Himself—a life which is the light of men. He is the Son, who quickens whom He will.

M. Godet presents to us another Christ than the Christ of the word, even if we consider Him only as man. In the word He ever goes lower down, in contrast with the first man, who sought by usurpation and disobedience to be like God; whilst He who was in the form of God, and in divine estate, as the obedient man, went down even to the death of the cross. For M. Godet, it is the innocent man who rises to the state of holiness. For the word, it is God who exalts Him, because He went down to the utmost.

There is another element which we must consider in the life of Jesus. M. Godet first makes Him to have been free from sin, and secondly that there had been with Him self-conflict. That no external restraint held Him from sinning, this is true; but His liberty was that of a perfectly holy nature, entire love for His Father and for us. If it had been possible to deprive Jesus of liberty, this would have hindered Him from doing good and obeying His Father. He sought and desired nothing but that; it was His food. His liberty was the liberty of a perfectly holy nature, which was tried by everything that could hinder it from going on to the end in the accomplishment of the will of His Father. Such a trial only served to show the absolute perfection of His holiness and of His obedience. In His life, as Savior and sacrifice, there was neither leaven nor honey—salt there was. Tried in the fire of God's judgment, there was but sweet savor for God. Every morsel of that cake of fine flour was anointed with oil, as also in its origin it had been steeped with oil. (Lev. 2)

M. Godet will have that He had conflicts (p. 113). “He felt happy in the temple, as a child in His Father's house;” nevertheless “He subjected Himself to His parents, and returned with them to Nazareth, but surely not without sacrifice and conflict.” But He had come to do His Father's will, and that was in this case that He should return to Nazareth. According to M. Godet, Jesus must have had conflict with His own will, which resisted the will of His Father! Is not this a complete invention of M. Godet? The same thing occurred in the desert (p. 114). Hunger is surely not sin. Jesus hungered, but He waited on God: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that goes out through God's mouth.” No word had gone forth from that month, and to Him life was in that word. He lived by the Father. There is no conflict in the desert; there is but one answer to Satan, and that answer establishes the perfection of Him who was tempted. Conflict in Christ is an invention of M. Godet, as well as the “immolation” of His will, or of His legitimate tendencies, or of “His purest enjoyment” (p. 113). Hunger is not sin, nor are legitimate natural affections, but self-will is sin. To, have God's will as the motive and spring of ours, is pure, simple, and absolute obedience; it is the normal condition of a servant, of whom Christ took the form. At page 114 we read that in John 12 “another voice, that of the spirit,” replies to the cry of His nature (already expressed “before all the people"), and sways the first voice in Him, Thus, then, a will was impressed in Christ which was other than the will of His Father, and contrary to it. Such is M. Godet's teaching; but if so, it was sin in Christ. Created sensibilities are not sin, but self-will mixed with them introduces sin. Such is the position this system attributes to Jesus.

This last instance is connected with another principle, more fully developed by the author at the circumstance of Gethsemane (p. 116). “The first voice, the voice of the flesh, says, ‘Let this cup pass from me.” Sensibility to suffering is, I repeat, no sin; but it is wretchedly poor to reduce the feelings of the Savior here to the fear of the suffering only. It makes a far finer testimony of the death of Stephen (and it may be said of a multitude of Christians) than of the death of Jesus. Does the mere dread of death cause man to sweat great drops of blood? One well understands the impossibility of sounding the depths of that cup given Him to drink by the Father, death, as the judgment of God. But then “fear” of that is “piety” (Heb. 5:7), and the cup of which we speak was the only one from which Jesus shrank. Never did He say of any other, “let this cup pass from me.” Many a bitter cup was given Him by man, and His own. Who could not feel the curse when it was there? Who could ever have felt it as Jesus, who lived in His Father's love? (Compare Heb. 5)

Before passing on to the work itself, let us see how M. Godet presents the road to it. We have seen that, according to his system, Christ needed to progress from innocence on to holiness, and

from holiness on to glory; but a special phase exists from each of these different degrees to the other. It is true that holiness is connected with the revelation of glory to the heart; but M. Godet is very far from seeing the side of grace, namely, that eternal life is the gift of God, who has given it to us, that that life is in His Son, and that he that hath the Son hath life. He says, in fact, with regard to Jesus (p. 132), “Human nature is elevated in its normal representative to the possession of divine life.” That which I am now examining is the different phases of these successive degrees of progress, and the bearings of the progress itself with the cross. Jesus, by self-conflict and against a will which was not that of God, was to raise Himself from innocence to holiness; and this was completely attained by the Savior at the moment of the transfiguration. It matters but little that the object of that remarkable event was quite different in the word; it is the system we are examining. According to that system, Christ might thus have entered into glory, having then, and not till then, been rendered fit for the glory. This system tells us that till then His holiness was imperfect; but now, at the time of the transfiguration, Christ had attained spiritual life

It is in vain that the word says; “No one has gone up into heaven save he who came down out of heaven, the Son of man, who is in heaven;” the progress made by Christ, according to M. Godet's system, rendered Him meet to enter heaven as Son of man (p. 121). “A royal road had originally been traced for Him, conducting, by, trial and moral progress; from innocence to holiness—this was the first stage; afterward by a glorious physical and spiritual transformation, from holiness to glory. The key to the narrative of the transfiguration is found in this thought.” Adam, to whom this road had been traced, failed; death entered. Jesus, having recommenced this career afresh, completed it, and reached this culminating point. The transfiguration was the first step on the road to glory.

Moses and Elias were the messengers who came to conduct Him into it. M. Godet will explain it all to us (p. 122). “The light from within Him, illuminated from above, eradiated through His person, making even His garments to shine” “The cloud is as the chariot” to bear Him. But now everything changes, for (p. 123) “two opposite ways of quitting this terrestrial life presented themselves to Him at this moment. One, that to which He was entitled by His holiness.... the glorious transformation Jesus could have accepted this triumphant departure, and God must offer it Him; for it was the reward due to His holiness. But returning thus to heaven, Jesus must have returned alone; the door could but close after Him.” Then (pp. 123, 124) “Jesus contemplated another, which accomplished itself at Jerusalem That exodus of suffering was that of which He conversed with the two great representatives of the old covenant, and which He declares to them He prefers and accepts.” We had always supposed that the Son of man had come to give His life a ransom for many; that He had been made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. It seems we were mistaken; He had acquired for Himself the title to enter heaven by holiness, and God must offer Him glory; but He converses with Moses and Elias; then, the two ways offering themselves to Him (for it was still uncertain, uncertain even up to that moment, if Jesus Himself were entitled to enter there), He declares that He prefers and accepts the road of death. What would have become of Moses and Elias had the door been closed? “for,” says the author (p. 123), “the gate [of heaven] could only close behind Him;” had He departed this earthly existence by its normal exit, to which the transfiguration itself was the prelude.

I repeat these things with sorrow, but to show the folly of such inventions. Is this, I ask, Christianity? Assuredly it is not that of the Bible.

This brings us to the work of Christ. This is M. Godet's starting-point (p. 158). “God has surely not done more for guilty man than He would have done for the obedient man. He has only done differently.” Can one conceive a greater absence of all ideas of grace? It is merely a question of man's deserts, those of the guilty and the obedient man. God is excluded from M. Godet's thoughts to a degree that is scarcely credible. God would show to the ages to come the unspeakable riches of His grace in His goodness towards us. To M. Godet the question merely concerns the preference given to an obedient man. And if obedience were in question, would Adam's abstaining from the forbidden fruit bear any resemblance to the obedience of Jesus, forsaken of God And as to the manner even of performing this, this result in man (as M. Godet says, p. 158), would it in any way have resembled the obedience of the Lord? Was God in Adam reconciling the world unto Himself? Was the Father revealed in the Son, in Adam? It is, says M. Godet, but another method of producing the same result!! The full development of evil in man—the perfection of good in the man—Christ—the power of Satan, prince of this world—the manifestation on the cross of God's righteous judgment against sin—the love of God, and at the same time His infinite grace—and that by the means of the perfection of obedience and love displayed in Christ, there where sin came before God, when Christ was made sin—all this become the basis and the earnest of the new heavens and new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell—finally, a work wherein good and evil culminated, and where the question of good and evil was resolved for eternity; all this, according to M. Godet, is of no more worth, and will certainly produce no other result than would have been produced by Adam abstaining from the forbidden fruit!

Where was the righteousness of God in Adam? (Compare John 13:31, 32; 16:10.) Is it possible a Christian can be blind to such a degree? But I said I would refrain from expressing my feelings. “Hereby have we known love, because he laid down his life for us.” What means could Adam have used to make known to us that divine love, a love surpassing all knowledge? The value of the work of the cross will be depreciated in Christians in proportion as they assent to M. Godet's system. Two principles constitute the importance of this system (p. 178). It was needful that the rights of God's righteousness should be recognized, manifested, exercised (pp. 174, 175). It was “order maintained in the bosom of disorder, without liberty being touched” But “mere suffering no longer sufficed....” “‘The wages of sin is death.' I can live without thee, and in spite of thee, says man to God, when thus acting.” “Thy life is a gift; that gift is withdrawn: such is the legitimate answer of divine justice to this provocation. Immediate death, death by the shedding of the blood of the guilty, this is the punishment of sin.”

Chapter 69

Evangelical Protestantism and the Biblical Studies of M.Godet: Part 5

(Concluded from p. 268.)

THEN (pp. 176, 178, 179) “What God required was not the satisfaction of His rights by shedding torrents of blood; it was the revelation of that right to human conscience which ignored it; it was the acquiescence granted to that right by that very conscience.” “God demonstrated that great principle, that whosoever rebelled against God is worthy of death.” Then “the very fact of redemption proves that what God sought has been, not the most, but, on the contrary, the least, shedding of blood, provided the same moral effect be produced. One man sufficed Him, in the bloody death of whom He has ostensibly manifested that which in reality had been merited by all; of one victim, at the sight of whom all others could say, that is the treatment which I had acquired for myself.” It was also, “first, the revelation of God's right on guilty humanity; secondly, the recognition of that right by that humanity itself.” Then (p. 182), “There a reparation, without default has been offered. The most bitter death has been accepted as the just chastisement of sin, the right which God possesses to inflict such a punishment on man, has been acknowledged without reserve. ‘Righteous Father,' exclaimed the dying Son, in the last prayer He uttered with His own.” Also (p. 192), “It was not a compensation for injustice, but a revelation presented to all of what all would have deserved to suffer, and what all they will truly suffer whom the spectacle of that expiation will not bring back repentant and believing to God.” And again (p. 182), “The demonstration of righteousness which God desired to give the world has then in this case attained the character of absolute perfection. To the adequate nature of the inflicted punishment has been added the full acquiescence of Him who consented to endure it.” After that (p. 185), our faith gives also our acquiescence, in acknowledging that it is we who deserve the chastisement. “It is by faith that this association of individuals, in the reparation wrought by Christ, takes place.”

There are many other things to notice; but, first, if bodily death be the punishment, and God be satisfied with that which Jesus has done, why should we die? Then, if bodily death be all, then all pay already down here the penalty of their sin, be they penitents or not. That death, says M. Godet, was the adequate nature of the inflicted punishment. The demonstration of righteousness has attained the character of an absolute perfection.

Why then must I myself, if the Savior does not come in time to spare me this bodily death, undergo the full consequences of my sin, that same thing which God has already done? Such are the results of human wisdom.

Then, if I myself die, acknowledging that I have merited it, why needed it that Christ should have died? It will be said, Christ could adequately recognize it. But if it be but the death common to all, which is the wages of sin, and if I recognize that I have merited death, I recognize it adequately; then, morally in sight of the cross, I am no more advanced as regards this than otherwise. I only recognize it in proportion to my own faith, even if Christ died for me. And why, if some one had

fulfilled the career of holiness, would he not also make expiation? Nothing prevents it according to M. Godet's system. That is not all by any means. That death is the wages of sin is quite true, but it is quite another thing to understand it, as though it signified that bodily death (natural, if you will) is ALL the wages of sin. That is so far from being true, that the full effect of judgment overtakes sinners after their resurrection, when death will no longer exist. “It is reserved unto men once to die, and after that the judgment.” They must rise again for that judgment; I speak of the wicked. And when the well-beloved Savior said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” this was not death. When that took place, He peacefully. resigned His spirit into His Father's hands.

That which M. Godet tells us of the propitiation is equally false (p. 184, lines 17 to 19), that faith is needed to render a victim propitiatory. The word in Greek is not propitiation, nor propitiatory victim. M. Godet adds. “victim.” Christ, in Rom. 3:24, is a “mercy-seat” (the place where God is accessible) “through faith in his blood.” But He is the propitiation for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the whole world. (1 John 2:2.) The righteousness of God is now manifested to the world, in that Christ has gone to His Father, and the world sees Him no more. (John 16)

We read again (p. 185), “Nor has He accomplished this expiatory act, in which the treatment which the sinful world deserved was manifested, with the object of dispensing, as from offering to God, the reparation which we owed Him.” What is the reparation we owe Him for sin? From beginning to end it is M. Godet's gospel, not that of the word of God— “which is not another.”

I shall not occupy myself with M. Godet's other interpretations; I do not accept them, neither his two justifications, nor the subsequent loss of those who have been once justified; for the apostle says, “whom he justified, them he also glorified.” I might have taken up a, mass of things which I believe to be anti-scriptural, a crowd of entirely false interpretations. But I will not mix these things with the foundation of the truth of the gospel of God. The gospel, and the revelation of God in Christ, that of the Father in the Son, have disappeared, as well as the cup which an infinitely precious Savior had to drink for us. It is this that makes me speak. M. Godet tells us that the Savior comes ever since He went up. My pen, but for that, might remain dormant. But if another Christ than the true one is presented to souls, and another expiation than the true one as revealed to It by the word, and if this be done under the banner of orthodoxy, this concerns all the world.

M. Godet's system is the re-establishment of the first man, not the introduction of the Second Man. The first man is not only a sinner, but he is lost and condemned. God has for our instruction used every means in His power to try if man could be restored. Left without law, the world had to be destroyed. The law having been given, man could not keep it; his flesh cannot submit to it. God sends the prophets: man persecutes and kills them. God then says, “I have yet my Son.” He comes, and binds the strong man; He manifests a power sufficing to remove all the consequences of sin. But God's presence having been then and thus manifested, man would not have it. Sin, enmity against God there in goodness, manifest themselves to the utmost degree; man crucifies the Son of God; they had seen and hated both Him and His Father. From that time the history of man in the flesh was closed: “Now is the judgment of this world,” says the Savior. The fig-tree, man under God's special care, is condemned, never again to bear fruit. Stephen sums up his history. (Acts 7) The law violated; the prophets persecuted and killed; the Just One betrayed and put to death; the resistance of the Holy Ghost: such is man in the flesh. Nevertheless man's sin only brought about the accomplishment of God's counsels. Christ was made sin for us; there He

glorified God, and faith can say, “He bore our sins in his own body on the tree.” “He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling.”

Born of the Spirit, Christ being our life, we count that we are dead to sin. Our bodies being the temples of the Holy Spirit, we live from the life of the risen Christ, whilst waiting till He comes to take us to Himself in the glory (not to be man—God, like Himself, but) to be in the same glory, so near Him as to adore Him with the knowledge of what He is, and what He has done; not “restored,” but saved and glorified, not merely by the death of a holy man, as though that were all; but saved from the second death, from eternal torments, by Him who, upon the cross, ere He died, was forsaken by God that we might be brought to and ever with Him. He was far from being “the object of the displeasure and reprobation of God” (p. 190). Never was His obedience so pleasing. “On this account the Father loveth me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again.” But this does not prevent that He drank the cup given by His Father, and that He bore in His soul the consequence of our sin.

I have finished. I will only direct the attention of him who reads these pages to the uncertainty and the ambiguity of M. Godet's expressions. I will quote but two examples. “The true meaning of history since Christ's appearing is expressed by ‘that which is born of the Spirit is spirit’” The history of what? And again: “Christ has re-established fallen humanity.” What is re-established? Has man ceased to be a sinner? Is he reconciled to God? J. N. D.

Notes on Ezekiel 32

It was not enough to have set forth the fall of the Assyrian as a pattern of Egypt's ruin. The Spirit of God adds in conclusion a fresh message in two parts: one, in the first half of this chapter, setting forth the impending catastrophe of Pharaoh under the figures of a lion and a crocodile, (or a river dragon, not “a whale") once the terror of nations, now caught, slain and exposed before all, and this under the king of Babylon; the other a developed picture of that which had been more curtly sketched in the preceding chapter, the once mighty monarch with his multitude pitiably weak now in the lower parts of the earth, yea in Sheol like all that were fallen before himself, consoling him with no better solace than that he and his were sharing the inevitable doom of princes and people.

“And it came to pass in the twelfth year, in the twelfth month, in the first day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man take up a lamentation for Pharaoh king of Egypt, and say unto him, Thou art like a young lion of the nations, and thou art as a whale in the seas; and thou earnest forth with thy rivers, and troubledst the waters with thy feet, and fouledst their rivers. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will therefore spread out my net over thee with a company of many people; and they shall bring thee up in my net. Then will I leave thee upon the land, I will cast thee forth upon the open field, and will cause all the fowls of the heaven to remain upon thee, and I will fill the beasts of the whole earth with thee. And I will lay the flesh upon the mountains, and fill the valleys with thy height. I will also water with thy blood the land wherein thou swimmest, even to the mountains; and the rivers shall be full of thee. And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. All the bright lights of heaven will I make dark over thee, and set darkness upon thy land, saith the Lord Jehovah. I will also vex the hearts of many people, when I shall bring thy destruction among the nations, into the countries which thou hast not known. Yea, I will make many people amazed at thee, and their kings shall be horribly afraid for thee, when I shall brandish my sword before them; and they shall tremble at every moment, every man for his own life, in the day of thy fall. For thus saith the Lord Jehovah; the sword of the king of Babylon shall come upon thee. By the swords of the mighty will I cause thy multitude to fall, the terrible of the nations, all of them: and they shall spoil the pomp of Egypt, and all the multitude thereof shall be destroyed. I will destroy also all the beasts thereof from beside the great waters; neither shall the foot of man trouble them any more, nor the hoofs of beasts trouble them. Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil, saith the Lord Jehovah. When I shall make the land of Egypt desolate, and the country shall be destitute of that whereof it was full, when I shall smite all them that dwell therein, then shall they know that I am Jehovah. This is the lamentation wherewith they shall lament her: the daughters of the nations shall lament her: they shall lament for her, even for Egypt, and for all her multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 1 - 16.) The prophet announces that the king of Egypt should be an object of horror and pity, and an occasion of mourning, no longer of fear and envy. Pharaoh should be like the sea-monster disabled on shore, captured by a crowd of men, deluging with blood the land of its swimming, a prey to all birds and beasts, its flesh on the mountains and the valleys filled with its height, the rivers also.

It may help the reader to compare Rev. 8:12, 13 with verses 7,.8. The political destruction of Egypt is compared to the darkening of the stars, the clouding of the sun, and the withdrawal of the moon's light. The notable difference in the Revelation is another and distinct feature, which appears to mark that it was to be only in the west (comp. Rev. 12:4), the eastern empire not being involved in this judgment, but bearing its own afterward. Here the gloom has for sphere the land of Egypt, Then, in verses 9,10, we hear of the effect produced, dropping symbol for ordinary language, when countries which Egypt had not known should know of its destruction, and many people and their kings should be amazed and violently troubled at its fall, trembling each for his own life in that day.

Verses 11 - 16 proclaim the coming conqueror who should destroy Egypt's pride as well as its multitudes, a source of grief among the nations. There lie the ruins in witness of both, of old splendor, and of utter sudden desolation, to the extinction of once busy trade and even of agriculture celebrated over all the world. In verse 14 it does not mean “deep,” as I conceive; but the waters were to sink or subside and so become clear, with which agrees the rivers flowing like oil, instead of being turbid as of old by the demands of commerce. How manifest Jehovah's hand! Egypt itself should know that it was He.

In the latter half the dirge, a fortnight after, is still more profound, as unveiling the unseen world, the most solemn elegy over a heathen people ever composed. “And it came to pass also in the twelfth year, in the fifteenth day of the month, that the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, wail for the multitude of Egypt, and cast them down, even her, and the daughters of the famous nations, unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit. Whom dost thou pass in beauty? go down, and be thou laid with the uncircumcised. They shall fall in the midst of them that are slain by the sword: she is delivered to the sword: draw her and all her multitudes. The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword. Asshur is there and all her company: his graves are about him: all of them slain, fallen by the sword:

Whose graves are set in the sides of the pit, and her company is round about her grave: all of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living. There is Elam and all her multitude round about her grave, all of them slain, fallen by the sword which are gone down uncircumcised into the nether parts of the earth, which caused their terror in the land of the living; yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit. They have set her a bed in the midst of the slain with all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living, yet have they borne their shame with them that go down to the pit: he is put in the midst of them that be slain. There is Meshech, Tubal, and all her multitude: her graves are round about him: all of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living. And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to hell with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads, but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living. Yea, thou shalt be broken in the midst of the uncircumcised, and shalt lie with them that are slain with the sword. There is Edom, her kings, and all her princes, which with their might are laid by them that were slain by the sword: they shall lie with the uncircumcised, and with them that go down to the pit. There be the princes of the north, all of them, and all the Zidonians, which are gone down with the

slain; with their terror they are ashamed of their might; and they lie uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword, and bear their shame with them that go down to the pit. Pharaoh shall see them, and shall be comforted overall his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword, saith the Lord Jehovah. For I have caused my terror in the land of the living: and he shall be laid in the midst of the un-circumcised with them that are slain with the sword, even Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 17-32.)

The word of the pious Jew, who knew from God the judgments of the nations before and why they came, was not to be insensible, still less insult their fallen old and recent foe and snare. The Christian feels for men in view of eternity, but, thank God, he is charged with the gospel, with the ministry of reconciliation founded on the atonement of Him who once was here revealing God in perfect grace, but despised and rejected of men, most of all and most guiltily by the Jews themselves.

Here it is the judgment that sweeps off the earth after long patience and sends down the vain-glorious to the pit. There lie the fairest, without a token of relationship to God," with the uncircumcised." There in abject weakness and humiliation lie Assyria, Elam, Meshech and Tubal (though with a peculiarity to be explained more fully in chapters 38. 39), Edom, Zidon and others north of Palestine, ashamed of that might of which they were erst so proud bearing their confusion with those that go down to the pit. Jehovah's terror abides, and for those most who most inflicted terror here with the sword. What more graphic? Whose irony so keen as the prophet's?

Notes on Ezekiel 33

The prophet now returns to speak of Israel, their shepherds, and their mountains, their restoration, national revival, and re-union, under one head, the Beloved, their Prince, forever, when the last enemy before the reign of peace comes to his end, with all his lusts. (Chapters 33-39)

Under the figure of a watchman, Ezekiel is set to warn the house of Israel, so that if any slighted the sound of the trumpet, their blood might be on their head; if the watchman blew not, his blood should pay the penalty.

“Again the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people: Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.” (Ver. 1-9.) It is individual responsibility that becomes now the ruling principle, though this does not hinder, as we see, the call and duty of one to warn many. Such was the prophet's place.

“Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel? Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that lie sinneth. When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is

lawful and right; he shall surely live. Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways." (Ver. 10-20.) It was a day of judgment, not of grace, with which some strangely confound it. Despair would avail nothing; repentance would. Past righteousness should not screen present sin, nor past sin hinder present turning away from it. But let such walk softly. The ways of righteousness are immutable; the wages of sin, death. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the holy is understanding; whilst they that confess and forsake sins find mercy. In vain, therefore, did any complain of the Lord's ways as not equal; it were well if they felt their own iniquity. Life is theirs who walk righteously; death for such as turn from the Lord. They should be judged each according to their deeds, challenging the Lord, as insensible to their own state as to His goodness.

If the reading be correct (for there is a variation in some copies, perhaps to lessen the interval), the tidings of Jerusalem's fall were long in reaching the prophet, when he opened his mouth, long closed, and gave a solemn warning of further judgment, and the rather because of the pretension to take up the language of faith, when their heart was far from the Lord. Grace is sufficient for any one, and for all circumstances, but it is inseparable from the faith that gives glory to God, as in Abraham. But what were they? What their ways? What their judgment of themselves? Alas! steeped in sin, contemning the ordinances of the Lord, and abandoned to wickedness, they thought as highly of themselves, as (we have seen) they said ill of Him. What, then, could be announced but judgment at His hand?

"And it came to pass in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten. Now the hand of Jehovah was upon me in the evening, afore he that was escaped came; and had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb. Then the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: but we are many; the land is given us for inheritance. Wherefore say unto them, thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Ye eat with the blood, and lift up your eyes toward your idols, and shed blood: and shall ye possess the land? Ye stand upon your sword, ye work abominations, and ye defile every one his neighbor's wife: and shall ye possess the land? Say thou thus unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; As I live, surely they that are in the wastes shall fall by the sword, and him that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that be in the forts and in the caves shall die of the pestilence. For I will lay the land most desolate, and the pomp of her strength shall cease; and the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, that none shall pass through. Then shall they know that I am Jehovah, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all their abominations which they have committed." (Ver. 21-29.) To plead the promises in such a state of things is ruinous. Equally so was it to affect care for the prophet's word, listening as men do to a charming song.

"Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from Jehovah. And they come unto thee as the

people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass (lo, it will come), then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them." (Ver. 30-33.) To hear and not do is but to increase condemnation; as the issue would prove when the warning that pleased their ears was verified in their destruction.

Chapter 72

Notes on Ezekiel 34

We have next a solemn, righteous, but severe denunciation of the kings or shepherds of Israel, at whose door Jehovah lays the blame of selfishly afflicting and ruining His people.

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say unto them. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.” (Ver. 1 - 6.)

Thus without the fear of God or love for His people, they forgot the relations both of themselves and of Israel to Jehovah. Hence all was wrong, as could not but be when His rights had no place in their eyes. Like the Gentile monarchs, they regarded the people whom they governed as their own, not as the flock of God: hence confusion and every evil work. What a contrast with Him, deigning to be Son of David and King of Israel, who will rule over them justly, reigning in righteousness, as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry land; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, yea, as the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, as the tender grass out of the earth by clear shining after rain! The shepherds had fed themselves, not the flock. They fed not the sheep, no matter what the benefits they had drawn from them. No sorrows of theirs drew out their sympathies. They ruled with harshness and rigor, and scattered them, a prey to all the wild beasts without a shepherd's care; and scattered the sheep over the whole face of the earth: no one sought or searched them out.

But He who called to the scepter over Israel was not heedless of His people groaning under their wicked rulers. “Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah; as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them.” (Ver. 7 - 10.) Their sin is set out, the shepherds are convicted and sentenced; but Jehovah promises to deliver His sheep.

The manner of this deliverance is now further assured and explained. “For thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out. As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day. And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country. I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and in a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel. I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord Jehovah. I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment. And as for you, O my flock, thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats. Seemeth it a small thing unto you to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures? and to have drunk of the deep waters, but ye must foul the residue with your feet? And as for my flock, they eat that which ye have trodden with your feet; and they drink that which ye have fouled with your feet.” (Ver. 11-19.)

Thus the utter failure of the shepherds casts their care on Jehovah Himself who undertakes, not merely to require the sheep at the hands of those set over them, but to search for them and seek them out wherever dispersed. In verses 13, 14, this is detailed in language so simple and express that it is in vain here as in kindred passages to evade His testimony to the work He will yet accomplish for Israel on earth when He has finished gathering His assembly for heaven. Never have these words been fulfilled as yet; they therefore must be. Their certainty and security rest on Himself, and that mercy which endures forever, as they will soon sing—how joyfully! In vain do sages reason on His non-execution of a threat when men, as at Nineveh, repented: for after all it came, though it be His delight to hear the cry of those that humble themselves at His word, and defer the stroke till patience would lose its character and lapse into indifference at evil which is far from Him. But He who promises knows how to make good all circumstances and conditions, even as He has meanwhile brought in the only righteous basis; as for past forbearance so for the future harvest of blessing. That day of rich goodness and mercy will not be without the judgment of the wicked, but contrariwise. As we learn in chapter 33., that individual state before God will have a force in Israel which it never had under the first covenant, so here it will be when He judges between sheep and sheep, between the rams and the he-goats, and calls up the wantonness of those who destroyed what they could not use to the hurt of the flock.

But there is more still. There might be judgment of oppression and deliverance of the wretched, and blessing of the people restored to the land of Israel; but grace does not stay its flow according to the measures of men. “Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto them; Behold, I, even I, will judge between the fat cattle, and between the lean cattle. Because ye have thrust with side and with shoulder, and pushed all the diseased with your horns, till ye have scattered them abroad; therefore will I save my flock, and they shall no more be a prey; and I will judge between cattle and cattle. And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I Jehovah will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I Jehovah have spoken it. And I will make with them a

covenant of peace, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land: and they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing. And the tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase, and they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have broken the bands of their yoke, and delivered them out of the hand of those that served themselves of them.

And they shall no more be a prey to the heathen, neither shall the beast of the land devour them; but they shall dwell safely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will raise up for them a plant of renown, and they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the heathen any more. Thus shall they know that I Jehovah their God am with them, and that they, even the house of Israel, are my people, saith the Lord Jehovah. And ye my flock, the flock of my pasture, are men, and I am your God, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Ver. 20 - 31.)

Not Zerubbabel nor Nehemiah, not the Asmonean house, still less the Herods are meant, but the King, Messiah-Jehovah, as we know from elsewhere, but here distinguished from Jehovah who speaks and will accomplish. Otherwise your interpretation exposes you to insinuate or think that the word of prophecy is the grossest exaggeration. Interpret it of the Lord reigning over Israel thus gathered back in divine mercy and power, and then one feels that the words cannot rise beyond the reality: when it comes, "the half was not told" will be the genuine feeling of those who behold His glory even on the earth. And what will it be on high!

It is absurd on every point of view to interpret these prophecies of the church or of the gospel. Then the very beasts will have their nature changed, and the earth yield its increase: for it will be the day for which creation waits groaning still and travailing in pain, but then will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

It is the day when Messiah is raised up for them, not now rejected and despised as once, a plant of renown, and Israel shall no more either pine with hunger in the land or be a reproach of the Gentiles. Jehovah will be with them, their God, and they His people. Has He spoken, and will He not make all good? Is aught too hard, too good, for the Lord?

Notes on Ezekiel 35

In chapter 35 the prophet had threatened Seir and the sons of Edom who inhabited that land of natural fastnesses, so jealous of the favor shown by Jehovah to His people. Here he resumes the theme yet more fully.

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me saying, Son of man, set thy face against mount Seir, and prophesy against it, and say unto it, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, O mount Seir, I am against thee, and I will stretch out mine hand against thee, and I will make thee most desolate. I will lay thy cities waste, and thou shalt be desolate, and thou shalt know that I am Jehovah. Because thou hast had a perpetual hatred, and hast shed the blood of the children of Israel by the force of the sword in the time of their calamity, in the time that their iniquity had an end.” (Ver. 1-5.)

The denunciation is all the more solemn as standing out in contrast with the immediately preceding promise of goodness and mercy to Israel. It was this very blessing by divine grace to the chosen people which from the beginning had raised the ever growing rancor of their kinsmen who looked sullenly on their predicted blessedness from their own heights of proud self-confidence. Soon were they to prove what it is to have Jehovah against one, yea, His hand stretched out to render desolate and waste. And so the issue declared; for the word and the hand of Jehovah were shortly after manifest in the desolation of their cities and themselves. Yet I may add, for the warning of any careless soul who may glance over these pages, that awful as it was thus to know that He who had so spoken and wrought is Jehovah, displayed in the chastening of Israel and the judgment of the heathen, incomparably more so must be His dealing with every soul in Christendom who trifles with the name and word of the Lord now.

God notices the feelings of the heart, and distinguishes too in judgment as everywhere else. There were many haughty enemies of Israel; and which of them was not disposed to injure the people of Jehovah's choice? But He fixes His eyes on “the old enmity” of Edom, and the relentlessness which was even more cruel than its wont in the day of their calamity, “at the time of the iniquity of the end.” Not an atom of generosity was there; natural feeling had turned to gall and wormwood. He who had been so basely dishonored by His people was chastening them in measure: who and what were the Edomites to avail themselves of it to crush without measure and destroy without mercy? “Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will prepare thee unto blood, and blood shall pursue thee: since thou hast not hated blood, even blood shall pursue thee. Thus will I make mount Seir most desolate, and cut off from it him that passeth out and him that returneth. And I will fill his mountain with his slain men: in thy hills and in thy valleys, and in all thy rivers, shall they fall that are slain with the sword. I will make thee perpetual desolations, and thy cities shall not return: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 6-9.) The emphasis is very strong, not only blood flowing and pursuing the blood-thirsty Edomites, but themselves made perpetual “desolations, their mountains and valleys filled with their slain, and their cities not to be restored: so should they know Him to be Jehovah.

Again, God heeds what men say as well as their feelings; as said the Lord still more comprehensively and profoundly and solemnly in Matt. 12 “Because thou hast said, These two nations and these two countries shall be mine, and we will possess it; whereas Jehovah was there: therefore, as I live, saith the Lord Jehovah, I will even do according to thine anger, and according to thine envy which thou hast used out of thy hatred against them; and I will make myself known among them, when I have judged thee. And thou shalt know that I am Jehovah, and that I have heard all thy blasphemies which thou hast spoken against the mountains of Israel, saying, They are laid desolate, they are given us to consume. Thus with your mouth ye have boasted against me, and have multiplied your words against me: I have heard them.” (Ver. 10-13.)

Is there no immediate lesson now from these declarations? Is there no analogy in Christendom? I believe there is, and one little considered or conceived among those who are bitterly jealous of what is really according to the word and Spirit of God at this day. They too forget that God is of a truth in His saints, and that their gathering to the Lord's name in dependence on the Holy Ghost's presence and action is the way in which to show our faith, and walk faithfully in this respect. Yet it would be hard to say what is so hated and dreaded by worldly Christians, yea, even where they are real if indifferent or opposed to the truth of God's assembly. This is not surprising in the clergy of all sorts, who naturally dislike what condemns their own position and existence as wholly unscriptural. It applies to all who support and defend a state of things which scripture proves unjustifiable. A bad conscience rouses the evil of the natural heart; and no words are too bitter, no insinuations too vile, against those who are at this moment cleaving to the revealed will of the Lord for the church. Let them know that the Lord will act according to the anger and envy Babylon feels against such as stand faithful. The proud Anti-church is judged when the marriage of the bride, the Lamb's wife, is come. What is said against the church and its privileges truly understood and acted on is no light sin in God's eyes: as with Israel of old, so now what is said contemptuously against His people, cleaving in their weakness to His grace and word, He regards as said against Himself: “I have heard.”

The chapter concludes with this sentence on the foe: “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; When the whole earth rejoiceth, I will make thee desolate. As thou didst rejoice at the inheritance of the house of Israel, because it was desolate, so will I do unto thee: thou shalt be desolate, O mount Seir, and all Idumea, even all of it; and they shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Vers. 14-15) Never was a falser judgment, though all was false, than that Jehovah will not yet restore and bless Israel, not for any deserts of theirs, but in His own mercy through the once rejected Messiah, who will as surely desolate the enemies of Israel as He will make good all that He promised to their fathers. But neither one nor other dealing is the gospel, which contrariwise is now gathering in indiscriminate grace from Jews and Gentiles for heavenly glory with Him who is not Savior only but head of the church on high. We know Him not after the flesh, nor by any judgments that He executes on Edom nor even by His mercy, but as dead, risen, and glorified in heaven according to the purposes of God once hidden but now revealed.

Chapter 74

Notes on Ezekiel 36:1-15

Following the denunciation of mount Seir Jehovah now addresses Himself to the personified mountains of Israel and declares the consolation in store for them, whatever the proud malice of the Edomite might have said against them.

“Also, thou son of man, prophesy unto the mountains of Israel, and say, Ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of Jehovah.” (Ver. 1.)

It is well to bear in mind that in Israel of old it was a question of government under the revealed name of Jehovah, but oil the conditions of law, which, being taken up by man in the flesh, could only issue as it did in ruin. Now it is a wholly different state of things; for on a rejected Christ, who is the Son of God, the assembly is built, His body and bride in grace pure and absolute, and hence formed out of believers, Jews and Gentiles indiscriminately, who are destined to be with Him on high and reign with Him over the earth. But the government of the world in Israel is not abandoned by God forever. He will take Israel up once more at the coming of the Lord, the glorious Son of man, and display His government perfectly then to His own glory under the new covenant, and hence on a principle superior to the weakness or the evil of the creature. This will be the epoch and turning-point of the world's blessing, not merely as now grace gathering out of it for heavenly glory with Christ, but judgment returning to righteousness on earth, and all the upright following it. Hence the second advent of the Lord for the world is characterized by the execution of judgments; and the rather as all scripture shows that the state of the earth will just before it be one of unexampled evil in apostasy, not only the rebellious rejection of the truth, but the great lie consummated of man sitting as God in the temple of God. And God will deal not with the most flagrant offenders only, but with each and all who have risen up against Him, when He delivers and exalts His ancient people still justly abased because of their sins.

To this time these prophecies look onward, whatever may have been their partial application in the past. If Israel will come forth from their hiding-place for His mercy, so will Edom for His judgment. I mean now of course for the judgment of the quick not of the dead, which will follow at the close of all when the wicked of every age and clime shall rise again and be judged by the Son of man.

But here it is the earth dealt with, not that eternal judgment; and the prophet was to speak comfort to the long desolate mountains of Israel. For God has not made the earth or man upon it to be ever the victims of sin and sorrow, of vanity and corruption. He will surely show Himself a deliverer from all the mischief Satan has wrought; but there must be judgment as well as mercy, and both we see here. Had the enemy taunted the land of Israel, saying Aha, even the ancient heights are become our possession? (2.) Jehovah's answer through His prophet is, “Because, even because they have made you desolate, and swallowed you up un every side, that ye might become a possession unto the residue of the nations, and ye are taken up on the lips of talkers, and a reproach of the people, therefore, ye mountains of Israel, hear the word of Jehovah: thus saith the Lord Jehovah to the mountains and to the hills, to the ravines and to the valleys,” (Vers. 3, 4.)

If the unuttered taunt is recorded before Jehovah, how much more that malicious boasting over the needed humiliation of Israel and the consequent desolation of the land, as if it were their victory over the only true God! But He heard and was soon warned by His servant the prophet; yet was He slow to judge. But His hand will ere long make good what His mouth then declared; and a yet more tremendous downfall yet awaits the haughty Edomite. The unbelieving Jews may divert their maledictions to their so-called Christian adversaries meanwhile; for both Jews and Christendom have lost all simplicity and consequently power of faith in the word of God. But neither good nor evil have perished from before His eyes. Edom and Israel but slumber in the dust and will soon come forth, Edom with still indomitable pride and vengeance, Israel at length repentant and subdued by the patient infinite grace of God. And then in this world shall each race receive its portion in that day, and Edom finally by the hand of Israel. (Compare Isa. 11:10-14; 34;. xxxv.; lxiii; Obadiah.)

For it would be a sorrowful and altogether unworthy conception of that day, were" it only divine wrath dispensing its death-blows on the wicked. But No. 5. Vol. X.-May, 1874.

the prophecy holds out no such monotony of gloom, but contrariwise the dark ways of man's iniquity followed by the judgment but ushering in the day of the Lord. "Prophesy therefore concerning the land of Israel, and say unto the mountains, and to the hills, to the rivers, and to the valleys, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I have spoken in my jealousy and in my fury, because ye have borne the shame of the heathen: Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I have lifted up mine hand, Surely the heathen that are about you, they shall bear their shame. But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel; for they are at hand to come. For, behold, I am for you, and I will turn unto you, and ye shall be tilled and sown: and I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded: and I will multiply upon you man and beast; and they shall increase and bring fruit: and I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am Jehovah. Yea, I will cause men to walk upon you, even my people Israel; and they shall possess thee, and thou shalt be their inheritance, and thou shalt no more henceforth bereave them of men. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Because they say unto you, Thou land devourest up men, and hast bereaved thy nations; therefore thou shalt devour men no more, neither bereave thy nations any more, saith the Lord Jehovah. Neither will I cause men to bear in thee the shame of the heathen any more, neither shalt thou bear the reproach of the people any more, neither shalt thou cause thy nations to fall any more, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Vers. 6 - 15.)

The Lord thus pledges His oath, jealous for the blessing of Israel and indignant at their reproach not yet come, still continued from the heathen. In vain do men apply such glowing words to the return from Babylon, which was but an earnest of what is coming for the entire people. Can any one who respects scripture and knows the facts pretend that the Lord multiplied men on the mountains of Israel, "all the house of Israel, even all of it?" (Ver. 10.) Such words seem expressly written to guard souls from such meager and misleading views. Did Jehovah settle the returned remnant after their old estates, and do good more than at their beginnings? (Ver. 11.) Did the land, did the mountains, become Israel's inheritance and no more bereave them? (Ver. 12.) Do we not know that under the fourth empire a still worse destruction came and a longer dispersion, instead of the land devouring no more, neither bereaving its own nations nor bearing the insult of the

Gentiles any more? (Ver. 15.) No! the fulfillment of the prophecy is yet to come, but, come it will as surely as Jehovah lives and has thus sworn through His prophet concerning the land of Israel. To suppose that the gospel or the church is meant by such language is both ignorance and infatuation.

Chapter 75

Notes on Ezekiel 36:16-38

In the next message of Jehovah the moral reasons are stated why the land of Israel was left desolate, and themselves dispersed among the nations; the dishonor they did to His name even there; finally His restoring grace with its effects on the heart and ways of Israel, as well as His power in renewing their land to more than pristine prosperity and fruitfulness, Jehovah being sanctified by all before the nations.

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Son of man, when the house of Israel dwelt in their land, they defiled it by their own way and by their doings: their way was before me as the uncleanness of a removed woman. And I poured my fury upon them for the blood that they had shed upon the land, and for their idols wherewith they had polluted it; and I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed through the countries: according to their way and according to their doings I judged them. And when they entered unto the heathen, whither they went, they profaned my holy name, when they said to them, These are the people of Jehovah, and are gone forth out of his land.” (Ver. 16-20.) Such was Israel's way in the land and out of it, everywhere a shame to Him who chose them as His own, idolatrous corruption and murderous violence in Canaan, profaning His name among the nations. And what did He against whom they had sinned? He is Jehovah and changes not: therefore were they not consumed. Nay, He had pity for the name which they had outraged and would sanctify His name and be sanctified in them. As He says here, “But I had pity for mine holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the heathen, whither they went. Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.” (Ver. 21-24

When and how this work of divine grace was to be wrought, we need not conjecture; nor does it now want elaborate discussion to determine. There are landmarks which make the answer quite plain. The return from Babylon was no fulfillment, but at most an earnest; for then only a numerically inconsiderable remnant returned. Ezra 9 in no way takes the same ground nor claims to be what the faithful looked for, any more than later still Neh. 9. They speak in one of “our bondage,” in the other of being “servants this day; and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers to eat the fruit thereof and the food thereof, behold, we are servants in it; and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins: also they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.” How far this falls short of what is pledged by Ezekiel should require no argument. “For I will take you out from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land.” The mass of Israel remained after the decree of Cyrus up and down the nations.

But there is a further and clearer proof that it has not yet been fulfilled, for it is added, “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.” (Ver. 25-28.) Was the Jew, not to speak of Israel, then cleansed from all his filthiness? Malachi tells a different tale; and so in fact did our Lord prove in person. Here when fulfilled we have no less a blessing promised than the new birth of the Jewish people. God will give them a new heart and a new spirit, take away the heart of stone, and give a heart of flesh. He will Put His Spirit within them, and cause that they shall walk in holy obedience, they His people, and He their God. It is the grossest exaggeration to assume that this has ever yet been accomplished, though in addition to this is an allusion to these verses in our Lord's words in John 3:5: most real, yet wholly distinct from its predicted application.

But there is more. For the prophet proceeds to say that this blessedness in store for Israel will include outward favor and earthly abundance in a way never known before. “I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen.”

It is in vain to fritter this prediction of restored and increased fertility, or to treat it as either incredible or not an effect of Divine power extraordinarily shown, as beneath the attention of God. The New Testament shows us the principle in Rom. 8. The groaning creation is yet to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. But this is under no message of the gospel, but a fruit of Divine power when Christ is no longer hidden but appears in glory and the sons of God are revealed too. The difference here is that the apostle connects this blessed deliverance with the revelation of the risen saints, the prophet with the restoration and renewal of Israel. But further, it is grace alone which, applied by the Holy Spirit to the soul, produces true fear of God and judgment of self. “There is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” It is this too which as here leads Israel to abhor and confess their past iniquities with a full heart. How glad are they to bow to His sovereignty who uses it in saving mercy! “Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I Jehovah build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I Jehovah have spoken it, and I will do it. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel, to do it for them; I will increase them with men like a flock. As the holy flock, as the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men: and they shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 29-38.) Thus will Jehovah wipe off all

reproach from without to the praise of His own name, while He works feelings and ways suitable to repentance in Israel. Nothing approaching this was experienced by the returned remnant; and those who were brought under the gospel were called into other and better blessings which induced many to get rid of their houses and lands. There was no rebuilding of the once desolate cities as a part of their heritage. But God will surely make good every word when the day comes to restore the kingdom to Israel. Under the law Israel was ruined; under the gospel there is neither Jew nor Greek, but union with Christ in heaven; when the kingdom is manifested in power, they will be restored to their land and cities, no longer waste but under the blessing and glory of Jehovah.

Notes on Ezekiel 37:1-14

This section contains a striking vision and a plain explanation of it. It is a question neither of the conversion of the soul nor of the resurrection of the body, but of God's causing Israel to live once more by-and-by as a people. They were at that time swept away and without a political existence; and greater troubles than those inflicted by Assyrian or Babylonian were before them, of which law and prophets clearly forewarned; but the word of Jehovah shall stand. And here again it was revealed to the sorrowing captives for their consolation after their earlier exile and before the later, that they might be sustained in presence of such overwhelming disasters by the sure hope of their national revival under the gracious working of the Lord.

“The hand of Jehovah was upon me, and carried me out in the Spirit of Jehovah, and set me down in the midst of the valley which was full of bones, and caused me to pass by them round about: and, behold, there were very many in the open valley; and, lo, they were very dry.” (Vers. 1, 2.) There is no disguise as to the estimate intended of those meant by the bones in the valley. There was not only no strength, but not even life. In order to bring out this the more we read, “And he said unto me, Son of man, can these bones live? And I answered, O Lord Jehovah, thou knowest.” (Ver. 3.) The impotence thus implied and confessed opens the way for the word of the Lord. “Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of Jehovah. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah unto these bones; Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live, and ye shall know that I am Jehovah.” (Ver. 4-6.)

Truly it was man's extremity and God's opportunity. He is the God that quickens the dead; and where should He exercise His glorious power if not on behalf of His people? And the prophet was given to see as well as to hear and speak. “So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, bone to his bone. And when I beheld, lo, the sinews and the flesh came up upon them, and the skin covered them above: but there was no breath in them.” (Vers. 7, 8.) Still more solemnly is this followed up in verses 9, 10. “Then said he unto me, Prophesy unto the wind, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet an exceeding great army.” (Vers. 9, 10.) It is impossible to apply such a statement as this with any show of propriety to the return of less than 43,000 from Babylon: especially as the armies of old far exceeded those usual in modern times. The returning remnant was a very small army compared with that of Judah alone under their kings. And we shall find later on that Ephraim as well as Judah are expressly contemplated: indeed it is implied immediately after in “the whole house of Israel.” The past return from captivity is therefore out of the question.

But we are not left to reasoning of ours on the scope of this hook and the general aim of Ezekiel. He who gave us the vision through His servant has added the most explicit interpretation. “Then

he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am Jehovah, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall ye know that I Jehovah have spoken it, and performed it, saith Jehovah." (Ver. 11-14.)

To a mind simple and subject to scripture there can be no hesitation here. To whatever use or application we may turn the vision, its direct and express meaning is God's revival of His ancient people Israel, then utterly destroyed, dead and buried, but yet to quit their graves according to the word of Jehovah. "These bones are the whole house of Israel." And God would comfort His people as well as rebuke the unbelief which said, "Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts." His own faithful grace will undertake to do what is manifestly beyond the power of man. He declares that He will not only disinter them from the graves wherein they now lie buried as a nation, but will bring them into the land of Israel—an issue suitable neither to those risen from the dead nor to souls converted to God now by the gospel, for what have we to do with the land of Israel? But restoration to their land is the simple and necessary complement of the national resuscitation of Israel. And so all the Old Testament testifies. Continually we see the people and their land bound up: blessing by-and-by on both, as now alas a curse on both.

The meaning therefore seems incontestable, save to men whose minds have been corrupted by the Patristic or Puritan schools, who can see none of the ways of God in Israel for the earth, any more than they read aright His heavenly counsels for the church; and this because the starting-point of both, though in different forms, is the substitution of self for Christ. Their interpretation of prophecy in particular is vitiated by this fatal mistake, which practically razes the hopes of Israel from the Bible and lowers ours to a mere succession to their hope and inheritance with somewhat better light and privilege. It is a part of the first and widest and most tenacious corruption of Christianity against which the apostle fought so valiantly. And it comes in the more insidiously, because it seems to those under its influence that they are of all men the most distant from the false brethren Paul denounced. To their minds the truest guard against judaizing is to deny that the Jews will ever be reinstated as a people, or be restored consequently to their own land. All the predictions of future blessedness and glory to Israel they turn over to Christendom now or to the church in glory. Most pernicious error! For this is exactly to judaize the Christian and the church by making them simply follow and inherit from Israel. The truth is thus swamped; Israel's bright prospects are denied; Gentile conceit is engendered; and the Christian is rendered worldly, instead of being taught his place of blessing on high in contrast with Israel's on the earth.

Notes on Ezekiel 37:15-28

But there is another and connected revelation. The revival of Israel as a people is not all that the prophet here learns and communicates. This was given in the first half of the chapter, not their quickening individually, however true it may be, but their national resuscitation under the operation of the Spirit, not of man's Will or the world's politics, as becomes the people chosen and now finally to be blessed of Jehovah. There was a distinct fresh blessing to be conferred on them, the disappearance of an old reproach which had long dishonored Israel from the days of Rehoboam as long as it had subsisted in the land. When God sets to His hand for their restoration in the latter day, He will re-unite them as they were of old under David and Solomon, never to have their unity broken or even threatened again. This is reserved for the true Beloved when He reigns as the Prince of peace.

“The word of Jehovah came again unto me saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: and join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand.” (Ver. 15-17.)

It is indeed no obscure proof of human perverseness that words like these should ever have been mistaken. Yet they have been and are, not among the despised Jews who cleave to their future hopes, but in contempt of their present responsibility by Christians under the gospel of God's indiscriminate grace in the dead and risen Christ to every soul that believes, be he Jew or Gentile. Thus it is then that Satan deceives all. The Jews are right in maintaining that Israel are yet to be blessed in their land under Messiah and the new covenant, and this, not vaguely nor partially, but after apostasy as well as divine judgments shall have thinned them down, all Israel that shall then be saved, gathered and united, Judah and Joseph as one whole. They are utterly, fatally, wrong now in not seeing their Messiah, the Savior, in Jesus of Nazareth, and consequently perish because they obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. But Satan deceives Christendom in this that, while they rightly confess the Crucified One to be the Son of God, they not only mix up the law with the gospel and so lose all the comfort and power and certainty of God's salvation in Christ, but yearn after the predicted glories of Israel on earth as if they were descriptive of their own privileges to the almost total ignoring of theft heavenly standing as well as to the denial of God's faithfulness in future mercy to Israel.

There is indeed no excuse for misunderstanding a symbol so plain as that in verses 16, 17. But, as if to clench the application, we have as before an explanation appended. “And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not show us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand. And the sticks whereon thou writest shall be in thine hand before their eyes. And say unto them, Thus saith the Lord

Jehovah; Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the heathen, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land: and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel; and one king shall be king to them all: and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all: neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling-places, wherein they have sinned, and will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God." (Ver. 18-23.)

It is as vain to wrest such language to the remnant of Jews that returned from Babylon as to the church at Pentecost. There is not even analogy. It is a union of the two long-divided houses of Israel, and nothing else. Not even a shadow of its accomplishment has appeared yet. Words cannot be conceived more explicit. Every sense but the future ingathering. and union of all Israel as a single nation under one king is excluded. Never more shall they be divided, never more defiled. Nay more, they shall be Jehovah's people, and He their God. As the Jew cannot say that this lies yet been, so it is absurd for any Gentile to say it of or for them. Still more absurd is it for the Gentile to claim it for himself. In no case is it applicable to the Christian body. A remnant returned of Jews to be defiled not from Babylon merely with transgressions, but with a more detestable thing than their old idolatry, even the rejection and cross of their Messiah. Was this a fulfillment of Ezekiel's glowing words?

But further it is added, "And David my servant shall be king over them; and they all shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them." (Ver. 24.) Here again what confirmation if this were needed! For no sober believer can doubt that Christ only can be meant, and Christ, not as Head of the church in heaven, but as king of Israel when He reigns over the earth. Never, since the prophecy was uttered, has there been an approach to its accomplishment. Never since have they all had one shepherd; nor have Israel walked in His judgments, nor observed His statutes and done them. Christians all over the world cannot be meant here, still less when they go to heaven, but Israel only. "And they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob my servant, wherein your fathers have dwelt; and they shall dwell therein, even they, and their children, and their children's children, forever; and my servant David shall be their prince forever."

It is, as Isaiah says, the sure mercies of David—that everlasting covenant Jehovah makes with Israel; and this the resurrection of Christ explains. Thus was He to reign—not merely to ascend and become the beginning and Head of a new work on high, but reign over Israel in their land. Indeed, in language strongly resembling the prophet referred to, Ezekiel follows with the assurance of Jehovah. "Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and multiply them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them for evermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them: yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I Jehovah do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore." (Ver. 26-.28.) The humbling thought is that Christians could question what is here meant. Only one thing explains it—the deep and wide-spread departure of men in Christendom from an adequate or indeed any real sense of their own blessings. From the peace and joy proper to the Christian, they have through judaizing and the influence of Babylon slipped away into doubt and darkness and error; and in their lack of

comfort in the Holy Ghost, through unbelief of the grace in which the Christian stands, they are tempted to covet their neighbors' goods, to the ruin of truth and to the confusion of relationship with God, whether of the church now or of Israel by-and-by. The issue of the prophecy is of so plain and positive and glorious a nature that the very heathen shall know that Jehovah sanctifies His people, when His sanctuary shall be in their midst forever. Who can affirm that this is true now, either of Israel, of whom it is said, or of the church, of whom it is not?

Notes on Ezekiel 38:1-9

Next follow two chapters which contain a prediction of God's judgment to fall in the last days, when Israel is restored, on a great north-eastern chief with his vast array of satellites and allies on the mountains of the Holy Land.

But it may be well to clear away some mistakes which have long, and for most readers, overhung the translation of verse 2 to the detriment of the sense. Happily the oldest version (the Septuagint) gives the true meaning; and the Greek versions of Theodotion and Symmachus did not abandon but confirm it. It is impossible on any just principles to deny that the Septuagint and those who hold with it rightly give ■ρχοντα 'P■ς κ. τ. λ. for PωP■ψ■ιK■■■■.I am aware that the Chaldee Targum of Jonathan and the Greek version of the Jew Aquila take it, like one English Bible, as “the chief prince,” the Vulgate as prince of the head or chief (like our margin), the Syriac as “ruler and chief,” the Arabic as “prince of the princes,” &c.

But none of these affords a tolerable or even intelligible meaning, save the latter two which desert the text. It is true that ■■■, when the context requires it to be a common appellative, means “head” or “chief;” but it is this sense which in the present instance brings in confusion. There can be no doubt therefore that it must be taken as a proper name, and here not of a man as in Gen. 26:2, if the common reading stand, but of a race. This at once furnishes a suitable sense, which is strengthened by the term which precedes it, as well as by those that follow. For, as ■■■■■■■ regularly means the head of a tribe, or a prince in general, so Meshech and Thubal fix ■■■■ as meaning a Gentilic name (Rosh). They were in fact three great tribes, by the ancients called Scythians, the first of them apparently deriving its name from their proximity in those days to the river Rim, or Volga (though some think the Araxes), and supplying that of the modern Russ, as the others are reproduced in Moscow or Muscovy, and in Tobolsk.

There is of course no difficulty in supposing migrations northward from the original seats, supposing that they may have been the races in the north of Asia Minor during the days of Ezekiel, and familiar to us as the Moschi, Tibareni, and perhaps other tribes named in later authors of Greece.

The great questions are what, where, and when they are viewed when the vision applies, not when it was written. And of this the place it occupies in the prophetic series, the precise language of the vision and the character of the judgment pronounced, ought to leave no doubt for any believer. It can apply only in the last day when the chosen nation are peacefully restored to their land, and it speaks of such a judgment on their enemies, countless though they may be, as has never been witnessed since Ezekiel prophesied, nor anything approaching to it. The Grotian effort to apply it to Antiochus is of course a pitiable failure. Equally unsatisfying is the very vague “ideal” of Fairbairn and the modern German school. Nor are the Futurists more right who confound with the beast and the false prophet this great leader of the north-eastern nations, not without followers from the south.

Let us now look into the opening of this remarkable prediction, when the rapid and immense development of the Russian empire bears its unmistakable witness to the judgment that is coming, as here declared so long before.

“And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Set thy face against Gog, the land of Magog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, and prophesy against him, and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal; and I will turn thee back, and put my hook into thy jaws, and I will bring thee forth, and all thine army, horses and horsemen, all of them clothed elegantly, a great company with bucklers and shields, all of them handling swords; Persia, Cush, and Phut with them, all of them with shield and helmet; Gomer and all his bands; the house of Togarmah of the north quarters; many people with thee. Be thou prepared, and prepare thyself, thou and all thy company that are assembled unto thee, and be thou a guard unto them. After many days shalt thou be mustered; in the latter days thou shalt dome into the land that is brought back from the sword, that is gathered out of many peoples against the mountains of Israel which have been always waste: but it is brought forth out of the nations, and they shall dwell safely all of them. Thou wilt ascend and come like a storm; thou wilt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou and all thy bands, and many people with thee.” (Ver. 1-9.)

Here the case stands clearly defined in all but the name, which seems to be probably symbolic. It is the last enemy of Israel who confronts us. He dwells in the land of Magog, that son of Japhet who overspread in due time the vast steppes of what was anciently called Scythia. He is autocrat of all the Russias, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal. Thus we have himself, his land, and his people. But the Lord Jehovah is against him who, instead of seeing when good cometh to a long-troubled people, would fain aggrandize himself, and thus finds himself in array against not merely the Israel of God but the God of Israel. Cursed must he be who thus trusts in man and makes flesh his arm; and so does Gog prove. For Jehovah declares that He will turn him back, put hooks in his jaws, and cause him to go forth, him and all his host.

Then will it appear as a final lesson that no king is saved by the multitude of his host, that a mighty man is not delivered by much strength, and that a horse is a vain thing for safety. Israel at length are poor in spirit; and Jehovah brings the counsel of the heathen to naught, whilst His counsel stands forever. There they come clothed to perfection, a great company, with shield and buckler, all of them grasping swords; Persia too is there, obliged to follow the train of the mighty northern leader, Cush and Phut with them; Gomer, and all his bands; the house of Togarmah from the sides of the north, and all his bands: many people indeed with Gog! With grave irony he is told to be prepared and prepare himself, and he and all his vast confederacy, and be their guard if he can!

Long, long ago had been the prophetic warning. No great nation in the old world had been so slow to take up the leadership of the populous East. But, delayed as it might be, the epoch is seen vividly by the seer of the Chebar. “After many days thou wilt be mastered; in the last of the years thou wilt come into the land” of Israel, where they are then dwelling safely. As a storm Gog comes, as a cloud he covers the land. But no weapon formed against Israel shall prosper. Such is their heritage, when their righteousness is of Jehovah. They may as yet be few, their adversaries countless; but what is this to the Lord but an opportunity for showing Himself the enemy of His people's enemies? This Gog finds out, as we shall see, too late not only for himself and his enormous following, but for those he had left quietly at home. It is the day of just retribution and of

divine government on earth, when the manslayer, so long estranged yet preserved, returns to the land of his possession. And shall not God avenge His own elect when he whose trust is in his numbers numberless casts his greedy look on the land where Jehovah's eyes rest continually?

Notes on Ezekiel 38:10-23

The prophecy then supposes the return of the people as a whole to their land, not of a remnant only, as after the Babylonish captivity. But there is more. It supposes a condition of unsuspected quiet such as differs from any period of Israel's history in the past. Of this Gog is to take advantage, but to his own ruin. He has no faith in God's love for His people, and never thinks of His taking His place in their midst for their defense against their foes.

“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, It shall also come to pass in that day that things shall come into thy mind, and thou shalt devise a wicked device, and thou wilt say, I will go up to the land of villages, I will invade those who are at ease, that dwell securely, all of them dwelling without walls, and having neither bars nor gates to take spoil and to take prey, to turn thy hand against the wastes that are inhabited and against a people gathered out of the nations, gathering cattle and goods, dwelling in the midst [or on the height] of the land.” (Ver. 10-12.)

If the day is come for Israel to be blessed in the mercy of God, it is no less the day for the judgment of the nations. Of these we have here the last in order, and perhaps the widest in extent, the awfully impressive lesson at the final confederacy before the reign of peace and righteousness. Nothing can exceed the graphic force with which the prophet describes all. Gog calculates on finding an easy prey in a people apparently so exposed and powerless. He little thinks that on those heights of Israel he and his immense host are about to perish at the hand of Jehovah, if not by one another. Nor is it only that the actual combatants are thus taken in their own snare, but those who look on have to learn that He whose name alone is Jehovah is the Most High over all the earth. “Sheba, and Dedan, and the merchants of Tarshish, with all the young lions thereof, shall say unto thee, Art thou come to take a spoil? hast thou gathered thy company to take a prey? to carry away silver and gold, to take away cattle and goods, to take a great spoil?” (Ver. 13.) They may be eager to treat with the spoiler, and profit by the purchase of the expected booty, but they too shall soon say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth.

“Therefore, son of man, prophesy and say unto Gog, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; In that day when my people of Israel dwelleth safely, shalt thou not know it? And thou shalt come from thy place out of the north parts, thou, and many people with thee, all of them riding upon horses, a great company, and a mighty army: and thou shalt come up against my people of Israel, as a cloud to cover the land; it shall be in the latter days, and I will bring thee against my land, that the heathen may know me, when I shall be sanctified in thee, O Gog, before their eyes.” (Ver. 1416.) It will be noticed that the downfall of Gog is here expressly set down to “the latter days,” as well as to “that day when my people Israel dwell safely.” Not only was none of this true in the days of Zerubbabel, as Theodoret imagines, or when Antiochus persecuted the returned remnant, but the scale of destruction is wholly inapplicable. In no case whatever since Ezekiel's time is there so much as a point of contact. The prediction therefore, beyond just question, awaits its fulfillment in days to come.

“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: Art thou he of whom I have spoken in old time by my servants the prophets of Israel, which prophesied in those days many years that I would bring thee against them And it shall come to pass at the same time when Gog shall come against the land of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah, that my fury shall come up in my face. For in my jealousy and in the fire of my wrath have I spoken, Surely in that day there shall be a great shaking in the land of Israel; so that the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the heaven, and the beasts of the field, and all creeping things that creep upon the earth, and all the men that are upon the face of the earth, shall shake at my presence, and the mountains shall be thrown down, and the steep places shall fall, and every wall shall fall to the ground. And I will call for a sword against him throughout all my mountains, saith the Lord Jehovah; every man's sword shall be against his brother. And I will plead against him with pestilence and with blood; and I will rain upon him and upon his bands, and upon the many people that are with him an overflowing rain, and great hailstones, fire, and brimstone. Thus will I magnify myself, and sanctify myself; and I will be known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord.” (Ver. 17-23.)

It is the notion of not a few authors that Gog must be the great western antagonist of the Jews as in Daniel, &c. But this is to mistake the scope of our prophet who never enters on the system of the four imperial powers that were to tread down Jerusalem till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. Even Nebuchadnezzar is viewed as Jehovah's servant for accomplishing His work: as head of the image he does not appear. Gog belongs to another character of enemy and perishes afterward when, blinded by the lust of territorial aggrandizement, he sees not that he is assailing Jehovah in seeking to plunder and destroy Israel. Isaiah speaks of him in chapter 33 as the rest do in more general terms. Here attention is drawn to the longstanding predictions of this final effort. (Ver. 17.) But after all God alone governs, whatever the pride or greed or will of Gog: Jehovah brought him against Israel for his own destruction. Yet when he does come, “my fury,” says the Lord Jehovah, “shall come up in my face” (literally, nose). No more fears for the land of Israel, no need of fresh blows on the Gentiles, at least till the muster of the nations a thousand years afterward to which this invasion lends its name, the one at the beginning, the other at the end, of Messiah's reign.

That this is none other than the last destruction of Israel's foes before the millennium should be plain enough from the words that follow, not to speak of the chapter after this, and all the rest of the prophecy. To take the words as merely symbols of political revolution is quite uncalled for, yea, contrary to the context. There is no change of government whatever in Israel, nor do they suffer more, but these distant enemies who are congregated on their hills are to perish forever. The mighty concussion in Canaan adds to the solemnity of the scene, land and sea, heaven and earth, thus owning the presence of Him who made all things espousing the cause of Israel, not mutual slaughter only in the ranks of the foe, but pestilence and blood, overflowing rains and great hailstones, fire and brimstone. No wonder that the rationalistic Rosenmüller is forced to own how plain it is on the strongest evidence that Antiochus Epiphanes cannot be meant here. There is no difficulty whatever to the believer who looks for the future dealings of God in behalf of Israel. The efforts to apply it to the church would be ridiculous, if they were not flagrant and sinful unbelief, falsifying every right thought of our place as called to suffer on earth and to reign in resurrection glory with Christ at His coming.

I may add that the thought of some that the Turks are meant is evidently unfounded; for they on the contrary have been for ages allowed by God to possess the land in insulting defiance over a

Christendom as guilty and idolatrous as the Jews were before Babylon carried them captive. Here, on the contrary, it is the mighty leader of the north in the latter days, followed by his myriads from the east down to the south of Asia, who perishes with all his host under the most signal judgment of God when essaying to possess himself of the land of Israel brought back from their long dispersion.

Chapter 80

Notes on Ezekiel 39:1-16

Tins chapter resumes the divine denunciation of the great northern enemy. There is no concealment of his formidable numbers and resources; but, whatever these may be, they will but enhance the victory Jehovah gains for His people by his utter destruction.

“And thou, son of man, prophesy against Gog and say, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Behold, I am against thee, O Gog, prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tribal; and I will turn thee back and lead thee [? astray], and cause thee to come up from the sides of the north, and bring thee upon the mountains of Israel. And I will strike thy bow out of thy left hand, and will cause thine arrows to fall out of thy right hand. Upon the mountains of Israel shalt thou fall, thou and all thine armies, and the people that are with thee: I have given thee for food to the ravenous bird, the bird of every wing, and to the beast of the field. Upon the open field shalt thou fall; for I have spoken it, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 1-5.)

The judgments of God are as usual in keeping with the sin and the people that come under His displeasure. Thus the doom of the beast and the false prophet is beyond all experience appalling; the solemn and final adjudication without further process to the lake of fire. And so, it would seem, will it be with the little horn of Dan. 8 (or king of the north in Dan. 11). They had meddled with the things of God against His people, having a character of apostate contempt for His truth or perverting it to their destructive ends. Gog is judged as a more vulgar aggressor, actuated as he will be with greed of territorial acquisition and relying on brute force. So he is confronted with a power mightier than his own, which beats him down ignominiously without relenting.

Nor is this all. God will deal with the land whence. Clog came as well as with those isles which contributed their contingents to his host. “And I will send a fire on Magog, and among them that dwell carelessly in the isles: and they shall know that I am Jehovah. So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen shall know that I am Jehovah, the Holy One in Israel.” (Vers. 6, 7.) No distance nor isolation shall screen from consuming judgment in that day; for the Lord is awaking to call the quick to account, as one out of sleep, like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. Then at length shall the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. Can argument be wanted by the believer to prove that these solemn dealings ending in so blessed a result have never yet been fulfilled? Magog is not Rome or spiritual Edom or any other than the Scythia of the ancients.

“Behold, it is come, and it is done, saith the Lord. Jehovah; this is the day whereof I have spoken. And they that dwell in the cities of Israel shall go forth, and shall set on fire and burn the weapons, both the shields and the bucklers, the bows and the arrows, and the handstaves, and the spears, and they shall burn them with fire seven years: so that they shall take no wood out of the field, neither cut down any out of the forests; for they shall burn the weapons with fire: and they shall spoil those that spoiled them, and rob those that robbed them, saith. the Lord Jehovah.” (Ver. 8-10.) It is no vague warning of the foe where and whenever he may be; it is no general principle reproducing itself often in divine providence. The Holy Spirit takes pains here to make it precise

and specific, the judgment of a distinct enemy, long suspended, and falling as the last of Jehovah's blows on the, most overwhelming force that shall ever have mustered against Israel, immediately before His glory, returns in more pristine splendor and peace to dwell in the midst of His people in their land. Hence the minutely graphic detail of their going forth from the cities in Palestine and burning the arms defensive and offensive of their foe; and this not only as a witness of his total destruction, but as their provision of firewood so as to dispense with all other store for seven years.

But there is another and still more permanent result as the trophy of that great victory. “And it shall come to pass in that day I will give unto Gog a place there, a grave in Israel, the valley of the passengers on the east of the sea; and it shall stop the passengers; and there shall they bury Gog, and all his multitude; and they shall call it the valley of the multitude of Gog. And seven months shall the house of Israel be burying of them, that they may cleanse the land. Yea, all the people of the land shall bury them; and it shall be to them a renown the day that I shall be glorified, saith the Lord Jehovah. And they shall sever out men of continual employment, passing through the land to bury with the passengers those that remain upon the face of the earth, to cleanse it: after the end of seven months shall they search. And the passengers that pass through the land, when any seeth a man's bone, then shall he set up a sign by it, till the buriers have buried it in the valley of Hamon-Gog. And also the name of the city shall be Hamonah. Thus shall they cleanse the land.” (Vers. 11-16.)

Did Gog think to take the land for a possession Jehovah will give him there a grave; and this in no obscure spot but in the direct pathway of many passers by. The idea is not, as our translators fancied, that people would stop their noses because of the bad smell, but that the barrows of so many buried men would stay all who pass that way and lead them to think of the vengeance poured out on them. The LXX seem here confused (“the burial-place of all that approach the sea"); but there is no countenance given to the notion already mentioned. No calculation of unbelieving believers who would evaporate the prediction need embarrass the Christian. Has Jehovah spoken and will He not perform?

The care to purify the land from the sight of a man's bone is remarkable, but natural if glory is to dwell there. People in general if they were but going through are to help those formally told off for the work, “men of continuance,” whose task is to bury every relic of the prodigious slaughter of the enemy, all the dwellers in the land also taking part in the work. The multitude thus slain and buried will give its name to a city in the land. But it is the day when all impurity disappears from the land which Jehovah recognizes as His own, when He is then and there glorified. Can there be a legitimate doubt of the epoch when these conditions meet? It is plain to see that it is a question of God's judging the last leader of the Russias in the Holy Land when Israel have been brought back from the lands of their dispersion. But preoccupation with our own place as Christians hinders here as elsewhere—hinders not only our seeing the faithfulness of God to Israel and His mercy to them yet, but also our discernment of the church's peculiar blessedness. If we are to appreciate either, we must distinguish them, and see the connection of each with Christ. The mystical interpretation gives its due place to neither, and hence envelops all in fog.

Chapter 81

Notes on Ezekiel 39:17-29

Next a message of remarkable force is sent through the prophet to all birds and beasts of prey. Now is their time for a feast on a sacrifice such as they have never had before nor can have again. Vast hosts have been decimated, and the rest dispersed or taken, where they failed to make good their retreat; but has the world seen such a slaughter as this? It is assuredly to come.

“And, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Speak unto every feathered fowl, and to every beast of the field, Assemble yourselves, and come; gather yourselves on every side to my sacrifice that I do sacrifice for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel, that ye may eat flesh and drink blood. Ye shall eat the flesh of the mighty, and drink the blood of the princes of the earth, of rams, of lambs, and of goats, of bullocks, all of them fatlings of Bashan. And ye shall eat fat till ye be full, and drink blood till ye be drunken, of my sacrifice which I have sacrificed for you. Thus ye shall be filled at my table with horses and chariots, with mighty men, and with all men of war, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Vers. 17-20.)

If Jehovah invites to a great sacrifice for the creatures of prey, will He not make good the word? A similar call is made in Rev. 19:17, 18, but there only to all the birds that fly in mid-heaven. It is in view of the carnage which is to befall the armies of the west at the end of this age; and I suppose only the birds are named as in keeping with the judgment of the apostates from the heavenly testimony of Christianity. Here it is larger, as His dealings take effect on the countless eastern hordes, who have not only despised the gospel but seek to possess themselves of the land when His earthly people are being settled there in peace. No mistake can be more glaring than the denial of these judgments on the quick before the reign of the Lord as the true Solomon here below; no truth more evident in the word of God than that the gospel is not destined to put down all rule and all authority and power, but Christ Himself when He comes in glory. In title all things have been put under His feet as He sits on the throne of God; but the process of putting all His enemies under His feet is not yet begun. He is occupied with another work now; He is calling out the joint-heirs who are to be glorified, risen or changed, at His coming, and then to reign together with Him in His kingdom. And this active subjecting of all is not the work of heavenly grace, but of power put forth on earth, of course not always in destruction, though the kingdom opens and closes with it on an immense scale, as we see here and in Rev. 20:8, 9.

The moral effect of the judgment executed on Gog and his host we find afterward: “And I will set my glory among the heathen, and all the heathen shall see my judgment that I have executed, and my hand that I have laid upon them. So the house of Israel shall know that I am Jehovah their God from that day and forward. And the heathen shall know that the house of Israel went into captivity for their iniquity: because they trespassed against me, therefore hid I my face from them, and gave them into the hand of their enemies: so fell they all by the sword. According to their uncleanness and according to their transgressions have I done unto them, and hid my face from them.” (Vers. 21-24.) The gospel meanwhile if believed puts souls in association with Christ for heaven. The sight of the judgments will be used by the Lord to teach the nations righteousness on earth. Israel

too need to learn, and so they will, that He who so deals is Jehovah their God “from that day and forward.” It will be plain and undeniable in that day that Israel went into captivity for nothing but their iniquity; that for this only did Jehovah withdraw His favor from them and give them up to the sword of their enemies. It is His retribution that explains their past history with all its sorrows.

But there is a bright future in prospect for Israel: I do not speak of the gospel or the church, where there is neither Jew nor Greek, but of the kingdom on earth when Israel shall be restored to their land, and have the first place among the nations in favor, peace, righteousness, and the manifested power and glory of Jehovah. “Therefore thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Now will I bring again the captivity of Jacob, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name; after that they have borne their shame, and all their trespasses whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid. When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations; then shall they know that I am Jehovah their God, which caused them to be led into captivity among the heathen: but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there. Neither will I hide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my Spirit upon the home of Israel, saith the Lord Jehovah.” (Vers. 25 - 29.)

It may be observed here as a practical remark of much moment for souls that, if the New Testament is to be believed, God never hides His face from the Christian; and this because the believer possessing eternal life in Christ is now brought into the full efficacy of His sacrifice, and has the Holy Ghost dwelling in him as its continual witness. We accordingly anticipate in this what will be true of Israel by-and-by, instead of standing on the probationary ground of Israel's past, The traditional unbelief of Christendom puts souls thus so as to, cloud the true grace of God wherein we stand; and this alike among Protestants and Catholics, while the latter add the further error of antedating and appropriating to the church that place of earthly honor, and ease which is reserved for Israel under the Messiah when the mountain of Jehovah's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. Some Protestants indeed are so dark as to follow Romanists even in this error, though they in general put it before them as a millennial hope rather than as a present claim. But assume it as they may, the effect of the error is to degrade the church from heaven to earth, and either to deny the hopes of Israel or to make those who hold it inconsistent if they own them.

We may add that, though the Spirit is assuredly to be poured out on Israel when the new age begins, there will be no baptizing the saints then into one body. On the contrary, in the millennium the Jewish saints will be in a nearer and more honored position than the Gentiles on the earth. It is a state in contrast with the assembly now, where such distinctions are unknown.

Chapter 82

Notes on Ezekiel 40:1-4

The remaining chapters of the book present a vision of the most striking character, in which the prophet sees and communicates the pledge of more than restoration of crowning glory for Israel in their land. Such is its plain meaning, though there may be deep details, as indeed there are, most minute, and not without difficulty as is usual in all such descriptions. But there is scarce more of obscurity in Ezek. 40-48 than in Ex. 25-40 It is a difficulty because of circumstantial detail outside our ordinary habits or even study. There is really none as to its general scope except to those who misapply the vision. That it is unfulfilled prophecy is very true, but that this is not the real source of its difficulty to us will appear from the parallel to which reference has been made. The details of the future temple in the land are not harder to understand than those of the past tabernacle in the wilderness.

It is well known that some consider that the vision applies to the church that now is. Those who think so should on their own showing find it easy to explain its figures and symbols, for such writers generally assume that we cannot have an accurate understanding of a prophecy till it be accomplished, and certainly the church has been in existence for more than 1800 years. On this score therefore they ought to have the amplest materials for illustration. But these are the very persons who find insuperable difficulty in interpreting the prophecy. Nor need we wonder; for the whole thought is a mistake. Jerome and Gregory can make nothing of it but ingenious accommodation. There is no real exposition: what is in their remarks can scarcely have satisfied even their own minds. As one of the most learned of the commentators that follow them says in respect of part, so we may say of all, “How it is to be understood, nobody explains, nor dare I conjecture.” Yet this man, Cornelius a Lapide, was not to be despised, but rather to be admired, because of the honest confession of their failure and his own. The whole of the allegorizing interpreters go on an evidently false track: It would be strange, if a symbolic vision of Christianity were to leave out the day of atonement, the feast of weeks, and the action of the high priest in the presence of God—its most essential features in type

Scarcely better is the very large class of divines who have striven bard to appropriate the vision to the Jews who returned from the Babylonish captivity, for the facts then realized stand immeasurably below this prophetic pledge. The inevitable result therefore of such applications as of this and the preceding schools is to lower the character of the divine word. For to speak plainly there is more contrast than analogy between the glowing promises of the prophet and the very small installment that was paid under Zerubbabel as recorded in Ezra and Nehemiah. It is not only then that both those interpretations fail to meet the prophecy, but that they do not fail to depreciate scripture itself. For if the prophets be thus hyperbolical and untrustworthy, what is to save the Gospels and the Epistles any more than the Law and the Psalms? The tendency of both, schools is unwittingly but none the less really to undermine inspiration.

Who can think that the modern attempt to save appearances for the latter view is at all successful? “Ezekiel,” says the late Dr. Henderson (p. 187), “was furnished with an ideal representation of the

Jewish state as about to be restored after the captivity." Was this "ideal" then realized? Did it or did it not differ immensely from the actual state of the Jews in Palestine after their return? Did the post-captivity temple correspond with the building here so carefully measured? Had they priests? And what about the prince, to say nothing of the feasts and the sacrifices without a high priest—so marked a peculiarity in this prophecy? Had the Jews the glory returned to their land? Did the twelve tribes, with the special provision for the priests and the Levites and the prince, take up their position so carefully laid down by the prophet? Did healing waters flow from the temple towards the Dead Sea at that period, or in any sense whatsoever? Did the priests and Levites dwell no longer up and down Palestine, but only round about the sanctuary, both henceforth having land assigned to them? We know that not one of these things applies to the post-captivity interval.

No doubt it was the restoration of the material temple then in ruins that the prophet had in his eye, and a restoration not only of its worship but of the nation in full under the richest theocratic (and not only spiritual) privileges. No doubt a just and true interpretation supersedes all necessity of confounding the Christian and the church with the hopes of Israel; but no view is less satisfactory than that which points to the five centuries which preceded Christ, and denies a literal fulfillment in the future for Israel in their land. It is an unfounded assumption that a single feature in these visions was fulfilled by a single fact among the returned captives in their past history. Less than fifty thousand men, women, and children came up from Babylon: a little remnant of a remnant, and in no sense those twelve tribes, whom the prophet sees to take up their allotted portions in the land—seven in the north, five in the south, extending beyond the ancient bounds on this side of Jordan, with Jerusalem between.

Indeed there never was the very smallest semblance of the holy oblation any more than of the allotments of the land from east to west here predicted. It is ridiculous to say that there is no valid objection against such an interpretation because in many points the city, temple, services, &c., did not accord with the prophecy. The fact is that those who returned from Babylon fell back on the order as existing before the captivity, and in no respect made good the peculiar condition predicted by Ezekiel. Thus no one appeared answering to the prince, while the high priest was as before a notable personage; the land on the other side of Jordan was as freely used as ever, and no strangers held inheritance any more than in ancient times. Pentecost was still as of old one of the three great feasts of the Jews, whereas it will have no place according to the prophecy. Such differences are of the most decided character, and, at any rate to believers, demonstrate that the last vision is yet absolutely unaccomplished in the history of the Jews: to say that it is never to be is to confess oneself an unbeliever in prophecy at least.

It is quite tree that the vision is not to be regarded as a description of what was remembered of Solomon's temple—a work of supererogation indeed for those who possessed the books of Kings and Chronicles. It was a divine disclosure of a new condition, when Israel shall be restored finally and forever. It is a material temple, a literal but in some grave respects unprecedented arrangement of feasts, sacrifices, rites, and priesthood, as well as of general polity for the new capital and the nation under wholly novel circumstances crowned with the glory of Jehovah who deigns again to dwell in their land. Nor does it appear consistent to interpret the temple and its ordinances literally, but as a figure the waters that carry fertility and beauty into the Dead Sea and the barren wilderness. Why this should be a mere symbol and nova fact it would be hard to tell, except that men like Seeker and Boothroyd with a certain following will have it so. But we need say

no more as to all these things for the present. Ample opportunity will be afforded when we come to the chapters themselves in detail.

This however we must insist on, that it is altogether illegitimate to sever these chapters in an absolute manner from those we have already had before us. The closing series (chaps. 40-48.) is the glorious but fitting and most intelligible sequel to the prophecies immediately before: so much so that the previous series (chap. 33-39.) prepares for it, announcing the judgment but happy return of the chosen nation in the last days, far beyond what was at hand. We have had the new ground laid of individual conduct before God in chapter 33, of their leaders in chapter 34, and of Edom in chapter 35; then the prediction of Israel's restoration to their own land with a new heart and a new spirit—yea, with God's Spirit within them—in chapter 36. We have seen the parabolic vision in chapter 37 of the dry bones suddenly invested with life and strength, which are expressly said to mean not Christians nor men at large, but the house of Israel, under the figure of resurrection, caused to live and placed by Jehovah in their own land; and this too united as they have never been—Ephraim and Judah—since the days of Jeroboam, under one head, one king, in the land, on the mountains of Israel. We have had before us the last and most formidable attack to be made upon Israel whilst thus settling in peace in Canaan, when the great north-eastern chief with his myriads of followers shall be utterly exterminated by divine intervention. No allegory this, as they shall then learn to their cost; and Israel shall know and the spared Gentiles too, for Jehovah shall be thus glorified in His people on earth. Most appropriately follows the last vision, where the polity of Israel is laid down with precision, both sacred and civil, and the descending Shekinah shall once more find its place in their midst, the seal of glory never to be broken, till means melt away before blessing complete and everlasting, and judgment has no more evil to be judged.

Beyond a doubt, the main stumbling-block in this section to most Christians is the plain prediction of sacrifices, feasts, and other ordinances according to the Levitical law. These, they conceive, must be explained (that is, are really to be explained away), so as not to clash with the Epistle to the Hebrews. But the argument assumes that there can be no change of dispensation—that because we are Christians, those whom the prophecy contemplates must be in the same relationship. This however is nothing but error. For the Epistle to the Hebrews looks at believers since redemption while Christ is on high till He comes again in glory; the prophecy of Ezekiel, on the contrary, is occupied with the earthly people and supposes the glory of Jehovah dwelling once again in the land of Canaan. The truth is that to bless Israel as such and the Gentiles only mediately and subordinately to the Jews, as this prophecy and almost all others suppose and definitely declare, is a state of things in distinct contrast with Christianity, where there is neither Jew nor Gentile but all are one in Christ Jesus. Hence the whole ground and position here are quite different from what we see in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Earthly priests distinct from the people, with a position quite peculiar to the prince, a material sanctuary and tangible sacrifices and offerings, are distinctly predicted by Ezekiel; but these are evidently wholly foreign to Christianity. One as much as the other would be in. consistent with the doctrine in the Epistle to the Hebrews for the “partakers of the heavenly calling;” but will they therefore be out of place and season for those who have the earthly calling when Jehovah again makes choice of Jerusalem, and glory shall dwell in the land? This no one has proved, and few have even essayed to prove; but it is the real question. Entirely do we allow the incongruity of sacrifice with our faith in that one offering

which has for over perfected us. A temple on earth is a practical inconsistency with the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man, into the holiest of which, now that for us the veil is rent, we are invited to come boldly. Further, the assertion of an earthly priesthood for Christians is in principle, if not effect a denial not only of our nearness to God by the blood of Christ, but of the gospel itself as we know it.

But the coming of the Lord to reign over the earth will necessarily bring with it changes of immense import and magnitude; yet this is the great object of all prophecy, which accordingly puts forward a new condition wherein Israel stands at the head of the nations under Messiah and the new covenant, the church having entirely disappeared from the earth, and, in fact, reigning over it with Christ, the Bridegroom of His then glorified bride.

Now the prophets, from Isaiah to Malachi, bring to light for that glorious day an earthly temple with sacrifices, priesthood, and rites appropriate to it. No doubt it is not Christianity; but who with such an array of inspired witnesses against him will dare to say that such a state of things will not be according to the truth, and for the glory, of God in that day? It is in vain to plead the usual resource of unbelief—the cloud that overhangs unfulfilled prophecy. Not so. To unbelief all scripture is obscure; to faith it is the light of God through men empowered by the Holy Ghost to communicate it. And the particular difficulty in the present case is only, if we believe the Apostle Paul, Christendom's conceit, which assumes, or rather presumes, that the fall of the Jew is final and that the Gentile has supplanted him forever. The truth is that God will not spare the Gentiles in their present and growing unbelief, but will assuredly recall in His mercy Israel ere long about to repent. Those that now wait for Christ, with the risen saints, shall be caught up to Him, and the Deliverer will come out of Zion and turn away ungodliness from Jacob. If the King of kings and Lord of lords enter on so now a position, it would be singular indeed if all were not changed in accordance with it and in consequence of it. This is precisely what the prophets show in contradistinction from the Epistle to the Hebrews as well as all the rest of the apostolic Epistles. Our wisdom is to learn of God by His word and Spirit, not to judge of scripture by conclusions drawn from our own position, circumstances, or even relation to God. Let us leave room for the various evolutions and displays of His glory in the ages to come, instead of making His present ways (profound and blessed as they are) an exclusive standard: a snare natural enough to man's narrow and selfish mind, but withering to all growth in and by the knowledge of God.

But we must turn to the opening words of the vision. “In the five and twentieth year of our captivity, in the beginning of the year, in the tenth day of the month, in the fourteenth year after that the city was smitten, in the selfsame day the hand of Jehovah was upon me, and brought me thither. In the visions of God brought he me into the land of Israel, and set me upon a very high mountain, and upon it was as it were a city on the south. And he brought me thither, and, behold, there was a man, whose appearance was like the appearance of brass, with a line of flax in his hand, and a measuring reed; and he stood in the gate. And the man said unto me, Son of man, behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, and set thine heart upon all that I shall show thee; for to the intent that I might show them unto thee art thou brought hither: declare all that thou seest to the house of Israel.” (Ver. 1-4.)

The declared aim of the vision is thus evident. God certainly did not reveal the mystery of Christ and the church to Israel or to any other, but kept it secret in Himself till the due moment came to

make it known. Much of man's eventful trial yet remained. God had yet to send His one Son—the Heir, not to speak of prophets who followed Ezekiel and preceded John the Baptist. After Christ too He would add the final testimony to the risen and glorified Lord by the Spirit, besides His presence in humiliation in their midst. Accordingly the vision is of Israel's hopes when restored to their land, to show them how complete the work shall be in the last days, above all (spite of their past sins) in respect of God's presence in a new and suited sanctuary—a presence never more to be lost, least of all when time yields to eternity and to the new heavens and earth in their fullest meaning.

Chapter 83

Notes on Ezekiel 40:5-49

It is commonly laid down that the four main lines of divergence among interpreters are these—1, the historico-literal, adopted by Villalpand, Grotius, &o., who make these chapters (40-48.) a prosaic description, intended to preserve the memory of Solomon's temple; 2, the historico-ideal of Eichhorn, Dathe, &c., which makes them a vague announcement of future good; 3, the Jewish theory of Lightfoot, &c., which assumes that the idea was actually adopted by the returned remnant; and 4, the Christian or allegorical hypothesis, which was that of Luther and other reformers, and followed elaborately by Cocceius, &c., and indeed generally by many to the present day, which essays to discover in them an immense system symbolic of the good in store for the church. But this leaves out the fifth, and, I have no doubt, the only true interpretation, which sees in these chapters the suited conclusion to the entire prophecy, and especially akin to the chapters which precede, the prediction of the complete re-establishment in the last days of Israel, then converted and in the possession of every promised blessing forever in their land, with the glory of Jehovah in their midst. This is the only proper Messianic fulfillment of the vision, which accordingly must be taken in its simple and just grammatical import, literal, symbolic, or figurative, as the context in each passage may decide.

Thus, in the vision that follows in the chapter before us, we have a measured description chiefly of the temple courts and their appendages, the ■ερ■ν, (as in chapter 41, of the να■ς, or ο■κος), the porch of which alone had been given in the chapter before, with a sequel in chapter 42, which may be viewed as concluding the first part of the description, and is important in destroying the notion that there was, or could be, any real resemblance between the prophetic vision of Ezekiel and any temple yet realized. The “wall on the outside of the house round about” (40:5) is not measured till we come to the end of chapter 42, where it is declared to be 500 reeds square, which, given as it is with the most express exactitude, cannot be allowed to be an “hyperbole,” without shaking the character of the prophet, and of scripture in general; that is, the precincts are to take in considerably more than the entire city did. How this can be may perhaps be shown when we come to the passage. It is enough here to remark that, if true, the temple intended by the prophet must be looked for in the future, to which, indeed, all its surroundings point. One can understand also a past tabernacle typical of present heavenly things in Christ; but here it is a prophecy of what will only be accomplished for Israel in their land, when the church is changed at Christ's coming and reigns with Him, over the earth. There is no room therefore, for the Christian or allegorical application; that to the past Jewish we have seen to be a failure, yea, impossibility; and the vague ideal we may dismiss as scarce a remove from infidelity. As regards the prophets, disciples now, as of old, are foolish, and slow of heart to believe them. The future view is not only the sole sound one, but really alone possible. At the same time, while maintaining that all the evidence is in favor of a future temple for Israel under Messiah and the new covenant, there may be also many a lesson of. truth and righteousness couched under the building and ritual and general order here laid down, without endorsing all the excellent John Bunyan's fancies, still less his confusion of all the temples of scripture, Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, Herod's, and this of Ezekiel. But as to such

applications, we need a vigilant watch lest we pervert the holy word of God; and I trust myself to be reticent rather than thus offend.

On the details of our chapter there seems little to remark. In the first section (ver. 6-16) the eastern gate is measured, threshold and posts, porch within and without, chambers on both sides, breadth of the entry, length of gate and pillars, the reed consisting of six cubits, and each cubit of a handbreadth above the ordinary length. In the second (ver. 17-23), where the outer court comes before us, its gate towards the north is measured, its chambers, posts, porches, and steps, with the distance between the gate of the inner court opposite to those looking east and north. In the third (ver. 24-27) we have the measure of the south gate, with its appurtenances, as before, with the distance from a southern gate of the inner court. This gate is next measured (ver. 28-31) similarly; and the eastern gate of the same court, and the northern also (ver. 35-38). Then follows a description, in verses 38 to 43, of the cells and entrances by the columns of the gates, and the eight tables of hewn stones for slaying the burnt-offerings, &c., four on each side; and (ver. 44-47) without the inner gate cells for the singers; one, looking to the south, for the priests that had charge of the house; and one, toward the north, for those that had charge of the altar; (the court itself being 100 cubits square, with the altar before the house.) The chapter concludes with measuring the porch of the house, length and breadth, with the gate (ver. 48, 49).

It will be noticed that the sons of Zadok are specified for the service of the house. They had the pledge of that everlasting priesthood which was annexed to Aaron's line. What Phinehas, son of Eleazar, had guaranteed to him forever falls in due time to Zadok, who, under Solomon's reign, set aside the line of Ithamar according to the judgment of the Lord predicted to Eli.

Chapter 84

Notes on Ezekiel 41

It has, I confess, struck me much that our prophet speaks nothing of gold or silver in his prediction of the future temple. It is notorious how prominent is the use of each in the tabernacle of old, and how characteristic of Solomon's building was the use at least of gold. Why is this? A few suggestions on the divine idea of each may be helpful; but we must take care, not only that it be truth that we own, but how we use it.

Gold, then, seems to be regularly used in scripture as symbolic of divine righteousness; and this in the aspect, not of earthly judgment, which vindicates Him (this is rather set forth by brass), but of what we draw near to on high. Hence we see the difference between the altar of burnt-offering and that of incense, while the fullest illustration of the gold appears in the ark with its mercy-seat of solid gold. Silver we see in certain parts of the tabernacle, as in the sockets for the boards and the pillars, with their hooks and fillets also. It typifies grace, being the ransom-money of Israel. Hence we see the propriety of silver as well as of gold in that which figures the tabernacle for the people passing through the wilderness, of gold (and not silver) characterizing the heavenly city in Rev. 21, while neither is named by the prophet in his description of the millennial sanctuary we have now before us. It is not that one can doubt that gold is implied here also, but this only makes the absence of all express account of it more striking.

On the chapter little need be said for my present purpose. The prophet is brought from the outer precincts to view the house itself. “And he brought me to the temple; and be measured the posts, six cubits broad on the one side, and six cubits broad on the other side, the breadth of the tabernacle. And the breadth of the door [was] ten cubits, and the sides of the door five cubits on the one side, and five cubits on the other side; and he measured its length, forty cubits, and the breadth, twenty cubits.” (Vers. 1, 2.)

Next we look within. “Then went he inward, and measured the posts of the door, two cubits, and the door six cubits, and the breadth of the door seven cubits. So he measured its length twenty cubits, and the breadth twenty cubits, before the temple; and he said to me, This [is] the most holy.” (Vers. 3, 4.)

“After this he measured the wall of the house, six cubits, and the breadth of a side-chamber four cubits, round about the house on every side. And the side-chambers [were], one over another, three and thirty times; and they entered into the wall which [was] on the house, for the side-chambers round about, that they might be fastened on, but they were not fastened on the wall of the house. And as one wound upward it became continually wider for the side-chamber, for the row of chambers went more and more upward round about the house; therefore the breadth of the house [was] greater upward; and so they went up, the lowest to the highest, by the middle. And I saw the height of the house round about; the foundations of the side-chambers a full reed of six great cubits. The thickness of the wall which [was] for the side-chamber without [was] five cubits and that which was left, the place of the side-chamber, belonging to the house. And between the chambers is a breadth of twenty cubits about the house all round. And the doors of the

side-chambers [were] toward the place left, one door toward the north, and another door toward the south; and the breadth of the place that was left was five cubits round about. And the building that was before the separate place at the end westward [was] seventy cubits broad; and the wall of the building [was] five cubits thick round about, and its length ninety cubits. So he measured the house, an hundred cubits; and the separate place, and the building with its walls, a hundred cubits long; and the breadth of the face of the house, and of the separate place toward the east, a hundred cubits. And he measured the length of the building over against the separate place which was behind it, and its galleries on the one side, add on the other side, one hundred cubits, with the inner temple, and the porches of the court, the door-posts, and the latticed windows, and the galleries round about on their three sides, opposite to the doorposts, a wainscoting of wood all round, and from the ground up to the windows, and the windows were covered. Over above the door, even to the inner house and the outer [a wainscoting], and on all the wall round about, within and without, by measures. And [it was] made with cherubim and palm-trees, a palm-tree being between two cherubim, and a cherub had two faces; and a man's face was towards the palm-tree on the one side, and a young lion's face towards the palm-tree on the other side;.[it was] made through all the house round about. From the ground to above the door the cherubim and the palm-trees were made in the wall of the temple. The temple had four-cornered posts; and the front of the holy of holies, the appearance [was] as the appearance." (Vers. 5-2l.) It will be observed that the symbols used here express judicial power and victory: how appropriate to the millennial day needs not to be argued.

In verse 22 we read that "the altar of wood [was] three cubits high, and its length two cubits; and its corners, and its top-piece, and its walls [were] of wood; and he said to me, This [is] the table that is before Jehovah." This identification of the altar with the name of the table on which the show-bread was set before the Lord is remarkable; and the reader can compare Mal. 1:7, 12.

"And the temple and the holy of holies had two doors. And the doors had two leaves, two turning leaves, two for the one door, and two leaves for the other. And [there were] made on them, on the doors of the temple, cherubims and palm-trees, as [were] made upon the walls, and a thick plank-work [was] upon the face of the porch without; and latticed windows and palm-trees on the one side, and on the other side, on the sides of the porch, and on the side-chambers of the house and the thick planks." (Vers. 23-26.)

Notes on Ezekiel 42

The survey of the house or sanctuary being ended, the prophet is given to see the cells or chambers for the priests.

“And he brought me forth into the outer court, the way toward the north, and brought me into the cell that (was] opposite the separate place, and that [was] opposite the building toward the north. Before the length of a hundred cubits [was] the north door, and the breadth fifty cubits. Opposite the twenty [cubits] which [were] for the inner court, and opposite the pavement, which [was] for the outer court, [was] gallery against gallery, in three [stories]. And before the cells [was] a walk of ten cubits in breadth inward, a way of one cubit, and their doors [were] toward the north. And the upper chambers [were] shorter, for the galleries contained more than these, than the lower and the middle one, of the building. For they [were] in three [stories], but had not pillars as the pillars of the courts: therefore it was contracted from the lower and the middle ones from the ground. And the wall which [was] without, opposite the cells, by the way of the outer court before the cells—its length [was] fifty cubits. For the length of the cells which [belonged] to the outer court [was] fifty cubits; and, behold, before the temple [were] a hundred cubits. And below these cells [was] the entrance from the east, in one's going into them from the outer court. In the breadth of the wall of the court eastward, before the separate place, and before the building [were] cells. And the way before them [was] as the appearance of the cells which [were] northward, as long and broad as they; and all their outlets according to their fashions and according to their doors. And according to the doors of the cells which [were] toward the south, a door at the head of the way, the way directly before the wall eastward, when one entereth into them.” (Vers. 1-12.)

This account of the chambers for the priests is followed by express regulations as to their eating in them, their laying the offerings in their service, and their dress within and without.

“And he said to me, The cells northward [and] the cells southward, which [are] before the separate place, [are] cells of the holy place, where the priests who draw near to Jehovah shall eat the most holy things; there they shall place the most holy things, both the meat-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering, for the place [is] holy. When the priests enter in, they shall not go forth from the holy [place] into the outer court, but they shall leave there their garments with which they ministered, for they [are] holy, and put on other garments, and shall approach the [place] that [is] for the people.” (Vers. 18, 14.)

The closing paragraph is a summary of the general extent. “And he finished the measurements of the inner house, and brought me out by way of the gate that looketh eastward, and measured it round about. He measured the east side with the measuring-reed, five hundred reeds, with the measuring-reed, round about. He measured the north side, five hundred reeds; with the measuring-reed round about. He measured the south side, five hundred reeds, with the measuring-reed. Turning to the west side, he measured five hundred reeds with the measuring-reed. He measured. it by its four sides; it had a wall round about, five hundred long, and five hundred broad, to make a separation between the holy and the profane place.” (Vers.

15-20.)

It is well known that there has been no little debate as to the reading in verse 16, and whether the word here used (íéÄðÈ÷) should be taken in the sense of “reeds” or not; for that of the text (five cubits) is clearly an error of transcription. Some would strike out the measure altogether (and the LXX. waver in the verses). Doubtless, the space is greatly larger, than Mount Moriah as it is; but this is a small difficulty to the believer, who looks for great physical change according to prophecy. To view it as, hyperbolical, and yet as leaving the literal interpretation intact, seems to me not only unbelieving but absurd.

Chapter 86

Notes on Ezekiel 43:1-12

An incomparably more august sight now opens for the prophet. The Shechinah of Jehovah displays itself, returning to dwell in the midst of His people.

“And he brought me to the gate, the gate that faceth the east. And, behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east, and his voice [was] as the sound of many waters, and the earth shined with his glory. And it was] according to the appearance of the vision which I saw, according to the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city; and the visions [were] like the visions that I saw by the river Chebar; and I fell on my face. And the glory of Jehovah came into the house by the way of the gate whose aspect [is] toward the east. And the Spirit took me up and brought me into the inner court; and, behold, the glory of Jehovah filled the house.” (Ver. 1-5.)

The force of this is clear enough, if men were but simple. It is the sign of God's return to Israel whom He had left ever since the carrying of the Jews to Babylon. But the return from Babylon in no way satisfies the prophecy; nor yet even the mission of the Messiah. He Himself lets us know, as we learn from elsewhere also, that the seasons of Gentile supremacy were then, as they are still, in progress. Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. The Son of man at His appearing will gather Israel again and judge all the nations. Jehovah will then govern the earth with Jerusalem as His earthly center. Of this the return of the Shechinah is the symbol. When it left, the Jews ceased to be the recognized people of Jehovah; when they are taken up again under Messiah and the new covenant, the glory comes back. No mistake can be greater than the idea that this vision applies to the first advent of Christ in humiliation when the Jews rejected and crucified Him. The prophecy requires us to believe that the glory will be actually restored; but it was not, when the Jews returned by Cyrus' proclamation, any more than when the Lord Jesus was here; it will be, when He returns to reign. Theocracy will then be established and flourish as long as the earth endures; for it will rest on Christ, not on the first man with all his failures under law. With grace as its foundation, “glory will dwell in the land,” and this henceforth immutably. Then and not before shall the creature rejoice. Meanwhile it groans, but in hope, for all of it shall be delivered; and Christ is the sole deliverer at His coming in power and glory.

“And I heard [him] speaking to me from the house, and a man was standing by me. And he said to me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel forever: and the house of Israel shall no more defile my holy name, they nor their kings, by their whoredom, and by the carcases of their kings in their sepulchers; while they set their threshold beside my threshold, and their doorpost beside my doorpost, and the wall between me and them, they even defiled my holy name with their abominations which they committed, so that I consumed them in mine anger. Now let them remove their whoredom and the carcases of their kings far from me; and I will dwell in the midst of them forever.” (Ver. 6-9.)

There was a dwelling of God in the midst of Israel of old, after He had wrought redemption for them and brought them out of the land of Egypt. At once they sung His praise when delivered from

the house of bondage. “Thou leadest forth thy people whom thou hast redeemed; thou guidedst it in thy strength unto the habitation of thy holiness.... Thou wilt bring them and plant them on the mountain of thine inheritance, the place, O Jehovah, which thou hast wrought for thy dwelling, the sanctuary, O Lord, thy hands have established.” (Ex. 15:13, 17.) But there was more than anticipation; for He adds (chap. 29:45, 46) “I will dwell among the children of Israel, and I will be their God, and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt that I may dwell among them.” The temple was the same thing in substance; only it was suited to the established state of Israel in the land, not the tabernacle which wandered with the Israelites up and down the wilderness. But in either case, as this was but an external redemption, so His dwelling was of an outer sort and contingent on their fidelity to Him as witnesses of the one true God and placed under the responsibility of His law. The result was, as must always be for the first man, ruin.

Afterward in due time came the Lord Jesus, the Son of man, the true temple of God, and this in His case alone without blood, for He only was without sin, the Holy One of God. Alas! He was refused, and all the hopes of Israel and man after the flesh were buried in His grave. But the grace of God wrought redemption in Him crucified; and a new dwelling for God was formed in those who confessed His name, whether Jews or Gentiles, builded together for a habitation of God by the Spirit. It is the church and goes on still, whatever be the ruined state of that holy temple.

That however of which Ezekiel speaks is none of these things, but the dwelling which Jehovah will make for Himself “in the land of the children of Israel forever.” Of this we hear much and often in the later Psalms, especially Psa. 132 As yet it is wholly unaccomplished. Why should it be thought an incredible thing that God should thus dwell in the midst of Israel here below? Doubtless He is now forming a body for heaven by virtue of redemption in Christ. But its worth will be unexhausted for the earth; and grade will work afresh in power for Israel and the nations, as now for the church, that all the universe may know the virtues of Christ's blood, and behold the glory of God to the blessing of the once sick and weary creation delivered from its long and otherwise hopeless thralldom. Moral evil and religious pravity shall vanish away. All will be to the praise of the only worthy One. The people who had so long wrought mischief in the earth will be ashamed of their defilements and rebellion against Jehovah, and be the witness of His mercy in that day yet more than they have been of His consuming anger.

So even then the prophet is commanded to set the house before Israel in its measured pattern, that they might feel of what their iniquity deprived them. Deeply will the vision act on them by-and-by.

“Thou, O son of man, tell the house of Israel of the house that they may be ashamed of their iniquities, and let them measure the pattern. And if they are ashamed of all that they have done, let them know the form of the house, and its arrangements, and the goings out of it, and the comings in of it, and all the forms of it, and all the laws of it; and write it in their sight, that they may observe all its forms and all its statutes and do them. This [is] the law of the house: on the summit of the mountain shall its whole limit round about be most holy. Behold, this [is] the law of the house.” (Ver. 10-12.) Far more than of old shall holiness reign in that day. Compare also Zech. 14

Chapter 87

Notes on Ezekiel 43:13-37

Next in order we have the measurement of the altar, and then its statutes for the offering of burnt-offerings and sprinkling of blood.

We have already seen that it is in vain to apply this description to the past return from Babylon. Much more evidence will follow in refutation of such a thought. The present chapter is evidence enough; there has been no return of the Shechinah. The Jews were then groaning under Gentile power. Since the destruction of the city by the Romans still less can it apply. Why then should men evade the only alternative? The fulfillment is future. Israel shall yet return to the land, and be converted, indeed, and blessed, under Jehovah their God, but as Israel, not as Christians, which all believers do become meanwhile, whether Jews or Gentiles. They belong to Christ in heaven, where such differences are unknown, and therefore one of the great characteristics of Christianity is that such distinctions disappear while Christ is the head on high, and His body is being formed on earth by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. When Ezekiel's visions shall be accomplished, it will be the reign of Jehovah-Jesus on earth, and the distinction of Israel from the Gentiles will again be resumed, though for blessing under the new covenant, not, as of old, for curse under the law. Hence the total difference of what is found in the Epistle to the Hebrews as compared with this and other prophecies. There can be no doubt that that epistle applies now. There ought to be as little question that this prophecy will apply by-and-by. Those who make both converge upon the Christian destroy the force of both. The result is that one is half Jew, half Christian. And such is the prevalent aspect of Christendom, to the great dishonor of the Lord, the distress of souls, and the enfeebling of the word of God. No, we must give each scripture its own proper value, and, while cleaving as Christians to the doctrine of that epistle for ourselves, let us rejoice in the prophet's bright anticipation for Israel. The heavenly people rest upon the one sacrifice, and draw near into the holiest of all, where Christ is at the right hand of God. But the earthly people will have a sanctuary as well as land suited to them, and such are all the ordinances of their worship.

“And these [are] the measure of the altar in cubits: The cubit [is] a cubit and a handbreadth, and the bottom a cubit, and the breadth a cubit, and its border on its edge round about a span: this [shall be] the outside of the altar. And from the bottom [on] the ground to the lower projection two cubits, and the breadth one cubit; and from the lesser projection to the greater projection four cubits, and the breadth a cubit, and the hearth” (literally Ariel, or lion of God) “four cubits; and from the hearth and upwards four horns; and the hearth twelve [cubits] long, twelve broad, square on its four sides; and the projection fourteen [cubits] long, and fourteen broad, on its four sides; and the border round about it half a cubit, and its bottom a cubit round about. And its steps shall look toward the east.” (Vers. 13-17.)

Next follows the use to which it was to be applied. “And he said to me, Son of man, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: These [are] the ordinances of the altar on the day when it shall be finished, to offer burnt-offerings thereon, and to sprinkle blood thereon. And thou shalt give to the priests, the

Levites, who are of the seed of Zadok, who approach to me, saith the Lord Jehovah, to minister unto me, a young bullock for a sin-offering. And thou shalt take of his blood, and put it on its four horns, and on the four corners of its projection, and upon the border round about. And thou shalt cleanse it, and make an atonement for it. And thou shalt take the bullock for a sin-offering, and one shall burn him at an appointed plane of the house outside the sanctuary. And on the second day thou shalt offer an he-goat, without blemish, for a sin-offering. And they shall cleanse the altar as they cleansed it for the bullock. When thou hast made an end of cleansing it, thou shalt offer a young bullock without blemish, and a ram out of the flock without blemish, and thou shalt bring them near before Jehovah, and the priest shall throw salt upon them, and they shall offer them up a burnt-offering unto Jehovah. Seven days shalt thou prepare every day a goat for a sin-offering. They shall also prepare a young bullock, and a ram out of the flock, without blemish. Seven days shall they atone for the altar, and purify it. And they shall consecrate it. And when these days are expired, it shall be on the eighth day and forward, the priests shall prepare upon the altar your burnt-offerings, and your peace-offerings, and I will accept you, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Vers. 18-27.)

This is decisive. Not only do we hear of the priests, but of these as Levites; nor this only, but of the seed of Zadok, intrusted with the duties of the altar. Sin-offerings, burnt-offerings, thank-offerings, all follow in due order. It is the renewal of sacrifice when the earth and Israel come under the reign of Messiah, displayed in glory, and governing in righteousness and peace. It is the apostasy, the Judaizing, of ritualism, which seeks to introduce this sacrificial system, now that we are called to act in faith of the one offering of Christ accepted in heaven. But we ought not to close our eyes to the revelation of this future day for the earth, when God sanctions priest and people, sacrifice and altar, for Israel. If we cannot adjust the differences, we are bound at least to submit to the scriptures, which are unanswerably plain in their import, both as to ourselves now, and as to Israel by-and-by.

Chapter 88

Notes on Ezekiel 44:1-14

THE prophet is again brought back to the gate that looks toward the east. This time it was shut. When he saw it before, the glory of Jehovah came by this very way into the house, and filled it This gives occasion for the word of Jehovah. And there is ample instruction to decide its application. “Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said Jehovah unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because Jehovah, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before Jehovah; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the, same.” (Ver. 1-3.)

The entrance of Jehovah, the God of Israel, was enough to close it for all but His representative. But He will have a representative upon earth—the Prince—and the Prince shall sit “to eat bread before Jehovah.” He is to have the honor of entering in and going out by the way of the porch of that gate. No high priest ever claimed this. Indeed it is not a priest but the Prince, the earthly chief of Israel. We shall learn from chapters 45 and 46 a little more about the Prince. Suffice it to say that he is certainly not the Messiah; for although he is thoroughly distinguished from a priest, he needs to offer a sin-offering, and he may have sons. Doubtless, it is a future prince of the house of David.

“Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house. And I looked, and behold the glory of Jehovah filled the house of Jehovah; and I fell upon my face.” It is clearly the kingdom. The Prince shall be there, and the glory of Jehovah too. No approach to it has yet been seen, only a type in the days of Solomon. Greater things are yet in store for Israel.

“And Jehovah said unto me, Son of man, mark well; behold with thine eyes, and hear with thine ears, all that I say unto thee concerning all the ordinances of the house of Jehovah, and all the laws thereof. And mark well the entering in of the house, with every going forth of the sanctuary.” (Ver. 5.) It is here that men have failed to set their heart. They have not understood the difference between all the ordinances and laws of the house here noted, and the past circumstances of the temple. They have failed to mark well, and confounded all with that which has been. Indeed it is where man habitually is dull. The Holy Ghost alone can show us “things to come” according to God.

“And thou shalt say to the rebellious, to the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, Let it suffice you of your abominations, in that ye have brought children of a stranger, uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in my sanctuary, to pollute it, my house, when ye offer my bread, the fat, and the blood; and they have broken my covenant, because of all your abominations.” (Vers. 6, 7.) There will be no following of idols any more. Israel will have done with all their abominations. No longer will there be a tampering with the priesthood, nor yet a breach of Jehovah's covenant. Holiness will be observed henceforth in the house of Jehovah forever. Here he reminds them of their sins, but shows that there, can be no toleration longer.

“And ye have not kept the charge of mine holy things, but ye have set keepers of my ordinance in my sanctuary for yourselves.” (Ver. 8.) There is an end of every such failure.

“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah, no stranger uncircumcised in heart, nor uncircumcised in flesh, shall enter into my sanctuary, of any stranger that is among the children of Israel. And the Levites that are gone away far from me, when Israel went astray, when Israel went astray far from me, shall even bear their iniquity. Yet they shall be ministers in my sanctuary, having charge of the gates of the house, and ministering to the house. They shall slay the burnt-offering, and the sacrifice for the people; and they shall stand before them, to minister unto them. Because they ministered unto them before their idols, and caused the house of Israel to fall into iniquity; therefore have I lifted up mine hand against them, saith the Lord Jehovah, and they shall bear their iniquity. And they shall not come near unto me, to do the office of a priest unto me, nor to come near to any of my holy things in the most holy place, but they shall bear their shame and their abominations which they have committed. But I will make them keepers of the charge of the house, for all the service thereof, and for all that shall be done therein.” (Ver. 9-14.)

Thus the Levites who had turned aside will feel their shame in the days of the kingdom. They are degraded from their proper work—at least in its higher parts—and are only allowed to do menial service for the sanctuary. Sad contrast with the Levites in the days of Moses, when even Aaron revolted! But it is the days of the kingdom, and righteousness governs. Past reputation will not suffice. If their sons have walked unfaithfully before the Lord appears in glory, they must bear the consequences. The Lord shall be exalted in that day, and those who have humbled themselves will He exalt in due time.

So Israel must here learn in due time upon the earth. We have had the Prince and the Levites; the rest of the chapter concerns the priests.

Chapter 89

Notes on Ezekiel 44:15-31

If evidence be wanted to know the just application of this final vision (chaps. 40-48.), one can hardly conceive of anything plainer or more decisive than the latter verses of our chapter convey. It is not at all a ministry to preach the good news of God in indiscriminate grace or to establish the children of God in His truth and their privileges. The church state is gone before this prophecy begins to be fulfilled, as surely as that church state began long after the prophecy was written. As we have seen the house of Jehovah with its inner and outer courts, its gates and its porches, its separate place, its chambers, and its sanctuary, so now we have the sons of Zadok as the priests the Levites who alone are authorized to draw near in divine services for Israel.

It is in vain to plead that under Christianity there are priests; for this does not mean a class of Christian officials who represent their brethren and enjoy a greater nearness to God than the rest. It is the mystic priesthood of those who believe in Christ. They are all free to draw near to God, being equally brought nigh by the blood of Jesus. To assert a relationship of greater nearness for some is to deny the gospel not only for the others but for all; inasmuch as it is the very essence of it that grace now puts all who are Christ's in the same absolute perfection by His blood. The efficacy of His sacrifice is complete, unchanging and everlasting. He annuls the work of Christ who attributes to it a various value; he has only a human traditional notion of it; he has not learned what Gad reveals as to it. The teaching accordingly of the New Testament is that all who believe are priests. The same precious blood which has blotted out their sins has brought themselves near to God. They are in Christ before Him. As there was no difference of old in their sinfulness, so is there none in their access to God. We have therefore, all alike, boldness for entering into the holy places by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way which He has dedicated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh. We are a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifice to God by Jesus Christ, yea, a royal priesthood to set forth the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness to His wonderful light.

But here it is a certain favored portion of the chosen people who could represent all where the rest could not go; and as this is an earthly priesthood, so the offerings are akin. “But the priests the Levites, the sons of Zadok, that kept the charge of my sanctuary when the children of Israel went astray from me, they shall come near to me to minister unto me, and they shall stand before me to offer unto me the fat and the blood, saith Jehovah God: They shall enter into my sanctuary, and they shall come near to my table, to minister unto me, and they shall keep my charge.” (Vers. 15,18.) “The fat” and “the blood” according to the law were Jehovah's portion, as we see claimed punctiliously in the directions for the peace-offering. (Lev. 3; 7) It has been pointed out already that, though the altar in the Old Testament is designated the table of Jehovah, nowhere is the Lord's table in the New Testament spoken of as His altar. The altar of old might fittingly be styled His table because thereon was laid and consumed “the food of the offering made by fire unto Jehovah.” This in no way applies to the New Testament, where it is no question of any such oblation but of the church's communion in the remembrance of Christ and thus in showing forth His death.

The details quite fall in with the remarks just made and confirm them. Thus linen was enjoined for the priestly ministration and wool forbidden; and this for the head as well as the body. Their ordinary clothes are all well outside, but they must wear the due priestly garments in their office and lay them in the holy chambers. They must neither shave their heads nor wear long hair; they must drink no wine when they enter into the inner court. They must not marry a widow save of a priest or maidens of Israel. “And it shall come to pass, [that] when they enter in at the gates of the inner court, they shall be clothed with linen garments; and no wool shall come upon them, whiles they minister, in the gates of the inner court, and within. They shall have linen bonnets upon their heads, and shall have linen breeches upon their loins; they shall not gird [themselves] with anything that causeth sweat. And when they go forth into the utter court, into the utter court to the people, they shall put off their garments wherein they ministered, and lay them in the holy chambers, and they shall put on other garments; and they shall not sanctify the people with their garments. Neither shall they shave their heads, nor suffer their looks to grow long; they shall only poll their heads. Neither shall any priest drink wine, when they enter into the inner court. Neither shall they take for their wives a widow, nor her that is put away: but they shall take maidens of the seed of the house of Israel, or a widow that had a priest before.” (Ver. 17-22.) It is clearly a repetition of Levitical order for the earthly priests of Israel in the days of the future kingdom, with even increase of strictness in this that all the priests are to be put under the conditions of marriage laid of old on the high priest. But in their literal bearing these precepts have no reference to Christians, still less to any class among them.

Their duties are next shown to embrace both ceremonial and judicial decisions. “And they shall teach my people [the difference] between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the unclean and the clean. And in controversy they shall stand in judgment; they shall judge it according to my judgments; and they shall keep my laws and my statutes in all mine assemblies; and they shall hallow my Sabbaths.” (Vers. 23, 24.)

The law of defilement for the dead holds as rigidly as ever. “And they shall come at no dead person to defile themselves; but for father, or for mother, or for son, or for daughter, for brother, or for sister that hath had no husband, they may defile themselves. And after he is cleansed, they shall reckon unto him seven days. And in the day that he goeth into the sanctuary, unto the inner court, to minister in the sanctuary, he shall offer his sin-offering, saith Jehovah God.” (Ver. 25-27.) Death may be but rare and exceptional in that day, but so much the more reason why the priests should not be under its power in any way.

They are to be content with Jehovah as their inheritance, instead of the carnal portion of an Israelite. But they are appointed their share out of His offerings, dedicated things and first-fruits, abstaining from any food of what had died of itself or been torn. “And it shall be unto them for an inheritance: I [am] their inheritance: and ye shall give them no possession in Israel: I [am] their possession. They shall eat the meat-offering, and the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering; and every dedicated thing in Israel shall be theirs. And the first of all the first-fruits of all [things], and every oblation of all, of every [sort] of your oblations, shall be the priest's; ye shall also give unto the priest the first of your dough, that he may cause the blessing to rest in thine house. The priests shall not eat of anything that is dead of itself, or torn, whether it be fowl or beast.” (Ver. 28-31.) Surely it is not needful to demonstrate that these regulations are wholly outside Christianity; yet will they assuredly be in force when the glory of Jehovah visits and governs the earth. In heaven,

or to the partakers of the heavenly calling, they are quite inapplicable. They will be lessons beautiful in their place and season. They are but beggarly elements now if taken literally, whatever spiritual instruction they furnish, as they undoubtedly may and do.

Notes on Ezekiel 45

(Chap. 45.)

Next follows the characteristic of the new age, the oblation sot apart to Jehovah.

“And when ye shall cause the land to fall by lot for inheritance, ye shall heave an heave-offering unto Jehovah, a holy portion of the land. The length [shall be] the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand; it shall be holy in all the border round about. Of this shall be for the sanctuary five hundred by five hundred, square round about; and fifty cubits an open place for it round about.” And of this measure shalt thou measure the length of five and twenty thousand, and the breadth of ten thousand; and in it shall be the sanctuary and the most holy place. The holy portion of the land shall be for the priests the ministers of the sanctuary, which shall come near to minister unto Jehovah: and it shall be a place for their houses, and an holy place for the sanctuary. And the five and twenty thousand of length, and the ten thousand of breadth, shall also the Levites, the ministers of the house, have for themselves, for a possession for twenty chambers.” (Vers. 1-5.) Jehovah thus claims His right as the acknowledged possessor of the land, but uses them for His people's sanctuary and those who carry on the worship there, whether priests or Levites. It is a fresh arrangement for the millennial age; nothing equivalent was known in the past.

“And ye shall appoint the possession of the pity five thousand broad, and five and twenty thousand long, over against the oblation of the holy portion; it shall be for the whole house of Israel. And a portion shall be for the prince on the one side, and on the other side of the oblation of the holy portion, and of the possession of the city, before the oblation of the holy portion, and before the possession of the city, from the west side westward, and from the east side eastward: and the length shall be over against one of the portions, from the west border unto the east border. In the land shall be his possession in Israel: and my princes shall no more oppress my people; and the rest of the land shall they give to the house of Israel according to their tribes.” (Vers. 6-8.) Thus Israel have their portion in the possession of the city; the prince has his, and the tribes theirs, in the land generally; Jehovah binds up the entire system of His people, civil and religious, with His own name. Thenceforward selfish oppression will be as unknown as corruption in worship. But it is not less clearly the earth and the earthly people. Heavenly things have no place here. What a blank must be in the thoughts of such believers as leave no room for such a change in the earth to the praise of Jehovah's name!

This leads to a pointed moral exhortation, addressed to those of the prince's house. “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; Let it suffice you, O princes of Israel: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice, take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord Jehovah. Ye shall have just balances, and a just ephah, and a just bath. The ephah and the hath shall be of one measure, that the hath may contain the tenth part of an homer, and the ephah the tenth part of an homer; the measure thereof shall be after the homer. And the shekel shall be twenty gerahs twenty shekels, five and twenty shekels, fifteen shekels, shall be your maneh.” (Ver. 9-12.) God

deigns to regulate all things for His people on earth; there is nothing beneath His notice.

Next, the religious dues are laid down with precision. “This is the oblation that ye shall offer the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of wheat, and ye shall give the sixth part of an ephah of an homer of barley: Concerning the ordinance of oil, the bath of oil, ye shall offer the tenth part of a bath out of the cor, which is an homer of ten baths; for ten baths are an homer: And one lamb out of the flock, out of two hundred, out of the fat pastures of Israel; for a meat-offering, and for a burnt-offering, and for peace-offerings, to make reconciliation for them, saith the Lord Jehovah. All the people of the land shall give this oblation for the prince in Israel. And it shall be the prince's part to give burnt-offerings, and meat-offerings, and drink-offerings, in the feasts, and in the new moons, and in the sabbaths, in all solemnities of the house of Israel: he shall prepare the sin-offering, and the meat-offering, and the burnt-offering, and the peace-offerings, to make reconciliation for the house of Israel.” (Ver. 18-17.) The relative places of the people and the prince were thus defined; there was no confusion, but their interests were common, and could not be severed.

Then we come to the times and seasons, as they were henceforth to be observed by Israel. At once we notice a new order for cleansing the sanctuary. “Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; In the first month, in the first day of the month, thou shalt take a young bullock without blemish, and cleanse the sanctuary: and the priests shall take of the blood of the sin-offering, and put it upon the posts of the house, and upon the four corners of the settle of the altar, and upon the posts of the gate of the inner court. And so thou shalt do the seventh day of the month for every one that erreth, and for him that is simple: so shall ye reconcile the house.” (Ver. 18-20.) It is not now a testimony at the beginning of their months, any more than an atonement in the seventh month. The year opens on its first day with an offering which set forth Christ in His full unblemished devotedness, yet suffering for sin; and this again on the seventh day, for every one that errs and for the simple, that none such should be debarred from the enjoyment of God and his privileges.

But there are the feasts, as well as the reconciliation of the house. God re-enacts the passover. It is the great unchanging institution for His people, begun in Egypt, observed in the wilderness, celebrated in the land, after long indifference recovered by Hezekiah, and again by Josiah; and now anew we see that in the kingdom Israel are still to keep the feast of seven days with unleavened bread. “In the first month, in the fourteenth day of the month, ye shall have the passover, a feast of seven days; unleavened bread shall be eaten. And upon that day shall the prince prepare for himself and for all the people of the land a bullock for a sin-offering. And seven days of the feast he shall prepare a burnt-offering to Jehovah, seven bullocks and seven rams without blemish daily the seven days; and a kid of the goats daily for a sin-offering. And he shall prepare a meat-offering of an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and an hin of oil for an ephah.” (Ver. 21-24.), It is not here thousands of oxen and sheep offered willingly out of a free heart; but the prince and all the people, on the fourteenth day of the first month, are identified as they never were before in a single bullock for a sin-offering, while every day of the seven the prince prepares a complete burnt-offering, with its sign of perfect consecration to Jehovah, audits daily sin offering, and not without the appropriate meat-offering.

Most strikingly however the feast of weeks appears nowhere. There are those who conceive of the millennial day as peculiarly the era for the gift of the Spirit, and who might naturally expect this to

be then far the most prominent of all feasts. But it absolutely drops but of the list. This is solemnly instructive. The gift of the Spirit has been, and is, the characteristic of this day of grace when we have to walk in faith and patience, rather than of the day when the kingdom comes in power. It is not that the Holy Spirit will not then be poured out on all flesh, for the prophets are explicit that so it is to be in that day. But now He is come down, not only in the way of power and blessing, but baptizing all that believe, whether Jew or Gentile, into one body, the body of Christ, the glorified Head of the church on high. It will not be so in the future day. Israel and the nations will be blessed, and they will rejoice together, but no such union is predicted as one body. They are to be each on their own ground, forming distinct circles, however blessed, around their Lord and God, whose earthly throne will be Jerusalem in that lay. There will be far greater breadth then, but no such height and depth as the sovereign grace of God gives in this day for the praise of His earth-rejected Christ now exalted in heaven. Hence, as it appears to me, most fittingly, Pentecost is not found for the day of earth's blessedness, having found its highest and richest fulfillment in the church of God united to Christ in heavenly places.

But the feast of tabernacles will surely be then. This, accordingly, is here appointed afresh, and in the usual time. “In the seventh month, in the fifteenth day of the month, shall he do the like in the feast of the seven days, according to the sin-offering, according to the burnt-offering, and according to the meat-offering, and according to the oil.” (Ver. 25.) The sense of Christ's work is fully maintained, as in the passover.

Chapter 91

Notes on Ezekiel 46

We have now further particulars as to the public worship of the millennial day in the sanctuary; and this as affecting the prince, the people, and the priests, and with especial prominence given to the sabbaths and the new moons.

“Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; The gate of the inner court that looketh toward the east shall be shut the six working days; but on the sabbath it shall be opened, and in the day of the new moon it shall be opened.” (Ver. 1.) The reason why those two occasions gain so marked a place now is obvious. Those who are of God are no longer entering into rest: they have gone in. The day is come. Sabbath-keeping no longer remains for the people of God. Glory dwells in the land, and Israel are there gathered out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. They had wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. This is all past—past forever. They have been led forth by the right way, they are come to a city of habitation, yea to His city, for this is its true and deep and worthy boast: as we shall hear, Jehovah is there. “In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack. Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will be silent in his love, he will exult over thee with singing.” The sabbath therefore naturally is now made much of. But so is the new moon. Israel who had long waned and disappeared now renews her light, never more to withdraw herself. The new moon therefore fitly marks Israel restored now and for evermore.

“And the prince shall enter by the way of the porch of [that] gate without, and shall stand by the post of the gate, and the priests shall prepare his burnt-offering and his peace-offerings, and he shall worship at the threshold of the gate: then he shall go forth; but the gate shall not be shut until the evening. Likewise the people of the land shall worship at the door of this gate before Jehovah in the sabbaths and in the new moons.” (Vers. 2, 8.) It was meet that prince and people should thus worship before Jehovah, and with this distinction between them. But even the prince does not go within, he stands by the post of the gate, he worships at the threshold. There is no drawing near as we now do in the Holy Spirit through the rent veil. It is a people blessed on earth, not in the heavenly places.

“And the burnt-offering that the prince shall offer unto Jehovah in the sabbath day [shall be] six lambs without blemish, and a ram without blemish. And the meat-offering [shall be) an ephah for a ram, and the meat-offering for the lambs as he shall be able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah. And in the day of the new moon [it shall be] a young bullock without blemish, and six lambs, and a ram: they shall be without blemish. And be shall prepare a meat-offering, an ephah for a bullock, and an ephah for a ram, and for the lambs according as his hand shall attain unto, and an hin of oil to an ephah. And when the prince shall enter, he shall go in by the way of the porch of [that] gate, and he shall go forth by the way thereof.” (Vers. 4-8.) Such was the order on ordinary occasions. There was this difference however, that in the solemn feasts the prince went in and went out in their midst: “But when the people of the land shall come before Jehovah in the solemn feasts, he

that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate; he shall not return by the Way of the gate whereby he came in, but shall go forth over against it. And the prince in the midst of them, when they go in, shall go in; and, when they go forth, shall go forth. And in the feasts and in the solemnities the meat-offering shall be an ephah to a bullock, and an ephah to a ram, and to the lambs as he is able to give, and an hin of oil to an ephah." (Vers. 9-11.) Another distinction appears when he offered a voluntary offering alone: "Now when the prince shall prepare a voluntary burnt-offering or peace-offerings voluntarily unto Jehovah, [one] shall then open him the gate that looketh toward the east, and he shall prepare his burnt-offering and his peace-offerings, as he did on the sabbath day: then he shall go forth; said after his going forth [one] shall shut the gate." (Ver. 12.)

It is remarkable again that while the daily offering consisted of the burnt-offering of a lamb, as of old, it was to be prepared morning by morning, but there was no longer an evening lamb. "Thou shalt daily prepare a burnt offering unto Jehovah [of] a lamb of the first year without blemish: thou shalt prepare it every morning. And thou shalt prepare a meat-offering for it every morning, the sixth part of an ephah, and the third part of an hin of oil, to temper with the fine flour; a meat-offering continually by a perpetual ordinance unto the Lord. Thus shall they prepare the lamb, and the meat-offering, and the oil, every morning [for] a continual burnt-offering." (Vers. 18-15.) The propriety of this again seems most apparent. It was the day when the sun of Israel should go no more down. Of old an evening lamb was in every way seasonable, and full of comfort for the people to know when awakened to the truth that God had provided for that long, long night during which they had slept alas! in their forgetfulness of Him who had died for that nation. But now that they are in the light of His day, the evening lamb disappears, while every morning it abides, as a continual burnt-offering.

Next we have care taken that the prince should not overstep his due limits, in case of a gift to his servants, so as to preserve the rights of his sons intact, as well as of every Israelite. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah: If the prince give a gift unto any of his sons, the inheritance thereof shall be his sons'; it [shall be] their possession by inheritance. But if he give a gift of his inheritance to one of his servants, then it shall be his to the year of liberty; after it shall return to the prince: but his inheritance shall be his sons' for them. Moreover the prince shall not take of the people's inheritance by oppression, to thrust them out of their possession; [but] he shall give his sons inheritance out of his own: possession: that my people be not scattered everyman from his possession." (Vers. 16-18.) Truly judgment shall return to righteousness in that day. The jubilee, is then observed in all its force.

The last regulations show special provision not for meat-offerings only but for those for sin, and trespass; the state of Israel on earth still demands them. "After he brought me through the entry, which [was] at the side of the gate, into the holy chambers of the priests, which looked toward the north: and, behold, there [was] a place on the two sides westward. Then said he unto me, This [is] the place where the priests shall boil the trespass-offering and the sin-offering, where they shall bake the meat offering; that they bear [them] not out into the utter court, to sanctify the people. Then he brought me forth into the utter court, and caused me to pass by the four corners of the court; and, behold, in every corner of the court [there was] a court. In the four corners of the court [there were] courts joined of forty [cubits] long and thirty broad: these four corners [were] of one

measure. And [there was] a row [of building] round about in them, round about them four, and [it was] made with boiling places under the rows round about. Then said he unto me, These [are] the places of them that boil, where the ministers of the house shall boil the sacrifice of the people." (Ver. 19-24.) The millennial age differs as decidedly from the present ways of God with the church, as from the eternal state. We have here Israel blessed on earth during the kingdom, Satan bound, but sin not yet extirpated though suppressed, and in certain cases grace meeting it, where it did not demand a curse or excision.

Notes on Ezekiel 47

(Chap. 47.)

WE now come to a highly characteristic feature of the coming age, in connection with the sanctuary of Jehovah, waters that issue with healing power, and this with increasing volume.

Joel, as is well known, had already predicted that “a fountain shall come forth of the house of Jehovah, and shall water the valley of Shittim” (Joel iii. 18). The prediction does suppose exuberance of earthly blessing, as the token of God's favor and delight in goodness to the creature. The valley of the acacias does not forbid, but confirm this. For it is no question whether the waters could flow thither on the other side Jordan, some seven miles or more beyond the Dead Sea, as nature now is. “That day” will be subject to no such conditions. Nature bowed to the Creator, when He came to be a man and die and rise again; nature will bow correspondingly when He executes judgment on the quick at His coming again in His kingdom. It is just because it affords such an example of dryness that God takes that valley, and declares it shall be watered then; and because the east sea is one proverbially of death, that it shall be made to abound in life. Blessing will spread to the ends of the earth, and from this center—the house of Jehovah. What ought to be shall then be without fail, even on this earth, in spite of its hitherto sad continuity of failure and this because Jehovah-Jesus reigns in virtue of His cross.

After our prophet, Zechariah declares that half of the living waters should go to the hinder sea or the Mediterranean, and half to the former or eastern sea, thus adding very materially to what Joel had predicted; and this should be alike in summer as in winter. For its source was higher than the creature supplies.

Ezekiel, between these two prophets, will tell us of the manner and effects of these waters, which so evidently point to an energy altogether different from man's or nature's that Henderson is obliged here to depart from his previous interpretation. So far as the temple and its ordinances are concerned, he owns their literality. Here he gives this up, because there was nothing left for the Jews to do in bringing about the realization of the vision. But this is in every way erroneous; (1) for the Jews could do as little to bringing back the visible display of Jehovah's glory, as in causing healing waters to flow from the temple: and yet the return of the cherubim is the grandest feature in all this vision from first to last; and (2) we have already seen that, in what might be thought more within the compass of the Jews, a vast deal of the description, and even ritual, wholly differs from what existed among the remnant who returned to the land from Babylon. It would be hard to point out a single particular of agreement between their history and the prophecy.

The only just conclusion then is that the vision, as a whole and in all its parts, belongs to the future, and supposes the kingdom to be set up over Israel, restored once more, and planted forever in their land. In this point of view the words of the translator referred to may be cited, though they need correction. Having left the temple, the seat of the divine residence, and the source whence blessings were to flow to the restored Hebrew nation, the prophet is carried in vision southward

into the regions of the Dead Sea, which had been noted for everything that was forbidden and noxious in its aspect—the very embodiment of barrenness and desolation. These were now to be converted into fertility and beauty. As in their previous condition they were strikingly symbolical of the spiritually unproductive and abhorrent character of idolatrous Israel, so they were now to serve as images of the renewed state of things when God should bring back His people, and, according to His promises, bless them, by conferring upon them abundantly the rich tokens of His regard. Instead of a barren wilderness, they should now become as the garden of Eden. By the copious effusions of the influences of His Holy Spirit He would restore His church to spiritual life, and render her instrumental in diffusing blessings to the world around."

The intelligent reader will see, not only the confusion of the Jew with the church, but also the mistake of supposing that this vision regards Israel's blessing. It is distinctly the divine blessing which will change the familiar, yet awful, scene of death outside into life and fruitfulness, though flowing out from the house of Jehovah. But, whatever may be the effusion of the Holy Ghost which accompanies it, there is no solid ground to question that this part of the vision is just as literal as what precedes and follows. All is really homogeneous.

"Then he brought me back unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued from under the threshold of the house eastward; for the front of the house [was toward] the east, and the waters came down from under the right side of the house, at the south of the altar. And he brought me out of the way of the gate northward, and led me about the way without unto the utter gate by the way that looketh eastward; and, behold, there ran out waters on the right side. And when the man that had the line in his hand went forth eastward, he measured a thousand cubits, and he brought me through the waters; the waters were to the ankles. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through the waters; the waters were to the knees. Again he measured a thousand, and brought me through; the waters were to the loins. Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass over: for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." (Vers. 1-5.) The remarkable fact here seen is the striking increase of the waters, without the least hint, but rather to the exclusion, of the thought of accession from tributary streams, as in ordinary nature. It is an astonishing manifestation of God's gracious power: all gushes forth from His house, yet the waters deepen rapidly, instead of growing shallower, as they recede from their source—to the ankles, to the knees, to the loins, and, lastly, till they are a river to swim in, that could not be passed over.

"And he said unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen [this]? Then he brought me, and caused me to return to the brink of the river. Now when I had returned, behold, at the bank of the river were very many trees on the one side and on the other. Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea; which being brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, that everything that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh. And it shall come to pass, that the fishers shall stand upon it from En-gedi even unto En-eglaim; they shall be a place to spread forth nets; their fish shall be according to their kinds, as the fish of the great sea, exceeding many. But the miry places thereof and the marishes thereof shall not be healed; they shall be given to salt. And by the river upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade,

neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed: it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary; and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine." (Vers. 6-12.) The effects appear at once: very many trees on both sides the stream, and there, where death had so long reigned, fish in the greatest abundance, so that fishers should spread their nets from end to end of what had once been the lake of Asphaltitis. Still, it is in time, not yet the perfection of eternity any more than its condition, for there is still sea (if Rev. 21), and its swamps and its lagoons are not to be healed, whatever may be the ample exhibition of animal and vegetable life within and around; but there is marked exception here, as verse 11 shows, oven if we accept the view that those unhealed waters are reserved or destined for the production of salt. Lovely is the picture of God's bountiful provision in verse 12, though here, too, we may note the supply of leaves for medicine. It is an earthly scene.

It may be remarked here how singularly some of the ancient versions (the Greek, Syriac, and Arabic) have mistaken the plain and certain meaning of verse 8. All three have blundered alike in making 15+1711 äÇìéÄìÀâÇä mean Galilee, the Septuagint and the Arabic adding also the error of translating äÈáÈãÇòÀÈä as Arabia, the Syriac as the north, or north-east instead of the plain or valley of the Jordan. The Targum of Jonathan has avoided these mistakes.

The rest of the chapter is occupied with the arrangement of Israel according to their future place in the land; and here Henderson cannot but return to "the literal Canaan and the literal tribes," as alone meeting the demand of the unbiased expositor. The counsels of God stand. Joseph, whatever the dark history of his sons meanwhile, must have his portion; the title of flesh failed, Reuben forfeited his birthright; but not the original gift of grace. So the prophet begins the distribution. "Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; this shall be the border, whereby ye shall inherit the land according to the twelve tribes of Israel: Joseph shall have two portions. And ye shall inherit it, one as well as another: concerning the which I lifted up mine hand to give it unto your fathers: and this land shall fall unto you for inheritance. And this shall be the border of the land toward the north side, from the great sea, the way of Hethlon, as men go to Zedad; Hamath, Berothah, Sibraim, which is between the border of Damascus and the border of Hamath; Hazar-hatticon, which is by the coast of Hauran. And the border from the sea shall be Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus, and the north northward, and the border of Hamath. And this is the north side. And the east side ye shall measure from Hanna, and from Damascus, and from Gilead, and from the land of Israel by Jordan, from the border unto the east sea. And this is the east side. And the south side southward, from Tamar even to the waters of strife in Kadesh, the river to the great sea. And this is the south side southward. The west side also shall be the great sea from the border, till a man come over against Hamath. This is the west side. So shall ye divide this land unto you according to the tribes of Israel." (Vers. 18-21.) Did any fear that the territory might fail for Israel gathered in, every one from all lands? They need not, for in that day the earth shall yield its increase, and the abundance of the sea shall be turned to Zion, and the riches of the nations without measure. The nation and the kingdom that will not serve Jerusalem shall perish. Kings shall be her nursing-fathers, and princesses her nursing-mothers.

But so little ground is there for anxiety that the land will suffice, not only for the tribes of Israel, but for the strangers that may sojourn and have begotten children there. "And it shall come to pass that ye shall divide it by lot for an inheritance unto you, and to the strangers that sojourn among you, which shall beget children among you: and they shall be unto you as born in the country

among the children of Israel; they shall have inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. And it shall come to pass, that in what tribe the stranger sojourneth, there shall ye give him his inheritance, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Vers. 22, 23.) Who can doubt that such largeness of heart and liberality of hand are absolutely new to Israel?

On every side the evidence is complete that it is not of the past and accomplished we here read, but of the bright future of God for Israel in their land, when there will be a welcome for the stranger truly divine to an inheritance in any tribe whatsoever. So will it be with the Jew in that day, happy contrast with all that has ever been! He will learn it of God when he bows to Jesus, and blessed will be a blessing; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, such shall they give, to the praise of His mercy which endures forever.

Notes on Ezekiel 48

IT must be evident to every dispassionate mind that the distribution of the tribes in the land, from Joshua to the ruin of the kingdom, wholly differs from what is here predicted, and that nothing answering to the prophecy can be alleged since. Thus Dan is in the extreme north, not Naphtali, as of old; next Asher, and, not till then, Naphtali. Again Manasseh, instead of being divided by the Jordan, is altogether like the other tribes, with Ephraim to the south, and Reuben no longer to the east of the Jordan but following, and Judah immediately before the holy oblation. South of the oblation is first of all Benjamin's portion reversing their ancient order, in which the former was north and the latter south. Simeon comes next, and Issachar (instead of its old position, south-west of the sea of Galilee and north of Samaria) follows Simeon. Then succeeds Zebulun, which of old was north of Issachar; and Gad, instead of its ancient locality in the east, is found the most southern of all.

“Now these [are] the names of the tribes: from the north end to the coast of the way to Hethlon, to the entering in of Hamath, Hazar-enan, the border of Damascus northward to the coast of Hamath; and these are the sides thereof east [and] west; Dan, one. And by the border of Dan, from the east side unto the west side; Asher, one. And by the border of Asher, from the east side even unto the west side; Naphtali, one. And by the border of Naphtali, from the east side unto the west side; Manasseh, one. And by the border of Manasseh, from the east side unto the west side; Ephraim, one. And by the border of Ephraim, from the east side even unto the west side; Reuben, one. And by the border of Reuben, from the east side unto the west side; Judah, one. And by the border of Judah, from the east side to the west side, shall be the oblation which ye shall offer, five and twenty thousand in breadth, and in length as one of the parts, from the east side to the west side; and the sanctuary shall be in the midst of it. The oblation that ye shall offer unto Jehovah [shall be] of five and twenty thousand in length, and of ten thousand in breadth. And for them, [even] for the priests, shall be [this] holy oblation; toward the north five and twenty thousand [in length], and toward the west ton thousand in breadth, and toward the east ten thousand in breadth, and toward the south five and twenty thousand in length: and the sanctuary of Jehovah shall be in the midst thereof. [It shall be] for the priests that are sanctified of the sons of Zadok; which have kept my charge, which went not astray when the children of Israel went astray, as the Levites went astray. And [this] oblation of the land that is offered shall be unto them a thing most holy by the border of the Levites. And over against the border of the priests the Levites [shall have] five and twenty thousand in length, and ten thousand in breadth: all the length [shall be] five and twenty thousand, and the breadth ten thousand. And they shall, not sell of it, neither exchange, nor alienate the firstfruits of the land; for [it is] holy unto Jehovah. And the five thousand, that are left in the breadth over against the five and twenty thousand, shall be a profane [place] for the city, for dwelling, and for suburbs: and the city shall be in the midst thereof. And these [shall be] the measures thereof: the north side four thousand and five hundred, and the south side four thousand and five hundred, and on the east side four thousand and five hundred, and the west side four thousand and five hundred. And the suburbs of the city shall be toward the north two hundred and fifty, and toward

the south two hundred and fifty, and toward the east two hundred and fifty, and toward the west two hundred and fifty. And the residue in length over against the oblation of the holy [portion shall be] ten thousand eastward, and ten thousand westward: and it shall be over against the oblation of the holy [portion]; and the increase thereof shall be for food unto them that serve the city. And they that serve the city shall serve it out of all the tribes of Israel. All the oblation [shall be] five and twenty thousand by five and twenty thousand: ye shall offer the holy oblation foursquare, with the possession of the city. And the residue [shall be] for the prince, on the one side and on the other of the holy oblation, and of the possession of the city, over against the five and twenty thousand of the oblation toward the east border, and westward over against the five and twenty thousand toward the west border, over against the portions for the prince: and it shall be the holy oblation; and the sanctuary of the house [shall be] in the midst thereof. Moreover, from the possession of the Levites, and from the possession of the city, [being] in the midst [of that] which is the prince's, between the border of Judah and the border of Benjamin, shall be for the prince. As for the rest of the tribes, from the east side unto the west side; Benjamin, one. And by the border of Benjamin, from the east side unto the west side; Simeon, one. And by the border of Simeon, from the east side unto the west side; Issachar, one. And by the border of Issachar, from the east side unto the west side; Zebulun, one. And by the border of Zebulun, from the east side unto the west side; Gad, one. And by the border of Gad, at the south side southward, the border shall be even from Tamar [unto] the waters of strife[in] Kadesh, [and] to the river toward the great sea. This [is] the land which ye shall divide by lot unto the tribes of Israel for inheritance, and these [are] their portions, saith the Lord Jehovah." (Vers. 1-29.)

It will be observed that, as in the days of Joshua, the land was divided by lot; so it will be in the day when a greater than he takes the kingdom. The oblation is a wholly new feature of this redistribution of Israel, when He comes whose right is the crown, and whose prime care is the sanctuary of Jehovah. Prince, Priests, and Levites shall be there, each in due place in relation to the city and the sanctuary. For it is no question here of heaven or the heavenly city, new Jerusalem, that comes down out of heaven from God, but of the earth and the land. The temple is as marked here as it is emphatically absent in Rev. 21. So there are not, nor could be, priests or Levites, feasts or sacrifices, in the heavenly city of the Apocalypse, any more than in Christianity now. In Ezekiel there are essential and indelible traits, which are only intelligible to those who, believing the prophets, look for the age to come before eternity, and the fulfillment of prophecy in the blessing of Israel and the Gentiles under the reign of the Lord Jesus, when He shall have come with all His saints in glory. Unbelief of the truth is natural, and reasoning against it is not difficult; but the word of God remains as plain and sure as ever; and blessed are they who, confessing the future joy and rest which await Israel on earth, converted in the grace and faithfulness of God, are the more free to await the Son of God from heaven, our Deliverer from the coming wrath. To see with distinctness the place of the earthly people, first under the old legal responsibility, next wider the Messiah and the new covenant, helps greatly those who through grace now believe against the efforts of Satan, who would darken and destroy, if possible, their intelligence and enjoyment of their own proper blessedness and calling on high, as the body of Christ and bride of the Lamb. Mysticism is thus avoided; and scripture received in simple faith.

One more section leads us to the close of the prophecy. "And these [are] the goings forth of the city: on the north side four thousand and five hundred measures; and the gates of the city [shall

be] according to the names of the tribes of Israel; three gates northward, one gate of Reuben, one gate of Judah, one gate of Levi. And at the east side four thousand and five hundred: and three gates; and one gate of Joseph, one gate of Benjamin, one gate of Dan. And at the south side four thousand and five hundred measures: and three gates; one gate of Simeon, one gate of Issachar, one gate of Zebulun. At the west side four thousand and five hundred, [with] their three gates; one gate of Gad, one gate of Asher, one gate of Naphtali. [It was] round about eighteen thousand [measures]; and the name of the city from [that] day [shall be], Jehovah [is] there." (Vers. 30-35.)

This then is the last and chief glory—the presence of Jehovah in the city of His choice. In this Israel shall boast above all their privileges; and justly, for it is the complement, and crown of all. How bright an end of their long wanderings, and of their manifold sorrows How worthy of His redeeming grace, who will cleanse away the guilt which shed it, when they turn to Him in faith, discerning and owning at length their self-destructive folly, in the light of His love, which never wavered, but died for them, so many centuries before they broke down in shame and contrition before Him.

Chapter 94

Thoughts on Matt. 24; 25

I shall take you a little back with me in this Gospel, in order that we may get more of its beautiful spirit—to chapter 22. That chapter, at verse 15, presents to us the last great controversy between Christ and the Jews. The characteristic of the Gospel of Matthew is the controversy between the mind of Christ and Jewish unbelief; and in this we see the last instance of it. We find Him in this chapter assailed by the Herodians, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

How does He answer the question put to Him by the first of these opponents, tempting Him in a way by means of which He at once escapes from the snare laid for Him and gives them a moral lesson? He shows them a penny, points to the image stamped upon it, and tells them to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's; and thus, by this simple but expressive action, He not only defeats their intentions but delivers a great principle to their consciences. They had put themselves into the power of Caesar; they had brought upon themselves his right to be paid tribute. It was then their duty quietly to pay that tribute. The perfect mind of Christ would not be content with merely delivering itself from the Herodians' snare, but it also led Him to propound to them a deep element of profound truth, and not only to them but to us also. The first great action of divine truth upon our souls is the teaching us that our first duty is to bow our heads to the punishment which our sins have incurred. We must take our proper place—that place is the place of sinners. We are addressed as sinners in God's word. The first action of faith in the gospel is that we take our place outside the city, and cry, unclean, unclean.

Our Lord is now assailed by another—the Sadducean form of unbelief. Let us see now the beautiful simplicity of the wisdom of the mind of Christ. He brings them back to the burning bush and the voice of God that spoke from it, telling them that “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.” Our natural conscience tells us that He is the God of the living. You have more than the intimation of scripture for that truth, or you do not know it in its power. If you have thoughts of God, you will be able to answer yourself the inquiries of your mind. The witness of the truth of scripture is the mind of Christ in you, as scripture is a transcript of His mind.

In verse 26 we see the question of the Pharisee beautifully answered. Our Lord points him to the germ of the law. On these two phases of the great principle of love—the love of God and the love of our neighbor—hung all the law and the prophets. Right feeling vindicates the mind of Christ in this. Thus, in these three ways, did the Lord answer the challenge of His questioners.

Now we shall see whether they can answer Him. Read from verse 36 of chapter 22 to the end. In this we see the mind of Christ as it should be in us. He was able to give an answer to all them that asked Him, though His questions in return entirely defeated them.

In chapter 23 Jesus judges the moral and religious scenery around Him, but He does not take the sword in His hand to do so. He was judging all things morally. There are two kinds of judgment, the one moral, which gives an answer to our souls as to all that we see around; and the Other a judicial judgment, that cuts off the wicked. The first, or moral judgment, is that which our Savior

executed as He walked among men. It is not now that He judges men to their condemnation. There is no such thing as temporal judgment by Christ now. He is now sitting at the right hand of God; and if you put the sword into His hand now, you put Him out of His proper place. It is not until He comes forth as the rider of the white horse that He shall take the sword in His hand to execute all we are told of in Rev. 19. He never thought of that judgment which cuts off the wicked.

Moral judgment of all He passed through was His place; and this is your place now. If you do not see it, you do not get into the mind of Christ in this particular. You must take that place of moral judgment. You must try the spirits whether they be of God; but you must not hurt nor destroy. While you judge men morally, you must not touch a hair of their heads. If you do not take this place, if you do not use the endowment of moral judgment given you, if you do not try the spirits, if you be not able to give an answer to the Herodians, Pharisees, and Sadducees of the present day—the resistance to the mind of Christ in whatever form it may present itself, you are not treading the path of Christ, you are not following His footsteps.

That which we call Christendom has not learned this lesson. The religion of the day does not teach its votaries that this place is theirs; but we find it given to us in 1 Cor. 2. Do you value such an endowment? Do you valve the right, which is yours, of subjecting all persons and things to the judgment of the mind of Christ which is in you? The religion of the flesh tells you that in thus judging you take too much upon yourself. The religion of faith tells you that this is precisely your proper plane. In this, as in all else, let the mind of Christ be in you.

The time shall come when He will take the sword, but it is not come yet. If you do not see this, if you impute present temporal judgment to Jesus, you disturb dispensational truth; but if you see Christ in this beautiful scripture, with the mind of God in Him, judging the moral and religious scenery around Him, you see His proper place then, and learn yours now as His imitators.

I repeat, this is not presumption, it is a right view of the saint's place. If I do not judge the moral and religious scenery through which my path lies, I have forgotten the mind of Jesus. If I condemn or molest, I anticipate. His action. Look at the scenery through which He passes in chapter 23. He sees it all, He judges it all with the mind of God in Him; but does He take the sword in His hand? He never thinks of such a thing. He is waiting to be gracious, waiting to be gracious to the Sadducees as to others, if haply they might repent.

Now read the close of chapter 23. Here He writes the judgment of Jerusalem. To this effect He speaks, but—it is not His to execute yet. You pass on to chapter 24 then, and what does it introduce you to? A scene common now, as then, to me, we frequently meet with. The disciples have just heard Jesus pronounce the doom of Jerusalem, and yet they bring Him to show Him the temple How little had His faithful and loving disciples entered into His mind How apprehensive they were! How often do we find this the case, not only with them, but with His true saints at this time! Many of them, who truly and fervently love Him, and to whom His mind delivers itself, speak, act, and think as if that mind had never spoken. Jesus had been in the most solemn way judging every bit of the scene around. The disciples had heard Him, and yet they bring Him to show Him the temple, the tremendous and total destruction, which they have just heard foredoomed, passing from their inapprehensive minds. It is nearly incredible but is established in the mouths of more than one witness. This is a solemn truth, and a warning to us. See the conduct of Jesus in these circumstances. Is He impatient with them? Does He rebuke their slowness to sympathize with—to

enter into—His mind? No. He goes over all He has said again, and at great length. He takes His seat upon the Mount of Olives, and with all the gentle patience of His unchanging unwearying love He tells them it all over again. Jerusalem is not more judged in chapter 24 than in 23. It was judged before, but He repeats it all again for them, so slow of heart to believe.

This chapter is prophetically of much moral value. It shows the present action of the mind of Christ in the exercise of this gracious patience. This is the second feature of the mind of Christ impressed upon us in this precious scripture. We have seen the first, the moral judgment to be exercised by the saints; the second is the patience they should exercise towards each other. If we have the mind of Christ in us, we shall have His patience in our dealings with the souls of our fellow-saints. If we meet misapprehensiveness, mistake, slowness of perception, we must then in patient love take our seat on the Mount of Olives, and read to each other the blessed lesson again, and again, and again.

There is yet another feature of the mind of Christ in this scripture, and a most important one. We are not only here taught that it is our place to judge all things morally, and to show the like patience as He did, but He shows us that it is also our place to be perpetually watching for His return.

The end of chapter 24 and the beginning of 25 beautifully exhibit this feature of His mind to us. We are to be faithful copyists of the mind that is in Christ Jesus. I do not speak from experience—God knows I cannot—but I do want to impress it upon your souls and my own, to be imitators, beautiful copyists of the beautiful mind of our Jesus.

Look at verse 48 of chapter 24, and you will see there how admirably the mind of Christ trains the soul in its watching for His coming. How very graciously He begins! He gives our watching at first a very low character. The good man of the house watches against the coming of “a thief in the night.” This portrays the duty in its very lowest form. It represents us as watching for His return, as though it were something against us, an object of dread and apprehension. The mind of Christ meets us here on very low ground, but it does not leave us here; it trains our hearts to reach a much higher elevation, raises our watching to a finer character, and imparts higher beauty to the same features.

Let us look at the watching in its lowest exercise. It is very good, though it expresses dread and apprehension. We should take care it does not surprise us. He does not despise that. “The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom.” If we watch in dread lest His coming surprise us, it is morally good; for we shall not go into any place where we should dread His finding us. We shall not engage in any pursuit which we dread His coming finding us involved in. It is well we should be standing ready in the apprehension of an alarmed conscience. It is well that our watching should begin in that attitude, but not end in it; rather that the mind of Christ should train our hearts to a far different watching. Is it the alarmed watching for the thief in the night which your soul experiences? It is all well, it may act as a wholesome check, a great instrument for withstanding temptation. But the Lord does not leave the soul of His saints there; He fills them with the riches of His grace. If I watch for the thief in the night, I am still a watcher in the house. If I watch as the virgins, with the oil in my lamp, for the Bridegroom, I am still a watcher in the house. Let me watch with dread and apprehension, or with affection and joy, I am still a watcher. But our Lord does not leave souls watching with fear of conscience; He trains them to watch with affection and joy of heart, as the desirous virgins.

J, G. B.

Chapter 95

Farewell: Mr. R.P. Smith's Letter

My Dear ——

I have read Mr. Pearsall Smith's address, delivered at the “Farewell Meeting” in Liverpool, as reported in “The Christian” of September 24th, and now say a few words on it as you request.

It is but right, I think, to give the importance that is due to this last lecture, as it contains his own review of his course in England, and states his own judgment upon the work and its results, which he earnestly commends “to the intelligence of the ministers of Great Britain.”

In common with many others, I have not been uninterested, as you know, in the main objects proposed by Mr. S., namely, “increased holiness of life” in our daily walk, and more “entire consecration and personal devotedness” to the service of the Lord. In neither of these objects is he peculiar, and he only expresses a common want which, thank God, is felt by thousands of Christians who have been waking up to the discovery of declension in themselves, and of their sad departure from Christ's glory in the church of God, as such.

The ways and means by which he proposes to reach these objects, and which he recommends so confidently to others, are the things really in question—and by many, more than questioned. Let me add, that as a system (for it is one), I at one time hoped Mr. S. would have judged it as a whole and broken it up, as fundamentally opposed to scripture; but his farewell address leads me to fear he will only take his vessel into dock to be repaired, with possibly the removal of some avowedly rotten timber, and then re-launched. This I deeply regret for his own sake, and the sake of others in this country, who have had their curiosity excited, or in many cases really got a something which they had not before. As regards his doctrines, Mr. S. says, “I have been thrown in the way of men now, of high culture and of deep piety, and have been benefited thereby. I shall before God, with prayer, re-consider and re-write what I have already sent out: if I am wrong, retract; if I am right, stand to it” —which is all very well as far as it goes; but I doubt whether Mr. S. will in this way get into his real and true place before God.

Mr. Smith knows that some of his own friends have openly declared they cannot give away his publications as they now stand, because of wrong doctrine; and surely this is matter for conscience in confession before God. May the Lord preserve him from being a judge in his own matters, for he says, “if I am wrong, retract; and if I am right, stand to it.” “To the word and to the testimony.”

Another thing I would ask for him in brotherly love, namely, that he may not be allowed to re-consider, with a view of re-writing what he has already sent out; for this would be a great snare, and will in fact be only bringing out the old ship with new copper-bottom to conceal her defects, and new sails to make a finer show than before.

And now a few words on the “Farewell Address” at Liverpool, which does not show me any advancement, either as to growth in holiness, or personal consecration to God of which he and

they speak; but on the contrary sanctions an acceptance of conscious sin and known existing evil. Would you expect to hear Mr. S., who is the teacher and example of this higher life “of increasing holiness and personal consecration,” publicly say, “no one has been unsettled from his ecclesiastical surroundings; to churchmen the prayer-book, they say, is a new book to them; and the baptists confess they never understood their own standards before?” Where Christ becomes better known, this is the case with the Bible.

Again, where persons have been exercised upon the evil with which they are connected as Christians, Mr. S. tells us, “I have said to those inclined to change, you could not do a worse thing than to leave your church.” “Don't discuss,” he says, “but search the scriptures with the honest purpose, to gain a scriptural experience before God. This rest [what rest?] may be attained by all denominations of true Christians; your dogmas may remain unchanged but must be illuminated. [Is there no such thing as truth?] The churchman and dissenter alike need to walk more and more in the light of God and in the company of God,” &c.

What is meant, and more important still, what is the value of this “scriptural experience before God,” and “this rest,” which are compatible with a person abiding in existing evil, and all the various forms of ecclesiastical corruption in these last and perilous times? Is there such a thing as “the church of the living God"? and is there no responsibility for to-day in the words, “every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is;” and further, as to the man himself, “if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy which temple ye are"? What kind of “scriptural experience before God,” and what kind of a rest which may be attained by all denominations of true Christians, may this be, which Mr. S. has discovered for himself, and to which he leads his followers? Is this the way of holiness and personal consecration by which one may “walk more and more in the light of God and in the company of God,” and by which” God's word becomes of greater virtue to the soul"?

Whose voice are we to follow—his, who tells us, “I have said to those inclined to change, You could not do a worse thing than leave your church” —or the voice of Paul to the Corinthians, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty;” and again the voice from heaven in the Apocalypse, saying, “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues?” It is with sorrow one is compelled to add that seldom, if ever, have there been such loud professions and calls to holiness of life and personal consecration (connected, too, with an expected “baptism of the Holy Ghost,” and a “pathway of power") as have been made by Mr. Smith and his followers, and yet only seen to collapse at the very moment when an opportunity for, their definite and distinct application against ecclesiastical evil and corruption occurred.

“I will spue thee out of my mouth” were the words of the Lord (who walked through the midst of the seven golden candlesticks), as regards Laodicea. “Be zealous therefore and repent” marked the moral estimate of Him whose eyes were as a flame of fire; but says Mr. Smith, “you could not do a work thing than leave your church"; and “no one has been unsettled from his ecclesiastical surroundings.” If principles are to be judged, and the truth of their character by the results produced, what can be said of the competency of Mr. S. to hold the balances of holiness in the one

hand, or of sin in the other in the church. of God? No, I repeat my desire that he may not occupy himself in the re-consideration of his tracts, with a view of re-writing them and re-printing them, with a patch here and there, but judge himself to be unfit for any such work, while there remains a prior and grave matter to be searched out and confessed between his soul and God In secret.

In my judgment he does violence to the sanctuary of God upon the questions of holiness and sin—to say nothing of the whole scope of Christianity—and comes out with an unsanctified balance, and weighs clean and unclean to the saints with false weights and measures. If he has done this unwittingly and ignorantly, as I fully believe, yet is he on this account unfit and unable to detect the wrong, much less to put the truth of God right; and this is why I trust he may be kept from the use of his pen at present, lest he should only give proof of this to his own sorrow and shame, and the regret of those who are anxiously and prayerfully waiting on the Lord on his behalf.

This entire repudiation of conscience or responsibility to relative evil before God leads to the fact (which is evident enough in his system, and in this “Farewell lecture") that be only contemplates the individual in what is but his own personal purity.

The object becomes self, and is reduced to one's own self: consisting in the expurgation of sin, and bad tempers, and cares; and “a re-adjustment of body, soul, and spirit to Christ,” accompanied by “an inward realization of purified affections,” &c.

“There is,” he says, “to be found in Christ a uniform victory over sin, not variable, but unbroken, cloudless, shadowless,” and he then asks, “What is sin?” His final answer to this query is, that “the scriptural standard is not faultless, but blameless;” and then by an illustration of a little girl spilling the ink on her mother's dress, and “much pleased with the result,” he reduces God's standard to mere consciousness, and this little girl's “conception” of not having done a wrong thing “So all that is beyond our conception,” he says, “is met and cleansed every moment by the blood of Christ, and in our Christ we have resource for uniform victory over sin.” If so, why were sins of ignorance to be atoned for? He also speaks of “the commencement of a long life of sanctification,” and that “there must be complete consecration to God, and complete trust in His promises” —which is all a turning back to Judaism, and reducing Christians to an inward realization of a lower purity. “Thus has come a harmony into my existence,” he says, “a re-adjustment of the whole nature, spirit, soul, and body to Christ, that must be the wonderful reality of the words, ‘Christ formed in you,' ‘Christ in you,' the ‘being filled with the Spirit,' the ‘not I, but Christ liveth in me,' and 'the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God.'“ (See “Holiness through Faith,” p. 19.)

All this reasoning, and from these precious scriptures too, shows how much the system consists of making everything of self as the object down upon this earth, instead of the Christian's portion and state with the ascended Son of man in heaven at the right hand of God in glory. He borrows from Christ, it is true (as the scriptures just quoted prove), what is necessary to produce all these effects; but it is to re-adjust the Adam nature in order to get an inward state and realization of purified affections, &c.

In result, it separates Christ from us, as the one and only object for the soul, and makes the state of the soul an object to itself instead; and then necessarily and naturally modifies the standard of holiness, so as to bring it down to one's reach; and of sin, so as to escape its condemnation.

Otherwise, why take such an example as the little child and the ink-bottle, and its want of conception to excuse its misconduct as to the mother's dress, instead of “If we walk in the light, as he (God) is in the light, we have fellowship one with another"? Take another instance of dropping the standard of holiness and sin to suit a present state and condition on earth— “If we could see into everything future in our life, we could never take another step; but God progressively shows it to us.” This is applied by Mr. Smith to the church too— “may the church walk in Christ, not in self, not faultless, but blameless before God.” What confusion is here!

If the state of a believer in Christ were looked at as accepted and complete in Christ, why make this distinction between “faultless” and “blameless?” For surely looked at as in Him, which is our true and changeless standing and state, we are both “unblameable in holiness and unrebukable in love.” If we have for our souls another state and experience for this present life, then it is plain the perfect example and faultless, yea, sinless, nature of Christ will not do for us as the proper object of faith and hope any more than the absolute holiness of God.

Nevertheless, if this be beyond us now in every-day experience and in positive conformity, as it certainly is, and must be till His coming, it is not beyond that mighty power of God to effect which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, &c., as Head of the new creation of God. Do you think that these variations, and this sliding scale of holy and unholy, clean and unclean, faultless and blameless, &c., would be necessary, if the new creation with Christ the second Adam were the one object before the soul? Are we, or are we not, on the other side of the cross, and by means of it, through death to the old man and our resurrection with the new, united to Christ in life and righteousness and glory? We are not in the flesh, nor of the world, even as He was not of the world. Is there merely a re-adjustment of our nature, body, soul, and spirit to Christ? or is it true that “if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away and all things are become new, and all things are of God"?

The witness and testimony of the Holy Ghost is certainly to Christ where He is, and as He is—and He is likewise in us, the assurance from God the Father of our sonship; yea, further, that “as Christ is, so are we in this world.” Why should we lower the standard of the new creation to any present state, if it serves God to work for His own glory by no one less than the Son of man as He is? He has begun to create and will conform us to the image of the heavenly man at His right hand in glory; and practically “he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he Christ is pure.”

I am sorry for those who accept any other pattern than Christ as our rule of life while here below, and who would make a difference between faultless and blameless to get at an ideal purity another way. Was not Christ both faultless and blameless when on this earth? and is it not falsifying the standard in heaven where God is working for His own glory, as well as below where the Holy Ghost is working for Christ's glory, to accept any other pattern than what our blessed Jesus was and is?

There are of course other statements upon which I will not remark. Still I repeat, where separation from evil, even from the corruptions of ecclesiastical evil, around us is refused, and yet holiness of life and personal consecration to God is pressed, I cannot put these opposite things together without, as I have said, a compromise of the balance and weights and measures of the sanctuary of God; and this we ought instantly to judge. His stand-point is wrong.

In conclusion, I would observe as to the system of Mr. Smith, that it is mainly occupation with the flesh, with sin in oneself and what it produces; though accompanied it may be with what he calls a uniform victory over sin and the world through faith. Some such difference of ministry is stated by John the Baptist when speaking of himself in contrast with Christ; “he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth. He that cometh from heaven is above all, and what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth.” As a consequence, there is but little use made of John's Epistles except one verse— “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin” —and this, as you know, is misused by him. The new nature, and “that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested to us,” of which John speaks, and which is in fact the apostle's subject, has but a small place with Mr. Smith or his system. “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit [practice] sin, because his seed abideth in him, and he cannot sin because he is begotten of God,” is a truth which, as you will easily understand, cannot well be worked up in his theory. So likewise “whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world,” is seldom or never used, for the same reason; whereas the latter part of this verse is of constant occurrence, and “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” In short, the partial use of such fundamental scriptures as these, and indeed, John's Epistle, at large, as well as the misuse of others not only in John but in the Romans, &c., guide exactly to the defects, not to use any stronger and more exact word, of all such systems as this of Mr. Smith, and shows where they all break down by making one's own state and experience here the object, instead of Christ.

It is not the new creation with the Second Adam at its head, and God in sovereign power by the Holy Ghost quickening the dead in trespasses and sins, raising them up together with Christ, and making them sit together in heavenly places in Christ, which flows forth fresh and full from his soul as one who is there in the full glow of what satisfies the Father's love to give to His Son. On the contrary, this when referred to is merely called a standing, and, let me say, coldly declared to be a “judicial” standing! Why this, except it be that his system is so exclusively moral and human—so wrongly subjective as to be all but confined to the state and experience of a person either with or without a temper, and the absence of daily cares; having at the best a uniform victory over sin, except as to what is not known of evil in the flesh, through want of perception or conception, like the little girl? Such effects of faith and this holiness, coupled with an inward purity and a progressive sanctification, are Mr. Smith's objects, instead of “beholding the glory of the Lord, and our being changed (morally) into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

He has not got into the true position of a Christian as united to Christ at the Father's right hand, the Second Adam, and Head of the new creation of God; or one with the church as a member of the body of Christ on the earth, where the Holy Ghost is come down from the Father and the Son “to gather together in one” the members of Christ, and to work in the church, “dividing to every man severally as he will.”

Not being consciously in a true position with Christ in heaven by the anointing of the Holy Ghost, he speaks and urges lower things which have not to do with forming “our citizenship in heaven” by the things which are at God's right hand, but with objects which may serve to make a man happy and contented on earth through a uniform victory over a certain kind of sin, and an absence of care, &c. Is this mode of life and its experiences what Paul meant when he said, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me"? Mr. Smith contents himself

with these proofs of his own daily victory, and with confident assurances of it to others, for their encouragement; but all this must fall infinitely short of the measure of Christ, and what He has overcome to reach His present place in glory, and to give us communion with Himself there by the indwelling of the Spirit. In the end all such experiences must be unsatisfying and powerless to himself and others; because he makes his own conscious enjoyment the measure of his communion, instead of Christ and His fullness, and what the Father has given Him, that He might see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. We are sharers with Him in all this through His own most precious love, in a present fellowship and joy (imperfect in nothing save its measure in us as down here) by the power of the Holy Ghost, whom we have of God, and who dwells in us—a blessed portion! May this form our life and ways below, while we wait for Him.

Yours faithfully in Him, J. E. B.

Chapter 96

Fellowship and the Right State for It

My Dear Brother,

Not quite at the end till I turn round towards England again, the Lord sparing me and holding me up.

I have just made ninety-six hours of railroad; without stopping, and am all well. My mind fully turns to England when I have done in these parts.

Were I young, with (humanly speaking) life before me, there would be ground for staying, for the work is opening. It is in many respects on a new footing, and the question of this position and the truths of scripture as to the fall position, and the walk too, of the Christian is raised everywhere. But I am not young, and cannot think to carry out the work myself; and. God, I trust, will raise up instruments, as He has a few, It is not His mind, I believe, to be out of weakness. In the state of the church it becomes us to take part in her sorrows.

As regards your first question, I think there is a mistake as to the position of the assembly, both in the sister, and also of the brother who objected, perhaps in all. When a person breaks bread, they are in the only fellowship I know—owned members of the body of Christ. The moment you make another full fellowship, you make people members of your assembly, and the whole principle of meeting is falsified. The assembly has to be satisfied as to the persons, but, as so receiving to break bread, is supposed to be satisfied on the testimony of the person introducing them, who is responsible to the assembly in this respect. This, or two or three visiting, is to me the question of adequate testimony to the conscience of the assembly.

At the beginning it was not so, that is, there was no such examination. Now I believe it a duty, according to 2 Tim. 2 Nobody comes in but as a believer. This again makes the distinction of member of the particular assembly. Still I do not think a practice such as this sister's is satisfactory. I admit fully every case must stand on its own merits, and so be dealt with. Where breaking bread is intermitted, it is all well to mention it, though this be in some cases uncalled for, where the assembly knows about it and is satisfied; but if person's break bread, they are as subject to discipline as if always there, because it is the church of God which is in question, though represented by two or three: Christ is there. If it is merely an occasional coming as a stranger, the person not being known, it is well to mention.

What is not satisfactory in such cases is, first, it is accepting the person by the assembly as if they had another fellowship besides membership of Christ, which I do not recognize at all. And, secondly, I should fear there was a reluctance to take honestly the reproach of the position, the true separated position of, saints, and [the wish] to be able to say to others, I do not belong to them, I only go as a believer. I only go as a believer, only I accept the position. Waiting for them to get clear is all well. A true believer has title at the table; but if they meet as members of Christ's body, they are all one body as partakers of one loaf.

I do not admit them. I own their title, wait upon their want of light, but would not allow them to put me in the position of a sect (and full fellowship means that), making allowance for their ignorance, and waiting upon it. They do not come really to break bread with us on the ground of the unity of the body, if they think they are not one with us in coming; for if we are true and right, they are not one with the body of Christ, the only principle of meeting I know at all.

I repeat, in the present state of the church we must have much patience, as their minds have been molded in church membership; but I ought not to falsify my own position, nor sanction it in the mind of another. If the person is known to all, and known to be there to break bread, all mention is needless; it is a testimony to the unity of the body. If an occasional thing, the person who introduces is responsible.

I remember a case, where one growing in truth came to help sometimes in a Sunday-school, and from the other side of London, and asked the brethren if he might not break bread when there—time even did not allow of him to get back to his Baptist service—and he enjoyed the communion of saints. The brethren allowed him gladly; and, if my recollection is right, his name was not given out when he came afterward. Very soon be was amongst brethren entirely, but his fellowship was as full when he was not, and had he given occasion, he would have been refused in discipline, just as if there every Sunday.

The other question is for me a more delicate one, because it is a question of the state of the soul, as of the church, when darkness covers it. Many, many souls cry Abba Father, (that is, have the Spirit of adoption), which are clear in nothing, save that their Confidence is in Christ and His work only; and as doubting is taught in the church, and a plain full gospel unknown and even rejected by teachers, this state is the natural consequence; and it often requires spirituality to discern the real state of a soul, if really under law, undelivered or legalized by teaching. Hard cold knowledge of doctrine is not what I seek. Then there is the danger of throwing back a soul just when it wants to be encouraged. Doubts brought in by conflict, when a soul can really say Abba, are not a ground of rejection, though it shows a soul not well established. Yet a soul exercised, but not yet resting in Christ's work, is not in a right state for communion. So with young converts—it is far better for them to wait until they have peace, only carefully showing it is not to reject them but for their own good. I should not look for understanding deliverance but being personally able to say, Abba, Father. The intelligence of deliverance is the consequence of sealing. But if a man be not sealed, he is not in the Christian position. “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” Peace through forgiveness is, as to Christ's work, the evidence of faith in Christ's work, and that work received by faith is the ground of sealing. Then one is delivered; but the intelligence of this is another thing. Israel out of Egypt was brought to God—delivered. Through Jordan they entered in, were circumcised, and ate the corn of the land. But a sealed person alone is in the true Christian position, and this is founded on the sprinkling with blood, that is, faith in Christ's work, by which we have redemption, not in the knowledge of deliverance. This is its effect.

J. N. D.

Chapter 97

Fellowship With the Father and the Son

The special point in what we have before us here, as I may say in all the writings of John, is such a manifestation of the Father in the Son as should bring us into fellowship and, association with both. We have difficulties: there is the holy nature and character of God, and our state. He first puts this blessed thought and purpose of God, giving us fellowship with the Father and the Son, and then goes on to show where the difficulty lies.

As Christians we have a new nature and capacity of enjoying God, born of God, a, divine nature—"that which is born of the spirit is spirit;" and we have the power of the Holy Ghost. Evil nature has some special delight; and so the divine nature in us delights in divine things. If this were simply so, all would be very simple; but the flesh is there. Yet it is true for all that, that we should never have had the same kind of fellowship with the Father and the Son if we had not these exercises with other things that are not the Father and the Son. We have to go through temptation, but all this brings out the love and thoughtfulness of God about us that we never should have learned if we were not what we are. Man in Eden would be in innocence, thanking God and enjoying himself; but we have had Christ, that is, God revealing Himself fully in grace above all the sin. It was natural to God, if I may so speak, to love creation, but something more than natural, when God in sovereign grace commends His love to us when we are sinners. There I find what rises above all my thoughts of simple goodness; One absolutely holy, not merely good, but a perfectly holy nature dealing with one that is evil. That is infinite goodness, and yet it brings us in this increased knowledge of what God is to where there has been no evil at all.

This revelation makes us know God as we never could have known Him otherwise. The angels delight to look into it, but it applies to the affections of our hearts as applied to ourselves; for He does not take hold of angels but of the seed of Abraham. I get then the Lord Jesus Christ becoming a man, showing His holiness where sin was—not where sin never could enter—and then the patience and the goodness of the love, the perfect revelation, of the Father. He could say, "Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known me Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." "No man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father he hath declared him." Even if we take the highest character of this, we have the Father's delight in the Son Himself revealed to us, and we are brought into it in Christ, the very thing that should occupy us, He puts us, by the love that sought us while sinners, into this love; we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son; it is there that we are and thus so blessedly brought in.

I see a Man (much more God over all, but still a man) the object of the Father's delight, and the one who had His delight in the Father. "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you." And "I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." It is all sovereign grace towards me, it is true, but redemption has brought us thus (Christ having become our life) into the apprehension of all these delights, so that, while we are brought to the dust as to ourselves, it brings us to full joy. And when God revealed

Himself thus, He does not say “this is my beloved Son, you ought to love Him,” but “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased” — “I love Him.” He reveals His own affections to the Son. When we come to the death of the Lord Jesus, “now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him.” I see the sinless one, in the very place of sin where He was made sin, perfect in love to His Father and perfect in obedience. I say, was there ever anything like it? This perfect One, perfect in dependence when as a victim forsaken of God, perfect in His love, perfect in obedience: everything was tested to the uttermost— “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it.” When I see all this, my soul as taught of God adoringly delights in it, humbled to the dust as to ourselves, still looking at the perfectness of this wondrous One. I suppose the soul has had peace, sin all gone; then Christ is the blessed object of my soul, and I learn these kind of feelings I never should have otherwise known. He could say “therefore cloth my Father love me because I lay down my life,” and I say therefore do I love Him. I have got the thought of the Father about Him, It is not merely that my sins are put away; but by the Father thus revealing all His thoughts and ways in Christ as He has, my soul in looking at Christ sees all this perfectness, enough to draw out the affections of the Father because of His perfectness of love to Him and obedience. He has set Him at His own right hand in glory; I sit down to gaze at Him, I see infinite perfectness. The Father could not but delight in, and love Him; and as taught of God I have fellowship with the Father in the very most blessed object of His affections, the closest fullest object of His love. He has centered all my affections. As it is said in the epistle to the Ephesians, “that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness towards us in Christ Jesus” even to angels and principalities and powers in the heavens.

It is there where a soul is brought, when there is peace of heart—not merely of conscience—but peace of heart through the Holy Ghost, when peace of conscience has nothing to do with it. If my affections are concentrated on the object of the Father's whole delight, I know the infiniteness of the object, and this gives peace of heart. Through sovereign grace I have my delight in Him. My affections are feeble and weak; but still if they are centered on this object, I am at the infiniteness of the source of delight. He is the Father's constant delight: His delight was to do His Father's will—His meat and drink to do the will of Him that sent Him. With Him I have all things; the object is there; with Him I know the Father. I have His Father my Father, His God my God. I have the Spirit of adoption whereby I cry, Abba Father. The affections flow out according to the new nature and the Spirit of Christ. It is not supposing that our affections are adequate: they never are even in human things, but they can be concentrated—not let out to other things. We are finite, the object is infinite; confidence grows in the apprehension of it.

We are brought then in this new nature and the power of the Holy Ghost—the Father has brought me—into the very same place and title and name that Christ is in. “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God; 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.” “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” The soul goes on in fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, It cannot be otherwise if you merely take the truth, because it is the Holy Ghost that is the spring of the affections and thoughts, and He cannot give us different ones from those of the Father and the Son. For though the Holy Ghost is down here and working in us, He brings down the things that belong there and communicates them to us.

When I speak of my need as a sinner, it is not fellowship; I must come as a sinner to the cross; I want to be cleansed, justified. It brings me into it; but I must come as a sinner, I must come by my conscience, though my heart may be attracted by the Lord Jesus; if my conscience is not reached, nothing is done. His holy love, not mine, attracts me; but if I come into God's presence, He is light, and my conscience is reached. If I anon with joy receive the gospel, there is no root, though there may be sincerity at the moment; where love works, it always brings light, because God is love as well as light, and the love gives me confidence to come into the light when I find I am a sinner.

You will always find these two things where a soul has to do with God; you cannot have confidence without finding out both. Why did the woman that was a sinner come into the Pharisee's house? Because the love of Christ was in her heart. It is the same with every soul. God is both light and love. He has really revealed Christ to us, and I have confidence. The righteousness of God against sin is revealed and love to the sinner. We walk in the light as God is in the light. It is the only way we can go to God; I cannot come but through the cross of Christ. Then when I am come, I find in passing through that rent veil, there is not a morsel of sin left on me in the sight of God. I am fit for the light, and then I come to enjoy God's way in it. I have this side in coming to God, I want the cross; but then when I pass through, I am reconciled to God, and begin to learn His thoughts to look on the cross from God's side. I come to Him, and there I see all the wondrous blessedness of what God is, and therefore my heart can adore, being in peace. Having come, I have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

First is brought out simply and absolutely that as such he that is born of God cannot sin. Christ is his life: sin cannot touch it— “he that is born of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.”

But it gives us what our portion, our place is. If I only get a mixed condition, I cannot have God's complacency in it. It is in complacency and fellowship: our proper life is proper fellowship, and that in divine complacency. Our proper divine life is fellow. ship with the Father and with the Son. It is not a question of being able to stand before God in righteousness; that is the claim of His holiness and righteousness, not fellowship. If it be a question of righteousness, He is estimating in a judicial way what is before Him. And, Christ being before Him, it is all settled. But here it is the full joy that should be ours in this fellowship, and that by the perfect blessed revelation of the eternal life which was with the Father.

“For the life was manifested and we have seen it, and bear witness and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us: that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us.”

We have seen all that is in the Father's heart close to ourselves in a man. (Ver. 1.) “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father” —He was constantly before us, and we looking on Him. Here I get this blessed object before me, this eternal life come down to me in which the Father has been perfectly revealed, revealed in Him so that that which is my life reveals the Father. It is a wonderful blessedness, a truly blessed joy. That which perfectly reveals the Father and represents Him has come down here in my nature: therefore the apostle so insists on it—we have heard Him, we have seen Him with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life. There is what he first presents “these things write we unto you that your joy may be fully.”

Now comes the other side, the grace having been all brought out. This is that which was from the beginning (mark the word); now what does he reveal? He has a message, “that God is light,” that is, that He is absolute purity and reveals everything: this is what light does, it makes all things manifest. “God is light and in him is no darkness at all” —no mixture. “If we say that we have fellowship with him and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth.” It is the nature of God in its purity, applied as a test of communion. This is the message that Christ has brought, that God is light. And we walk in the light—that is, in the thorough knowledge of God. Darkness is no knowledge of God at all. If I take the world, the light shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not. That is, man's heart was the very opposite of God's. “Ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord.” “If we walk in the light” —here it is not merely according to the light, but in the light, that is, the full revelation of God, though of course we ought to walk accordingly.

Now mark another point of importance. It is an entirely new thing that is given to us; it is that which was “from the beginning.” It is not as in the Gospel— “in the beginning;” because that is before the creation. In the beginning God created. But before this Christ was there and had no beginning: when nothing was created He was—that is where the Gospel begins. But here we have got a question of associating man with God in a new standing, that is, in grace, and this is what was from the beginning. The old man is set aside; it is a new start-point, God's Son, still a men. He is the first-born, the man of God's delight and God's counsels; others are brought into the place by grace. But the cross has come in and closed the history of man as a lost sinner, and begun the history of the accepted man—that is, of Christ. “Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning” —it is Christ. The law and the prophets were before Him, but are all entirely set aside for faith, and, Christ taking the place of everything, I have got that which was from the beginning. “Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old; it was then I was by him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” Therefore the angels say “glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good pleasure in men.” (Luke 1)

Now, dealing in detail as to this fellowship with God, God is light; where therefore there is growth, if there is a thing in which the flesh is active, this comes to the light. The person with whom I have fellowship is light; the light detects if my conscience is right. I cannot have fellowship really without my conscience being brought into the light. He unfolds this both as to the nature, and as to the acting of it. We have to walk in the light as God is in the light. We could not have got it in Adam, blessed and happy and peaceful as he was; but here I have got it. Christ is the revelation of God in light; and if I am made partaker of the divine nature, it is in the last Adam. “In him was light, and the light was the life of men; and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” Darkness does not comprehend light, but light that is of the same nature does.

“But if we walk in the light;” for mark here that it is not now the law. Do not call the law light. In the law I get the measure of what man ought to be, and therefore God says, “I dwell in the thick darkness.” Christ meets it for us; but when I have got this new nature, this light that comes down from heaven, it is not what a man ought to be, but what is fit to be in the light as God is. Thus you cannot go back to innocence. Here I am, a lost sinner, and now I have found God revealed in Christ, the light of the world. This brings me in through the rent veil, and I must be fit for God's presence in glory.

Thus it is in John 13 In the chapter before “The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified.” It is the third character in which He is presented in these chapters,—as Son of man. The Greeks come up, and He says, “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.” Then in chapter 13, “He riseth from supper and laid aside his garment and took a towel and girded himself.” What was the meaning of that? “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me” —I cannot sit with you as your companion: I cannot go on; I am going to My Father, and I must have you fit to be there. You are going through the world and will pick up dirt, and I cannot have it. He is showing this, that it is not now any return to a condition of man, responsible as man, but to walk in the light, even as God is in the light. If I am not fit for that, I cannot be with God at all. There is where the difficulties come in. It is not the question—can I answer to God? No, I cannot. The veil is rent now: the question is, Have you got such a new condition and standing that you can be in the light with God, where the flesh cannot be? There is where He puts us.

“If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another.” There is no selfishness there. Suppose I enjoy the love of God, do you think bringing another in makes it less? No; you enjoy the light, and it is not a bit the less for others. In human things, if I have a loaf and another comes in to share it, there is only half a loaf left for me. In divine things we have fellowship one with another, and there is no diminution.

Then I come to the third point. Here I am in the light as God is, in this blessed fellowship, “and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” It is not has cleansed or will cleanse, but very simply an abstract statement, just as when I say 'that medicine cures the ague,' I am talking of its nature. I have to do with God in the light as He is in the light. I have got this blessed knowledge, that the light has come out through the cross, and I am as white as snow. The thing that let out the light made me fit for it. Thus there are these three great elements of my condition—in the light as God is, the fellowship of the Spirit, and the blood of Jesus that cleanses from all sin. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” I cannot say the flesh is not there (it is not sinning), but the existence of sin in the flesh does not give a bad conscience. My conscience is bad (I mean practically) if I let the sin, the flesh, act. The old man in its nature is always there. In the cross of Christ I have what meets the case—our old man is crucified with Him, and I have to reckon it dead; but still there it is in itself too truly.

Then I get the next step. Suppose it does act— “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

It is not “if we confess our sin” —I have nothing to do with confessing sin. People will confess their sin, not their sins; for the heart is deceitful enough to excuse the sins by admitting sin in the flesh. I admit the flesh is there; but why did not you keep it down in the power of Christ so as not to let it act? Therefore it is we have to confess our sins: and mark, we have to walk with that. When he speaks of sin (ver. 8), it is the present tense; I never can say I have no sin: but when of sins it is, “if we say that we have not sinned.” (ver. 10). I ought not to be sinning; I may be thinking of the blessedness of Christ. If so, I am not sinning; my mind may be occupied with Him. But if I say that I have not sinned, I make God a liar, because He declares all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: Here I get the distinction.

It is surprising that people do not see the difference between sin and sins. Peter speaks of sinning: that is the lust that comes when the flesh is active; but when I come to Paul and John, they speak

of the nature of the flesh, of sin in the flesh. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: if we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

Observe in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is not communion exactly which is the main object of the teaching there. Here it is, and therefore I get the Father and the Son, the highest expression of it. In Heb. 1 enter into the holiest. It is a question of whether I can approach God who is holy and righteous, and does not give up His holiness and righteousness because He is love; and there I get this, that I am perfected forever (the words “forever” meaning not merely for eternity, but what is uninterrupted). As Christ is always at the right hand of God, so we are uninterruptedly before God. There is never a moment that the believer is not the righteousness of God standing in Christ. Therefore priesthood in the Epistle to the Hebrews does not apply to sins. What it does apply to is this: I am perfected forever and He who is my righteousness, by whom I am perfected forever, has sat down at the right hand of God. But I am here Walking in this world, where I cannot take a step without mercy and grace to help. I have difficulties and trials; I go to the throne of God and get help in time of need. The thing in Hebrews is whether I can go as a mere sinner into God's presence. Yes, the veil is rent, and the person that put away my sins is sitting there. He is my witness that I am perfect” for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” —a perfection that never changes, for He is sitting there for me, “expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.” He is sitting there because He has nothing more to do. There are these two points in the epistle: having by Himself purged our sins, He sat down; and being perfected forever, I am walking on this earth with temptation, but He is always getting grace to help me through this world of difficulty and contradiction of sinners. There is a daily dependence on grace to help me to walk a holy life, without a question of my being perfect before God, and the constant supply of grace through Christ who is there.

Now here the question is raised of how I can have fellowship with the light, where, if I have for a moment a thought not spiritual or charitable, it is sin. The instant I come to fellowship and communion, if I let my own thoughts come in, it is gone. The smallest thing interrupts communion, even supposing I recollect myself, yet for the moment it is gone. The holy God cannot have communion with that which is unholy. Now I get what Christ is as the Advocate: “if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.” What is the ground of it? Jesus Christ the righteous. The righteous One is there, my righteousness, always there (as in the Hebrews). Thus not a question of imputation arises, but of communion. I cannot bear the thought that I should grieve the Spirit of God and turn Him into a reprover, instead of communicating the joy of God to me, the one that gives me fellowship with the Father. The moment that is all settled, Jesus Christ the righteous One is there, and He is the propitiation for my sins, I must not have one thought that is inconsistent with the place. But what makes me find it out? My Advocate has been there about it, to bring my soul back into fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, which had been entirely interrupted; but the righteousness has not been interrupted. Therefore he says “an Advocate with the Father,” and does not talk about God in that sense, because it is a question of communion with the Father, not of righteousness.

Thus I have got grace acting, not the law; no question of imputation, but no allowance of sin at all as a matter of holiness. It does not put me back to the law, nor its righteousness; but its Christ

being Advocate for me there, and the Spirit of God in me to act in my conscience, it brings me into utter humiliation before God, and restores the communion of my soul. Some chastening or other. comes. But there is not the smallest allowance of anything that hinders communion, nor the smallest imputation of it. It is the maintenance of communion practically, or the restoration of it when broken, with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, while the righteousness and propitiation remain, so that it is advocacy, not imputation.

We must walk in the light as God is in the light. Nothing unfit for God is tolerated. There is propitiation; there is provision of grace if we sin. As to imputation, all is settled, perfected forever. But we are to walk worthily of God who has called us unto His kingdom and glory, to walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. Now let me ask, do we really believe we are called to fellowship of that kind? How is it in our hearts? I am sure there is growth in this fellowship with the Father and with the Son. Is that where our souls live? It is what we are called to. It is not saying we have no sin. The sin is there, but in the power of Christ dwelling in us we are called into this fellowship. The power is there, so that I have no excuse for letting in anything that, will interrupt communion. We do, when careless about prayer or something of the sort; but there is no excuse for it. Our place is to walk in fellowship with the Father and the Son always. If we do fail, we have the Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and as with poor Peter, He restores us. Do you suppose that the work of Christ has not put you in the light as God is, that there is not that perfecting us forever? There is grace for you to walk aright. It is not saying I am weak: if we always said that, we should get the strength we wanted.

The Lord give us to have the blessed consciousness, that we have been reconciled to God as revealed in Christ, loved as Christ is loved, and called to walk in the sense of this, so that there is the constant dependence on. Christ, constant supply, of grace to depend on, the constant testimony to the One we are dependent on. It is not saying, I am perfected and that is all about it. You have to go through a world of temptation. When Israel was redeemed, they had to go through the wilderness: there is where all the ifs” come in. If I am in Christ, there is no “if” at all. But I am walking through the wilderness with that which keeps me constantly dependent. I have the revelation of Christ's power. We are kept by the power of God, and we are kept because we want to be kept; I need this power every moment, there is all necessity for it.

I know this power, and there ought to be this blessed dependence on God. He does not raise the question of righteousness in it, but puts me in this place, and then leaves me to go through the world to have the senses exercised to discern both good and evil. If I do fail, there is my Advocate with the Father to restore my soul. Unceasing grace and unceasing dependence are the true ground.

The Lord give us the distinct and full sense that the work of Christ has perfected us forever, and then that you are brought by it into the presence of God in light, and know every instant dependence on the grace of Christ, and constant grace to be dependent on.

Chapter 98

Fragment

“The power of the spirit judging thus (according to the sentence of death against the flesh) the state of unfaithfulness which was thought to be hidden from the true husband of the people, makes the sin manifest and brings down the chastening and the curse upon the unfaithful one, and that evidently by the just judgment of God. Drinking death according to the power of the Spirit is life to the soul. 'By these things,' says Hezekiah, 'men live, and in all these things is the life of the Spirit,' even when they are the effect of chastening, which is not always necessarily the case. But if any of the accursed things be hidden, if there be unfaithfulness towards Jesus, undetected, it may be by man, and God puts it to the test; if we have allowed ourselves to be enticed by him who has the power of death, and the holy power of God is occupied with death, and comes to deal with this power of the enemy; the concealed evil is laid bare, the flesh is reached, its rottenness and its powerlessness are made manifest, however fair its appearances may be. But if we be free from unfaithfulness, the result of the trial is only negative; it shows that the spirit of holiness finds nothing to judge, when he applies death according to the holiness of God.”

Chapter 99

Fragment: Bought With a Price

I am going to be like Christ in glory; then I must be as like him now as ever I can be. Of course we shall all fail, but we are to have our hearts full of it

Remember this, that the place you are in is that of an epistle of Christ. We are set for this, that the life of Christ should be manifested in us. Christ has settled the question with God: He appears in the presence of God for us, and we are in the presence of the world for Him. “In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” If I know He is in me, lam to manifest the life of Christ in everything. If He has loved me with unutterable love which passes knowledge, I feel bound in heart to Him; my business is to glorify Him in everything I do. “Bought with a price” —that is settled: if bought, I am His. But, betrayed friends, I press upon you that earnestness of heart which cleaves to Him, especially in these last evil days, when we wait for the Son from heaven. Oh! if Christians were more thoroughly Christians, the world would understand what it was all about. There is a great deal of profession and talk; and the activity of the Spirit of God—thank God—there is; but do you think if a heathen came here to learn what Christianity meant, he would find it out?

The Lord give you to have such a sense of the love of Christ, that, as bought with a price, the only object of your souls may be to live by Christ and to live for Christ; and, for those who. do not know Him, that they may learn how He came down in love to seek us, and, because righteousness could not pass over sin, died to put it away.

Chapter 100

Fragment: Reward in the Kingdom

As a rule, reward is in the kingdom, ten cities, &c., in Matt. 25 ten and four talents being alike into the joy of the Lord. Fitness for heaven is not connected with progress in scripture. “He hath made us meet.” It is natural to suppose greater spirituality is more capable of enjoying; but the object is so great after all—it eclipses us! And we must remember Christ is our life, and there all else gone. Scripture, as far as I know, never speaks of spiritual capacity or growth in it to enjoy more. Here, surely, there is such a thing. When God is all in all, there is no such thing spoken of. God may have in His eternal purposes fitted for more or less. But, as scripture does not speak of it, I do not. Reward in the kingdom is clearly spoken of. J. N. D.

Chapter 101

Glory of the Son, the Valley of Dry Bones, and the Mount of Olives: Part 1

I desire to mark an analogy which exists between the prophecy of Ezekiel, and the earlier part of the Gospel by John, in reference to the ways of the Son of God, when presenting Himself to Israel and Jerusalem, both in the temple and at the national feasts; in other words to point out (and in a yet fuller sense) the correspondence between “the vision of the glory” which appeared to the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans; and “the glory of the only-begotten of the Father” when beheld by John, in the person of the Son Himself, sent forth from God and come into the world.

In this light, the object of Christ's coming and the work that was given Him to do were twofold-embracing all that God had spoken, and promised by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began; and comprehending also the secret counsels and purposes bound up in the Son of the Father, which lay bidden in God from before the foundation of the world. Even Moses was taught somewhat of this difference, when he said, “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things that are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever,” &c. Indeed such a manifestation as “the Word made flesh and tabernacling amongst us” was necessary, in order to embody and accomplish all that the Spirit of prophecy had foretold of the earthly and heavenly relations between God and His people in and through Christ Jesus. Upon this hangs, likewise the ultimate blessing of the whole creation, which was made subject to vanity not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; for creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

The Son who lay in the bosom of the Father could alone declare Him. He was “the One whom God had made strong for himself,” and it was He alone who could as the Christ of God make every promise and type; “yea” even as He has by His death, and exaltation in the glory put His “amen” to all the hidden counsels that were from everlasting, prepared in Him as the second Adam. The Gospel of John opens, as is evident, with the glory of this person who was with God, and who was God, and who was in the beginning with God. The glory of the incarnation brought Him into our midst as the great mystery of godliness, “God manifest in the flesh,” and in this grace to us He took His place in the human family, and entered upon, His relations with the eons of men. The Baptist's testimony to Israel, that this was likewise the Messiah-Jesus, by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him like a dove, identified Him with, and yet put Him far beyond the typical “likeness of the glory of the Lord” in Ezekiel's vision; which is content to fill its place as a lesser light, and to be eclipsed in the presence of the opening glories of the Christ of God. Indeed this was the characteristic feature of all prophetic ministry, and we may say of the prophets themselves; for however willing the people were for a season to rejoice in the light they kindled, yet the “greatest of them that were born of women” said of Jesus, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” John rejoiced greatly to hear the bridegroom's voice, and to point Him out to the hopes and expectations of the people, adding, “this my joy therefore is fulfilled,” as he withdrew into obscurity.

The glory in the vision of Ezekiel was a pattern of the intimacy which existed between Jehovah and His people; and became therefore the test as to how this intercourse had been maintained on their part, while it abode in their midst as the outward witness of the favor of God. Measured by this standard of responsibility, the glory was offended and grieved as it took its course through the land of Immanuel, and beheld the temple with all its abominations, the city filled with idolatry and its corruptions; till, hovering alternately over one and the other, it abandoned the guilty scene, and took its flight from the Mount of Olives, up to its own place on high, in hope of a future day. (Ezek. 11:22, 23.)

Since those typical times the Son of God in His manhood-glory has traversed the same path, “as the fulfiller of all righteousness” on their behalf if they could so receive and welcome Him; but He was grieved in His turn by the hard-heartedness of the people, and hid Himself when they took up stones to kill Him. His only refuge was in ascending up to where He was before; and Jesus, knowing that His hour was coma that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, was also received up in glory from the mount called “the mount of Olives;” till in the coming day of His millennial power His feet shall stand there again, and ten thousands of His saints with Him. Israel too shall be willing in the day of His power.

It exercises and humbles the soul to discover how everything which came forth from God to men has been thus either grieved or refused, and compelled to retire into the heavens till another day—whether set up in type and figure, or as since in substance and by personal appearance; for where is Christ?

The beginning of the Gospel of John held out a promise of something different, for when the forerunner said, “behold the Lamb of God” to two of His disciples, they left all and followed Him. The glory of the only-begotten of the Father was thus acknowledged, and our Lord became the new center of gathering upon the earth. They abode with Jesus that day and only left the house to tell others what they had found, and gather them also to the Lord in this new place of blessing. The activities of love which dwelt in the bosom of our Lord led Him the day following to go forth in other glories, into Galilee, in the devotedness of the willing and obedient servant. It was this personal acquaintance with the Lord in the house that became the spring of testimony in the two disciples who had enjoyed it. Besides their own peace in His dwelling, they were able to tell others who the Christ was they had found, as answering to all that Moses and the prophets had written in the scriptures, concerning Him. The words “come and see,” which had gathered them to Christ, put Nathaniel also into this pathway of life and blessing. Jesus saw him coming, and said, “behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile.” The question, “whence knowest thou me?” got its answer from the Lord, “when thou wast under the fig-tree I saw thee,” and on this Nathaniel confessed Jesus to be “the Son of God, and the king of Israel.” The first ripe fruit from under the national fig-tree, where Nathaniel was sitting, was gathered by the Lord; and the secret was divulged to this Israelite indeed, of “the opened heavens, and the angels of God [henceforth] ascending and descending upon the Son of man,” the gathering point for Israel and the world, and the uniting link between the heavens and the earth. Precious revelation of a yet future day, when the nation shall be ready like its Nathaniel, to own the person and glorious titles of the anointed Christ, and be born in a day Prophetically we know, that Israel itself will be delivered from all guile, and be no longer a hypocritical nation. God will turn to them a pure language, and put His laws into their hearts, and make them to be His peculiar people. In that day saith the Lord of hosts, ye shall call

every man his neighbor under the vine and under the fig-tree, and great shall be the peace of His people.

The marriage in Cana was beautifully in keeping with these exhibitions of the personal glories of Christ, and His royal title as Son of God, and king of Israel, and opens out the works by which He was to be acknowledged. “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory, and his disciples believed on him.” In this two-fold character does He, pass before us, into the further revelation of this Gospel; that (being accredited by the glorious majesty and grace of His person, on the one hand, and by the manifestation of His power in miracles on the other) He might be owned and accepted in Israel. He comes to Jerusalem, as in spirit Ezekiel had been carried in his day (see chapter viii.) to the city of the great king, to see if she is ready to arise from the dust, and put on her beautiful garments now that her light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon her. There is a promise of joy in the land, for Jesus was called and His disciples to the marriage; but alas! the vine of Israel and its grapes are like the fig-tree with its one Nathaniel, and prove unequal to the occasion. “The mother of Jesus saith unto Him, they have no wine,” and how can they celebrate the wedding, or make Him a feast? The Israelite without guile, sitting under the typical fig-tree, left it for the “Immanuel,” when He was walking through the land; and now the One who came up to the wedding must take His place in another character, and act as the Lord of it by turning the water into wine. The time of figs was not yet, nor did the vine send forth a goodly smell. He had come into His garden, but the winter was not over, nor was the time of the singing of birds yet come. Made of the seed of Abraham and David, He had appeared in their midst at the marriage; but the words He spake to His mother, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come,” show how He felt the barrenness of Israel in those relations according to the flesh; and that to meet this need He must manifest forth His glory in far deeper words and mightier works than as the royal Son of David and king of Israel. The Bridegroom would be taken away from them, and the children of the bride-chamber fast, till in their millennial day they say, “blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” Then Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the whole earth with fruit. Jesus leaves the vines and the fig-trees, and comes out of His garden into the city of Jerusalem, for the Jews' passover was at hand.

This center of light and blessing, the beautiful temple, is next to be tested whether she is suited for the reception of her Lord, and may be found more in keeping with the character and ways of the Son of God, who comes into it that He may fill it with His glory? Will she open her gates, that the Lord of hosts, the king of glory, may come in? The “hole in the wall” to Ezekiel, in the vision of the glory, or the visit of the Messiah to the door of the temple, only disclosed its abominations. Alas! for the house of prayer, it had been turned into a house of merchandise, and had become a den of thieves. Jesus made a scourge of small cords, and drove them all out of the temple, poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables, saying to those that sold doves, Take these things hence. The feasts of the Lord with His people could not be established in the harlot city, and its temple—all—must be cleansed, and the people baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. The zeal for His Father's house had eaten Him up, and He who drew Nathaniel out from under the fig-tree, and turned the water into wine at the marriage of Cana, now presents Himself in the temple in the mystery of His decease, saying, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” This spake He of His body. An exceptional Israelite, one without guile, had been found, and in faith confessed the Word made flesh; but as to all else, Jesus did not commit Himself unto them,

because He knew all men. The light of the world had walked in their midst, and the glory had shone upon the heart and ways of man, and this is the condemnation from His lips, “who knew what was in man;” that when known in this searching light he is not to be trusted, Jesus did not commit Himself to them.

This verdict was substantiated even to Nicodemus, a man of the Pharisees, who came to Jesus by night, owning Him as a teacher come from God, and as one with whom God was, because of miracles which He did. But He who knew what was in the man, knew that the ruin and alienation in which man and Israel stood from God lay far deeper than ignorance, which might be met by a teacher come from God—and by such a teacher! This man of the Pharisees, though a ruler of the Jews and a master of Israel, yea (and because he was all this), must not hold his intercourse with Jesus upon the mere footing of God's wisdom and man's ignorance—and is put back. Nicodemus, a first-class man (and this is very important, now that “the true light” shineth) is told that he will not do, with all his standing and attainments, for the kingdom of God. He must be born again, born of water and the Spirit, and enter in by the cross—through the knowledge of the Son of man lifted up, as the antitype of the brazen serpent, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. This master of Israel must disown his standing in the flesh as tested by the glory and accept a new one with Christ, through redemption by His blood and the quickening power of the Spirit.

A question of purifying is attempted by the Jews, in this chapter but purification of the flesh, which was characteristic of Judaism, had produced nothing. At the cross of Christ man as he was in the flesh has been discovered and disowned, for the last Adam was upon it in death; and Christian purification is only by means of that death, which has put an end to the flesh forever: “ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit.” Nathaniel was drawn out by the glory of the person; now Nicodemus is shut up to the efficacy of His work on the cross—and the water and the Spirit—that he may thus get rid of himself, and be born again, and enter into the kingdom of God.

The man of the Pharisees when at his best is set aside, and at Jacob's well the woman of Samaria who met Jesus when at her worst was accepted, so that the disciples marveled when He talked with her. The light of the glory in which He walked, and into which He brought her, shone in upon her conscience, and in that searching light she owned herself and her state. “He told me all things that ever I did,” and confessed Him, “Is not this the Christ?” Precious discovery of herself and of Him! But He came to do much more than this, “if thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” —and with this He filled her vessel. The cross for the master of Israel, and the living water for the woman of Samaria, showed that the grace and truth come by Jesus Christ could be no respecter of persons. The temple, having likewise been superseded by the body of Christ, necessitated a corresponding change as to worship. It could no longer be restricted to places, any more than to persons; and thus Jerusalem and Samaria are set aside. The new order of worship is this: God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Christ being come as the true light, and giving eternal life to them that believed on Him; the religion suited to man in the flesh, in the temple at Jerusalem or elsewhere, goes away with it; and the true worshippers are they that worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. The way to see and to enter into the kingdom of God had been shown to Nicodemus; and now the Samaritan is to be sanctified as a worshipper of the Father, and drawn away from her

water-pot and Jacob's well, as Nathaniel the “Israelite indeed” had been drawn out from under the national fig-tree, and Nicodemus from his Pharisaism. The light and the life are doing their work in love, wherever the ear is opened to hear His words, or the eye anointed to behold His glory.

Israel's unbelief and unpreparedness to receive the king into the city, or the glory into the temple, force Him to gather around Himself into His own solitude and counsels, any who could lift the veil of “the Word made flesh,” and say with the Samaritans “this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

The pool of Bethesda and its multitude of impotent folk, waiting for the moving of the water, might have risen up to condemn the nation and its priests and rulers, who lay under the heavier pressure of God's displeasure, and yet waited not for the Lord of that pool to deliver them. The blind and the halt and the withered watched for Bethesda's angel to come down, though only one out of the crowd, and be the first who stepped in after the troubling of the water, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. The Word that was with God, and was God, must needs come to this place; and He calls out the man, who told the disappointing tale of many a one “stepping down before him.” But He, before whom all the angels are but worshipping spirits, had come to heal the people of all their sicknesses and diseases, and was at the pool where they lay, if they would but let Him take the place as greater than the angel.

Jesus said to the impotent man “rise, take up thy bed and walk, and immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed and walked, and on the same day was the sabbath.” Man can rest, and be at home in a ruined state of things with which he has grown familiar; but there God can only work to rescue him from the misery he is under. A feast of the Jews, the pool of Bethesda, and the sabbath were together, in strange connections, through Israel's transgressions; for in its normal state God had said, I will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt upon you, and will take away all sicknesses. Into this scene of wretchedness the Lord of the sabbath entered, not to rest, but in quickening power to deliver out of the ruin of the old, and to bring into the new. As the life and the light, and full of grace and truth, He proclaims the great fact “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” He passes through their midst, as the quickener into life, and the raiser of the dead. In this chapter He walks in the majesty of His own person as one with the Father, going under our entire wretchedness in divine power and grace, to raise up those who were bound in fetters of iron. “He that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.”

Israel with its ordinances and feasts of the Jews and the sabbath on the one hand, confronted and contradicted by the pool of Bethesda and its multitude on the other, give occasion to the Lord to identify Himself with the Father in the counsels which brought Him into the world, and to exercise that almighty power by which the morally dead could be quickened. The old creation is before the Lord, with the vineyard which He had chosen, and the pleasant plants and noble vine which He had brought out of Egypt, and placed therein. Such cultivation as He had unweariedly bestowed had not produced grapes; the boar of the wood, and the wild beast of the field, had devoured it. Forgetfulness of God, and satisfaction with a state of things suited to themselves only led them to throw over all this moral evil the covering of the sabbath, and impugn the right of Christ to work recovery in their midst or even to alleviate their misery. They vainly use the law against Him that made it and magnified it, and sought in violation of the law to slay Him whose power and grace in

healing the impotent man they could not deny.

New and divine sources of life-giving power are here opened up; for as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. The Father hath given Him authority to execute judgment likewise, because He is the Son of man. Death and the grave are also in prospect overcome, in the righteous title of “the Word made flesh.” The hour is coming when all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.” To Him as the Son of man the Father has thus given authority over all flesh (upon its proved incapacity and ruin, under ordinances) to give eternal life, to them that believe, whilst in His own prerogative as equal with God, whatsoever the Father doeth, those things also doeth the Son likewise; for as the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself. Having thus passed through this valley of dry and dead bones, and presented Himself as the quickener and the raiser of the dead, if they will accept Him and take deliverance and thus enter into the rest of God in Christ; He quits the scene, saying, I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. As in the vision of Ezekiel, so in fact with Jesus in their midst, the bones were not only dry, but very dry.

(To be continued)

Chapter 102

Glory of the Son, the Valley of Dry Bones, and the Mount of Olives: Part 2

(Concluded from page 76.)

Chapter 6 lays the groundwork for the exercise of such a life-giving power as this in the death of Christ; for how else could it be either bestowed by Him, or received by us? There is a beautiful correspondence here between the living bread come down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall live forever; and the living water of which the Lord said to the woman of Samaria it should be in her a well of water springing up into everlasting life. Besides this, Jesus is presented in the glory of His person, as “the bread of God,” the incarnate One, who came down from heaven to give life to the world. This glory is manifested to us in that new order of manhood, by which He who thought it not robbery to be equal with God (Jehovah's fellow) made Himself of no reputation, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross that He might there connect Himself with the mighty ruin to overturn it—and then gain through redemption, resurrection, and finally by ascension (to “where he was before") the triple crown of glory, which lay before Him. By such a path did Jesus enter the dark valley, where “the dry bones of the whole house of Israel lay thick around Him” so very dry, and so many, nor would they be wakened up from their moral death in trespasses and sins, nor stand upon their feet, breathe He never so encouragingly upon them. Jesus said unto them, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven, if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever;” but if this presentation of Himself shook the dry bones of Israel, it was only to relapse into an alienation still deeper, and if it moved the broken sticks of Ephraim and Judah for a moment, it was but that they might sink back again into the stiffness of death.

The Word made flesh has dwelt among them so that it could be said, “behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and by others “we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” It was this glory in the person of the Son that now walked through this world, and cast its bright beams upon “every man coming into it;” if so be that men would respond to it, and take life, and walk in the light of life with this glory; “to as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name.” The glory finally in the person of the anointed Christ, the Messiah of Israel, re-entered the temple of Jerusalem, and rode into the royal city too; but only to be grieved afresh; as it was prophetically, when in type Ezekiel was the recorder of its visitations from place to place. The nation was familiar historically with the faithfulness of “the glory of the God of Israel,” together with the “pillar of cloud” which led them from Egypt, through the wilderness journey; till in the days of Solomon this glory found its rest in the temple which it filled, and where it made itself at home with that favored people. Protected they had been, in every step of their wondrous journey into Canaan by it, and blessed under its covering wings, when brought into the habitation and house which Jehovah had prepared for His delights with His people; and now the promised seed, the Messiah Himself, the Jehovah-Jesus, the Son of God, was come down into their midst to lead them back and establish them in all the covenanted blessings and promises which they had

forfeited. Are they ready?

The result of Jerusalem's visitation by One greater than its temple, and greater than Solomon, is before us; but this inspection on the part of the glory must necessarily lead to the exposure of the moral state of the temple and its worshippers, which it detected, as well as of the city and its rulers, when tested by their readiness or unreadiness to welcome the presence of the God of Israel in the glory of “the Word made flesh.” Alas! the temple had become “a den of thieves:” a fitting but awful presage of the royal city itself, which shortly after gave forth the betrayers and murderers to shed the blood of Him who in pity and compassion “wept over her and said, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem how often would I have gathered you, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not; but now your house is left unto you desolate.” Entreated, and tested by the glory, though He spake as never man spake (as they themselves said), all was refused and lost by them in the rejection of Christ the Lord—and the glory retired from the city!

One only path remained in grace, and this lay among “the valley of dry bones.” The Lord took His place among the Jews when in this condition morally, as these chapters describe; but if they were in this state of death, He on that account was in their midst, as “the breath who had come from above the four winds” of heaven to breathe upon them. In this chapter He had gone in and out amongst them, as the quickener of the dead, the restorer to life, the recoverer of sight to the blind; and these living proofs of His power (who were made every whit whole) were walking about in their streets to convict and condemn the rebellious children. The promised glory came amongst them to lead them out into peace and blessing with Jehovah, if they would accept the hand stretched out to deliver; and the valley of dry bones, with the all-sufficient Savior of His people there in fullness of grace, characterized the ministry in love, which followed them, and which put them to the test, up to John 6. It is then that Jesus spoke to the disciples which followed Him, of the necessity of His death, in order to give life to them; and that they should have the real “bread of God” to sustain that life. Even they stumbled at these new ways, in the open valley—the four winds of heaven were inadequate to the moral ruin. Often had they heard the sound thereof, but as Jesus said to Nicodemus, “thou knowest not whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” The Holy Ghost must needs come into this valley, and do a greater work than He did in creation, when He moved upon the face of that mighty chaos to bring light out of darkness, and order out of confusion. Except a man be born of water and the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God or stand in this new connection with the Son of man who came down from heaven and yet is the Son of man which is in heaven. “He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.” It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing—the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life—is what the Lord of glory proclaims in this valley of dry bones, when He was passing through it. Many said, this is a hard saying, who can hear it? but Jesus in spirit is carried yet further and asks, what and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? and from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him. With others “the bones came together, bone to his bone,” and the word which was spirit and life in Christ had caused them to live, and they confessed Jesus to be the life, saying, “to whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.” Nationally the time of figs is not yet—these are but gleaning grapes, two or three from the uppermost boughs, four or five in the outmost branches thereof, who are thus gathered out into place and companionship with the

rejected Son of man into another and far higher glory in the heavens.

Now the Jews' feast of tabernacles was at hand, and His brethren said, “If thou do these things, show thyself to the world, for neither did his brethren believe on him.” But the pathway of our Lord is determined on, and lies through the untrodden regions of death and resurrection, that He may give life to the world. His time for showing Himself to Israel at the feast of tabernacles and then to the world go together, and is not yet come. “I go not up yet to this feast;” the world and Israel are alike too, in their enmity; “the world cannot hate you, but me it hateth, because I testify of it that the works thereof are evil.” “Your time is alway ready, but my time is not yet come, and when he had said these words he abode still in Galilee.” Instead of any contradiction in this action of Christ at the feast time, there is beautiful moral order; “about the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught” passing on into His own heights, when He said, My doctrine is not mine, but His that sent me, if any man will do His will, He shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. They keep their feast as though all were right in Israel, and the glory still filling the temple of Jerusalem; not realizing the fact that the Lord of the temple had passed through it, only to make a scourge of small cords, and to justify that strange act, by saying, “the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.” But a greater zeal than that now takes possession of the Lord, as He reveals Himself in the descending steps of His sufferings and death; for He cannot lead His people into promised blessing by any other path, than their redemption by blood; nor will He take any other road to His own glory, or to His kingdom, than through His sufferings. The glory will wait upon Him on the morning of the third day, at the door of the sepulcher!

In perfect keeping with this, Jesus says to the Pharisees, and chief priests and officers who were sent to take Him, “yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me; ye shall seek me and shall not find me, and whither I go ye cannot come.” One great necessity was declared to the man of the Pharisees, the ruler of Israel, at the feast of the passover; when Jesus deposited the secret to Nicodemus of the lifted up Son of man, in order to see and enter the kingdom of God; and now at the feast of tabernacles, He reveals another great necessity. “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink, he that believeth on him as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water; but this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that the Son of man was not yet glorified.” Precious Jesus, what grace hast Thou shown to Thy rebellious people—deeper than the depths of the humiliation that brought Thee down upon the level with man on earth, or into the valley of dry bones, must Thou needs descend to serve him. Into Thy sufferings and baptism of blood hast Thou gone on the cross, as “the lifted up Son of man,” to redeem them; yea down into the very dust of death hast Thou been brought, fast bound by the pains of death, that God Himself might loosen Thee from them. Thine agony and atoning blood as the Paschal Lamb have turned the relations between God and man into a feast of the passover, for Thy willing people, and as the basis for all the remaining feasts. Out of the depths of the grave, and the heart of the earth hast Thou been raised, having won all the glory for Thy Father and Thyself, and for us, which death and the eater would yield to none but Thee. By ascension to the right hand of God, as the glorified Son of man, the Spirit will yet come down and breathe upon the valley of dry bones at a future day, when the whole house of Israel shall stand up in the power of life, and the two sticks of Judah and Ephraim become one. “Behold they say, Our, bones are dried, and our hope is lost, we are out off from our parts; therefore

prophecy and say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves.... and will put my Spirit in you and ye shall live, and I shall place you in your own land, then shall ye know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, saith the Lord." In conclusion, we see in this group of chapters, the journey of the glory through the midst of Israel and the world, down into the dark valley, in order to grasp this mighty ruin as He alone could, and make Himself in grace responsible for lightening it up, and bringing "his own glory and the glory of his Father and of the holy angels" back into it, that all the world may be filled with the glory of God. The lifted-up Son of man on the cross, and the lifting up of the glorified Son of man to the heavens, were necessary, in order to the descent of the Holy Ghost, and for the gathering out of the church first.

This other company, brought out with Peter, upon a present confession of Jesus, as the Christ the Son of the living God, during His rejection by the Jews, and the judicial hiding of Himself from both houses of Israel, was now to be manifested upon the earth. The valley of Ezekiel's vision will be opened up, and bone come to its bone, a very great multitude, according to the Spirit of prophecy, when that same Spirit from on high is poured out upon the people to make good all their latter-day blessing. The offended glory, and the Lord Himself once rejected, will again return in the person of their crucified Messiah; holiness shall then be upon the bells of the horses, and the pots in the Lord's house be like the bowls before the altar. In the meanwhile, the new and heavenly family are distinct, and distinguished in these chapters, as brought out to the Lamb of God, the Word made flesh, and these can gay, "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." They dwell with Him, accompany Him in all His ways of patient love in the midst of His Israel according to the flesh, and are His associates in service and testimony after to the heavenly things themselves. God is gathering out through Christ a people for the heavens, into the Father's house, in contrast with the feast of tabernacles, which was the record and witness that God dwelt with Israel on the earth, and blessed them where they were with natural blessings in the earthly places. Peter and others make the confession which identifies them with Christ now and hereafter; for when Jesus said to them, Will ye also go away? they reply, "To whom shall we go but unto thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life; and we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

The "hard sayings" and tests of chapter 6 brought to light the secrets of all hearts, and put all to the proof. Peter and those with him witnessed at that time a good confession, and go on with their Lord, and continue with Him through His temptation; others (who are sifted) go back, and "from that time walk no more with him." On the other hand, the refusal of Christ to accept the footing of the feast of tabernacles for Himself and Israel and Jehovah in chapter 7 as the present way to prosperity and blessing in Canaan, and a millennium on earth; and His refusal to show Himself there, or in the light of it to the surrounding nations and the world, became a test to the men of progress then, and religiously to the ritualists of that day, as well as now. "Every man went to his own home," and thus they broke company with their Messiah, and refused Him; and the heavenly things; but "Jesus went unto the mount of Olives," into the counsels of the Father concerning Him, and the hidden glories to which that death and His departure to the Father should introduce Him. Thus the One in whom the glory dwells has in spirit departed from the house, and the nation, and its temple, and the feast of tabernacles, to the mount of Olives; just as the typical glory did, in the prophetic times of Ezekiel. Moreover, it is by the way of the east (after the Lord's shout and the glory, in the twinkling of an eye, have caught no away to be forever with Him) that de and it alike

return; for His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem. Like the disciples, we (in the meanwhile) follow Jesus into the place of rejection here, and by the way of the mount of Olives to the right hand of God, into oneness with Him and the Father, where He now is; as being identified with Him in grace, in every thought and purpose which the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory has counseled in Him for the everlasting ages.

United to Him, and members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones, our suited prayer is that He “may give unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.”

J. E. B.

Chapter 103

On the Greek Article

On the Greek Article. By J. N. Darby. Reprinted from “The Present Testimony,” revised. London: G. Morrish, 24, Warwick Lane.

The title-page does not do justice to this book; for it consists partly also of papers that appeared elsewhere, partly of some previously unprinted matter. Besides, there is a pretty full paper on the Greek particles and prepositions, as far as a student of the New Testament wants a clue. The reader who would value such a help cannot do better than procure it; and those who do not themselves pursue such a study may know Christians to whom it would be a real boon.

Chapter 104

He That Hath an Ear Let Him Hear What the Spirit Saith Unto the Churches: Part 1

(Rev. 2; 3)

We are told in Rom. 2:16 of a coming “day in which God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ,” and that according to the gospel, which teaches the complete condemnation and removal in judgment of the first Adam, or man in responsibility before God, and the substitution of the second Man, “the Lord from heaven.”

From the beginning and down the course of the history of this world, God has passed man in his responsibility to bear fruit for Him through various trials or testing processes; but, although the result has always been manifest and alas! but too manifest failure, yet it was not until the rejection and death of the Lord Jesus that the ground was laid for the arraignment of the roots or sources of action and thought in man, or for our revealed partaking of the life and nature of the new man in whom alone are God's claims met and honored.

We should expect as a necessary result of this that in any subsequent dealing of God on the basis of responsibility, the springs and motives of those in any way under test would be made prominent; and we find that it is so in fact. For while the cross undoubtedly proved that man standing before God solely on the ground of his responsibility is lost, yet it did not abolish responsibility, nor has it deterred rash and foolish man from assuming an ability, which he possesses not, to satisfy the requirements of the new position into which believers are brought through it; so that we find since the cross both responsibility established upon new grounds, and the failure of men who are ostensibly subject, to its claims.

Men have assumed the name and privileges of the Christian and of the church of God without possessing the reality of either; and hence the world has seen, instead of the grace of Christ and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the sad evidences, in failure amongst those bearing His name, that man has once more undertaken to yield that which he is incapable of yielding. Not that real Christians have always been blameless: no one who truly knows the Lord would say so. But they have known, when the sense of failure and folly and sin has humbled them before Him, what it is to have the spring and source of their ways brought to light, and through grace they have not shrunk from bowing afresh to the judgment passed upon it; while with the others who have profession but no real life in their souls, every solemn appeal or dealing of God has but served to display in detail the absence of every motive which should characterize God's people.

The nominal or professing church has thus been made in a wonderful way the scene of the testing of man's heart, for the church, viewed as the visible assembly of God on the earth, has been responsible as the witness of God to the earth since Pentecost in Acts 2, and the fact that God has been dealing with her on the basis laid by the death of Christ has given terrible fullness and completeness to her trial.

It is in this light that I desire the searching words of these two chapters to reach and exercise our hearts. They are wondrous words—wonderful in their power of searching out the “secrets of men,” but this is good for us, beloved, and if they have their proper effect in us they will set the blessed One more distinctly before us as motive and pattern, and everything needful to enable us to stand joyfully and proudly before God as “overcomers.”

The Lord has often of late years directed our hearts to these seven Epistles, and has made us happily familiar with them and with the thought of the comprehensive view of the church's history which they embrace, while being primarily words addressed to seven assemblies which existed at the day in which John by the Spirit wrote.

Each one deals with a distinct and different condition, whether we look at them in the larger or lesser character, the Lord, always clothed in divine authority, being seen in suited light for each while the reward to the “overcomer” has reference both to the condition in which he is found and to the character in which the Lord declares Himself.

Following out the thought which presents them as giving a historical picture (though leaving aside for the moment the mere literal interpretation of this in earthly historical events) we find that the order in which the Epistles are arranged, whether we look at the various conditions, or rewards, or characters of the Son of man, points plainly to the various stages in the trial of human responsibility in the world. While however there is this analogy on the surface, on looking deeper we see that the actual details of the trials unfolded in these Epistles stand in contrast to similar details in the history of man, in consequence of the change in the relation of God to man, of which I have spoken, and we are thus shown that the secret springs of all these things are brought to light in God's dealings with the church and the true issues of trial are here declared as there is also laid bare the true, because divine, object of the testing. So that we learn that the church has been passed, in her case in this spiritual way, through the whole of the tests applied to man.

Failure, alas, has been invariably the general result and this we know is soon to be closed by final judgment on all that is nominally Christian—one reason why it is such final judgment as 2 Thess. 1; 2, declare being given to us in the character of the trial under which failure has been manifested.

We should notice also that inasmuch as it is responsibility which is in question, the blessings to the overcomers, high though they are, do not reach to the height of those which we have in heavenly places and in union with Christ as members of His body, of which Eph. 1; 3 speak; and this is because these are out of the range of responsibility being “by grace” absolutely. The Lord grant that the sense of possessing these may abide in our hearts.

(1.) Ephesus. The place from which the Lord speaks the message to Ephesus (ver. 1), as well as His blessed promise to the overcomer (in ver. 7), turns our thoughts at once back to Genesis, and to that which was the first step of man's course in the world.

Of old, the garden of Eden was the scene of human trial, and the Lord God was not far from those in whom His heart was interested and whom He had surrounded with the blessings of His goodness. Their obedience was the only thing under test—for there was no evil practice as yet to overcome or resist—and while His goodness was trusted and His will acknowledged as supreme, they had free access to the tree of life, for “out of the ground” had the Lord God “made to grow

every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, and the tree of life also in the midst of the garden" (Gen. 2:8-9); and also as we read in Gen. 3:8, "they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the midst of the garden in the cool of the day."

Here the same Lord, whom John saw in all His divinely-given glory (chap. 1:12-18) again walks in the midst of the scene in which the trial of His responsible witness is taking place (see ver. 1). He is there to encourage and reassure, if there also to measure divinely the work being done for Him: but whether for blessing or testing He lets us know that we have to do with Him "who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."

As when man was tried in Eden, there is here no present evil practice noted as a thing to be resisted or overcome, and this appears more remarkable in contrast with almost all the other churches wherein such is manifestly denounced;

The state of the church as at first established, as shown us in the early chapters of Acts, is indeed one of wonderful power and beauty, and also one of magnificent privilege.

I go to Acts 2; 3; 4, instead of to Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians, for the antecedent to the Epistle sent by John to the church at Ephesus; because Paul's Epistle unfolds the infinite extent of grace and the height of heavenly blessing which are eternally the portion of every saint and of the church as His body, quite apart from and beyond the reach of any question of responsibility; while Acts shows rather the results of grace in the manifest position of the church, her continuing in which was a matter which her practice would decide, and in fact did.

Nothing can surpass however the completeness of God's work in establishing her in all the integrity of the new order which He thus instituted, and the scene, as we read these chapters in Acts, is filled up with the evidences of divine power which was at the disposal of those brought into this new sphere, and with the manifestations of that "great grace" which "was upon all," enabling them to enter into all the reality of their position.

Although all this took place in this world, into which sin has entered, and though those then forming the church were in themselves sinful men, yet so thoroughly did God do His work that evil was forcibly quelled and practically banished from the scene by the power and energy and fervor of the new life, whose activities are thus the only exercises we see or with which they were then acquainted.

Would to God, we may well say, it had remained so! but we can see how it was so, and how the church was thus established in all the freedom and purity and energy of divine life; in all the integrity of that life which has nothing to do with evil as founded upon the banishing of sin and breaking the power of Satan in the cross of the blessed Lord. What was left to her was thus just to walk abroad in the activity of this life, and to know nothing but its exercises, the secret of this being, as Rev. 2:4 shows us, that the heart must be kept subject to God.

The Lord shows us plainly therefore in the message to Ephesus that it was simply love which was under test. "I have against thee," He says to the assembly (and it is the only thing He has against her), "that thou hast left thy first love, Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen and repent and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee and will remove thy candlestick out of his place except thou repent."

We can understand this stress laid upon love only in view of Him by whose light all secrets are to be, and to faith are even now, revealed for He has shown us that in His own blessed person and ways; as the spring is deeper than the stream; so love is the source and the only source of all true obedience. (See for instance John 14:30-31.) Indeed we may rightly go much farther and say, source of all excellence, for “love is of God, and every one that love this born of God and knoweth God.” Thus it is that there is such a striking contrast presented in the reward promised to him who “overcometh” under such a test as compared with that tree of life to which Adam had access. “To him that overcometh,” says the Lord in verse 7, “will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God,” and well we know, whose hearts have learned of Him, that what He stamps as thus absolutely “of God” can never be removed. The paradise of earth may be effaced, for even the first heaven and the first earth are to pass away; but that “new” scene which will be at once the tabernacle and the throne and the creation of God and the Lamb will remain forever. Blessed be His grace which has given us to have our portion in Him there!

(2.) Smyrna. “Sin entered into the world and death by sin,” and “death reigned from Adam to Moses,” said the Holy Spirit through Paul, “even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come;” and herein we have the key to the condition and the trial set forth in the epistle to Smyrna. That which is in itself the wages of sin the Lord in grace uses for the good of souls, seeking to awaken hearts and consciences by its means when He takes it up for chastening in order to prevent, if possible, farther falling away. Before His own blessed and wondrous death, when the truth as to sin and death, and God and man, was displayed, and in presence of Him the true light and the captain of salvation death stood forth as the “power of darkness” and the terror of him who had the power of death, that is the devil—before this, the full significance of death and tribulation was not known. Now however in Smyrna that which constitutes the trial is plainly seen to be the power of Satan up to and ending in death (see ver. 10), and this because the declension in the: Ephesus trial has given him a hold on those under test. So that we have here a very manifest step in the unfolding of the sources of the church's failure: for the slipping away from love, and so from” His love as motive first of all, leaves the heart exposed to other objects which are not Christ. Satan has power over these other objects and thus over Our hearts when desiring them, and he is the very agency which leads in to the world and on to sin; and we well know that “when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” How gracious of the Lord to turn these very things by His word into servants for the good of His own. to send a word of promise to the overcomer directly to encourage him in such a state of things all around him, and above all to present Himself in the glories which He won in the field of death. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life,” He says (ver. 10); and again, “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death” (ver. 11).

All this is in contrast to the trial of man from Adam to Moses when he was really exposed to Satan's power and working, but visibly with the testimony of the presence of death as the only standing public witness on God's part to deter him from sin and turn him to God, and this with little real difference whether after or before the flood, which was itself the most solemn form of this testimony. But just as the lake “which burneth with fire and brimstone” is an infinitely more awful flood than those waters of judgment which once overwhelmed the world, so is the “second death,” which that lake typifies (Rev. 21:8), infinitely beyond that physical death which is but its faint

shadow, although its portal also; and so we see in the solemnity of the issues which are raised what is now the depth and completeness of the trial.

So too, learning what it really is to be tried with Satan's power, can we estimate in some little measure what is His value who appears for our hearts as “the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.” He has gone through death; He has gone through the terrible waters of judgment; He has fathomed too the awful depths of exclusion from God's blessed presence, aye and fathomed them as the lost in hell will never be able, but He, the same One, thank God, is alive, the first in resurrection. It is our delight through grace to own Him as first of all in His own personal glory and Jehovah in infinite endurance too, but He loves to make us Think of those glories which attach to Him as the consequence of undertaking our cause in death. And thus in view of all that we find death—the death which had a claim on us—to be, we know that He is “the last Adam,” in blessed relation to us, the life-giving Spirit (see 1 Cor. 15); as well as the “first-born from the dead,” the “first-born among many brethren!”

(To be continued.)

Chapter 105

He That Hath an Ear Let Him Hear What the Spirit Saith Unto the Churches: Part 2

(Rev. 2; 3)

(3) Pergamos. In the course of this world's history we find in scripture that, when it had become wholly corrupt through self-will and idolatry, God in calling out Abram revealed the principle that those who henceforth were to be brought into relationship with Him as His people must necessarily be separated from the world. He, as it were, refused to be longer regarded as the God of this world, sin having made it what it then was, and alas! is still; and so. His people must bear a true testimony to His name in their position in it.

This principle was fully established in a visible manner in His dealings with Abraham's children according to His gracious promise, the judgment of death marking them off from the rest of the world, and separating them externally to God according to His word. “He brought them forth,” as we read in Deut. 8, “out of the land of Egypt from the house of bondage, and led them through—that great and terrible wilderness wherein were fiery serpents and scorpions and drought, where there was no water. He brought them forth water out of the rock of flint; he fed them with manna which their fathers knew not that he might humble them and that he might prove them to do them good at their latter end.” And when all this gracious dealing was past in which He had sought to teach them what boundless resources they had in Him, He led them into the land of promise casting out the idolatrous nations before them in the same grace. For although in the wilderness they had chosen to put themselves under the claims of law, yet this did not keep the Lord from in grace establishing them in the blessings, although it led Him thereafter to deal with them as to their continuance in these very blessings on the altered ground of their responsibility. It was as He said to them in Deut. 8:18-20, “Thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for it is he that giveth thee power to get wealth, that he may establish his covenant which be aware unto thy fathers as it is this day. And it shall be, that if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God and walk after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish. As the nations which the Lord destroyeth before your face so shall ye perish because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the Lord your God.” No power which was arrayed against them could hinder their taking possession as long as they maintained their separation, but what was indeed their danger was contained in the wiles and seductions of those from whom God's judgment had cut them off.

The Lord refers to all this in verses 13 and 14 (Rev. 2), leading our thoughts back (in ver. 14) to the time when, through the efforts of the world to deceive and stumble, every obstacle possible was thrown in the way to binder His people's entrance into their proper blessings and privileges; and He does this to point out to us by these material symbols that again the world is the deadliest foe, being, as it is by His cross declared to be, the “throne” of him who is our Lord's most envenomed enemy, by whom its allurements are now used to keep our hearts from heavenly things. Far better in such a scene to suffer, as His faithful martyr, the full extent of Satan's power

over the creation which was made subject to it through sin than in the least degree to compromise the name or the suffering of the blessed One who refused all its glory. When our hearts are truly alive to His honor in this evil world, we know well that nothing so dishonors Him as our yielding in any measure to the voice of worldliness; and therefore we can understand His terribly solemn word in verse 16, when such unfaithfulness has obtained a place. “Repent or else I will come unto thee quickly and will fight against them (those teaching or recommending any worldliness) with the sword of my mouth.” He has revealed Himself (in ver. 12) as the true leader of His people, the captain of the host of the Lord (as in Josh. 5:13-15) to lead us into the enjoyment of heavenly blessings in the true Canaan, the fruit of His own death as the true paschal Lamb. How terrible then to find Him turning His “drawn sword” with the two edges (see Heb. 4:12, 13) against any among those who profess His name!

But to him who “overcomes” in this scene, who preserves, amid all that is fleshly and worldly, the true spirit of the wilderness in its separateness and dependence upon God, the sweetest rewards are promised. He will have “the hidden manna” for his sustenance; and blessed as it is to know Him who is (according to John 6) “the true bread from heaven,” which Moses gave not, yet it is not even the common though blessed portion of Christians in Him as thus the great antitype of Israel's manna which is conveyed by the word, but rather is it participation in that full measure of the preciousness of Christ humbled here which has been reserved in secret for the Father's contemplation and delight, laid up in the golden pot within the ark of the covenant in the holiest of all! (Heb. 9:4; Ex. 16:32-36.) He will receive also “a white stone and in the stone a new name written which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it” (ver. 17); and this too is in contrast with Exodus and is another link in the chain of analogy. For it is not a national testimony like that which was laid up in the ark of the testimony (Ex. 40:20), but a personal one from God to the soul of him who overcomes; and, better still, it is the witness, not of responsibility and of sin, as Israel's was, but of blessed purity and of the closest intimacy of divine affection. Shall not these things, beloved brethren, win our hearts to faithful separateness while we are left here for conflict?

Thyatira. In wonderful grace God has from time to time taken up the very things which have been introduced into the world's order as the fruit of man's sin and departure from Him, and has turned them into His means for conveying blessing to man, thus necessarily making them speak of Christ in some of His blessed features or glories, because it is in Him—in what He is and will yet be manifestly—that all blessing for man is continued.

It was thus with royalty, as with other things, for 1 Sam. 8:5 shows us (to go no further back) that this order was established among the idolatrous nations before it appeared among the Lord's people: and it was no doubt the degeneracy of moral strength in men individually which made them seek a common center of union who would be a visible symbol of power, while the increase of evil too forced them of necessity to acknowledge some supreme authority. Alas for man! “God is not in all his thoughts,” but self is; and so we see when such necessity arose among men, as later it did in Israel, that in this, as ever, he has shown his incapacity to rise above man in these thoughts; even giving up, as Israel did, the communicated thought of God as supreme over man in order to gratify his own desires by placing man there.

But God has His own purpose to bless man in and by His beloved Son, and He is great enough in His grace to communicate His blessings or the knowledge of them by means of those very things

which mark the folly and weakness of men. And so here, for when made to speak of Christ there is no sweeter symbol of His power and glory in millennial days than royalty conveys.

Just because “the king” is introduced in the history of God's dealings with men as the fruit of the weakness into which men have sunk, so will they depend entirely upon Him, and so will every hope henceforth center in His stability and power. And in this light we see the ruinous result which must follow the destruction of His position or glory; all depending on Him, if He is undermined everything must come down with a crash.

For a brief period in its checkered course has the earth seen, in David and Solomon, those who were the only ones ever counted worthy to foreshadow “the Lord's anointed” (Psa. 2; 72); in His royalty and in spite of many blemishes, inseparable from the men, it was a bright season amid surrounding darkness. Too soon did it give place to the fruit of man's heart and will, and, before many reigns were over, it was entirely substituted by the foulest corruption and wickedness, all the more appalling because emanating from that throne which had been established for the help and guidance of men.

The life of Jezebel stands out from the black page of the divine history of man as the embodiment of the corruption of royalty, and, even if the Lord has to refer to the reign as Ahab's when singling it out by His prophet as an example well describing the evil for which sure destruction would fall upon all Israel (Mic. 6:16), yet He lets us know in 1 Kings 21:25, that He is not blind to the source of Ahab's wickedness. “There was none,” He says, “like unto Ahab which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up.” Those who were faithful to the God of Israel were nothing to her as we know, and she reckoned even the life of Jehovah's prophet of no account if it offered any barrier to the idolatry and lust which she unscrupulously indulged.

To these scenes we are recalled in the epistle to Thyatira (Rev. 2:18-29), to learn (I doubt not) that the root of these things has come up in the church's history, and that oven the position, and power, and glory of Him, on the due acknowledgment of whom as supreme everything for her and for the world depends, have been not only ignored but in effect utterly overturned by her grasping the place of power in the world, and assuming to teach and to rule, but, as He shows, in reality only to indulge the lust and the idolatry which are to be found now as ever springing from the human heart and will. The Lord (I may say) is never called or revealed as King of the church; but He is King as to His claim over the whole world, and therefore the church by usurping (as she undoubtedly has done) the place of power in the world has not only denied that claim but denied every right and glory of the Lord; acting in the spirit of Jezebel, reversing the Lord's order as to the woman (Gen. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:11-13; Eph. 5:22-24: compare Isa. 3:12), and seeking to identify the rule of Christ (in her boast) with her own wicked ways in a world which is still unpurged from its wickedness. His position and glory have therefore been destroyed by her to the full extent to which they were committed to her responsibility to guard, and who can wonder in view of such ruinous unfaithfulness that the Lord should pronounce, as He does in verse 21-23, His judgment upon all as the moral close of her history in responsibility? “I gave her space to repent of her fornication,” He says, “and she will not repent. Behold I will cast her into a bed and those that commit adultery with her into great tribulation except they repent of her deeds. And I will kill her children with death: and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts: and I will

give unto every one of you according to your works." (Compare Rev. 21:13.)

But even in such a condition of things some few faithful to Him are to be found—those who value His glory and a true testimony thereof to the world before any position or power which the world contains. Not deceived by the pomp and glitter of a position of power and honor in the world as it is, nor deterred by the thunders of wrath temporal and spiritual fiercely launched forth with all the determination of assumed authority, they think of what is due to Him who has title to all power in heaven and on earth but is still the rejected One from the earth as to what is His true character. They judge all that through which they pass by this standard, walking in separation of heart and mind from all and caring only to be found in company with Him whom they know. They are "overcomers" —not able to set anything to rights, able only to acknowledge Him truly; and though this exposes them to the full weight of the rage of corrupt power, they are encouraged. For, as of old, when man's kingly power prepared a "burning fiery furnace" for those who remained true to their God, despite forced idolatry, and who refused the claim of authority to power that was corrupt and cast them into the trial, the Lord was by them in His glory to cheer their hearts (Dan. 3:25); so here the same "Son of God" (see ver. 18) appears and speaks for the encouragement of His people, and in Him they whose eyes are opened see true divine power of discernment and judgment as well as righteousness, which applies the test with an unerring hand, to which the fiercer and cruel haughtiness of man's "burning fiery furnace" is but a sorry contrast; and so they can wait for His reward.

"Unto you I say, the rest (or remnant) in Thyatira," are His words, "I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have hold fast till I come. And be that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father. And I will give him the morning star."

The reward is, as ever, characteristic of the trial, for on every side the "overcomer" can see "works" which not only are unlike those of the meek and lowly One or those of the exalted and righteous One, but which also displace those, so that he cannot find a trace of them in the scene; and by that false and corrupt church he sees the name of God's Son fastened to more than all the foulness and violence which apostate kingcraft ever produced on the earth, though it is a terrible stream to stem. None but a soul filled with a true sense of His glory, and patient to abide the day which will put all these things into their due place, can hold fast what is true in spite of opposition. But he that does so and acts in such a scene consistently with the blessed ways of the Son of God will by-and-by share in the victorious power and rule of the true David, when He, whose hands are even now stretched forth in intercession and blessing; shall stretch forth His hands to grasp the "scepter of righteousness" (Heb. 1), which is no less a symbol of His glory than the reward of His perfection in grace and holiness as man, and shall vindicate God's glory on all His enemies.

Most blessedly does God bear witness in Heb. 1 to the divine glory of His Son, and in the course of that witness the throne and the scepter are seen to be the accompaniments of that glory. "Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of, thy kingdom, thou halt loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." In Psa. 45, from which these words are quoted, He is seen wielding the scepter as a consequence of His faithfulness in grace and

holiness as man; as one has said, “It is Messiah in judgment and taking the throne. He had already proved that He loved righteousness and hated iniquity—was fit to govern;” and as we think of Him thus in contrast to all and especially to that most unfaithful of all others—the Jezebel-sheltering world-church—we can devoutly echo the words and the desires put by God's Spirit into the heart of the Psalmist, himself a type of the gracious One of whom he speaks: “Thou art fairer than the children of men; grace is poured into thy lips: therefore God hath blessed thee forever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies, whereby the people fall under thee.”

It is thus that the scriptures speak of His glory as the reigning One, but as if to set His glory on earth before the heart of the “overcomer” the words of the reward to him in Rev. 2:26, 27 are taken from the second Psalm which speaks of the divine and immoveable purpose by which He is made King, notwithstanding rejection by or opposition from men, and of the decree which proclaims the earth-rejected man to be Jehovah's Son and which assures Him of the world-wide dominion which the Father will give Him. It is in this way that the overcomer knows Him as One who has trodden in spirit the same path as he treads; for it is to the One who suffered under the proud and winked hand of “the kings of the earth and the rulers” that Jehovah is heard saying,” Ask of me and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."... “Blessed are all they who put their trust in him.”

But He has more than His glory to present to the “overcomer,” wide though it be in its victorious sweep and fitted to establish his confidence in patient expectation. The Lord delights to bestow a present portion for the affections of His faithful servants; and therefore He, in addition to speaking of glory on earth presents the beauty of His person. “I will give him the morning star.” That which shines so brightly and cheerily in the dead and chill darkness before the dawn, refreshing the eye and heart of the lonely watcher whose eye and heart it fixes and occupies until, without setting, it melts into the full blaze of light from the rising sun—this it is which speaks of the Lord Jesus as the heart's portion for His lonely ones in Thyatira's darkness. And it is fitting; for He is calculated thus to draw out the heart's desire and to center it upon Himself. “I am the root and the offspring of David, the bright and the morning star. And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come.” “He that testifieth these things saith, Yea I am coming quickly. Amen! Come, Lord Jesus.”

(Continued from page 64.)

(To be continued)

Chapter 106

He That Hath an Ear Let Him Hear What the Spirit Saith Unto the Churches: Part 3

(Rev. 2; 3)

(Continued from page 79)

The failure of the church in responsibility having become so complete in Thyatira, it is plain that the Lord's judgment on her when in that condition forms the virtual termination of her history as under trial. Of course He is able at any time to establish a measure of restoration; but that only, far from interfering with the fact of such judgment being pronounced, is in fact presumptive evidence of previous failure and judgment on it. What we see here is not only that in her actions “the King” has been virtually dethroned, but also that the Lord applies to her the “judgment of works,” which, as we know from Rev. 21:13, expresses the close of His dealings with men when these are in question. I turn back therefore to notice how plainly the Lord lays bare the source of action in that which has departed from Him and show s that at once, when He is given up, Satan has obtained a foot-hold. No sooner has departure been marked in Ephesus than in Smyrna we find the church subject to the efforts of the power of Satan (Rev. 2:10); and when, heedless of the warning which so solemn a fact should have conveyed to her, she persisted still in a course of declension, we find her under the dominion of Satan, dwelling where he has his throne. (Chap. 2:18.) Still more awful and solemn, but the inevitable consequence of continued unfaithfulness, we see that in Thyatira she had descended to the depths of Satan (chap. 2:24); and it is thus the Lord would warn us of the sure but dreadful result of the heart's departure from Him as its object and from His love as its motive.

(5) Sardis. We cannot measure the patience of the Lord, nor can we ever predict of Him that He has exhausted the resources of His grace in His dealings with men. When He announces that the day of grace is to have an end, or that it has run to its close and judgment must take its place, than is the occasion for the obedience of faith in us, and we can but bow and own that it is right that it should be so. But He has shown us in His dealings with men that it is His prerogative (while maintaining all the time a perfect balance between right and wrong, good and evil, so that men dare not presume upon His grace with impunity, still when men have completely failed and broken down in faithfulness to Him) to place them anew in circumstances in which it is possible for them to walk in obedience to His revealed will, even though this is done in view of the actual failure which has taken place, and which has to all appearance rendered it impossible for His mind to be carried out.

He has never thoroughly reinstated any established order of His dealing with men precisely and as fully as it was set up at its commencement after it had once gone to ruin in man's hand; but He has wrought in restoration, which does not set aside the results of failure, but which alters these circumstances of His people which are the consequences of failure, in such a degree as that it becomes possible for men to walk in the spirit of His chosen path for them even when surrounded

by these. We are slow to estimate aright the value and significance of this gracious dealing of God; but as we think of it, we must admire the perfect wisdom and adore the blessed grace which could open up such a path of divine blessing to those who had, as it were, already sinned against it, even making their sin the occasion and the means (in some sense) of His acting, and yet never weakening the sense of His divine judgment against their sin—wonderfully combining grace and holiness.

And the blessedness flowing from this dealing is great, for it is the means of a much more full and intimate revelation of God Himself to the heart than even the normal condition from which failure had taken place could be. In that condition there is of course the consciousness of being set in the current of God's mind as to the world, and the blessings of the position are naturally before the soul; but here everything is gone, but the soul finds to its intense joy that even in spite of its failure God remains faithful as ever! It is evident that in such a condition the soul who would remain faithful to Him must be cast in very real dependence upon God, seeking to act directly and exclusively under His eye (for all question of testimony to the world is over), and having Him directly before the heart, for the sad evidences of failure are there and if the eye wanders from Him it must see them, and then one readily believes it is useless to seek to be faithful when, in its integrity, the position of His people is ruined.

All this the Lord has shown us in figure in His dealings with His ancient people, and (now that we have the key to it) we can say that we have the lessons of “restoration” taught us very completely in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah with the concurrent prophecies of Haggai and Zechariah. And they are blessed lessons! The goodness and mercy of the Lord (“His mercy endureth forever!") were brought home afresh to the hearts of His people so that they could trust Him—and well might they trust Him!—fully who had wrought for His people when all had gone from their bands. When they had Him thus before them, as counting wholly on His goodness and mercy, faith saw no difficulties, let adversaries without or within rage or plot as they might. But when faith in God grew faint, then a little was enough to turn them aside and to stop their service to Him, and the enemy quickly used the opportunity given him, and they were forbidden to serve. Even this prohibition was as nothing however when faith revived, but it was during their period of unbelief and therefore of failure that the Lord addressed to them the words of Haggai and Zechariah, in which He sought to recall their hearts to Himself as the object which they had forgotten, and to teach them of His power and grace, both of which He was ready to use for them.

He has indeed to say to them (in Hag. 1:2-11), “Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, saying, This people say, The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built. Then came the word of the Lord by Haggai the prophet saying, Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your ceiled houses and this house lie waste? Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, Consider your ways.” But His object and desire is that they should be perfect before Him and so He encourages them by saying, “Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua the eon of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt so my Spirit remaineth among you; fear ye not.” (Hag. 2:4, 5.)

Now apart from the general moral resemblance between the circumstances of the remnant of Ezra and Nehemiah and those of Sardis given in the word of Revelation (iii. 3): “remember how thou

hast received and heard," in view of the lessons of failure and judgment taught by the epistle to Thyatira, we find the same striking analogy, which we have been tracing in the other Epistles, existing here between the words of the message to the remnant and those of that to the church in its Sardis condition. We find also, as formerly, that it is in what is said to the church that the true spiritual condition is revealed and the root of failure laid bare.

The Lord could point in Haggai to the external conduct of His people, and tell them too "to consider their ways," because the temple was lying unfinished while they were busy building their own houses; but it is in the Epistle to Sardis that we find the spring touched, "I have not found thy works perfect before God" (chap. 3:2), and we are shown that the root is the eye off the Lord and the work not being done for Him. So too as to the condition, "thou hast a name that thou limit and art dead" (chap. 3:1); which has its figure in that which the Lord allowed to fall upon the Israelites, even though they were in their own land and nominally serving Him. (See Hag. 1:6, 9-11; 2:17.) These outward calamities witnessed that Israel was really disowned by God, although the presence of the remnant in Canaan and the work in which they were professedly engaged had another voice; but it cannot be a question of external position merely in the case of the church,—the Lord deals with her spiritual condition, and, so for her it is a matter of life or death as before Him.

The character in which the Lord appears to Sardis (chap. 3:1) also speaks to the heart of the solemn question Which is raised for us (settled as to the church as a professing witness for God) by the Sardis condition. The restored remnant were faithless towards God, it is true, but they knew Him as He had declared Himself to them "according to that word that He covenanted with them when they came out of Egypt" (see Ex. 23:20-25), to which by Haggai He seeks to turn them back, saying, "So my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not." (Hag. 2:5.) But the church has to do with no mere angel or representative of God in her path, blessed as it is to have such a pledge of God's faithfulness and power, but with Him who possesses the fullness of divine power and divine supremacy over all rule or subordinate authority— "Him that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars." Has she walked, nay, are we walking, in the faith of present connection with this One? To be in any degree faithless towards Him in the path is so far to drop into the current of the world, the eye getting turned to its arrangements and the heart, unconsciously at first perhaps, ascribing to them the place of importance.

It is not to "keep himself unspotted from the world" (James 1:27) nor to be one of those "few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments." (Rev. 3:4, 5.) In His rewards the Lord turns us back to the picture of His grace given in Zech. 3 and we learn to see in Joshua the high priest, who stood, clad in filthy garments as the representative of God's people in their sins, before the angel of the Lord, a type of Him who took that place in all the dreadful reality of sin's blackness and Satan's malice which attached to it for us, in order that in blessed grace He might be able to say, "They shall walk with me in white, for they are worthy," and "he that overcometh the same shall be clothed in white raiment."

He has, too, a solemn word to show us by comparison with Ezra 2:62, 63, the full character of the issue which is decided by the test applied to the church. Of old those who had faithfully kept apart from connection with the world which was disowned by God found their place in "the register of those that were reckoned by genealogy," while those not found there were excluded from the

place of honor among men. But an earthly muster roll, high though the privileges be of those whose names are inscribed in it, is but a feeble type of that divine register in which He preserves the name of the overcomer, just as no possible acknowledgment before men on earth can compare with what He puts before our hearts in His word of reward, “I will not, blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels.”

Blessed Lord! Thy grace and Thy power are devoted to Thy people, and they are enough. Keep our hearts in true dependence upon Thee!

(6) Philadelphia. In the wisdom of God, the restoration of the remnant gave occasion to the presentation of Christ according to the promises, and when “the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son.” In the Gospels we see how His personal and testimony of His words and works, and the official glories were presented to men, as well as the evidences of His divine power, but in the main without avail; and we learn how completely in every detail of this blessed presentation He was rejected, by none so thoroughly as by those claiming to be God's chosen race, who showed their enmity to His name and His teaching very plainly by deliberately deciding “that if any man confessed that he was the Christ he should be put out of the synagogue.” (John 9) Looked at in its fullest light, there is no doubt that His rejection, and death, in which it was completed, decided the whole question of the nature of man—of the first Adam—bringing out the full character of Sin as enmity against God, but blessedly unfolding the glory of God, both absolute and in relation to sin; but short of this full result it is equally clear that in the first instance He was presented to man in his responsibility to do God's will, refusing evil and choosing the good, and of course it was as good in its highest form, because divine goodness in a world of sinners, that He was thus offered to the hearts of men. Alas! He was rejected, and so the bright day of millennial or kingdom glory which has been predicted by “the word of the Lord” had to be put aside until it will be introduced in a new order; but meantime, to reveal the heights and depths of grace, new blessings and privileges “which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God” are brought to light, unconnected with the world or its course, and known only to faith in association with a rejected but glorified Christ.

In the Epistle to Philadelphia it is manifest that the test is Christ Himself and the question raised in the history of the professing church is that of faithfulness or unfaithfulness to Him personally and in His present character as having already been rejected by the world. As before, when He was in the world, the rejecters have plenty of loud pretension; but their true character spiritually, as well as the day of their future humbling, is here revealed: “Behold I make them of the synagogue of Satan who say they are Jews and are not, but do lie; behold I will cause them to come and worship before thy feet and to know that I have loved thee.” (Rev. 3:9.) And here the Lord shows that His eye rests on and His heart is occupied with those who through grace are faithful to Him, for blessed be God these He finds, though as ever it is a little flock to whom He reveals Himself as the good Shepherd (as in John 10:4, 5, 9, 11) and as their means of access to liberty, and food, and strength. “Behold I have set before thee an open door, and no one can shut it: for thou hast a little strength and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.” (Chap. 8.) In verse 7 a wonderful epitome of His personal glory is given—wonderful because in such few words so blessed an array of its features has been marshaled by the Holy Spirit. His nature as man according to Luke 1:35 is declared in “He that is holy;” His ministry, or the testimony of His words and works, in “He that is true” (see John 5-9); His Messiah glory in “He that hath the key of David” (see Luke 1:32, 33); and

His divine power in “He that openeth and no one shutteth, and shutteth and no one openeth;” and thus the Lord shows us that all is open to the eye of faith and that nothing is needed on our part but that we should acknowledge Him. He does not forget that He asks us to do this during the time of His patient waiting in trying rejection by the world, which is if possible a more testing time than before the world's public refusal of Him, and He has a word to encourage our hearts in view of this. “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience,” He says, “I will also keep thee out of the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth. Behold I come quickly; hold that fast which thou hast, that no one take thy crown.” (Chap. iii. 10, 11.) “Those that dwell on the earth,” finding all their interests and occupations in it, may go on in their fancied security thinking they are free to do as they like and that He and His people are of little account, but the Lord shows that He is the key to the future as well as to the present, and if our future is found in Himself, the world's must be in tribulation into which He and His will not enter.

To “him that overcomes,” who remains true to Him in what He is, despite the lies of Satan and of men who, even under the guise of religiousness, are His rejecters, He promises the highest character of millennial blessings, to which those prepared for the earthly people serve indeed as figures, although those spoken of here (chap. iii. 12) are as immeasurably higher than these of Israel as heaven is higher than earth. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God; and he shall go no more out; and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem which cometh down out of heaven from my God and my new name.” And not the least precious part of this blessed appropriating of us for God, for His worship and service, is that which sets us in association with the glory of the perfectly obedient One, who, as the fit answer to His blessed course of obedient humiliation, has received at the hands of His God and ours a new and glorious “name which is above every name.” (Phil. 2:5-11.)

Has not He given us abundant cause to say and to sing,

“Jesus, thou art enough

“The mind and heart to fill"?

(To be continued)

Chapter 107

He That Hath an Ear Let Him Hear What the Spirit Saith Unto the Churches: Part 4

(Concluded from page 94.)

(7) Laodicea. The chronology of the church properly has to do exclusively with the new creation, and its commencement is unmistakably fixed by Him who is “the beginning, the first-born from the dead,” also called (as here, Rev. 3:14) “the beginning of the creation of God.” Not yet literally or in fact passed out of this world, she has still done so in spirit; and both faith and external profession plainly avow that death as a past thing has shut out from her the life of man in the world alike with its pride, its projects, and its final doom. She has thus the cross with all that was accomplished by it as the solid foundation on which she stands; and as God has declared there the total end and judgment of man after the flesh, everything for her, in her history within and without, to be according to God, must be after the pattern of Christ, whose life and ways thus become her only guide and example. Not only so, but also on God's part to complete the likeness to Christ and to communicate divine power and intelligence, the Holy Spirit has been sent down to abide in her midst.

Short of the blessed Lord Himself, never was there, in the history of God's dealings, a witness for God in the earth so richly endowed; but we have here, in the Epistle to Laodicea, the sad result of her trial as a responsible witness in this view of the nature of her position and endowments. In Philadelphia we saw that it was a question of the heart's receiving and acknowledging Christ personally; here it is as distinctly one of His Spirit and ways being followed. But there is this striking difference between the two Epistles, that in the one case we learn the object of the Epistle by considering the “works” of those who are faithful to the Lord and only one verse is given to the opposite class, while in the other case (Laodicea) we trace the Lord's mind from His condemnation of universal failure, and this failure is precisely the development of that which was found present in spirit or germ in Paul's day and which be mourns over in pointing out: “All seek their own and not the things that are Jesus Christ's” (Phil. 2:21).

We get a hint from the Lord saying to the overcomer (in ver. 21) “Even as I also overcame” that the trial under which failure is here manifested, which failure “he that overcometh” is to stem, has its counterpart in the Lord's own life; and the character in which He appears to the church (in ver. 14) confirms the thought.

He is the Amen” —God's seal upon everything that is of Himself: we cannot go beyond Christ and there is no such thing possible as development in divine things after Him. He is also “the faithful and true witness,” the One who stands forth alone in His right to such a title, the only faithful One to God who never failed. And more, He is “the beginning of the creation of God” (cf. 2 Cor. 5:17, 18); so that, as we have seen, everything that is of God must be after the pattern and example of Him.

When tempted, if He had assumed an independent possession of power or intelligence in Himself, He would have done just what the enemy desired and strove for; but we know that as the perfect Man He took the only perfect place before God, the place of complete dependence. Had it been possible for Him to harbor indifference to God or His glory, then would room enough have been found for thoughts of self; but it was not so, and could not be so with Him, whose perfect obedience was the necessary outflow of His blessed condition of perfect dependence on God.

It is as we see Him thus that we are prepared to own that if He, the blessed Son of God who personally had a divine claim to every glory, was found in such a spirit and path of lowly earnestness for God, there is ten-thousand fold, nay infinite reason, why the church should be in it, not only as following Him in His ways as Son of man, as she has indeed been set to follow, but also because without that beauty which grace has bestowed upon her she has nothing that is not really shameful. There is in her case, and we may say in every case in which gifts or privileges involving the possession of power are bestowed on man, the temptation to use these without occupying the place of dependence, thus despising the beauty of grace which when owned would set one there, and thinking more of the powers or gifts which have been bestowed. But this is in fact to assume that we possess inherently the wisdom, or spiritual insight or power; and such boasting is true blindness and folly, for we never can hold anything from God according to His mind except as we are truly owning that we are mere empty earthen vessels “that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”

Foiled in his attempt to induce the Lord to assume the independent possession of power in Himself with self for the object of the exercise of that power, the enemy endeavored to sap the foundations of God's glory in Him by another method. The Lord Jesus being present in the world made all its character plain morally, because “He was the true light;” and so we hear that the devil showed Him “all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them” and said, “All this power will I give thee and the glory of them; for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.” But the temptation failed, for He would rather be avowedly poor in this world as it is than take earthly honor and glory in any but God's way and in His time; and in this He showed His steadfast purpose first of all to walk with God meanwhile. He “overcame” by taking the downward path in this world, all that was of God being contrary to it; and each step and movement of His in it God found fragrant with pure and perfect obedience (Phil. 2); and He has a present glory as well as a future one as the fitting result. “I am set down,” He says (Rev. 3:21), “with my Father in his throne;” and a similar place of blessed association with Him in His glory is held out as reward to the heart of him who “overcometh” in view of the church's failure, walking in His path, and in presence of the evil tendency of that failure. “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne.”

There was yet another form in which the blessed Lord had to endure and did successfully meet the temptations of Satan; and, considered in its moral and spiritual bearing, it may be said to have arisen out of the other two. The Lord stood in the unshaken consciousness of relationship with God, and the devil sought to work upon this by getting Him to act in such a way as that, while ostensibly it was to be displayed, yet really a question was to be raised about it, and, more than that, self thus assumed to be the center of God's actings, instead of the divine glory being their starting-point and end. The Lord met this by simply referring the matter direct to God as His center, refusing to use the confidence in His care and love which God gave to be sufficient for any and

every question about self; so that the heart might be always undistracted to think of Him and His glory—refusing, I say, to use this, as an occasion for making self prominent. “The devil said unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence, for it is written, He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.”

Now in all these details—in many others also alas!—but in these, as specially revealing the spirit and ways of the Lord as man in responsibility before God, the church has failed; and this failure is made apparent in the words of the message to Laodicea, which, though few, are amongst the most solemn which the book of God contains. The Lord give us to ponder them deeply in these days of indifference!

The Lord by His word fastens upon the root of all the evil, giving in a sentence the character of the condition which manifests such failure and which is the occasion for His expressed judgment. “I know thy works,” He says, “that thou art neither cold nor hot. I would that thou wert cold or hot. So then, because thou art lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Care or concern for God's glory there is none, and anything like faithfulness of heart is entirely wanting; nor is there that entire absence of movement in divine things which is an opportunity for the application of the word in the convicting power of the Spirit to the conscience; all is utter and complete indifference. God's word is known and the truth no doubt assented to, but in all the well-satisfied carelessness of those who are contentedly self-occupied and whom the Apostle describes (2 Tim. 3) as “traitors, having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.” The keen edge of the word is thus turned away from the conscience and so nothing can stop the sickening course of unabashed self-satisfaction and self-occupation, but that rejection by the Lord which will make manifest even to man in the world all its nauseousness.

Instead of having Christ as object and example and resource and covering and all, “I” fills up entirely the range of vision, but it is “I,” man, without being a possessor of the eternal blessings which are received from the Lord's hand, although boasting in the fancied possession of the light and knowledge and material blessings flowing from Christianity. “Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked: I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich, and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve that thou mayest see.” Thus the fruit of boasting in the possession of light and knowledge which have come in by Christianity is that the church thinks these are her inherent possession without Christ. And in result this boasting leads to such a course as that in very blindness she shows her enlightenment by adding man as he is naturally to Christ, whether by means of ritualism or by the philosophy which exalts his mind and himself to God, heedless of the lesson taught thousands of years ago, that to bring man as he is at all into God's presence is but to make very manifest that he is only a poor naked sinner who never can stand before Him.

The second chapter of Colossians reveals to us that trusting in the teaching of human philosophy, or having confidence in the ordinances of worldly religion, goes hand in hand with (even the slipping away from and certainly with) the absence of vital union to Christ as Head, and with the

giving up of the entire truth as to Christ. And we do well to note this in connection with the Epistle to Laodicea for there are evidences in Col. 2:1 and iv. 16 that the apostle had the actual assembly at Laodicea, much before his heart in writing to Colosse, so that we may judge that he discerned a similar condition in both.

There is no doubt that there is—and in one sense it was the Lord's intention that there should be—in Christianity light set in the world, which light has wrought (in and by the truth) in enlightenment and civilization among men, even where the reception of eternal life and eternal blessings has not in every case been secured, and thus the wealth of the world has been brought to light. And Satan has not been slow to see and to use this, and to present all this wealth of the world in attractive forms to induce men's hearts to receive it to the exclusion of God. He thus attacked the Lord, as we have seen, but a sad contrast to His blessed faithfulness is displayed by the church's course. He was content to be “the Son of who had not where to lay his blessed head;” but she is found boasting that she is “rich and increased with goods and hath need of nothing” alas! not even of dependence on God now, for she rests on what she is and has. (Compare Acts 3:1 and 6.)

We learn too in solemn words how her self-assertion has excluded God, for verse 20 tells us that the blessed pattern and example, the only One who can guide because He was the only thorough overcomer in such a trial is outside the door of the church—shut out! It is a dreadful condition and utterly hopeless, too, of amendment, if we look at it; but the watchful and loving One reminds us even in it that we can count upon Him. In His care for those who are His own He will have to send chastening that their hearts may be roused out of their dull lethargy to listen to His voice. “Awake thou that sleepest! and arise from among the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.” But there is the blessed intimacy of communion with Him to reward those who do. “Behold,” He says, “I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with me.” And His heart not satisfied with even this, the blessed overcomer, the faithful and true witness, who passed unconquered through the full trial of Satan's wiles, will share the glory that attaches to Him in this character with any little one who has sought truly, however feebly, to follow His blessed footsteps.

And with Him shall my rest be on high,

When in holiness bright I sit down,

In the joy of His love ever nigh,

In the peace which His presence shall crown.

“To him that overcometh,” are His words, “will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father in His throne.”

And now, beloved reader, where are you, and what is your individual share in heart and spirit in the condition of this church that has been so wonderfully dealt with? Be not deceived: that which is around you and bears the name of the church is not what God has developed from the principles given in the New Testament writings. That it is so is man's proud boast, but at the same time is Satan's deceit. It is, I repeat, not so, but really, if God's word is to be trusted, that which has slipped farther and farther from His will and ways. It is that whose history we have seen traced by

God's hand in these chapters, whose features you may discern, for God has Himself delineated them for you—that assembly seen on the earth, once made the depositary of His truth about His Son and concerning the work He accomplished and the glory awaiting Him, and once separated from the world to God by this to know the power and reality of a present Holy Spirit and of a coming Lord; but that assembly which has in every detail proved her unfaithfulness to her trust, which has embraced the world and mixed with it and sought to deck it with her name, so that she might without conscience be worldly; yea, which has in result taken sides with that world in all its indifference to and rejection of the Lord. You may be able even now to trace some if not all of those features on her face which God has shown us—you ought to do so—and if so, how are you in heart acting towards them and her? Are you acquiescing or witnessing against, consenting to the present order of things religiously or vindicating God's name and character from it all; are you overcome or overcoming? Which? You must be either.

If you are one of His, He has watched over and cared for His own amidst the disorder right through all its course and does so now. But oh! listen to His word: let it enter your ear, let it command you, let it stir you up to act faithfully for Him, let it rest in your heart and lead you on to bright reward.

Pause, I beseech you, even now, and do not incur the very serious and solemn danger which will most surely threaten you if you again pass by His warning, entreating, seven-fold uttered call—“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”

F. J. R.

Chapter 108

Hebrews 2

After the first four verses, which belong to chapter we get a statement of the position of our Lord: all things are not yet put under Him, but He is crowned with glory and honor. In chapter i. the apostle had spoken fully of the divinity of the Lord: in chapter after the first four verses, we get His humiliation, and then the thought of God with respect to us in His becoming man. In chapter ii. we get what fits Him to be the Apostle and High Priest of our profession; then in the close of chapter iv. he takes up His priesthood.

It is a wonderful thing that “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us,” and that He is gone up, as man, to sit on the right hand of the Majesty on high. He is sitting there as having finished and accomplished the work which He came to do: “when He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” He is still there in, His service as Priest.

“For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man that Thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of Thy hands.” In Psa. 8 we get the purpose of God as to man: in Psa. 2 we get the dealings of God with Israel, and the rejection of Christ. “Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” (Psa. 2:7.) Christ has this double character: He is King in Zion, and as born in this world, He is the Son of God according to Psalm Accordingly in John 1 Nathanael so owns Him as Son of God and King of Israel: “Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.” (John 1:49.) The Lord says to him,” Henceforth ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” (John 1:51.) He takes that other title, that larger wider character that was purposed of God as declared in Psa. 8 It is not there that He is the Son of God and King in Zion, but that He is the Son of man. So in Dan. 7:13, 14: “One like the Son of man came to the Ancient of Days And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.” He is the Heir of all God's purposes as to man: all that He had created as God He was to possess as Man, but (sin and evil having come in) He comes and takes the redemption title. Psa. 8 is quoted in Eph. 1:22, and also in 1 Cor. 15:27, where resurrection is spoken of, and here in Heb. 2 very definitely and distinctly. We are joint-heirs with Christ: the thought and purposes of God are all in man. “For unto the angels hath he not, put in subjection the world to come.” “My delights were with the sons of men.” (Prov. 8:31.) Therefore when the blessed Lord becomes a Man and the angels celebrate His birth, they say, “On earth peace, good pleasure in men.” (Luke 2:14.) Then when He is rejected by His people as Son of God and King of Israel, He takes this wider title as Son of man, having charged His disciples strictly not to speak of Him as the Christ. As the Son of man He takes the wider title, but then He must suffer to accomplish redemption.

1 Cor. 15 puts in a still stronger way His dominion over all things. “But when he saith, All things are put under him it is manifest that he is excepted which did put all things under him.” Then what is

said in our chapter is that that is not yet accomplished: He is sitting on His Father's throne, not on His own at all. “But now we see not yet all things put under him. But we see Jesus.... crowned with glory and honor:” we see part of the Psalm fulfilled, that part in which He is personally crowned with glory and honor, but all things are not put under Him. It is this that makes our whole place. Therefore we find in this whole Epistle that it looks at us entirely as walking on the earth; it is not union with Christ in heaven here, and the church is only once mentioned in a general way. If I take the mystery, then I get union with Christ, one spirit with Him; but this is not where the saint is Been here, but as a pilgrim and stranger in the world.

“This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God.” It is not like Aaron standing there, “offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which can never take away sins;” the apostle contrasts that distinctly in Heb. 10 Christ is glorified, in heaven but the things are not under Him yet. There is far more of contrast than of comparison in Hebrews. Take Aaron's priesthood, and you find a constant repetition of these sacrifices in contrast to Christ's own sacrifice you get many priests, whereas Christ has an unchangeable priesthood. The veil showed “that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest;” now “we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus;” and instead of a high priest not going in lest he should die, we find Christ seated at the right hand of God. Christ did not sit down till that work was completely finished; the Holy Ghost insists upon it in connection with the perfect purging of our conscience. You get in Hebrews the testimony of the Holy Ghost, but not His operation in us, nor do you get the Father; because it is a question of our standing with God as such. The question is, Does the sacrifice of Christ make the comers thereunto perfect? This part of the Epistle says it does: it is a conclusion drawn in chapter x., having been largely reasoned out in chapter ix.

Now “the worshippers once purged” have “no more conscience of sins.” Christ purged our sins by His work, and the divine testimony by the Holy Ghost purges the conscience. If the “one sacrifice” did not make perfect those coming to God by it, they could not be made perfect at all. “Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others, for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” If He did not suffer for sins, He could not put them away. He must drink the cup at the dreadful moment. It was not a mere form of suffering that Christ went through, but suffering such as we cannot fathom. If that work was not done in that one offering, it never could be done, “for then must he often have suffered,” and He is now in glory. As regards our approach to God the conscience is purged and perfected forever; “the worshippers once purged” have “no more conscience of sins.” These priests were always standing (“standeth” is the emphatic word in ver. 11), “offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which can never take away sins; but this man after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God;” He did not sit till He had finished His work, “from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.” He has finished the work for His friends—believers, I mean; they no more conscience of sins, “for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” It is not a question of the work done in us; He appears in the presence of God for us, He is in glory, sitting there—because His work is finished, giving the testimony that we are clean and our conscience is purged; besides that He has obtained this glory. “By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” “Forever” is a very strong word in this passage, it expresses a thing that is continuous and uninterrupted. As He sits there

continuously, so we are perfected continuously. We are always there before God according to the value of the work of the Lord Jesus. In Heb. 10 you get not only the good will of God (“Then said he, Lo I come to do thy will, O God"), but the work done divinely, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost that it is done. I have got God's will and thought towards me; then by the offering of Jesus Christ, I have got the work done, and I have got His testimony, “Whereof the Holy, Ghost also is a witness to us... and their sins and their iniquities, will I remember no more.” Whenever I know really by faith the value of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot go to God With the thought that He imputes anything to me: I may be in the dust before Him if I have sinned, but I know He cannot impute it to me. The thing is done once for all; as those priests were standing because it was not done, so Christ is sitting because it is done. “Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of saints in light.” (Col. 1:12.) Do not suppose that it is a light thing, having our conscience thus perfect before God; if we fail, we cannot be exercised about it too deeply; but let us be exercised ever so deeply, the question when I come before God is, not what I have done, but what Christ has done. If I go on the ground of what I have done, I can look for nothing but judgment. “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”

The value of what I have done is that I am perfectly lost, but what is the value of what Christ has done? If I go to God really, I find Christ in the presence of God for me, the perfect witness in God's sight that sin cannot be imputed to me. I cannot walk with God otherwise. Can I, if I am a criminal, talk of walking with a judge? Suppose a child has been disobedient and naughty: he cannot feel free and happy when he sees his father. You cannot have blessed and holy affections without a conscience that is perfect. You must get a clear conscience to have a free heart. In order to lead me to walk in fellowship with God, He makes my conscience perfect because Christ bore my sins, and He is now sitting at the right hand of God. He “when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” He did not sit down till He had finished the work, till He had blotted out our sins, all our sins. If that work has not been completed and finished, so that He has no more to do, it cannot be done at all. It is the contrast of Christ's work with the Jewish way of going on that we get here. “Which hath made us meet,” &c.

There is where I see Christ. I see Him sitting at the right hand of God as our Priest, and by His work finished before He sat down, my conscience is perfected forever. We are now between this work of the Lord and His coming again. “So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many: and unto them that look for him; shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

The question for us all is, not whether we own Christ, but whether we own Him as our Savior, or own Him as Judge and then have to answer for all our sins. Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, all things are not yet under Him; but the work has been perfectly accomplished which gives us boldness to enter into the holiest. There is no veil now. The veil has been rent.

If I look back, I see that the first paradise—the garden of Eden—is over; this world is not paradise, I am sure. Well, what is the state of things? We see in the world corruption, misery, wars, wretchedness: Christ is hid in God, but there is another paradise, and Christ is there, though we are not there yet. Meanwhile, “being justified by faith we have peace with God” —not joy merely, but peace—a very great word is peace. There is not a single thing between God and us except Christ as the testimony that the work is done.

It is interesting to see the four things in this chapter (Hebrews 2) which made it necessary that Christ should suffer.

The angels—witnesses of God's glorious power in creation—are in a certain sense passed over, but there is no jealousy in these blessed creatures, and when the Lord becomes man, they say, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in man.” The first thing that caused the blessed Son of God to become man was the glory of God. Nothing but the cross maintains the glory of God. The more we look at it, the more we see that the cross stands alone in the history of eternity. “For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” If the blessed Lord undertakes this work, He must go through it really. If we sinners are to be received to glory, Christ must suffer. It is only through the cross, morally speaking, that perfect righteousness and holiness and perfect love are reconciled. If God had cut off Adam and Eve when they sinned, where would have been His love? If sin had been passed over, there would be no righteousness in that; but the moment I get the cross I get the fullest and most terrible testimony of God's righteousness against sin. The more you look at it, the more you see how all good and evil were brought to a complete climax there. You get sin and wickedness at their height at the cross. It draws out the complete absolute enmity of man against God. Then I get another thing, the full power of Satan. I get in the cross of Christ man's perfectness as well as man's absolute sinfulness; I see His perfect obedience to the Father and His perfect love where He was made sin for us, and I see God's perfect righteousness against sin. All that man was in wickedness; all Satan's power; all that God is in righteousness and love was brought out at the cross. “How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?” The whole thing has been settled, and Christ is sitting down at the right hand of God because it is settled.

I get another thing too in this chapter—Satan's power destroyed; “that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.” His power is destroyed, though its effects are not yet gone. “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” (James 4:7.) We may listen to his wiles, but his power is destroyed. Satan put forth his whole power against Christ, and be was allowed to succeed apparently, but his power was broken in resurrection. “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive.” (Psa. 68:18.) The results are not produced yet, but the work is done that will produce them.

Then I get a third thing. Christ came “to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.” You get the double character of Christ's work in scripture. The blood presented to God gives us the propitiation side, while the scape-goat gives us the substitution side. The blood is the perpetual witness before God. The scape-goat has borne away all my sins, not some of them, not my sins up to August 10, 1874, but all my sins. I cannot think of sinning to-morrow, and I can feel only the sins that are on my conscience (conscience deals with past sins), but when I look at the work of Christ He did not bear my sins merely up to a given day, but “once for all.” The scape-goat has carried them to a land not inhabited. I get this double character of the work: the blood under God's eye, the perpetual testimony there; then, if through grace I do come, I find that Christ has been substituted for me, and so the whole thing is settled. I get God's glory requiring this sacrifice; I get Satan's power destroyed; I get the precious blood before God, and Christ bearing my sins in His own body on the tree. It gives me boldness.

There is a fourth thing in this chapter. Christ suffered that He should know how to succor them that are tempted. “For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted. The believer is looked at as a poor weak creature always in Hebrews. The priesthood of Christ in Hebrews is not about our sins (it could not be, because we “have no more conscience of sins"), but about our weakness. When faith has got hold of the fact, in the power of the Holy Ghost, that Christ has borne my sins, and I come to God by Him, I come in virtue of the work that has purged my conscience, What I do get in Hebrews is, that Christ can enter into all my temptations. I find temptations every moment, the world is a snare; if I want to live godlily, I need His sympathy. Christ found none in this world. He, the most accessible and gracious of men, sympathized with everybody, but there was no one to sympathize with Him. He can understand the nature of all these trials and temptations of mine. He knows them a thousand times better than I can, because He has suffered a thousand times more.

There were then these four reasons for Christ becoming a man—

1st, For the glory of God.

2nd, To destroy death which was the power of Satan.

3rd, As regards sins, “to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”

4th, To be “able to succor those that are tempted.”

As to our walk through this world with all its trials and difficulties, He can enter into all, feel it all, sympathize with it all. Christ having accomplished the work, He could take His people straight to heaven (therefore the thief could go straight to Paradise); but in an ordinary way He leaves them to pass through the world where they need His help in their weakness.

When it comes to sins, I get in the Epistle of John “If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” Righteousness is not touched: the value of the propitiation cannot be shaken. In virtue of this propitiation instead of imputing sin, the advocacy of Christ it brought out for me. It is not a question of imputing sins, because Christ has already borne them, and God must despise that blood before He can impute sin to me.

You find in John's Epistles that he does not speak of access to God but of communion with the Father. Communion with the Father and the Son is totally destroyed for the time by an idle thought. Perhaps I may have been in a state of carelessness, and the effect of Christ's advocacy is to make me conscious of this. Whatever the flesh produces in my nature God can have no fellowship with. But grace is at work; it is not a question of imputation because Jesus Christ the righteous is there, the Advocate is there to restore my soul. The effect of my failing is that He intercedes for me, and the Spirit of God brings home the word to my conscience, “How can you who are sanctified to God act thus?” I may get outward chastening too, if needed. “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous,” and there in Job He is speaking of chastening. There is not an instant that the high and holy God is not thinking of me a poor worm—not an instant.

“He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet.” (John 13:10.) The Lord is speaking of water there, not of blood. “You are picking up dirt in your walk: I cannot stay with you down here, but I am not going to give you up.” Where was He going? To God. Through the Spirit and the word they really were washed, and He washes the feet,

Everything inconsistent that has come into my ways or heart, He cleanses the heart from it. This is not the subject here in Hebrews. If I fail through carelessness or want of prayer, I get grace working to restore my soul, as in 1 John 2:1. Never be content if your communion is interrupted; whenever you get into the presence of God, if the light of His countenance is hindered in any way, do not you be content. There is no perfection for the Christian till he is like Christ and with Christ in glory. “And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly” there is no other perfection for the Christian. We are “predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son; it is looking at that this leads us on in practical holiness. When I know I shall be perfectly conformed to Christ in glory, then “he that hath this hope in him purifieth himself; even as he is pure.” If anything hinders my being positively in the light of God's countenance, let me judge it; as we go on with the Lord, we shall learn to see better whatever hinders us. There is growth in this surely, but there is no growth in the value of Christ's blood, no growth in the value of His work. If we fail, grace is there to restore the soul to communion; and coming to God we find it out. “For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one,” —one set, as it were in glory (the expression, is a very abstract one),— “for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren.” This is not forgiveness merely. What a thought it is! It is God's thought, to act on our affections. What unutterable grace it is! How thoroughly we see these are divine thoughts! The moment, beloved friends, God is showing the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus,” we cannot wonder at anything. When the angels themselves see the thief on the cross, the woman that was a sinner, one of us, in the same glory with Christ, and like Him, they will know the exceeding riches of His grace. The moment I see the blessed Son of God come down here, and die on the cross, what can be too much to expect? The most wonderful thing of all is the cross: no glory is too great after that. That which we have to desire is hearts that own the unspeakable fullness of the work of Christ, and in everything down here to glorify Him. We need the abiding sense of dependence so as to look for that strength which is made perfect in weakness, the care of Christ, the mercy of Christ in passing through this world. The Lord give you, beloved friends, to see the full efficacy of His finished work, and then to keep in the sense of entire dependence, seeking continual grace from Him. It is death to mere nature of course, but “it is joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Chapter 109

The Hexaglot Bible

It is proposed to give a very concise description of the main features of this noble and admirable book; in the hope that the attention of Biblical students, and others who are interested in that revelation of the mind and purposes and grace of God which, always most precious, is surely more so than ever in these last and perilous days, may be directed to its great merits. It may indeed be fairly expected that the diligent use of the work by such as are in any degree competent to appreciate its value, will tend, not only to shed clearer and brighter light for themselves on many passages of holy scripture, but also enable them thus to be more helpful as teachers or expositors, to the church of God at large.

As its name implies, the work presents the inspired books in six languages, in the following order: for the Old Testament, Hebrew, Greek, Latin, English, German, and French; for the Now Testament, Greek, Syriac, Latin, English, German and French.

The Hebrew text is that of Van der Hooght, corrected as regards accents, by comparison with the editions of Letteris, Vienna, 1852, and of S. D. Luzzatto, Trieste, 1858-61.

With regard to the ancient and important Greek version of the Old Testament, commonly called that of the Seventy, it is stated (Prolegomenon, p. xii.), that “The translation was begun about B.C. 280, and was probably not finished for several centuries. The dialect is Macedonic, mingled with a number of Hebraisms, being similar in style to the Greek of the New Testament.” The following remarks are worthy of attention. “The Septuagint translation is the connecting link between the original texts. While it often explains and illustrates, sometimes even corrects and supplies the Hebrew of the Old Testament, it not infrequently enables us to understand the peculiar sense in which words or phrases are employed in the Greek of the New Testament. Like all works which are merely human, the Greek translation has its defects as well as its merits, and some or both of these will be pointed out by us in due course. In the main it agrees with the Hebrew text as we have it this day; and the fact that it has always been received in the Jewish as well as in the Christian church, adds no little weight to its authority.”

The learned Editor shows, by a variety of instances too extensive to be more than referred to here, that the Septuagint Version “was made from an unpointed text, or from a text pointed differently from the present.”

Although the Septuagint presents many variations from the Hebrew, and in the Book of Job particularly the translators have occasionally given Hebrew words without an attempt at translation, in Greek character, still there are a number of passages introduced, either verbatim or nearly so, into the text of the New Testament, sufficient to prove that a divine sanction has been given, in these instances, to a translation which, as a whole, cannot be regarded as an exact representation of the original.

One remarkable example may be referred to here. In Deut. 32:48, there appears to be a double rendering, thus: ε■φρ■νθητε ο■ρανο■ ■μα α■τ■, “Rejoice, ye heavens, with him,” κα■

προσκυνησ■τωσαν α■τ■ π■ντες υ■ο■ θεο■, “and let all the angels of God worship him.” This is followed, as a second or alternative rendering, by the words, ε■φρ■νθητε ■θνη μετ■ το■ λαο■ α■το■, “Rejoice, ye nations, with his people,” κα■ ■νισχυσ■τωσαν α■τ■ π■ντες ■γγελοι θεο■, “and let all the sons of God be strong in him.” Now, the words κα■ προσκυνησ■τωσαν α■τ■ π■ντες ■γγελοι θεο■ are quoted verbatim in Heb. 1:6, the reference usually given being to Psa. 97:7. “Worship him, all ye gods.” But the corresponding Psalm in the Septuagint (97:7), has, προσκυν■σατε α■τ■ π■ντες ο■ ■γγελοι α■το■, “worship him, all ye his angels.” So that the words, “And let all the angels of God worship him” appear to be directly taken from the clause in the Septuagint just cited (Deut. 32:48), unless it can be shown that the same words exist in any other passage of the Old Teatament according to the Septuagint.

In this brief notice of so great a work no more can be done than to invite a diligent study of the very careful, and, as it appears, masterly examination of a large number of passages, forming a considerable part of the Prolegomenon, and which is worthy of and will amply repay an attentive perusal. Some of these passages elucidate obscurities in the Hebrew original, and one at least, though well-known, may be noted as adopted (albeit an interpretation, and not a translation of the original words) into the text of the New Testament, Heb. 10:5, (Sept. Psa. 39:7) σ■μα δ■ κατηρτ■σω μοι, “but a body hast thou prepared me.” In English Version, Psa. 40:8, “mine ears hast thou opened,” (or, digged), to be compared with Ex. 21:6.

While, however, there are many quotations verbally exact, and many more with some variation, transferred from the Septuagint to the text of the New Testament, it must be admitted that there are also not a few discrepancies from the original Hebrew. As to these the reader must be reminded that, as before stated, this ancient version appears to have been made from a text either without points, or differently pointed from the more modern copies of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The edition of the Septuagint adopted in the Hexaglot Bible is that of Tischendorf, founded on the Vatican Edition, with a notice of some interpolations, and the insertion, within brackets, of a good many important omissions.

Finally, notwithstanding the instances of double rendering, interpolation, and even occasional error in translation, which are pointed out at some length and with evident care in the Prolegomenon, the Septuagint Version must always be one of much importance and interest to the student, as being the work probably of many minds, engaged on the Sacred Books at different intervals of time, but, we may fairly conclude, with honest and conscientious desire to represent the sense of the originals as faithfully as the knowledge of the several translators permitted.

The Latin Version is substantially that of Hieronymus (Jerome), the greatest of ancient translators, though Bishop Walton asserts that the book of Psalms in the Vulgate was rendered by Jerome, not from the Hebrew, but from the Septuagint version according to the emendation of Lucian Martyr; and it is also alleged that the New Testament was not re-translated by him, but simply revised. The editor says, (Proleg. p. liii.) “In the Old Testament of the Hexaglot Bible, we have reproduced the Biblia Sacra Vulgates Editionis Sixti V. Pontificia Maximi jussu recognita et Clementis VIII. auctoritate edita. Parisiis, Jouby et Roger, Editores.”

“In the New Testament, out of deference to the opinion and advice of friends, we have adopted the Codex Amiatinus, Novum Test:meat= Latino, Inter-prate Hieronymo. celeberrhno Codice Amiatino

omnium at antiquissimo et pramitantiesimo, edidit—Constantinus Tischendorf. Lipsire, Avenarius et Mendelsohn, 1854."

After a very extensive list of variations between the Clementine Edition of the (New Testament) Vulgate and the Codex Amiatinus as edited by Tischendorf, we have the following important remarks. "In the above list of different readings, those words the spelling of which has been modified in the Hexaglot Bible are marked thus; some words and phrases which find place in the Clementine Edition and not in the Codex Amiatinus, are marked with an asterisk. This is intended to denote that those words or phrases have been introduced within brackets into the Hexaglot text. We wish it to be observed that, as a rule, those words only have been supplied which occur in the Greek as Well as in the Syriac. A very few passages, wanting in both Latin Editions, have been supplied from other sources."

A very interesting critical notice of nearly sixty instances of "omissions, additional and variations, in order, of the books of the New Testament," most of which are admitted, while a few, on apparently sufficient grounds, are rejected, concludes the account of the Latin Vulgate in the Hexaglot Bible.

On the all important subject of "the Greek of the New Testament;" it is stated, (Proleg. p. xcv,)—"The text of the justly renowned Dr. Tischendorf (eighth Elation) has been adopted in its integrity. Moreover, the suggestion of Dean Alford, as to one taking the trouble to compare his text with that of Tischendorf, has been acted upon. Every word of the One has been carefully collated with every word of the other. The differences which the Dean pronounces both numerous and important have been faithfully noted down."

The omission in Tischendorf's edition "have been supplied from various sources, where possible from Alford; those which Alford also rejects have been supplied from the Textus Receptus." This arrangement does not impair Tischendorf's text, since, as he "never employs a bracket; therefore whenever a word or a clause or a whole passage is introduced within brackets, into the Greek text of the Hexaglot New Testament, the reader will at once infer that the word, clause, or passage does not find place in Tischendorf's text; 'so that the simple omission of the bracketed portions leaves Tischendorf's text intact."

"We shall proceed now (Prolog. xcvi.) to point out I. the MSS from which Alford and Tischendorf obtained their texts. II. the discrepancies in spelling between the two Editors. III. Different readings, comprising: 1, Words in Tischendorf not in Alford; 9, Words in Alford not in Tischendorf, those introduced into our text being marked thus; 3, Differing words and phrases; 4, Transpositions. 5, Words admitted into the text of Alford, within brackets, some of which form part of Tischendorf's text; others which do not find place in the text of Tischendorf, but which have, nevertheless, been admitted into the text of the Hexaglot, because they exist in the,whole or in the majority of the other versions. 6, Words and passages, neither in Alford nor in Tischendorf, supplied in the Hexaglot text from the Textus Receptus."

Of the lists of MSS of the Greek Testament given by Alford and Tischendorf, that of the latter is selected, as the more concise. These MSS amount to fifty-two, followed by the ancient Latin authorities, (Itala), mostly of the 5th and 6th centuries (a few probably earlier), numbering about eighteen. Then many of the Vulgate, varying from the 4th to the 8th century. And, lastly, versions in various languages, as Ethiopic, American, Arabic, Memphitic, Sahidic, Syriac, Persic, Gothic,

&c.

II. With regard to spelling, accentuation, and punctuation, the system of Tischendorf is almost uniformly followed. A list is given of words differently spelled by the two editors, amounting though not in most cases of any real importance, to rather more than 300. As to these the orthography of Tischendorf is almost universally preferred, and this remark applies also to the spelling of proper names.

III. Different readings. 1. Words in Tischendorf not in Alford. Of these, in Matt. 24:36, the words ο■δ■ ■ υ■ος, "not even the Son." Mark 13:22; ψευδ■χριστοι, "false Christs," and Luke 10:21, ■ν τ■ πνε■ματι τ■ ■γ■■, "in the Holy Spirit," are found in the ancient Codex Sinaiticus. "About sixteen passages, of greater or less importance, are found in Tischendorf's text which are not found in the text of Alford. 2. Of words in Alford not in Tischendorf, Matt. 17:21, το■το δ■ τ■ γ■νος, κ. τ. λ., 18:11, ■λθε γ■ρ ■ υ■■ς το■■νθρ■που σ■σαι τ■ ■πολωλ■ς, 20:16, πολλο■ γ■ρ ε■σι κλητο■, ■λ■γοι δ■■■κλεκτο■, are not found in the Codex Sinaiticus, to which reference is here made as being one of the most ancient, and in many respects, most valuable copies of the Greek New Testament.

On the other hand, Matt. 21:44, κα■ ■ πεσ■ν ■π■ τ■ν λ■θον το■τον συνθλασθ■σεται ■φ'■ν δ ■ν π■η, λικμ■σει α■τ■ν, rejected by Tischendorf, occurs in Codex Sinaiticus. Several passages in Mark and Luke rejected by Tischendorf, are wanting also in codex Sinaiticus. But Luke 23:17, ■ν■γκην δ■ ε■χεν ■πολ■ειν α■το■ς κατ■ ■ορτ■ν ■να, and 24:12, ■ δ■ Πετρος ■ναστ■ς ■δραμεν ■π■ τ■ μνημε■ον, κα■ παρακ■ψας....θανμ■ζω τ■ γεγον■ς, and, ib. 36, κα■ λ■γει α■το■ς Ε■ρ■νη ■μ■ν, and, ib. 40, κα■ το■το ε■π■ν ■π■δειξεν (■δειξεν)α■το■ς τ■ς χε■ρας κα■ το■ς π■δας, though not found in Tischendorf appear in Codex Sinaiticus, while the important clause 51, κα■ ■νεφ■ρετο ε■ς τ■ν ο■ραν■ν, is wanting in both.

3. Differing words and phrases. Very numerous, (about 640), but very few of importance.

Transpositions, in which the order of words in Tischendorf differs from that in Alford, about 249.

Words bracketed in Alford's edition. Of the list given it may be remarked that the words which are not found in Tischendorf's text, but admitted, because sanctioned by the whole or the majority of the other versions, are placed within brackets in the Hexaglot text.

"Words neither in Tischendorf nor in Alford, which, being for the most part in the Syriac and other versions, have been introduced within brackets into the Hexaglot text, generally from the Textus Receptus." These words or passages amount to about 250.

The Syriac text of the Hexaglot New Testament is said to have been most carefully prepared by a comparison of the editions: 1, of Bishop Walton, 1867; 2, of the edition printed at the expense of the British and Foreign Bible Society, and edited by the conjoint labors of Dr. Buchanan and Professor Lee, the former of whom corrected for the press as far as the Acts of the Apostles, the latter completed the work; 8, of the Paris edition of 1824, being a revision of the edition in Le Jay's polyglot Bible, 1645; 4, of the Hamburg edition of 1669 (occasionally). The result of a collation of the Hexaglot Syriac text with those of Walton, the Paris edition, and that of the Bible Society appears to be that the different readings are both few and very unimportant. "It will be found that in every instance of any moment the Hexaglot is in accord with Walton." (Proleg. cxxvi.)

Of the three modern versions the English, of both the Old and New Testaments,—is the authorized translation, or King James's Bible, 1611.

The German is Luther's, “commenced in 1517, and completed and published in 1680. The Old Testament translation was made directly from the Hebrew (Biblia Hebraica, Gerson, Brescia, 1494.) The New Testament translation was also made directly from the Greek.”

“The first Protestant French version of the Old and New Testaments was published by R. V. Olivetan, with the assistance of the illustrious John Calvin, at Neuchatel in 1585, and at Geneva in 1540. Another edition of this appeared in 1588, called the Geneva Bible, because revised by the College of Professors at Geneva. The edition of David Martin is a recension of the Genevan version, and of this the whole Bible was published at Amsterdam in 1707. This text as revised by Bishop Luscombe has been adopted in the Hexaglot Bible.”

A series of examples showing the interest and value of the modern versions as occasional aids to interpretation, and some reflections which indicate a proper reverence for and love of the inspired word of God, conclude the Prolegomenon, or Introduction to this beautiful book, of which it may not be too much to say that its publication is an honor to the present century, and likely to prove a signal benefit, immediately and indirectly, in this and in other countries to the church and servants of God. C. P.

Chapter 110

Higher Holiness: a Review, Part 1

The question of holiness has recently stirred up too widely the Christian mind not to give attention to every form in which it claims it. It has, I believe, usefully roused Christians' minds to the sense that there ought to be deliverance from the bondage of sin, and more entire devotedness to Christ—self-surrender to Him. As is ever the case when what is true and important is based upon false principles, it has been accompanied by, or mixed up with, what is false—with the fruit of these false principles. Our part is to separate the precious from the vile, that we be as God's mouth.

The form in which this demand of holiness or perfection has been put forward, whether by Wesleyans or Mr. Pearsall Smith, has been pretty fully met, and I do not now recur to their views. The Moderator of the Free Church Assembly has stated his views on the subject; and as they involve some very important principles, and the position and character of Dr. Stuart will naturally command the respect of many, I will briefly weigh his statements. An excellent man, I doubt not, though personally unacquainted with him, and sound in the faith, he will not object to his sentiments being weighed by scripture. His mind, at any rate his statements, are neither clear nor accurate, always a difficulty in reviewing the thoughts of another. They are vague; but certain great principles are sufficiently clear to examine whether they are scriptural.

But I shall notice some of this vagueness where all is well meant. For the real result is that, with the best intentions, the statements mean nothing: only they ignore the true question.

“Outside the camp (he tells us) we find the Holy One numbered with transgressors. In that same hour His blood purges our conscience from dead works to serve the living God. We are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, in mind, in will, in heart; and sin hath not dominion over us because we are under grace.” This is merely using the general effect for the reality of the state; the question of a new nature or life, and of the law, is carefully dropped. But I add, sin where? If it be in us, the whole man is not renewed. Scripture says the new man is renewed in knowledge after God—is created in righteousness and true holiness; never that the whole man is. Practically sanctifying wholly is spoken of, and our being preserved; but the old man is said to be put off, not renewed. Scripture makes the division Dr. Stuart objects to. In fact, Dr. Stuart reduces the now birth to being born of water, leaving out being born of the Spirit. Death, not change, is what frees [justifies] us from sin. Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed [rendered null]. But of this point I will speak farther on.

Dr. Stuart says one stain would occupy the stained person in heaven. I quite agree; and more, it would spoil heaven itself. But what stain? guilt or unholiness? He had spoken of our past stains, and also of the poison of sin, then generally of our stains, as to our qualification to be in heaven. Scripture says, “Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light,” speaking of all Christians, and does not refer meetness to progress.

Many would reject this, but it is scripture they reject. Scripture does speak of progress continually, but not in this connection.

“It cannot, however,” we are told, “be set forth as within the plan of redemption that perfect holiness should be ours on earth. If we wash our hands with snow water, and make ourselves never so clean, we are quickly plunged into the ditch again, and compelled to cry out, O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?“

But there is no such thought as this in scripture. Job says, “Yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and my own clothes shall abhor me.” Dr. Stuart's holiness is a very poor thing, plunging immediately in the ditch again when we have cleansed ourselves. But Job is saying that his cleansing himself was nothing before God; he was as a man plunged in a ditch. “We are not, therefore, defeated,” Dr. Stuart tells us; “we have learned that sin is not omnipotent over us, but that grace is omnipotent over sin.” How so, if “we are quickly plunged into the ditch again?” Who plunges us? “There is no sin, no temptation, no obstinacy, no vitality of sin, which grace is not almighty to overcome, and at last to uproot it.” Does this mean a sinful habit? If so, I should not deny this. But sin in the flesh—is that uprooted? Is it in the new man?

“Where sin and Christ met together on the cross, Christ finished transgression for us, and made an end of sin.” Christ was made sin for us who knew no sin, but sin and Christ meeting on the cross has no truth in it at all. I have no doubt this is a misapplication of the passage, but I leave that aside. But Dr. Stuart adds, “And so in us, when sin and the grace of Jesus Christ meet together, grace triumphs—in the end always triumphs, and over every kind of sin.” What has this to do with Christ “made sin” on the cross, and how do sin and grace meet together in us? What does sin mean here? I suppose a particular lust; but all is vague. The whole man was said to be renewed in mind, will, heart. The man was plunged quickly, it is true, in the ditch, yet not defeated! The teaching is really deplorable, and so vague that no soul can find where it is, save that, with a sense that it ought to triumph, it experiences being “plunged in the ditch,” and cries out, “O wretched man that I am!” And this is holiness!

As to “Job, Daniel, and Paul,” the statement that “the higher any man rises in nearness and in likeness to God, he is always the more deeply conscious of sin,” is entirely unfounded. Job failed exactly in being conscious of sin, and made himself more just than God, and was overwhelmed into abhorrence of himself by God's revelation of Himself. Daniel never speaks of sin in himself at all, but in grace identifies himself with the past sins of Israel. Of Paul I will speak more fully. But there is no kind of evidence that the nearer he was to God the more conscious he was of sin.

Besides, it is the excessive vagueness of all this I complain of. What does conscious of sin mean? of its power actually in us? that there is an evil nature in us always simply bad? How, then, is the whole man renewed?

That is the division of nature which Dr. Moody-Stuart rejects. That the nearer we are to God the more we judge sin by a divine measure in ourselves, as in nature, is quite true; but that is not being more conscious of sin. All is deplorably vague and uncertain; and he whose whole man is renewed is at the same time, we are told, carnal, sold under sin. All this flows from denying the opposition of the flesh and spirit, and putting the Christian under the law, according to the seventh of Romans, reducing us to Judaism; for in the Old Testament the doctrine as to the conflict of

natures was not revealed, and the character of holiness pretty much what Dr. Stuart makes it—integrity of heart—loyalty of heart to God. God has now revealed Himself, and makes us partakers of His holiness. If I take the law as my measure, it is unscriptural to say, when I have the power of Christ, I cannot keep it. It is saying I must sin, which is not true. To say in many things we do all offend, is scriptural; to say that we must, is very evil.

Again, to say that it would be necessary for one child of God, who strives tope in the fear of God all the day long, to live for a day in the measure of hardness and deadness of another, is senseless, because if he were in the deadness and hardness he would not feel the evil.

The teaching, then, is most vague and unsatisfactory; but I must go to its root.

As to mistaken views, that holiness is in the will, so that we may pass over emotions (or, as the American perfectionists say, suggestions), as not sin, I reject with Dr. Stuart; so also that all is sunshine. These, therefore, I leave aside.

On his first mistaken view of holiness I shall dwell. As Dr. Stuart states it, I know of none who hold it save the followers of Freulich, and another in Switzerland. It is not forgotten that it is one person by those who hold, scripturally, the division of flesh and the divine life, the contrariety of flesh and spirit; nor is the sinfulness of the old nature accounted little—it is accounted absolutely and always bad; enmity against God; that it cannot be subject to His law. They insist on its absolute and permanent sinfulness as a nature, wholly bad, the source of evil lusts and enmity against God; that practically it should always be held to be dead. They do not believe that bondage to it, “carnal, sold under sin,” is the Christian state.

Dr. Moody-Stuart says, “As regards what constitutes holiness in redeemed men on earth, the dangerous opinion has been advanced, which makes a very excessive distinction, or rather division, between the new man and the old, between the flesh and the spirit in the believer, as if the sinfulness of the flesh were to be disregarded on account of the holiness of the spirit: forgetting that it is still one person in whom the evil and the good are found.”

(To be continued)

Chapter 111

Higher Holiness: a Review, Part 2

There cannot be “an excessive distinction or division” if there be two opposed natures; still less so, if one be divine, the other sinful. If two, there is division; if one be divine, the other sinful, there cannot be excess in distinguishing them. This is the question which Dr. Stuart ignores or swamps under the general charge of excess.

Let us see what is plainly declared in scripture.

First, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” (John 3:6.) Is not this distinguishing them completely in their origin and nature, carefully so distinguishing, making a division between two distinct and contrary natures?

Man must be born anew (■νωθεν). “Anew” is not a change or purifying what exists, but what, from the beginning onward, is a new birth.

We are born of God afresh; “of his own will begat he us by the word of truth, that we might be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures;” we are “born of the incorruptible seed of the word,” and, receiving Christ, He is our life. “For this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and that life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” It is that which Adam innocent had not more than Adam guilty. “Christ is our life.". It is not we that live, but “Christ liveth in us.” Our duty is to manifest the life of Jesus in our bodies.

That this produces a change in the whole man is most true, yet it is not a change, but a new thing given—eternal life that God hath given us, that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us, and is become our life, Christ, the second Man. It is not I, but Christ that lives in me. Nothing can be more distinct than the corrupt first Adam, the flesh, and Christ, the last Adam, who, risen from the dead, is become “our life.”

Let us see if scripture does not distinguish and oppose them one to another. As to the flesh, “it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Rom. 8:7-10.) Does not this put them in division and formal opposition? Again, in Gal. 5:17, “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other.” Could there be a plainer or more formal statement of what Dr. Moody-Stuart objects to, or contradiction of his objection?

But this contrariety is expressed in the strongest way in scripture. Christians have put off the old man with his deeds; where, note, the deeds, the fruits, are distinguished from the man or nature. They have put on the new man. This new man is created after God. But more: death is the portion of the old man. Our old man is crucified with Christ, dead with. Christ. We are dead and our life hid with Christ our life; to reckon ourselves dead and alive to God, not in Adam but in Christ. In us, that

is, in our flesh, dwells no good thing, but Christ lives in us. So for practice we are to carry about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies. He that is dead is freed (justified) from sin. And this old man and sin in the flesh is condemned wholly and finally, but, for faith, dead. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.”

The doctrinal portion of the whole Epistle to the Romans is divided into two parts. The first part of it tells us how grace has met our guilt, as having sinned, by Christ's death; and, secondly, from chapter 5:12, how we have died with Christ, and thus sin in the flesh met. All this is ignored by Dr. Stuart, and merged in a renewal of the whole man. The works of the flesh, and the fruit of the Spirit, are contrasted in scripture as flowing from two distinct sources—the divine nature, under the power of the Spirit, and the flesh, in which no good thing dwells, from which deliverance is only by death, actually by actual death, and practically now by reckoning ourselves dead, as crucified with Christ.

This leads me to Rom. 7, in which this system of Dr. Moody-Stuart's leaves the Christian, just as scripture carefully takes him out of it. And I do not conceal from myself that, quite admitting the personal piety of those who do not see it, this changes the whole nature and character of Christianity. Paul diligently teaches that a Christian is not where this system leaves him, and that he who is in Rom. 7 is not in the proper sense a Christian at all.

We must not blink the full assertion of this—it is a question of what Christianity practically is. A soul may be in the way, and He who has begun the good work will perfect it, but he is not yet in the Christian state at all while he is in the state described in Rom. 7. The prodigal was converted, repentant, on the right road; but he had not the best robe on till he met his father. (Luke 15)

I believe it often happens that the mind is in Rom. 7 through bad teaching, when it is really delivered in its relationship with God; many are so. But this does not affect the fact that there are two states entirely distinct, one the Christian state, the other not; not merely knowing it or not (of this I have spoken), but two distinct states.

Israel out of Egypt, and brought to God's holy habitation, as in Ex. 15, was in a different state from Israel in Egypt, though God had visited them. The prodigal converted and repentant, without the best robe, and having never met his father, was in a different condition from what he was with the best robe on him, and fit, and then only fit, to go into the house. Before, it was his own thoughts of what might be his state when he arrived; but when come, all was wholly, and solely, and actually according to his father's revealed mind.

Dr. Stuart, with alas! thousands of others, puts the Christian in the experience of Rom. 7, and consequently treats him as carnal, sold under sin. I affirm that the whole object of the apostle's reasoning is to show that a Christian is not there, but delivered from it, and that deliverance from it is the only true Christian state. Indeed I say more, namely, that what the apostle insists on is the absolute incompatibility of the two states—that a person can no more be under the authority of the law and that of Christ at the same time than a woman have two husbands. This makes the issue definite and plain enough, and I state it so because I am persuaded that it is a question of what true Christianity is, and in these days is of vital importance. Many, many years I have taken the

same ground for the deliverance of individual souls; but things are come to a crisis, and all is inquired into, and it behooves us to know what the word of God teaches.

I have already stated that the doctrinal portion of the Epistle to the Romans is composed of two parts, which divide at the end of chapter 5: 11. (Chaps. 9, 10, 11 are an appendix to reconcile the promises made to the Jews, with his no-difference doctrine.) The former part treats the question of sins or guilt; the second, sin, or the evil nature—the flesh. With Dr. Moody-Stuart, stains of guilt and stains of unholiness are all thrown together, and all is vague.

Let us now see how the Spirit of God treats the question of sin and the flesh. He leaves the ground of individual responsibility and works, on which we are guilty, and exposed to judgment, and leads us up to the great heads, Adam and Christ, the law coming in, by the bye (παρεισ■λθε), between. But by one man's disobedience the many (all connected with him, ο■ πολλο■) were made sinners, by one man's obedience the many (all connected with Him) should be made righteous. The objection of the world rises up at once; if one man's obedience constitutes me righteous, I may live on in sin. The answer is not to put man again under law, as is done so unscripturally in a flesh which cannot be subject to it, but to deliver man from sin in a wholly new life which does not come from the first Adam at all, but from Christ, the last Adam, so that he should live in this life: but more, his death to the old Adam—life also—not physically of course but by faith, in that Christ, who is our life, has died. We have been crucified with Him, nevertheless we live; but not we, but Christ lives in us.

Let us see what is said of this in Rom. 6, which is the full statement of this great truth. Let my reader remember that this part of the epistle does not treat of sins and guilt, but of sin; of the tree, and not of the fruit. How have we part in this righteousness of chapter 5? In having part in death—Christ's death. How then live on? That is the apostle's thesis. “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” The very profession we make, what we are baptized to, is to Christ's death; and we know that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed (κατηργηθ■). In that Christ died He died unto sin, and in that He liveth He liveth unto God. “Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord” —not in Adam: as to that we are to reckon ourselves dead.

Then comes our yielding ourselves to God (the practical walk of godliness in its root principle) as those that are alive from the dead. Thus the Christian is placed on a sure and fixed basis for his walk. He has died in Christ, and he lives in Christ, since he is justified from sin. You cannot charge evil lusts and a wicked will on a dead man. This shows the importance of distinguishing sin and sins. While alive he may have committed all manner of sins, and have to answer for them, but you cannot charge a dead man with sin as a present thing.

How does this affect the question of his being under law? He is not under it at all (Rom. 6:14). Law has power over a man so long as he lives, but we have died. We have become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that we might be married to another, to Christ that is raised from the dead (vii. 4). The metaphor is changed in verse 6 (not indeed in the text, which makes the law die as the first husband), but the marginal reading is, I may say, universally accepted as true, as indeed it connects itself with the whole reasoning of the passage: We have died, and are freed from the first husband the law; we (κατηργ■σημεν) have been set aside from the law, having died in it. As he says in Gal. 1 through the law am dead to the law by the body of Christ. If a man had died simply

by the law to it, it was condemnation too; but being in Christ, He has taken the condemnation of sin in the flesh, and we have part in death to it.

The first husband then, the law, is done with, and we are married to a risen Christ, and cannot in any sense or form be under the authority of two husbands at a time. It is adultery. It is we alive in flesh (and if not wholly lawless) under law, or dead as to it with Christ by faith, and married to a risen Christ; and the law in its authority in every sense gone as to us, for it reigns over a man only as long as he lives. Hence it is said, “when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law.” I cannot say, “when I was,” if I am in a place. I must be out of it to speak so, as is yet more clear in Rom. 8:9. The doctrine then is, we have died, and are thus wholly delivered from the law and its authority, to have another husband.

Then the apostle gives the experience of a renewed soul under the first husband. For of the law only there is question here. Christ and the Spirit are not mentioned, save for deliverance from that state. It is solely and simply a renewed soul under the first husband, the law, learning there what flesh is—that flesh is not subject to it, nor can be, and that we have in this case no power to fulfill it, even if we love it. Verses 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 each show it is the law that is in question as to experience. Deliverance only comes in verse 25, and is developed in chapter viii.; the fall reasoning on it is in verse 14, in 16, and in 22. We Christians know the spirituality of the law, and so it is felt to be by the renewed man, and his conscience consents to it as good; his heart delights in it, but he never performs it, does not find how to perform it, learns what sin (not sins) is, that there is no good thing in the flesh (sin becomes exceeding sinful); that the flesh is contrary to it all; but he also learns that he has no power to fulfill it. Sin, as a law in his members, makes him captive. He never does the good he would, but practices the evil he hates. Deliverance and power is what is in question. He is the slave of sin, sold under it, captive to it, learns to distinguish what Dr. Stuart will not have divided, but learns that under law the sin he hates is too powerful for his delight in the law; and that being in the flesh, not dead and alive in Christ, he is captive to the law of sin.

Christianity, besides forgiveness and righteousness before God, is just deliverance from this state by death to it in Christ, and power, the power of a new life in Christ, in which the Holy Ghost works, we being set free by the death and resurrection of the Lord. Jesus Christ. Colossians and Ephesians go farther, but I confine myself to this one point now. This holy liberty is developed in Rom. 8:1-11 on to actual, resurrection. Perfectionists have taken this deliverance for perfection; Dr. Stuart and Evangelicals deny the deliverance, and would keep us in Rom. 7. Scriptural Christianity rejects both, because it shows that sin dwells in us on the one hand, and has power over us on the other, but that there is deliverance from that power.

Dr. Stuart takes merely the outside change, which, if consistent, should go on to Wesleyan perfection, denying deliverance from Rom. 7, and the fact of the flesh being totally distinct from the new life, the last Adam as life in us from sinful flesh, and Makes all Christians carnal, sold under sin! Christianity shows we cannot say we have no sin, but that we have died in Christ to it, are to reckon ourselves dead, and alive to God in Christ, and so delivered from the power of sin, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, for the Christian is not in the flesh in which the law could not be fulfilled, for it was not, and cannot, be subject to it. Dr. Stuart, in terms, makes the Christian carnal, sold under sin, and holds he cannot

fulfill the law. Christianity delivers him from that state that he may fulfill it. It does a great deal more, but it does that. The Christian is one who lives by the power of spiritual life in Christ, a totally new thing which he has received—life in a risen Christ, God having given His only-begotten Son, that we might live through Him, His death and resurrection having set us free; so that, while this holy freedom is realized in the power of a new life, we have the title and duty to count ourselves dead in Christ's death, our old man, the flesh, crucified with Him.

Let us briefly see how this liberty is depicted in Rom. 8. “There is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus;” not whose sins have been borne by Christ, which clears and justifies us, but who are in a wholly new place in Christ; not in Adam or fleshly standing (for then they could not please God, and there they were when under the law, responsible for themselves for righteousness), but now redeemed wholly out of that place; not merely God met perfectly as a judge, like the blood on the lintel and door-posts, but as Israel out of Egypt, redeemed out of the place they were in (God being a Savior or Deliverer) and in a new one, not in the flesh but in Christ.

This involves the corresponding truth of Christ in us (compare John 14:20). The blood is the strongest motive for walking, but this is a nature, a life which walks. Redemption and a new state of holy liberty go together. I am not seeking who shall deliver. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” (Rom. 8:2.) I am not captive, sold under sin. My state and condition is exactly the opposite of chapter 7.

The question here is not if I act up to it—of course I should—but what is the state I am in? I am “not in the flesh,” not in my Adam standing before God at all, but in Christ; “not in the flesh, but in the Spirit,” redeemed into connection—living connection—according to the power of His resurrection, which is both the seal of redemption and the power of life with a risen Christ; and, besides that, I have received the Holy Ghost, that I may both know it (John 14), and have the power of it, the old man being condemned and dead; “for what the law could not do (chap. vii.), in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” A new life is there in the power of the Spirit; but the old has been condemned in the death of Christ, so that there is no condemnation, and it died when condemned. I have death to sin, and no condemnation for it, through Christ's death. I need not, I trust, say here Christ had none. He could do that, being made sin for us, because He knew none. But sin in the flesh is condemned, yet so that there is no condemnation for me, but for faith is dead: my old man crucified with [Him], I am dead with Christ. The realization of this in walk is found in 2 Cor. 4:10-12.

The new life is a new Creation in me: I belong to the new creation by it; but as to my body, and in fact, I am in the old: only the Spirit reveals the things not seen, that we may live by them. Romans does not speak of the new creation, looking at the Christian as here on earth, but the mind of the flesh, enmity against God, is contrasted with the mind of the Spirit, life and peace. The living presence and power of the Holy Ghost in us is clearly stated, and in formal opposition to the flesh in its nature. And we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of Christ dwell in us. It is a new standing, characterized by the Spirit being in us if He be not, one is not in the Christian state.

This brings out the truth of Christ being in us, as before our being in Christ was spoken of; and the ground is stated on which the great truth we have spoken of is based. If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit life because of righteousness. Through the Spirit dwelling in us

we hold the body for dead; for if alive, it is the evil flesh, enmity against God; and the life which we have is in the power of the Spirit—its fruit is righteousness. This is pursued to the resurrection of the body, which will be full deliverance.

It is not merely knowing our position, as some have said. We are not in the flesh, but in Christ—in the Spirit, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, the only recognized Christian state. In chapter vii., though converted, the man, as to his standing, was in the flesh, under the law, captive to the sin he hated. The motions of sin were by the law, he living in the flesh. Now he is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit—in the place redemption has brought him into, the Spirit of Christ dwelling in him. The fruits are a consequence. What is stated is the entire change of state and position: a man under the law, the first husband, and in the flesh; a man delivered from the law and married to Christ, in the Spirit, not in the flesh. A man is not captive, or a slave, and set free, at the same time. Falling into sin carelessly when free is not captive to the law of sin in my members.

I only add a notice of two false translations which theology has introduced, and for which there is no excuse. “The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other” —the opposition I insist on, and which Dr. Stuart denies. But then comes the theology: “So that ye cannot do the things that ye would.” This is nonsense; for if I cannot do what the Spirit would, nor what the flesh would, I can do nothing. But it is used simply to mean, we cannot do what the Spirit would, sheaving the practical state of souls. But there is no such statement; it is merely “that ye may not do” (■να μ■). They seek to hinder the working of the contrary natures.

The other is, “Sin is the transgression of the law.” This is really, I must say, a wicked subjection of the word to theology. The word (■νομ■α) is never used for transgression of the law anywhere else in the English translation of the Holy Scriptures; another expression is, παρ■βασις ν■μου. I call it “wicked,” because by it a human system denies what the word of God carefully insists on. Not only so, but it is the word rightly translated elsewhere “without law.” Sin is not transgression of the law; to say so, universal as it may be, is a wicked anti-scriptural perversion. Sin is the evil nature which produces lust, the enmity of the heart against God. It is written, “Sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful,” which could not be if sin was not there before the commandment. Again, the contrary is expressly stated. “Until the law sin was in the world,” There is no transgression without sin. Further, it is said, “They that have sinned without law,” the same word as an adverb (■ν■μως), in contrast to sinning under the law. That is, the word of God puts it in direct contradiction to what this false translation does.

These gentlemen believe men are born in sin. I do not blame them for this surely; but are men born in transgression of the law? It is false theological perversion, and nothing else; and it is time that false theology gave way to the word of God: for this affects the whole nature and character of Christianity. Patience has its just place; but, after all, souls are more precious than false theology.

The grave question is—Is there not a new divine life given in Christ (connected with the delivering power of redemption and the presence of the Holy Ghost), which is wholly contrary in its nature to flesh? Can there be an excess in the difference I make between them—the one being enmity against God, the other Christ as my life? Are they not divided, opposed, and contrary to one another? By one, children of God; by the other, of the devil: of which one cannot sin, because born of God, the other never doing anything else, mingled (it may be) in our life, but opposed in nature.

However misstated in detail Dr. Moody-Stuart's objection, it denies this. I do not call in question his genuine piety; but the question, whether in the Christian there be two entirely opposed and contrary natures, is too important to be smothered up. J. N. D.

Review of Four Letters to the Christians Called Brethen

Mr. R. writes kindly himself, but he does not scruple freely to cite unkind remarks of others, which only ill-feeling can account for from their authors. On this little need be said, for nothing can be more evident than that these unhappy effusions aim merely at detraction. They have nothing that tends to edification in their sayings or doings. If Mr. R. is animated with no such bitterness, he is at sea, and so exposed to every wind that blows. “Whilst I question your principles, I am not defending those of other Christians. On the contrary, I am far from satisfied with the worship and ministry of the sects,'“ &c. He admits, as the result of Brethren's study of God's word, unworldliness, and devotedness, and scriptural views whether one thinks of the church or of the world. Would to God there were tenfold more! But whatever there is among them that he values is due to keeping Christ's word, and not denying His name. Only it were passing strange if they were wrong, in what they have most of all sought—uncompromising fidelity to Christ in the ways of His house. Is this “schism?” If “Brethren” are wrong there, trust them nowhere else. If right in that which has cost them so much, Mr. R. will own that he has much to learn.

But Mr. R. starts with a mistake. No intelligent brother could accept his statement of their “principle of meeting, worship, and ministry.” No person at all accredited has ever put things so in a book or tract emanating from such. Doubtless the difficulty is great for an outsider. Not one Christian in a thousand can understand till he is bona fide in fellowship, though he may know enough to attract him, and more than enough to condemn denominationalism in every form.

Brethren go back to the written word about the assembly, worship, and ministry, and confide in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit to make it good in spite, but taking account, of the rain-state of Christendom. This is their principle, and it differs as radically from that of Friends as from other societies. For if others fail in owning the sovereign action of the Spirit, Friends have failed quite as fatally in owning the word of God, as Mr. R. must surely know. Now you can have the power of neither, if you do not honor the Lord in both; and it is recurrence to both in faith which distinguishes “Brethren.” To this they have sacrificed everything which stands in the way, as they will by grace so long as they are true to the Lord.

But they see clearly that, besides coming together as God's assembly dependent on the Lord to work in by the Spirit, as we read in 1 Cor. 12; 14, there is also His working by individuals as evangelists, pastors; teachers, &c. Wherever gifted men are found among “Brethren,” there is at least as much of the latter as of the former; and I believe there is a freer and fuller circulation of this individual ministry in their midst Than exists anywhere else. Some of these servants of the Lord move about, and others reside and work more fixedly, all over Great Britain, Ireland, France, Switzerland, Holland, Germany, Italy, &c.: in some places few and far between, but there they, are. So it is in America, the West Indies, Australia, New Zealand, not to speak of some few in Asia and Africa, though one shrinks from saying even thus much. Mr. R. wholly overlooks this, one of the most patent and characteristic facts among “Brethren.” He is exclusively occupied with the assembly as such. This is not to, be wondered at, for nothing like it is found anywhere else at

present; yet none can deny that it was quite as striking when the church of God was first known as distinct from Jews and Gentiles. Then, as among Brethren now, there was the gracious action of the Spirit looked for in the assembly, of which the Lord's supper was the central feast, and with liberty for the members of His body, only subject to His regulation by His word; and then too, as now, we see Him using His servants far and wide, who spread the gospel outside, and acted within as joints and bands, knitting all the body together, and ministering nourishment also.

One is surprised that Mr. R. should see the least resemblance to Brethren any more than to scripture in the principle of the Friends, who, in fact, ignore God's assembly more than any community in Christendom. They really hold that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man in the world! instead of understanding that this is to each in the church. This of itself falsifies all their action, and shows its fundamental opposition to God's assembly, not merely in practice, but in principle. Next, they avowedly set up what they call the living testimony of the Spirit above scripture, which accordingly is shut out of their meetings, no less than hymns. Who can wonder? Men quarrel with the written word when it condemns them; and none offend worse in this way than Quakers. Even Popery, with all its worldliness and worse, does not deny the difference between the first man and the Second, between flesh and Spirit, between nature and grace, between the church and the world, so flagrantly as the Society of Friends; and yet their principle Mr. R. imagines to be so like Brethren's, that he cannot see the least difference! Why, Friends have not one true idea about the church as Christ's body, or God's house; still less do they acknowledge the Spirit's sovereign action in it, or the difference between this and individual ministry apart from it. They confess the necessity and reality of the Spirit's action; and no doubt, so far as godly men among them act in faith as to this, they are blessed. But there is otherwise the most complete contrast between Brethren and Friends. Does not Mr. R. know that in a proper meeting of Friends elders exercise control over those who speak? Is this the principle of 1 Cor. 14, or of Brethren?

He will have it however, that Friends are more consistent in practice, because of eschewing hymns and tunes. But what saith the scripture? Do Friends in very deed bow to the word, as well as look for the power and guidance of the Spirit? We find the use of metrical compositions in singing contemplated, both in private and in public (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:15, 26; James 5:13). These are clearly not the Psalm of David, but Christian compositions, without a line of inspiration, yet open to and needing the direction of the Spirit in the assembly, like everything else. No doubt, if people have a mere theory of the Spirit's action apart from scripture; like the Friends one can understand their exclusion of hymns from being sung in their meetings, and even of scripture itself, though it be inspired. But this is consistency with a delusion, not only without subjection to the word, but to its deep and open affront. And if Mr. R. knows the facts, I am surprised that he should write thus coolly of a course so systematically unscriptural as that of Friends, or that he should not perceive that Brethren have the authority of scripture for their procedure as to singing hymns in and out of the assembly.

How is this? He is misled by his inability to see that scripture is equally clear against a pre-arranged discourse in the assembly as for singing hymns, as is ordinarily done, provided the Lord is waited on there and then, He does not see that it is a question of what the word authorizes. The Corinthians were on the same ground as his argument supposes till they were corrected by the first epistle. They thought it was simply a question of power, and if therefore half a dozen prophets spoke, it might be all well; and if any spoke in a tongue without interpretation, they were

free to do so; and if women could utter the word of wisdom or knowledge, why should they not? They had the gifts, and should use them in the assembly. But no; the apostle affirms the great principle, forgotten by Friends as well as Mr. R., &c., but acknowledged by Brethren, that the power, however truly of the Spirit, should work subject to the authority of the Lord, and hence in obedience to His commandment. (1 Cor. 12:26-40; especially ver. 37.)

We are not therefore inconsistent with the true guidance and action of the Spirit, when we submit ourselves to the word of the Lord; and in this very portion it deals with spiritual manifestations, yet it sanctions the singing of such psalms as are used in the assembly. There is no recognition of an “ordinary sermon” in 1 Cor. 14—there is of singing: only all must be to edifying, as well as decently and in order; and these ends cannot be but in the Spirit, who works in the assembly, in order that there should be the reality of “God in them of a truth,” and not the mere arrangements of a denomination after its own will.

The Holy Ghost was given to abide forever; and the Lord sets out His own ordering of the assembly by His apostle, grounded on that presence and action of the Spirit. He is there to guide and work. It is worthy of Christ and His redemption that so it should be. We know it is abandoned by Christians in general; but has the Lord repealed it? If not, it abides, and even those who do not practice its order hesitate not to cite verse 40 as a warrant for their own order to the subversion of His. Let men speak with contempt of those who in their feebleness cleave to it; the Lord will not. Those who meet there in faith can tell, without boasting, of an enjoyment of His presence and power unknown elsewhere. But not of this would we speak, but of what is due to His word and Spirit. He is a Spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind; and works sovereignly, certainly not alone in “ex-clergymen, noblemen, gentlemen, and military and naval officers.” Many of the working classes are gifted men, and blessed, some of the lowest of “the million,” no less than from the highest rank. It is as true now as ever that gift is independent of learning or station, and we would take a lesson from 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1, no less than from 1 Cor. 14 But it is a serious thing when a grave Christian thinks that, because the Spirit no longer displays miracles or tongues or their interpretation, He does not give the word of wisdom or the word of knowledge, teachers, helps, or governments. Mr. R.. has sunk low in unbelief to write, or even conceive, such a thought. He severs the action of the Spirit from the Word, and virtually denies both.

Hence he forgets that the Spirit is on earth to care for the saints, Could He not guide is a scriptural way (to meet the difficulties Mr. R. is pleased to imagine) the five thousand Christians said to assemble at the Metropolitan Tabernacle? or fifty thousand, or one hundred thousand, if there were as many in London, who judged sects to be evil, and gathered to the Lord's name? But then the schism! Yet is it schism to separate from what denies Him? Difficulties exist, but He is equal to all emergencies. Is it faith, or unbelief, to be neutral where a true or false Christ is concerned, or to pervert it into a ground for sitting down, contentedly or not, in denominationalism, contrary to God's word and Spirit? “Inspired worship or ministry” no brother pretends to. Is not such language an exaggeration to blink the importance of abandoning human ways, to the slight of both scripture and the Holy Ghost?

It is certainly not our duty to defend the Freemasons' Hall meetings, any more than those in Dublin spoken of. There was probably no fixity of principle in either. But it seems fair to say that neither the former nor the latter seem to have been professedly ■ν ■κκλησ■α, but rather brotherly

conferences, such as they were. Mr. R. therefore is scarce justified in judging them by 1 Cor. 14: no doubt far more than “two or three” spoke. In neither case was it the assembly as such. Does he understand the question?

What has been said is a sufficient answer to the comments in “The Church of Old” or the remarks of several brethren, as well as to Mr. R.'s own statement, already shown to be inaccurate; to the speech of John Foster, the essayist, and the certainly not intelligent clergyman who thought some brothers spoke by inspiration! till he heard them misquote scripture. One must be forgiven for not dwelling on such poor stories as these, or on the equally poor replies. But it may be riposted in reply to page 18, that there is no question of the Choke of a text, still less of the preparation and delivery of a discourse in 1 Cor. 14; there is of the use of a psalm there. Is it not an excellent reason that the apostle proves the latter, and ignores the former?

All that grace has given us is liable to abuse, from the salvation of the soul to the worship of the saints in the assembly. Yet you do not remedy the possible evil by denying or obscuring the truth, but by pressing it on the conscience in self-judgment. The Holy Spirit dwells in each Christian, as He does in the assembly; yet He makes neither inspired, but both responsible that all which is done in small things or great be done in the Spirit. This is first irksome to nature; then the truth is questioned; lastly the possibility is denied, but this is no less than departure (I say not from Christ, but) from the living power of Christ and the church. Take, for instance, the singing of hymns in the assembly. Does the Lord deign to guide in this by the Spirit, or does He leave it to our flesh? It is surprising that a Christian should cavil at what is so plain. 1 Cor. 14 speaks of what an individual might do in the assembly, not of individual exercises at home; and there is not a word implying that the words and the service were either of them given by inspiration.

Yet none that speaks among Brethren, or elsewhere, should shrink from the application of the rule in 1 Peter 4:10, 11. Alas I this is not only not the practice, but forgotten, perhaps denied, as the rule. It is false that Peter means inspiration, or that Brethren ever claimed it, but always maintained the contrary. Doubtless it is true that the Quaker system so claims—a twofold error, in depreciating the written word, so as practically to deny its inspiration, and in exalting their spoken testimonies, so as practically to claim inspiration. All the teaching of Brethren is most distinct against this presumption; a brother guilty of such folly would be put out forthwith as led of Satan.

As to the fullest ordering of the assembly in scripture, it is found in 1 Cor. 14, as grounded on 1 Cor. 12 But Rom. 12, Eph. 4, Col. 2, James 3:1, 1 Peter 4:10, 11, evidently fall in with it, not to speak of the Acts of the Apostles. Matt. 18:20 is the Lord's anticipative resource for the worst of times, guaranteeing His presence to even two or three gathered to His name. But it is distinctly and solely on the ground of the church, and no other. To apply it to sects is not only unintelligent neglect of the context, but faithless indifference to the wondrous privilege there pledged.

Of the citations in pages 23-30, it would be painful to say much: so thoroughly are they stamped with captiousness. But this may be remarked, that their writers knew well that Brethren do not set the Holy Ghost's presence against the Lord's employing men in His service as permanent gifts for the blessing of the saints, whether evangelists, or pastors and teachers. Would that they had not let slip convictions which once seemed divinely given, and that they were not now perverting the fact of gifts from Christ to weaken the still graver truth of the Spirit's presence, which imparts its weight to these gifts! That there is thus a rejection of the appointments of Christ for the edification

of His body is an unworthy cry. No brother refuses to acknowledge the bishop of the New Testament, either in principle, without appointment, or in fact, if duly appointed; and the main ground for refusing denominations of every kind is because we judge them, as well as ourselves, by the apostolic model. The strength of Brethren therefore lies, not in negation (as has been, with too much truth, said of Protestantism), but in the positive truth of the word acted on in simple dependence on the Spirit. “One body and one Spirit” is the very reverse of a negative principle, and it is ours, gainsay it who may. Of those who minister among Brethren there is the less reason to speak, as it is plain those who raise the question betray forgetfulness of God's word and Spirit as to His church and ministry. It were well to weigh 2 Cor. 10:12, 18. It is the more uncomely, as we pretend to no gifts which we do not allow in other saints, and, what is more, we urge that the Spirit dwells in the house of God, not in the Brethren merely: only we seek to act in faith of it, and others do not by allowing their modes of worship and ministry apart from scripture to hinder.

Of the second pamphleteer there is the less reason to take notice, as page 5 confesses that it is not our principle he repudiates, but its abuse. The words of scorn which are quoted are self-condemnatory. And it is evident that the minds of men who could so write had lost, if they ever had, a due sense of the church's ruin. As they lapsed into alienation, they must needs justify their own defection by a vigorous onslaught on their old friends, high and low. Yet who ever heard of men, essaying to lead others, whose efforts were so suicidal? They may have furnished fresh scandal to such as believe all evil against Brethren; but never did a movement so totally fail to act even on their intimates. Where are they even now? Was not this truly “pretension without power?”

For our part we do not claim a power for ourselves that God has not given to all Christians. The Holy Spirit is the energy for everything acceptable to God, as witnessing to Christ, and effectuating His will in those that are His. Brethren do not claim Him as in any way peculiar to themselves; they hold that, as He dwells in every Christian, so all saints are bound to judge what contradicts or fetters the recognition of His presence and action in the assembly. That they reap a blessing from God answering to their faith one doubts not, any more than that all Christians lose who de not believe in it, or who, if they believe, walk not in faith. That there are among Brethren men who slight what is due to His presence whom they own, coming out of the sects which are built on other grounds, is true; but such men either go away, and try to blacken what they had little honored when ostensibly with Brethren, or they fall into sin so as to require public discipline. In one way or another the Lord does not fail to watch over those who are gathered to His name, and deals jealously with what dishonors it. For it is freely allowed that nowhere is pretension without power so unbecoming and hateful and sure to be judged, even in this world. A just censure we would accept and bow to God in it, as an excellent oil, which shall not break the head.

Let Mr. R. then be assured that Brethren set up no claims, either personal or ministerial. They would fain urge on all saints the dishonor done to the Lord in denying the Holy Spirit His sovereign freedom of action in the assembly, as well as in using gifted men in direct responsibility to Himself (not as the officials of a denomination), and this in the unity of His body. But what can Mr. R. mean by speaking of their application of 1 Peter 4:11 to their own ministry as “mistimed, misplaced, and untrue?” They apply it to every true mouthpiece of God, and feel it to be most solemn and searching for themselves, as for others; but to talk of it as he does, as if it were some exclusive possession on their part, proves that Mr. R. understands neither the passage itself, nor the spirit in which it has been applied by them. Does he know what it means, or he himself means, by saying

what he does in page 31? It is certainly not inspiration any more than mere speaking according to the scriptures (p. 47): the one being as much too high as the other is too low a sense put on the passage. There is real unbelief of the Spirit's action in Mr. II. and his friends. Cannot, does not, God give one who is in communion with Him, as to speaking, to say just what He would have said? Where are men gone who deny that we should even look for this It is the only right thing.

Then follows a quotation from Olshausen, with which Mr. R. agrees, to the effect that the charismatic form of the Spirit's operation (that is, gift) ceased in the third century. Is it to this unbelief we are invited by Mr. Eres, or by the one who commends his “very temperate and Christian letter?” Did it never occur to him that his figure of “the crutchless cripple, stumbling at every step,” might apply, not to Brethren, but to the few who have lately gone out from them? At any rate, it is important to note that the ground for acting on 1 Cor. 14 depends on the continuance of the Spirit's presence and power, and that Mr. R.'s theory is the denial of it charismatically since the third century. Since then he allows sanctified natural ability and educational acquirement, but not the Spirit acting in gift.

The long extracts from the author of “The Church of Old” (pp. 34-46) may be safely left in silence. There are abundant words, but light weight. He has fallen into the same error as Mr. R., confounding the principle and practice of God's assembly (1 Cor. 12; 14) with the exercise of a ministerial gift in general. It is unfounded to separate the groundwork in the former chapter from the application in the latter.

But it is worth noticing, that Mr. R. avows, as probably all the men he quotes feel as to themselves, that it is not his aim to bring Brethren over to his platform of worship and ministry,” for I am not satisfied with it, nor with any other that I see around.” This witness at least is true; not so when he reiterates the mistake that we stand on the pinnacle of “inspired gifts.” What he believes to be the Spirit's guidance and power we have seen to be the mere pious use of ability and educational acquirement. Inspiration absolutely shut out error in any way; this was not the case with ordinary preaching or teaching. But the Lord has never ceased to give gifts to His servants, to each according to his several ability. The gift and the ability are not the same thing.

The main theme in his third letter is the discussion of the (to him) startling position taken in the tracts, entitled” Christ's Ministry,” and” The Brethren,” that elders or bishops required apostolic authority in persons only delegated to appoint them, and that, this authority failing, none can have them duly appointed now. Is it not plain, if not self-evident and certain, however startling? But he is quite mistaken in deducing hence the present inapplicability of the passages which speak of elders; and he might have gathered the denial of any such conclusion from these very tracts.

It is not contended that those chosen by a congregation, or by an Anglican diocesan, or in any other mode, may not sometimes be men whom an apostle, or an apostolic delegate, would have chosen; but that all these modes of choosing are unscriptural, and therefore the title founded on them invalid; and pot the less because those who pretend to give or receive those titles are proud of them in the world or the church so-called, and, as just seen, without the least reason. But it is not denied that the Lord continues to raise up men with gift to tend the flock, as well as teachers and preachers, and that such shepherds would have been in full formal order appointed, if they had the other qualifications, and one like Titus were there to appoint them. But this was not always the case, even in apostolic days. Hence we find a notable provision in the New Testament that the

saints should know such rulers, and honor them, even if, through circumstances, only doing the work they were fitted for, and not authoritatively chosen to it by an apostle or his delegate; and this principle is a blessed resource in these days, as indeed ever since the apostles' days, when there could be no such appointment. (See Rom. 12:8; 1 Cor. 16:15, 16; Col. 4:12, 13, 17; 1 Thess. 5:12, 13; Heb. 13:17, 24.)

But this in no way supersedes or annuls the scriptures as to elders or bishops. Thus Acts 14:23 is of great value in negativing the pretension of the disciples or congregation to choose such officers as in the Presbyterian or Congregational bodies. Acts 20:17-35 gives us a grand view of what the Lord looks for from all who labor in the way of oversight and is no less adverse to the arrangements of Episcopacy. 1 Tim. 3 and Titus 1 let us know who could and who could not be so appointed for want of moral power or other reasons. 1 Peter 5:1-4 and James 5:14 close the rear by exhortations of a general or special nature. But not a word falls to the ground for the believer; for though one might with scripture hesitate to call men elders who had not been scripturally appointed, one surely, according to scripture, honors as chiefs or rulers all who show the gift and have the requisite qualifications in other respects.

This is the way we pay deference to these passages as to elders: we own the spirit, even where the literal or formal circumstances fail; whereas Mr. R. and his friends disown not, only 1 Cor. 12; 14, but all the scriptures which speak of gifts as vanished away since the third century. And what would have been the worth of such envoys as Timothy or Titus without gift? We are thus left, not merely without apostolic appointment of men whom we would, and do, honor now for their work's sake, but, according to Mr. Eres, without a single charisma, including evangelists, pastors, teachers, or any others!

But the strange thing is that Mr. R. sets his own avowed unbelief in 1 Cor. 14 against our alleged setting aside of bishops or elders, and this over and over. Assuredly it were something to grieve over, if we were guilty of any haughty rejection of such officers; but how could it condone his unbelieving elimination of the only working of the Spirit in the assembly which scripture endorses, and his reduction of all to a mere human system instead of a divine? It is erroneous that the manifestation of the Spirit is His miraculous working, though the working of miracles was one, and only one manifestation, not all miraculous, as he makes them. It is, again, erroneous that he who desired to oversee during the last seventeen centuries desired a vain work, not a good one; for he might thoroughly do the work, even if he had not received that outward seal of honor which was impressed by apostolic authority when the church stood in its godly order. Who cannot see good reason for withholding (not the men, or the work, or the honor in. their hearts who profited by it, but) the formal title when Christianity was falling into the horrors of Christendom?

Mr. R. owns that he is not satisfied with the general mode of their recognition and appointment (p. 48): will he say that any one has the only mode scripture recognizes, at least among the Gentiles? If he must confess that none has, he must either agree with Brethren, or take the unhappy and unbelieving alternative that an unscriptural appointment is just as good as the scriptural. He names Luther, Knox, Wesley, and Whitfield, and says," We have seen in them, and thousands more, the work and qualifications of evangelists, bishops, and deacons," &c. Did one ever hear such confusion? Nobody among Brethren denies evangelistic gift and more in these worthies; but Mr. R. denies it in any one since the third century. The question is as to the formal appointment of

elders, which is quite another thing, not of their doing the good work of overseeing, which is admitted. Mr. R. cries out that he wants “power, power:” let us recommend him a more excellent thing—obedience. Grace will then add as much power as is good for him. It is grievous to hear anyone meanwhile glorying in shame— “human order for uninspired endowments” (p. 51). Is this the church of God?

The fourth letter, being a mere rehearsal of the old objections in new words or figures, demands no special notice. Mr. R. speaks of Brethren not obeying 1 Cor. 14. But that chapter is quite consistent with half a dozen praying, and several delivering long addresses (undesirable as this may be in general), if there were not more than “three.” In fine, it would rejoice us if Mr. R., and our brethren generally, put us to shame by their spiritual power in honoring these and all other words of our Lord. Why not set us an example of living obedience in faith? This would indeed be to His praise if our weighty censure.

Chapter 113

Man—Is He Recoverable?

What scripture teaches is, that man is not recoverable. Men are recoverable; but it is by being born again, by dying and rising, putting off the old man and putting on the new. The law, and even Christ's coming as addressed to man's responsibility, was the proof that there must be a second man instead of the first, and that death and resurrection must come in to found a place for man with God, that there must be a putting off the old man and a putting on the new man. The character of infidelity in the present day is that man can be improved and recovered—does not want a new man or to be born again. This will just lead to Antichrist. It is anti-Christianity unawares, the denial of the fundamental principles of Christianity—the new birth, and the cross. Man is not recoverable as in flesh. One must be born again (■νωθεν, entirely anew from the origin of his nature), and be redeemed.

Chapter 114

Jacob's Ecclesiastical Polity

It is certainly not the most profitable occupation, nor a service of the highest order, to be reviewing books of this kind, for it does not minister to the direct intercourse of our souls with the Lord: which alone, whatever be our learning, will make us spiritual. Yet is this sort of investigation necessary in the present day, when the question of “What is the church?” is continually brought before men's minds, and especially when the arrogant pretensions of popery are anew occupying the foreground of Christendom, and when; in smaller spheres, a mongrel Judaic Christianity is presented to us in lieu of the heavenly bride ministered to by direct intercourse through the Spirit from Christ on high. Thus, having so recently reviewed Dr. Lightfoot on the same or nearly the same subject, we find ourselves in presence of Dr. Jacob, who has written a more interesting history, and one which goes farther into the question of “gifts,” than did Dr. Lightfoot, who ignored the subject almost entirely, and limited himself to the history of episcopacy. Dr. Jacob takes a larger range, and confronts the question of gifts, although it be deliberately to deny their existence in the present day. For the rest, it is remarkable how the modern inquirers into church government are obliged to allow that episcopacy whether ancient or modern does violence to scripture, although they contrive as episcopalism to find excuses for remaining it their posts. Tradition is with them “sub-apostolic,” or “post-apostolic,” and thus they connect themselves with apostolical succession.

Before coming to the subject of gifts, it is well to notice that Dr. J. repudiates the idea that “church” ever means a building or place of worship, or that it ever means “Christian ministers, as distinguished from the general body of Christians” (p. 10). So likewise a strong protest is entered by him against the authority of the Nicene period or church. “Notwithstanding,” says he, “the still generally acknowledged supremacy of holy scripture among us, the main current of church opinion on all questions of polity and practice (to say nothing here of doctrines) has for a very considerable time been setting strongly towards the ecclesiastical system of the third and fourth centuries, to the neglect in this respect of the New Testament” (p. 21). He says, “the church of the apostolic period, is the only church in which there is found an authority justly claiming the acknowledgment of Christian bodies in other times” (p. 25), with more to this effect in pages 26, 29.

Dr. Jacob's book is well worth perusal. From the posts he has occupied, he must be a scholar, and certainly his “Ecclesiastical Polity” is the result of much research, and the fruit of much reflection. He has not spared the Establishinent in his incisive attacks upon her organization, but his suggestions for her reform are feeble after the impressions he has left upon his readers as to her present condition. It is with his review of the ministry of gifts in the church, and their merging, according to him, subsequently into the “ministry of orders,” that we have principally to do.

As much turns upon this in relation to all church questions, we shall devote a short space to some of Dr. J.'s statements with a view to their refutation. We quote Dr. J. at page 42, lecture 2— “The first organization of the church.” “These two forms of the Christian ministry may be called the ministry of gifts, and the ministry of orders. The ministry of gifts comes first. It belonged to

apostolic times alone, when preternatural or spiritual gifts, χαρ■σματα, usually by imposition of the apostles' hands, were abundantly shed abroad in the church. In the earliest part of this period it was exercised the most extensively, and probably in some places exclusively, before the ministry of the other form was sufficiently matured" (pp. 42, 48). Again, "It is evident from the circumstances mentioned by the Apostle Paul, in connection with the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 11-14) that the public worship there was not conducted by one or two ministers expressly chosen and appointed to the office but anyone who possessed a spiritual gift available for general edification was permitted to pray or prophesy; to address words of exhortation, instruction, or encouragement; to lead the devotional singing with psalms or hymns of his own selection; to speak in a foreign language, if either he himself or some one else interpreted his words; and in short to exercise his peculiar gifts, with the full sanction of apostolic authority, and without any other restraint than a conformity to such wholesome general admonition as, 'Let all things be done unto edifying,' 'Let all things be done decently and in order'" (pp. 43, 44). Again, "The possessors of these spiritual gifts were not, as far as we are informed, ordained or specially appointed to their office by any ceremony; and hence these functions have been sometimes represented as merely one phase of the operation of that universal priesthood which belongs to all Christians; or as the absence of all ministry in those times when, as it is alleged, all Christians were allowed before the church was fully settled to preach, baptize, and expound the scriptures in the church. But that this was really acknowledged and authorized ministry attached to the possessors of such gifts, and exercised because of this possession, and not merely a liberty indulged in from the absence of all rule, appears still more plainly from its not being confined to edifying ministrations in social worship, but extended to other spheres of labor also" (p.45).

These extracts, it is needless to say, we think excellent. Dr. J. allows that they are not in the nature of the priesthood of all believers, but "an acknowledged and authorized ministry." Now, however the tone changes, and we have a new phase of thought in the following extract. "This ministry of gifts was, from its very nature, only for a time. It was liable to obvious abuses; and it did not contain the elements of order and sobriety in sufficient strength to make it suitable for a permanent institution. The gifts moreover not being conferred by any hands but those of apostles, the ministrations which depended on them must have gradually passed away. And long before they disappeared, the other form of the Christian ministry was introduced and extended generally throughout the church. As this became more and more fully established, it was not unnatural that the ministry of gifts—once the glory and, it may be said, the pride of Christian congregations, should suffer some disparagement, and possibly, should at times be regarded as an irregularity, or an interference with established order" (p. 47).

We must trouble our reader with one more extract in order to put him in possession of the mind of Dr. Jacob. "The ministry of orders which gradually superseded the more free and unrestricted form of church administration was exercised by men especially selected for this purpose, and ordained or solemnly appointed by ecclesiastical authority to minister in their respective congregations....If we may judge from recorded instances of fit. Paul's practice, the apostles ordained elders in the churches which they founded, as soon as intelligent and suitable men could be found for this purpose; and long before the end of the apostolic age, the ministry of orders had become a generally received and ordinary institution throughout the churches. And as doubtless many of those who were thus formally ordained were also possessors of spiritual gifts, the earlier

ministrations which these gifts supplied, must commonly have passed into the later form, without difficulty or any painful change, until at last they were quietly merged in its permanent establishment. In the meantime, while both these forms of the ministry were in operation together, those who had gifts of 'teaching' and of ‘prophecy,' and other χαρ■σματα of a similar nature were subject to the general superintendence and control of the ordained officers, who always acted as rulers and overseers—■π■σκοποι—of the Christian communities, whether they themselves took a prominent part or not in the instructions, prayers, and other services of their religious assemblies. And, as might be expected, several different phases of the working of the double system, might be seen in different churches and at different times during the period embraced by the New Testament, and before the disappearance of the ministry of gifts as a distinct ordinance of the church” (p. 51).

Dr. Jacob's meaning is plain. Gifts exercised for a time along with the permanent ministry of elders became very soon absorbed into a stated ministry, represented by those ordained as elders by the apostles. Now how can we allow that such passages as those in Acts 20 and 1 Peter 5, convey the idea that the possessors of gifts are or were for the most part elders? Thus they run, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God,” &c. (Acts 20:28), and “The elders which are among you I exhort.... Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof,” &c. (1 Peter 5:1, 2.) Would these official men supersede or set aside the permanent provision made by our Lord for His church in such words as “he gave some, apostles, and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.... for the work of the ministry.... till we all come.... unto a, perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"? (Eph. 4) or did they (the elders) absorb every gift in their own persons? Did not the Apostle Peter, whilst using such language as we have recorded regarding elders, inculcate on the saints at large in the previous chapter the propriety of using the gifts committed to them? Thus,” as every man hath received the gift (χ■ρισμα) oven so minister the same one to another.... if any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth?” Is it possible that Dr. J. can so attempt to supply the need of divine power as to write such a sentence as the following? “At the same time, since natural gifts in an extraordinary degree, and of a kind most available for extensive good, are sometimes found even now in Christian men and women, it would seem that churches might still advantageously imitate the example of the apostolic age, by employing such powers to supplement though not to supplant their more regular ministrations"!! Does he seriously believe that Christ on high is the Head of the church which is united to Him by the Holy Ghost, who is as to the dispensation now personally on the earth? Will Dr. J. seriously maintain that the beautiful recommendation of the Apostle Paul in Rom. 12, beginning at verse 6, as to the use of χαρ■σματα, involving the whole action of a Christian community, was transitory, and to be superseded by bishops ordained by ecclesiastical authority? or, on the other hand, that these so gifted, if in exercise, are only “natural gifts"?

The reasoning of Dr. J. on the χαρ■σματα is fallacious. He supposes that they “belonged to apostolic times alone (and) usually by the imposition of the apostles' hands,” and that therefore they would naturally die out. This is only partly true, namely, of those which might be called miraculous; for we have no reason to think that any apostle had been at Rome, and yet these gifts were abundant when the Apostle Paul wrote there. (Rom. 12) But supposing Dr. J.'s ideas were

correct, the χαρ■σματα would not be the same as the δ■ματα of Eph. 4:8. These latter were men—not merely that a gift (χ■ρισμα) had been imparted (though of course this may have been the case), but the men themselves were the gifts. Dr. J. by rejecting everything but “orders of ministers” of whatever grades by ministerial succession, loses sight of those engagements of Christ the Lord, which provide supplies of pastors, teachers, and evangelists for His church at large apart from local organization, although it may be and is often true, that those local officers, such as elders, may also be these very gifts.

It cannot however be too distinctly held that office in the Christian church is not hereditary. It does not descend in any way by succession. Where is the apostle or where is his delegate Timothy to ordain? There is no clerical caste. There is no provision for the continuation of elders. The true succession is by gifts, and these are in the hands of Christ Himself, whilst eldership is an apostolic institution, and fails when there are no apostles; although, observe, men may be and are found with their characteristics as recorded in Timothy and Titus, and should as a principle thus be known and owned.

It is a matter of grave consideration whether eldership in itself, by the hands of the apostle, ever gave a title to preach, although it did to rule, or whether any laying on of hands did, although such laying on of hands conferred a gift of some kind.

It may be remarked indeed, as an occasion of grief, in connection with the state of Christendom, that both the treatises which have been under our notice, display a lamentable lack of knowledge as to the presence and power of the Holy Ghost in the church.

How strange that men—divines cling to episcopacy or eldership in the way of succession, Which since Paul's time has failed, and deny “gifts,” which Christ, speaking with reverence, is bound to maintain until He Himself come!

We have left ourselves but small space to record how Dr. Jacob, like Dr. Lightfoot, reaches episcopacy. He reaches it by the very same steps as Dr. Lightfoot (whom he follows closely), there not being as he acknowledges any authority for the office in the word of God. He says, “It is necessary to distinguish clearly between what the apostles themselves established in the church, and what was afterward found to be expedient as a further development of their polity” (p. 65). Again of presbyters and deacons, “These were established in the churches by the apostles themselves; while the episcopate, in the modern acceptation of the term, and as a distinct clerical order, does not appear in the New Testament.” We need not go further, only that Dr. J. fortifies the position we took up in reviewing Dr. Lightfoot, that the sources of all the subsequent deflection and departure from apostolic writings began after the decease of the apostles, and before the church history period, properly speaking, begins. He says, “Before the end of the second century, the episcopal form was probably established by general consent in all the churches of the Roman empire” (p. 78). Finally, Dr. J. says, though not in such strong language as Dr. Lightfoot, “The establishment of episcopacy saved the church, whatever mischiefs were wrought by the abuse and perversion of the system” (p. 80). We would piously ejaculate,” I understand more than the ancients; because I keep thy precepts.” W. W.

Jesus Forsaken of God and the Consequences: Duplicate

the Substance of a Lecture on Psa. 22

The scripture that I have read is pre-eminently the Psalm of One forsaken of God. In this it stands alone: not that there are not other psalms which refer to that most solemn hour, and to that blessed person who here speaks to God; but this psalm above all. It is not merely there that we have the Lord taking His place among men, the trusting One, which Psa. 16 gives—His trust carried on unbrokenly, looking on through death into resurrection, yea to glory at God's right hand.

But here what a contrast! He is abandoned of God, yet cleaves to Him wholly and vindicates Him absolutely. But He is forsaken of God. Now it is not His enemies that say so, though they too did—it is Himself; and it is Himself to God Himself. No believer had ever been thus forsaken, nor can be. “Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people: All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, he trusted on Jehovah that he would deliver him, seeing he delighted in Hm.” (Ver. 4-8.) Never was there such an hour even for Jesus, never can there be such an hour again. Good and evil were then brought to an issue in the only person who could solve the riddle; good and evil met in One that was perfectly good, in One then bearing evil at the hand of God: It was atonement. Not that, this alone appears in the psalm; but. Jesus made sin is the first and deepest thought and fact. There was no sorrow that He knew not; there was no shame that He was saved from. Bulls of Bashan were there; shameless dogs compassed Him about; the ravening lion was not absent. In truth, these are but figures; and man was more cruel than all, baser and most deliberate, he alone indeed guilty, led on by a subtler mightier enemy; but, deepest and most wondrous of all, God was there, and there first of all, as it could not but be, God as judge of sin, Who made His Son that knew no sin to be sin for us.

First, I repeat, was this mysterious judgment of evil on the Holy One, not merely first in point of fact, but because it stands necessarily to itself the most solemn and solitary of all things in time or eternity, in earth or heaven or hell, for God and man. Befittingly therefore with this the psalm opens, for what could compare with it, past, present, future? The Lord Jesus had met Satan at the beginning in the wilderness, at the end in Gethsemane. He had broken his power for the earth and for man on it, spoiling the strong man's goods, but it was another and inconceivably profounder question now. It was sin before God. It was no mere conflict, it was nothing that could be broken or won in the power of obedience. There had been living goodness, and God's seal was upon it. But here it was another thing. He had glorified the Father all His life, but now it was a question of glorifying God in His death, for God is the judge of sin. It was not a question with the Father as such, but with God as God touching sin. He who had glorified the Father in a life of obedience glorified God in the death in which that very obedience was consummated; and not merely this: evil was laid on Him in whom all was good, and they met. “What a meeting!

Yes, God was there, not the approver of what was good only, but the judge of all evil laid upon that Blessed head. It was God forsaking the faithful obedient Servant; yet it was His God: this would—could—never be given, up; for, on the contrary, He even then firmly holds to it, “My God, my God:” yet He has to add now “Why hast thou forsaken me?” It was the Son of the Father, but as Son of man necessarily that He so cried out “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Then, and then only, did God desert His one unswerving Servant, the man Christ Jesus. Nevertheless we bow before the mystery of mysteries in His person,—God manifested in flesh. Had He not been man, of what avail for us? Had He not been God, all must have failed to give to His suffering for sins the infinite worth of Himself. This is atonement. And atonement has two parts in its character and range. It is expiation before God; it is also substitution for our sins (Lev. 16:7-10, Jehovah's lot and the people's lot), though the latter part be not so much the subject of the psalmist here, and I do not therefore dwell on it now. The ground the most important part, of the atonement, though all be of the deepest moment, is Jehovah's lot.

Here then we have God in His majesty and righteous judgment of evil—God in the display of His moral being dealing with sin, where alone it could be dealt with to bring out blessing and glory, in the person of His own Son; One who could when forsaken of God reach the lowest, but morally highest, point of glorifying God, made sin for us on the cross. It was the very perfection of His bearing sin that He should not be heard. There was the sharpest pain and anguish and bitterness of rejection; and did He not feel it? Did the glory of His person render Him incapable of suffering? The idea denies His humanity. His deity rather was that which made Him endure and feel it most, and as none other could. “I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. But be not thou far from me, O Jehovah: O my strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog."(Ver. 14-20.)

Nevertheless the Lord Christ perfectly vindicates God who forsook Him there and then. Others had cried, and there was not one who had not been delivered; but it was His not to be. For the suffering must go to the uttermost, and sin be righteously atoned for, and this too not by power but by suffering.

But what is this that breaks on our ears, when the last drop in the cup is drained? “Thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare Thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee,” says the Savior. He says, now He is risen from the dead, “I will declare Thy name unto my brethren.” He had declared it: such was His ministry here below, but now on an entirely new ground. Death and death alone disposed of sin; death, but His death, alone could dispose of sin, so that the sinner could receive God's righteousness about it and be put without sin into the presence of God. And this is what God Himself declares.

Mark here too the consequence of it, “I will declare Thy name unto my brethren.” Now the Lord Jesus shows us in the Gospels the wonderful adaptation of the truth of the Old Testament. “Thy name” what name? When bearing sin He speaks of God. When looking on to deliverance, or in enjoyed relationship, the godly Israelite speaks of Jehovah. But in the New Testament, while God

remains God and must be ever the judge of sin, Father is the characteristic term of a relationship which the Son of God knew from eternity but knew none the less as man but in a truth and fullness which belonged to Him only. This in its reality and intimateness He would give as far as it could be, them in redemption, as many a soul here knows with joy. But I shall repeat it for some hearts which know not that blessed word in its sweetness and real meaning to the soul. Jesus could bring it out now, “I will declare Thy name unto my brethren,” and so He says “I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” He had never said so before. He had been declaring the name of the Father, but He had never presented it thus; and your particular attention is called to the fact. It supposes not merely love, but this on a foundation of righteousness. Undoubtedly grace was that which gave Him and thus wrought for sinful man; but here He gives us, when sin was judged and put away, to know that His God is ours, and when the life was bearing much fruit in resurrection that His Father is ours. The glory of the Father and the nature of God were now engaged in blessing us with Him, as just before only the holy vengeance of God came out against sin. It was indeed glory in the highest, it was grace in the lowest, but all was on the footing of righteousness, without which all else would only inflate the soul and expose it to be dragged down into worse depths. The basis of God's righteousness is needed for the sinner, and he who in himself was but a lost sinner is now entitled to know God not merely as God but as Father. “I will declare Thy name unto my brethren.” There was pardon now, and peace; but not these only: there was association with Christ Himself. Far more than this indeed, but, as it is not here, we need not now go beyond what is before us, with only the modification given by the scriptures of the New Testament already referred to..

Now mark how the declaration of His name comes out. “My God, my God,” says Jesus when and because He was forsaken on the cross, made sin and bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. It is the true and simple and strong answer to those who suppose that He had been all His life here below bearing sin: had this been so, He must have been all through forsaken of God, unless God shine with complacency while judging sin. It would be the virtual denial of His life in the joy and communion of His Father's love. Son of God here below, He Had ever walked in the intimate and perfect acknowledgment of His Father's presence and of His own relationship, and hence so much the more did He feel what it was to be abandoned. But now the sin that was charged upon Him is gone by His dying for it; and, as the witness that all was gone, He is raised up from the dead and then declares that very name, not first “your” Father, nor our Father (this were beneath His glory, Whatever may be His love) but “My Father and your Father, and my God and your God.” All that God is as Father to Him rests now on those for whom He died, on those whose sins had been blotted out by the blood of His cross. But this is not all. The perfect and manifested acceptance of the Man that God made sin is altogether theirs now, not merely the love of the Father, but the glorified character and light of God. Thus it is love not merely in relationship but in nature; yea more than this, all that God feels as God, all that pertains to Him vindicated forever not merely is Christ's but by Christ's work consequently belongs to those who rest on that person and that work. Such is the virtue and fruit of atonement; nor is it only for heaven, for it was brought out by Himself on earth. He was going to heaven but it was expressly for wise and weighty reasons made known here to the souls that needed it most. To the poor in spirit, to the meek, His disciples, He had shown Himself the pattern of dependence and obedience, of grace and righteousness, of bright and peaceful communion with His Father; but all this of itself could only aggravate their condition which was so far beneath His and thus be the more humiliating to His own, had not He

by grace wrought their deliverance. With what force then the blessed truth broke upon their souls! God Himself the Father of the Lord Jesus was their Father even as He was their God; all that is in God as completely in their favor by what He had wrought on the cross as all that is in Him as Father. For remark it is not merely “as a Father pitieth his children,” for there is incomparably more now. He is the Father as the Christ knew Him. “I will declare Thy name unto my brethren;” brethren brought, and brought righteously, into the self-same relation, so that all the satisfaction and delight of God (not only of the Father which relationship He has given us to enjoy, but of God) Himself in Christ is shared fully with us because of the acceptance we have in Christ our Lord.

But we have more still to hear. “In the midst of the congregation I will praise Thee.” It is not merely “I will praise Thee,” nor yet “in the congregation,” but, “In the midst of the congregation.” The Apostle Paul quotes this scripture in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and we find its spirit fulfilled in the little company gathered on that day (John 20), “the assembly.” The Lord is at once found in the midst of them, not reproving them for their just proved cowardice, unbelief, and unfaithfulness, to say nothing of lack of love for His person and suffering for His name. I say not that He had not His dealings with one or another; but He brings them at once into the highest relation and best blessings by His sacrifice! With one of them especially we know He dealt; but this did not hinder or postpone His grace.

“In the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee.” Think, beloved friends, for a moment what the praise of Christ was in such an hour, what His feelings must have been, when emerging from the darkness, from the dust of death, from the abandonment of God! He alone could rightly estimate the immensity of it as He did, who having suffered once for sins now rests in the victory won. Then it was that He bore our sins; then He who knew no sin was made sin. Risen from the dead, He is bearing sins no more; He is praising, and not alone, but “in the midst of the congregation.”

Let me add another word; there is a day coming when this earth will be filled no more with groans but with hallelujahs; the day hastens when every one born shall join in the chorus of blessing, when heaven and earth will be filled with joy and glory, but never will come a day when such praise will burst forth as that which He began that day. It is not that they who praise with Him, being brought into such association of blessing, will ever lose it—they never will; but if it began with Him then it will be theirs forever, but it is theirs only with Him in their midst: and the psalm before us proves it the more strikingly because it was written expressly with a view to the earthly people. The praise of the resurrection-day is peculiar, being Christ's praise in the midst of the congregation, that is, of His brethren.

And who could declare it as He? and when could even He have declared it as when raised from the dead by the Father's glory after having been brought into the dust of death for sin? None but He could feel to the uttermost what it was to be forsaken of God and not heard when He cried; but now, heard from the horns of the unicorns, He enters as the risen man into the light and glory of God shining forever on the accepted sacrifice of Himself and declares to His brethren the name (now we can say) of His Father and their Father, of His God and their God; and there and thus, in the midst of the church now set free forever by and in Him, sings praises. Oh! what praises were Christ's, delivered now at length, and from so great a death! But are they not our praises too? And is it not “in our midst” that He sings them? What a character does not this communion imprint on the church's worship! The praise of Christ, after sin was judged as it never can be again, and He

who was crucified in weakness lives by the power of God, gives the just and only full idea of what becomes God's assembly.

Are these your thoughts, brethren beloved of the Lord? Is this the standard by which you try your hearts and lips when you would present spiritual sacrifices to your God and Father? Be assured, He values none compared with those of the risen Christ, who deigns to be the leader of such as cleave to Him in this the day of His still continued rejection, though He be, as we know, glorified on high.

Truly His is in the highest sense a new song. Alone He had thus suffered; not alone does He praise, but in the full chorus of the consciously redeemed. How wondrous that it is not here merely “in” the congregation but “in the midst” of it that He thus sings! In the day of His power it will not be so for “the great congregation.” Not that His praises will be lacking in that day; not that high and low will not praise in the earth when all Jehovah's works shall praise Him and all His saints shall bless Him. Still it remains true that there is a revealed association on His part with those who are now being called and gathered since His resurrection which exceeds in depth anything said of those who follow in that bright and blessed day. Not to the great congregation is He said to declare His God and Father's name. In it indeed will His praise of Jehovah be, but not in its midst as on the resurrection-day for those who have not seen and yet have believed. Compare verses 22, &c, with 25, &c. For what is said of that jubilee for Israel and the earth would still be true if He praised alone on His ground and all others on theirs. Neither does He call them His brethren as now, however He may pay His vows (in itself another distinctive mark) before those that fear Jehovah, when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess Him Lord, to God's glory, even to the ends of the world and throughout all kindreds of the nations.

Is not all this grace indeed to us who deserve nothing less, this the true grace of God wherein we stand? May we appreciate the counsels and the ways of the God of all grace who has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus! To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever, Amen! May our praises then abound; but may they be Christ’s praises in our midst, who deigns to be where two or three are gathered to His name! He is not absent if we are called in aught to vindicate the truth of holiness of God: is He when we gather to worship His and our God and Father? By Him therefore let us offer sacrifice of praise continually, that is, fruit of lips confessing His name.

This is followed by a call to others founded on the resurrection of the suffering Messiah. “Ye that fear Jehovah praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Jacob. For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, neither hath he hid his face from him, but when he cried unto him, he heard.” (Vers. 23, 24.) This was at least anticipated, we may note in passing, in those words which the Lord uttered before departing; “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” The public answer to His cry was when God raised Him from the dead.

Thus we find Messiah no longer suffering but heard, His God and Father's name declared to His brethren and Himself in the midst of the church praising, and then a call to everyone who fears Jehovah to praise Him, on the ground of atonement; for by, the cross of Christ the whole question of sins before God and for the believer was settled forever.

But there is a new scene in the verses that follow, which may help to bring out more distinctly what I have been endeavoring to explain. Here the Messiah says, “My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation.” Thus “the great congregation” is distinguished from “the congregation” in verse 22. There it is clearly the assembly surrounding Him when risen from the dead; whereas in verse 25 we read, “My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation.” Remark that it is not in the midst of them. There is no such association with Christ spoken of. It is to be observed in the same chapter (John 20) which has already furnished us with the illustration, and indeed fulfillment, of His name declared to His brethren, and of the congregation in the midst of which He praises, that there also we have what answers to the great congregation. For Thomas came eight days after and exclaims to the Lord, when convicted of His unbelief, “My Lord and my God.” Not a word is hinted here about “my Father and your Father, My God and your God.” There is no longer the association of Christ with the disciples traced here, but another confession which grace will draw out from the great congregation as from Thomas, when they too repent, and confess their long despised and rejected Messiah. They too will then say “My Lord and my God.” It is most true, the striking type of what Israel will know in that day. (Compare Zech. 12)

How wide will be the praise! But it is not association with Christ, it is not He praising in the midst of the congregation. There is no such blessedness of fellowship with Him. Of Christ in that day it is said, “I will pay my vows before them that fear him.” Could anything more strikingly show that this is on Jewish ground? And still further it is not only what is said which distinguishes them from those in verse 22, but what is not said. Then there is not a hint of declaring the name of His Father and God here; nor are they here called His brethren. There will be a blessed people, but as a people round Him who is at once the reigning Messiah and Jehovah their God: even He praises and pays vows in that day.

There had been Christ's praise in the midst of the assembly of His brethren when He rose from among the dead, the leader; and there followed also a suited testimony of God to these who feared Him (compare Acts χ. 36), as well as to all the seed of Jacob or Israel. The day when grace assembles the children of God is ι also a day of good news to every creature, Jew or Gentile, that they may believe. But now it is more than testimony. Messiah's praises are of Jehovah in the great congregation; Messiah pays His vows before them that fear Him. There is the plain open accomplishment of all promises. Now every prophecy of coming glory for the earth and the nations is being fulfilled. Accordingly the “meek shall eat and be satisfied, they shall praise Jehovah that seek him your heart shall be forever.” “All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto Jehovah.: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is Jehovah's: and he is the governor among the nations.” (Vers. 27, 28.) Not a word of this was given in the former connection. Hence· forth it is not merely calling on all the ends of the earth to remember, but they shall remember. It will not be the gospel of grace as now, nor the church, but the kingdom, in its display of power. All therefore shall turn to Jehovah, as we are here assured, “and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.” It is no longer a question of the Christian place: this was given us in verse 22; then the testimony goes out. in verse 23, being laid the ground of faith in verse 24. After that (ver. 26-31) comes what supposes and characterizes the millennial days. It is when Christ asks (Psa. 2) and gets the earth; then He is in the “great congregation.”

Now on the contrary His is a “little flock,” and everything great among men is opposed to God. By-and-by it will not be so; but Christ will have “the great congregation,” and be Himself the governor of all nations. Then “all they that be fat upon earth shall eat and worship, all they that go down to the dust shall bow before Him.” It is a day of confessed dependence, though of the richest blessing. The Lord alone is exalted in that day, though we shall reign with Him,

Chapter 116

Jesus the Sufferer

(Matt. 26)

I feel some difficulty in speaking of the subject before us here, not as to the doctrine itself but simply for the excellency of it; for where Christ is presented in His own perfectness all our thoughts are so inadequate. The excellency of the Lord so surpasses all our thoughts. He is sufficient to be the Father's delight: surely He ought to be ours. But it is of importance that our hearts should be occupied with Him, and this in His low estate. He is at the right hand of God now: we should look at Him in glory that we may be changed into the same image; but when we look to be the same mind as Christ, we must look at Him down here. Thus in Phil. 2, “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” —when was that? When He who was in the form of God in all the glory up there thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men: then when He was a man, found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. There are the two steps as it were as He is descending; first, when being in the form of God He came down to be a man; and then when He who so humbled Himself became obedient unto the death of the cross.

This is the way in which He came from the actual glory of God—came down: nothing stopped Him even then. But here He is before men. Putting away sin He was alone with God. It was all darkness: man had done his worst and Satan. It was what the twenty-second Psalm brings before us when He speaks of the bulls of Bashan (ver. 11-18). “But be not thou far from me” —it was an appeal to God in what I may call human trials: He was cast into that—all this wickedness; His rejection in His perfectness cast Him upon God; and then to find He was forsaken of God! There we get the efficacy of the sacrifice in putting away sin. But it is the traits of Christ's character in the path I desire to speak of.

If we come to the cross, we must come by our wants and sins; no one comes truly, unless he comes as a sinner whose sins brought him there. But when we pass through the rent vail into the presence of God in perfect peace through the efficacy of the work He accomplished, and look back at the cross by which we came, in contemplating it in a divine way we find that the cross then has a glory and excellency in it all its own, that everything in God's ways is the result of—even the new heavens and the new earth. God was perfectly glorified in it; it was the climax of good and evil: all was met there. We must come to the cross as sinners to find the good of it; but if we have found peace by it, coming into God's presence reconciled, it is everything we shall see forever, we never shall forget the Lamb that was slain. But still we can contemplate it in a divine way.

I get in the cross the perfectness of man's sin, positive enmity against God present in goodness. Nothing would do for man but to get rid of Him— “Him ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.” “If I had not come and done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin,” then they would have been justified in rejecting Him, “but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.” There I get the extreme of man's wickedness: when

God was presented in goodness, it only drew out his hatred. The power was present in Christ to meet all the effects of sin by His word: the manifestation of it drew out the enmity of man's heart against Him, and they crucified Him. There you get all that man is brought out in the presence of God: he had broken the law before; but now God had come in in perfect goodness and power (power that could remove all their distresses), but it was God's power; and they would not have it, they crucified Him. On the other hand we see there all the power of Satan: therefore it says, “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out:” they were all led by him against Christ: “this is your hour and the power of darkness.” He had overcome him in the temptation in the wilderness; it is said in Luke he departed from Him for a season. Now He says, “The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me:” he who had power over the earth (for Satan was really the prince of this world) had come back and succeeded in moving up the hatred of man's heart against Him.

But now see the absolute perfectness of the Second Man— “But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, so I do.” I get in man (more than man) perfect love to the Father and perfect obedience, and when He had the dreadful cup to drink (mark the absolute need there was of it!) that perfect obedience and love to the Father made good in the very place where He stood as sin. On the other hand in the cross I find God's infinite love and grace abounding over sin: perfect love, giving His Son for us; and then at the same time perfect righteousness judging against sin and God's majesty vindicated. “It became him for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” I see thus perfect evil in man and Satan, perfect good in man (but He was God), and perfect love in God, and righteousness in God against sin when it was met as such, all brought out in the cross; evil and good meeting there. And it is what has laid the immutable foundation in righteousness for all that will come in in goodness and blessing in the new heavens and new earth, resting not upon responsibility but upon the accomplishment of the work the value of which never can be known.

The more we think of the cross (we have come as sinners needing it, but as Christians, reconciled to God, we can sit down and contemplate it), we see it stands totally alone in the history of eternity. Divine glory, man's sin, Man's perfectness, Satan's evil, God's power and love and righteousness, all were brought out and met there. Accordingly it is the immutable foundation of man's blessing, and of everything that is good in heaven and earth. Then, when our souls are reconciled, we look at Him and learn of Him: “Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest.” He sees that the world had given Him up: there was no rest upon earth. He searched with wonderful patience for a place of rest, there was no such thing to be found: He knew it, and had tried it: the Son of man had not where to lay (not merely outwardly) His head, but to rest His heart; no more than Noah's dove found rest for the sole of her feet. “I looked for some man to take compassion but there was none.” Yet feeling this, it is just there He says, “Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest: take my yoke,” &c, “and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

I desire then that, while we rest in the blessed efficacy of the sacrifice, our thoughts should be formed by the blessed One—that is the practical secret of going through this world; “He that eateth me shall live by me.” No doubt the taste ought to grow continually in us. There are the two sides of Christian life; if it is to give courage, victory over the world, I look at His glory as in Phil. 3. There it

is the energy that runs after to win Christ at the end, counting all else dross and dung. In the second chapter it is the other side, not the object, and His lowliness in coming down is set before us.

In Matthew He is specially the victim. All through in a wonderful way you get His entire submission, but along with that, what is most striking, the depths of His path of suffering. Thinking of the cup He says, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” In Luke we read of His sweating as it were great drops of blood; it is as a man there. But you find this extreme sense of what the terribleness of God's wrath was. In the measure in which He knew what it was to be holy, He felt what it was to be made sin before God. In the measure in which He knew the love of God, He felt what it was to be forsaken of God. His suffering was in that sense perfect, infinite, in that He was contemplating it with His Father. Looking at it with Him, He says, “If it be possible, let this cup pass from me.” You find His soul going through this utter depth, so that He sweat as it were great drops of blood; but when He comes back to His disciples, there is not a trace of it. He speaks to them as graciously and tenderly, entering into their thoughts as if there was no cup at all to drink.” “What! could ye not watch with me one hour?” It is wonderful to trace this, you will find it all through Christ's life, perfect sensibility to all that was around Him (except in the extreme case when He wasforsaken of God), but always Himself—never governed by it though He felt it all perfectly. The instant He turns round to the disciples, He has nothing to do but manifest the greatest tenderness and kindness. You see it all through; even before Pontius Pilate He says nothing, He is as a lamb led to the slaughter; as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth; He was dumb unless kindness and good was to be done to another: then He is as if nothing was happening, perfect goodness, perfect sensibility to all. It is His perfect submission, His perfect sense of the dreadful thing He was just about to go through we see; yet, because He felt it entirely with His Father, He could turn round and be just as perfect as to it with His disciples.

Now they come to take Him. He looked for some to take pity, but there was none, and for comforters but found none. He is God over all yet still, and thoroughly a man. But, as another has said, He never asked them to pray for Him; but says, “Tarry ye here and watch with me.” To me it is most precious to find thus, that He who was with God and was God, made flesh, felt as a man in everything. When asking His disciples to watch with Him, He knew the world was against Him; He looked to those that He had been most with, that they should be with Him. But He must have nothing. He was tested and tried to the last degree of human suffering and sorrow, standing alone in this, praying in an agony and alone. Where were there people that were going to prison and to death with Him? They were asleep, deceived; asleep in the presence of the glory of the kingdom on the mount, asleep in the garden! That shows what poor things we are—not sin exactly; but it shows what Christ was to have as His portion in this world; none to sympathize with Him: Mary of Bethany was the only one, but for the rest, never one had sympathy with Him; never one that wanted it that He had not sympathy with. Moved by Judas they say, “To what purpose is this waste?” What kind of hearts had they? It is just there God gives testimony to Him. In John (chap, xi.) you get testimony borne to Him as Son of God in raising Lazarus. God would not allow Him to be rejected unless there was this testimony. Then Mary puts this ointment upon Him; and when all were against Him, the Greeks come up desiring to see Him; and the hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” There is that care in which God secures a testimony to Him; but I

do not think you will ever find another instance of sympathy with the Lord's heart. How would you like that? It is dreadful! It was a dreadful world to Him. He was perfect and went through it. Here at the very moment that He asked them to watch with Him, they are asleep.

Then He goes all alone with His Father, going through it in spirit with Him. Now, that the answer of that cup might be fully drawn out, He cries," "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me, nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt." It was not possible. "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat Was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." Now having been in this agony He comes back to His disciples and says to them in the gentlest way, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?" What gentleness of grace— "watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation." Now He is thinking only of them. Where is the cup? He had gone through it all with the Father, and therefore His heart is ready in service; even at that very moment He is ready for any service. If we in our little measure carried all our exercises, our little troubles, to God, to go fully through all with Him, our hearts would be all free and happy to turn round and care for others.

The depth of His misery He went through perfectly in His spirit with God; it was fully out with God; and for that reason being thus fully out, He could turn with perfect peace to say to others, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." It is the only place you get His sense of where He was—His saying, "Watch and pray." Everything that meets us is either a temptation or an occasion of obedience. It was to Him an occasion of perfect obedience: "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" Everything you meet with is a case in which you serve Christ or do your own will, and this is entering into temptation. See how He speaks in grace to Peter: "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." Oh I know you love Me; your hearts are all right, but it is this poor weakness. What perfect grace! Counting on their hearts in one sense when the temptation was coming; and when they had totally failed, He thought of the danger to them and says as to it, "Watch and pray.... the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak;" when the instant before His sweat was as it were great drops of blood. What perfect submission! What lowliness of heart! And therefore what perfection of service, of love to God and to others! Just what we should do. "He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O, my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done. And he came and found them asleep again for their eyes were heavy. And he left them and went away again, and prayed the third time saying the same words. Then cometh he to his disciples and saith unto them, Sleep on now and take your rest, behold the hour is at hand." You have no need to watch now; the time for it is over.

All through this is the character of Christ—He had gone through it with His Father. On the cross it is—as in all the rest—entire, complete, submission. He is a victim here, led as a lamb to the slaughter. Even with Judas— "he that betrayed him gave them a sign saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss that same is he: hold him fast." It is terrible to think of Judas urging them to hold Him fast! In Judas you get lust of money; you see a progress of sin; he was a thief and had the bag and bare what was put therein; then Satan tempting him to betray Him I do not doubt with the idea that He would get free. Then after supper Satan enters into him, and he was hardened against all natural feeling, for many a bad man would not betray his friend by a kiss. "And forthwith he came to Jesus and said, Hail master, and kissed him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they and laid hands on Jesus and took him."

Then we get simple submission on the part of Jesus, meek and lowly in heart. He might have had more than twelve legions of angels; “but how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be?” Mark what is most striking here: at this last wonderful moment when He was going to drink that cup of wrath when the Word, the blessed Son of God as a man, Was going into that which none of us can fathom, that there is nothing like in heaven or in earth, to endure that which was due to sin—the scriptures, the word that God had spoken, must be fulfilled. “What a testimony of their being the expression of divine thoughts—of His Father's mind, even to the Lord Himself, and so they ought to be to us. When Satan came he gets a text— “Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” When Satan comes again, “It is written.” Now at this last moment the scriptures must be fulfilled. Scripture to Him sufficed as the expression of God's mind. He was in perfect, infinite communion with the Father. Look at the gentle patience with which He speaks to the multitudes— “I sat daily with you teaching in the temple and ye laid no hold on me.”

In John He looks at the divine side of it, “No man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.” The time was come, “All this was done that the scriptures might be fulfilled.” What a scene of obedience, of perfect submission to God's mind! The moment it comes to this point, “all the disciples forsook him and fled.” He was to have no comforter. When He is brought to the chief priest, He answers nothing until the high priest adjures Him. If a soul sin and hear the voice of swearing, &c, is a, witness whether he hath seen or known of it, if he do not utter it then he shall bear his iniquity. So He utters it then: “Thou hast Said, nevertheless I say unto you, From henceforth shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.” On His own testimony they condemn Him; He was the truth, and was put to death for being the truth. It was the same way before Pilate, who asks, “Art thou a king?” Jesus answers, “Thou hast said.” We have seen the perfectness of Christ with His Father in all the depths of that which He had to suffer; also His way—the same blessed way—before men. “It was not an enemy that reproached me, then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, then I would have hid myself from him.” In every circumstance He went through all that was most absolutely painful to man's heart, and at the same time was there the expression of divine goodness.

I will now just look at the same scenes as they are presented in John and Luke. In John it is the other side of these truths; it is all through the divine side. When they come out to meet Him, He asks, “Whom seek ye?” and they went backward and fell to the ground. Looking at it as a man, He had only to walk away. It is the divine side of power, while we see His absolute submission as man: “therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down and power to take it again.” He says the second time, “Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he; if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way.”

He puts Himself freely forward, the divine person giving Himself, and lets the disciples escape. There is no attachment to Himself manifest on their part, but He fills the gap and they are safe. It is the same on the cross: there is no cry of “my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” there; it is His divine perfectness above it all. “After this (having committed His mother to the disciple) Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.” Then He said, “It is finished, and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.” When all that

the Spirit of God had said would come was fulfilled and finished, He gave up His own spirit to His Father—it is the divine side of it all you see in John. In Matthew we get the victim; He is the lamb going" to the slaughter. But I must say a word on Luke.

In Luke we get the perfect blessedness of the Lord and His sufferings in Gethsemane more fully than anywhere else, but on the cross not one expression of sorrow; He is fulfilling scripture. Just as in John we have seen the divine side, here I find Him still more distinctly brought out as a man. "Being in an agony," in deep affliction of soul, He is cast as man on His Father— "He prayed more earnestly." So great was His confidence, perfect in His agony. It is there we find "His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," and an angel from heaven strengthening Him. So also in Luke you get Christ praying much more often,than in the other Gospels, because the object is to present Him to us as Son of man. On the cross you do not get one expression of sorrow—He had gone through it perfectly (I speak of the cup), "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is not in Luke. The sorrow was there, it is true, but it is not that side. We get then the perfectness of Jesus who had gone through it all with His Father in the garden. And so entirely is He above it that at the close occur the words "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said this he expired." We have the blessed Lord thus presented in these various characters. John gives a divine person: "as soon as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground;" He could have gone away, but it was not for that He had come— "If ye seek me, let these go their way." You see divine power and the divine perfectness of love, not exercising the power, but putting Himself forward to stand in the gap that they might escape. And on the cross He gives up His own spirit. In Luke 1 find His own sorrow and suffering as man in Gethsemane, more than in the other Gospels: and on the cross above all the circumstances He commends His spirit to the Father. In Matthew He is the sheep going to the slaughter.

The more we look to follow the blessed Lord in His path here, the more our hearts are bound in right affections to Him. He stood alone, ever as a man down here perfectly alone, and there is nothing more trying. "All ye shall be offended because of me this night." Again He says, "Behold the hour cometh, yea is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own and shall leave me alone; and yet I am not alone because the Father is with me" —nobody else! He looked for compassion, and got none; for some to watch with Him, and they fell asleep: to stand by Him, and they all forsook Him and fled. He is betrayed with a kiss. He felt it all: it was not an enemy, but thou, a man, my companion; "yea mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted which did eat of my bread has lifted up his heel against me." Follow Him all through—it puts down the pride of the heart; it sets us men very low, but it sets Him as man in a wonderful perfectness; not man in the glory, but a man going through everything that could test the heart, in the purest possible way; a man tested in every possible way, bowing His head as a victim, feeling it so that His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, going through it all as man so that our hearts might follow Him—going through every depth, and we poor creatures only standing by to look at Him. It is well if we are not asleep too! That is where it draws out the affections. It sifts the will. The will and affections never go together; will is self, affections rest necessarily in another. He is the perfect object— "therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again." To see Him in the meekness of His path giving Himself for us, never turning Himself aside, perfect in going through all, just as quiet with Him as if nothing had happened He suffered it so with God. We want our hearts to get right; we want our wills to be broken down; if we go and look at Christ as thus

presented to us in Gethsemane, can we seek to satisfy the will now?

Thus I get what is outside myself as an object that sets my affections perfectly right, and that does not leave a possibility of my will working. Looking at One that is beyond me, I find One that does not leave the possibility of the working of my will, but that draws out the energy of the affections of my heart and sets my will aside. He could say, “Therefore doth my Father love me:” so blessed was it, so perfect was He in it, that it gave a cause to God to love Him. Only divine perfectness could give a cause for divine love. The heart knowing that He is now in glory gets filled. “I am the bread that came down from heaven,” that we might abide in Him. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.” We are to be like Him in this character—He humbled Himself, He went always down till God took Him up. Are we content to follow Him? Looking at Him and seeing His perfectness, are we content to have all our affections filled with Christ, and no will at all? We are going to be with Him forever; and we can enjoy what. He is in heaven, in which His perfect blessedness is before our hearts and has been tasted by us. How far have our hearts tasted of that bread, and how far are we kept, our wills subdued and occupied with Christ? It is what God the Father delights in. There is the efficacy of His work as the foundation; but how far is Christ Himself the object of our souls' delight—dwelling on Him so that they are kept awake? There is nothing that forms the heart, breaking down the will in us, like the delight that we have in Christ in fellowship with the Father. The Lord give us while resting in His precious blood to go and contemplate Him, feed upon Him and live by Him— “He that eateth me, even he shall live by me.” See Him the lowly, blessed, patient One, at God's right hand now, the One that God has given to keep our hearts right in the world of folly and pride. The Lord give us to live by Him.

Chapter 117

Job 9

I suppose every reader is aware of the circumstances of this book, of the trials of Job, sent him of God for his good, under which his faith broke down at last.

It just teaches us how good is to be got, how blessing comes and must come, that is, in the real know ledge of self. Men speak of God's goodness; but their only thought of God's goodness is His passing over sin. Were half the people around us put into heaven, they would get out as fast as ever they could; what is there is not in accordance with them: nothing they like 13 there, and there is nothing there they like. Not one of us naturally would find a single thing according to our mind in heaven. So that God says “Ye must be born again.”

The goodness of God does not pass over iniquity, but brings us to the distinct definite knowledge of what we are and of what we have done, and that, being such, He is above all the evil, and can bless us in Christ. Here we are walking in a vain show, and are aware that everything here will not last. Everybody knows that the fashion of this world passes away, and yet people are occupied with it.

“While we look not at the things that are seen, but at the things which are not seen.” What is “seen,” everybody knows, will all go to nothing. They must leave it any way (1 Tim. 6); and then their whole life and objects will be entirely done with. Their conduct they will not have done with, unless it be put away by the blood of Christ. You think God has given a revelation; but do we want a revelation of this world? According to our intelligence and ability we know the world ourselves; but when we pass beyond this world, we want God to tell us, to bring down to us, a sure and certain testimony of what will become of us. This He has done. He has given a full revelation of what our state is and what His holiness is; and He has given a sure and settled certain foundation for blessing so that there can be no doubt about it.

God would not have us walking in uncertainty; for uncertainty is misery. “We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry Abba, Father.” Believing we know our relationship with God, we are “joint-heirs with Christ,” “Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”

God was dealing with Job; but he had to learn himself. What makes Job so interesting is that the book comes before all dispensations.

When I find what I am and cannot tell what God is, of course I am in misery. When God is plowing up the ground, this is not a crop. Plowing comes before harvest. “In all this Job sinned not.” There was none like Job in all the earth, but he did not know himself: a spirit of self-righteousness had been creeping over him.

Supposing God had stopped there, what would have come of it? Job might have said, “In prosperity I was eyes to the blind; in adversity I was patient:” and the whole case would have been

worse. He goes on till his friends come, and then, perhaps from pride, or because he could not bear their sympathy, he breaks down. The process was a trying humbling one. “O if I could meet God,” Job says, “He is not like you: there is “goodness in him.” His friends stood on utterly false ground; they took this world as the adequate witness of the government of God. This only makes Job the more angry: the world is no adequate testimony of the government of God.

There you see a soul rising under that which is upon him, striving and wrestling, the flesh breaking out so that he should know himself. Job, having been thus wrought in and exercised and plowed up, passes through all the various considerations as to how he could meet God. Throughout there are certain true sayings as “The righteous Lord loveth righteousness;” but are we righteous? This is another story. Are you in a condition, if you had to do with God this moment, to say “I am righteous” before Him? Many a one looks at the cross and says “I am a poor sinner, and I have no hope but the cross.” But can you say “I am a poor sinner, and the judgment-seat just suits me"?

When we have really known Christ as our righteousness, there is no place where the soul is so clear and bright and certain about the matter as for the day of judgment: we shall be in glory then. Where the heart has not been broken up, the soul does not understand as a present thing what it is to be before God now. You will find in this chapter naughty expressions, but in the main what Job says is true.

There was a mixture, that his wrong thoughts might be judged.

“How should man be just with God?” The instant the soul is awakened; it sees with God's eye: and this is the only way of seeing right: the moment this is the case, the soul in the light of the judgment says, “I could not answer him one of a thousand.” God is infinitely good; but His way of goodness is not that of allowing evil. Could you answer for yourself in the day of judgment for everything you have ever said or done?

We were all living in a vain show. I may have a character, which God cares nothing about; but He cares about conscience. Before the day of judgment He says “There is none righteous, no not one,” “that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” Job goes through several of these daises; then his wrong feeling breaks out. “He... filleth me with bitterness.” Then he gets, more right,” If, I justify myself, my own mouth shall condemn me.” Can you justify yourself in God's presence? If you cannot justify yourself there, what is the, good of doing so anywhere else? You could not Stand in the light as God is in the light, and you know it: How comes it that the thought of God makes a man. melancholy? He finds out that he is not walking with God. Then, beloved friends, it is impossible to go on in that way: we all naturally have got a conscience of good and evil. The crust of the heart has to be plowed up—the “fallow ground,” as Jeremiah calls it.

Then comes another case: “If I wash myself with snow water and make my hands never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me.” Thus; if a man had been brought up in a dirty cabin, he does not feel it to be so; so men have habits of thinking according to men, not according to God. You will find that sins against man are thought a great deal of, such as murder and robbery. Suppose a man commits sins like these, he is intolerable, not fit for society; but suppose he hates God, men say, Oh! that is his own affair.

Go through the history of all religions: do you find a Mahometan ashamed of his religion? Do you find a follower bf Juggernaut ashamed of his religion? You will never find when a man has a false religion, that he is ashamed of it. But take a Christian, a real Christian, and he is ashamed of it. How comes it? What a tale it tells of the world! Man may sing songs in the street, but hymns—that will not do.

If I talk of washing myself “with snow water, my own clothes shall abhor me.” This is where we are brought, all of us. “There is none righteous, no, not one.” If that were all, I could not stand here and speak to you, for we are all the same.

You see Job could not answer God, “and he is struggling under this: what does he say he wants? “Neither is there any daysman betwixt us that might lay his hand upon both.” O I have got no daysman! “Let him take his rod away from me and let not his fear terrify me.” What Job said he had not got is exactly what we have got in Christ. Was Christ a terror in this world? The law was a terror; there were thunderings., and lightnings, and even Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake;” the people said “Do not let God speak to us.” The law was a terror, and it produced no real change in man, no confidence, no trust in God.

The law does not give life, it does not change the heart, nor does it give an object for the heart. The man in Rom. 7 says “I hate sin.” “So do I,” says the law, “and this is the reason that I curse you.” Does this inspire confidence? The law is very useful, it brings the knowledge of sin (what Job was getting here, not that it was law, but the same principle). There was no peace, no rest, but it was sin brought, upon the conscience, and it never gave confidence.

In Cain we see utter insensibility to man's having been driven out of Paradise, to sin, to the curse: he brought to God the very sign of the curse. Man left God and listened to Satan; therefore he is under judgment. People talk as if God had made man as he is. Suppose I make a desk and then judge that desk, what do I judge? Myself. By our sin we turned God into a Judge instead of a Blesser. Abel comes to God, and brings his victim, offers the fat of the lamb. He felt, If I do not get something between me and God, I cannot come near God.

If we look at Christ we shall find that He exactly meets the need that Job felt. I cannot answer God one in a thousand; but what do I find in Christ? God came to me in this world because I could not do anything in this world. The blessed Lord did not wait up in heaven, but came to these unrighteous people. He never said “Come to me,” until He had come Himself.

I see in this Daysman God showing me that He is above all my sin. He is light to make everything manifest now; but when He has done that in man's heart and conscience, He puts it all away. In the world, where men were sinners, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.” I have God that visited me but not to hide my sins. God came to me, to the woman in the city that was a sinner, to Mary Magdalene. I get Him coming and talking to the Samaritan about wells of water springing up unto everlasting life; I have Him saying to the woman “Thy sins are forgiven thee.”

It is God Himself in this world, not terrifying us, but in perfect blessed love as Man amongst men; the holy One, the undefiled that used the undefilableness of His nature to carry the blessed love of God to us. This blessed One is the Daysman. God has visited. me just as I am; He came to me just as I am: I know God is for me; but if He comes to the sinner He lets him feel his sins; “you are so bad you have nobody you can trust; you cannot show your face to a decent person; then come

and show it to Me," says Christ. This is the way of God's dealing. Will He wait for the day of judgment?

The beginning of all sin was losing confidence in God. "He is keeping back that tree." If I do not trust God, I must do the best I can for myself: then follows lust, transgression, ruin. Christ comes into the world of sinners and says, "Now you can have confidence in me."

How blessed it is to trace Christ's life in this world! He says to the woman at the well "If thou knewest the gift of God!" and He came to bring the blessing. These two things I get hold of, that God is giving, and Who it is that has come down so low as to be dependent on a poor woman for a drink of water. Instead of waiting for the day of judgment He has come down into this world to say, "Now if you just trust me! You cannot answer in the day of judgment, but I am come in the day of grace." Did you ever see any terror in Him? Terror to the Pharisees you might in a certain sense see; but did you ever see, when God was in the world (Christ was God in this world), anything but love to sinners? Never. This is what I find in that blessed One, divine love. "Who put it into God's heart? Did you? Nobody but Himself; His own heart was the source of it. I get to know God far better than I know myself; the moment I receive the true blessed testimony of His love, I know Him: I have my Daysman ("I and the Father are one"), who has come into the world of sinners just as they were, passing through this world of sin to meet every want.

Well, He goes on. In the cross it is not God before men in this world, but Man before God made sin. In the perfectness of this same love He offered Himself to God: He stands before God made sin for us that He might be dealt with according as it deserved. This was the reason He prayed, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." He did not speak this of outrages and insults from man, but He could not take the wrath of God thus. If any of us was to be saved, that cup must be drunk. Just as God came out in love to us down here, so Christ has gone up as Man to God up there.

I find all these people that He had met in blessing saying, "Crucify him, crucify him:" the priests, who ought to have pleaded for weakness, crying out against Him: the judge condemning the innocent Man, and His friends who had been with Him continually—one betraying, another denying, and all deserting Him. I find Him setting His face as a flint, bowing to His Father's will. I find Him, if my faith follow Him there, drinking the cup on the cross: I brought Him there; my sin, my wickedness, my neglect of Him for years, brought Him there. What of my sins now? They are all gone. What is there like that atonement? People talk of Him as an example, which we know He was; but if you take Him only as an example, what do you find? The one righteous Man in the world declaring He was forsaken of God at the end! What sort of testimony is that?

The moment I see Christ there, and all the darkness around, and He made sin for us, the work done alone between Him and God; there only was obedience fully tested, there was the one spotless Victim, the blessed Son of God. There is no glorifying God perfectly except in the cross. There I find the whole righteous judgment of God against sin, no patience, no gentleness; Christ was really drinking the cup. If God could pass over sins, where would be His righteousness? Here I find God's perfect righteousness against sin and His perfect love: I get the whole enmity of man rising up against God, and, where it carries out its purpose, God's perfect grace. You never get positive sin dealt with outright before God except in the cross, and perfect love doing it. I find Christ there alone with God. I see Him in infinite unutterable love. He is in the presence of God for me, always in the value of what He has wrought; and; when I go up to God now, I go into the

holiest as white as snow, because I could not go in there except by the work of Christ.

I go on to the day of judgment: whom do I find there? The very person who put away all my sins; It gives this blessed rest to the heart now; and, when I stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, there is the Man who bore away my sins! How do we get there? When Christ appears, what will He do with me, with you? He comes and changes this vile body: “It is sown in corruption, raised again in glory.” To get before the judgment-seat we must be raised or changed: Christ comes Himself, and He raises or changes us, and takes us to Himself.

The first coming of Christ was about the putting away of sin. “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.” What you want is God-given faith in the person of our Daysman.

He brings out love to me where I am, and He has gone is as Man in righteousness to God. The question with me is, whether in that dark hour when all were shut out He finished the work God gave Him to do, and gave His life a ransom for many; and I believe He finished it, beloved friends. Now He is sitting there, having finished the work, and God has raised Him from the dead; and I know, not only that He has accomplished the work, but that God has accepted it; Like Abel I come to God with His Lamb in my hand. “(If I wash myself with snow water.... yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch.” I shall be like a man come out of a ditch. But I have got my Daysman, and God rests in Him; and we are in Him, the Holy Ghost being sent down that we may know it. “At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father and ye in me and I in you.” Then I learn what the Lord Jesus says in John 17: “That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them and I in them.” If I look at my Daysman, I have got to the very spring of God's heart. He has given His Son. Glory is but a natural consequence. Next I find He is a righteous God who cannot look at sin: well, I say, He has looked at it on the cross.

Christ has accomplished the work; God has accepted it; and Christ sits there at His right hand till His enemies are made His footstool. When I say I am in Christ, there is this other blessed truth that Christ is in me. If Christ is in you, walk worthy of Him; being reconciled to God, Christ being your life, you are to glorify God in everything: “Whether, therefore, ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” You are not your own at all; if you want to be your own, you are not Christ's. What we have to do is to detect the evil in the heart, and thus not dishonor Christ before the world. I am no longer my own at all, but the epistle of Christ. People are to read Christ in you as the ten commandments in the tables of stone.

Redemption is perfect: Christ is our righteousness; I have got my Daysman. The Holy Ghost coming down and dwelling in me, my soul is in the consciousness of the value of what Christ has done, and I am waiting in earnest desire for Christ to come and take me there. It is a perfect finished work, and the only part I had in it is my sin.

The Lord open your hearts and turn your eyes on that blessed One"; and if you have your heart open, if you are struggling like Job to lay your hands on the head of the Lamb, the Lord give you in this day of salvation not to neglect so great a salvation.

Notes on John 3:12

There is a natural repugnance in man's mind to divine testimony. The judgment depends on the affections, and the affections of man are estranged from God. Privileges do not alter this, nor the responsibility which flows from the relation in which one may stand to God. He must be born again. A divine nature cleaves to God; the life which comes from Him as its source goes up to Him in desire, if not always (till redemption is known) in confidence of heart.

Yet the Lord had not in this solemn declaration gone beyond the universal necessity of man for the kingdom of God: and therefore it was inexcusable in the Jewish teacher so to have overlooked it as to feel such amazement at the Lord's assertion of it. He ought to have known from the ancient scriptures, from the psalms and prophets especially, that Israel must he renewed in order to enter and enjoy their promised portion on the earth. “Truly God is good to Israel,” as the Messiah's Kingdom will manifest; but the assurance is restricted. It is “to such as are of a clean heart.” (Psa. 73) So far will the mass of the Jews be from fitness for that kingdom, that the Spirit of Christ in the pious remnant does not hesitate to ask God's judgment and pleading of their cause against an ungodly or unmerciful nation. (Psa. 43) They were no better, but guiltier, than Gentiles. There were enemies within as well as without. “And I said, Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. Selah. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest. Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues: for I have seen violence and strife in the city. Day and night they go about it upon the walls “thereof mischief also and sorrow are in the midst of it. Wickedness is in the midst thereof: deceit and guile depart not from her streets. For it was not an enemy that reproached, me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company.” (Psa. 55:6-14.) Thus to the saint's mind the city (the holy city in title, in fact most unholy) is worse than the wilderness, dreary as it may be. Not Gentiles only but Jews need to be born afresh: otherwise the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through them, as it is written.

But it is striking to notice that the chapter of Ezekiel (chap. 36.), already cited in part, which is naturally brought to illustrate these words of the apostle Paul, declares in the plainest and most unconditional terms that God will sanctify His great name which was blasphemed among the heathen, “Which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am Jehovah, saith the Lord Jehovah, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God. I will also save you from all your uncleannesses: and I will

call for the corn, and will increase it, and lay no famine upon you. And I will multiply the fruit of the tree, and the increase of the field, that ye shall receive no more reproach of famine among the heathen. Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall lothe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. Not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord Jehovah, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. Thus saith the Lord Jehovah; In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land, shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by. And they shall say, This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I Jehovah build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate: I Jehovah have spoken it, and I will do it." (Ezek. 36:23-36.)

Further, these words of the prophet illustrate "the earthly things" in our Lord's conversation with Nicodemus. "If I told you the earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you the heavenly things?" (Ver. 12.) In speaking as He had of the necessity to be born afresh—born of water and of Spirit—the Lord had not gone beyond "the earthly things." The kingdom of God could not be entered or seen without that new birth. Of course it is indispensable for heaven; but the Lord goes farther and insists on it as essential even for the lower province of God's kingdom. Even the Jew must be born again, and, for millennial blessings too as well as for eternity. So true is it that they are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither, because they are the seed or Abraham, are they all children.

We shall see too, when our Lord proceeds in His discourse to touch on His cross and the love of God in giving His Son, that to be born anew does not adequately describe what is given to the believer, but eternal life.

Substantially no doubt it is the same new nature which every saint has and must have; but, now that the glory and work of Christ are revealed, its full character shines out. There is yet more, as we know and the next chapter shows, the Spirit given, and the relationship of children of God enjoyed, and the results of the death and resurrection and ascension of Christ our portion even now. But I enlarge no more on this as yet. Only we here learn that the kingdom of God has its "heavenly things," no less than "the earthly things" of which the prophets spoke. Jesus the Son could have opened the heavenly things, but the condition of such as Nicodemus did not admit of it for the present. The Spirit revealed all these and other depths of God amply after the shed blood vindicated God and purged their consciences. Then were the disciples free to learn all in the power of Christ's resurrection and in the light of heaven. Such is Christian knowledge.

But even while Christ was here, He intimated distinctly the Father's kingdom as a heavenly sphere where the risen saints are to shine as the sun, contradistinguished from the Son of man's kingdom, which is clearly the world, out of which at His coming the angels shall be sent to clear away all offenses and those that practice lawlessness. (Matt. 13:41-43.) Nay, in the prayer given to the disciples we may recognize a similar distinction though not so sharply drawn out, for He bid them pray for their Father's kingdom to come, Where they and all the risen saints would be glorified; and then that His will be done as in heaven so on earth, which will only be secured at the completion of the age, when the Son of man comes in His kingdom. (Matt. 6:10.) These together

constitute the kingdom of God, which comprises therefore, as the Lord there assumes, “the heavenly things” and “the earthly things.” The reader will find abundant confirmation in Heb. 12:22-24, Eph. 1:10, Col. 1:20.

Notes on John 3:13

We are next given to learn who it is that could speak with competent knowledge and authority of heavenly things. It is the Son of man, the same person doubtless who deigned to be born of the virgin, the Son of David, the Messiah. But as Messiah He is to judge Jehovah's people in righteousness, and to reign with a power which cannot be disputed, save to the ruin of every rebel. For the Spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jehovah, and shall make Him of quick understanding in the fear of Jehovah; and He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of His ears, but with righteousness shall He judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. As such He presented Himself to Israel, but was rejected, and, as we know, they reject Him to this day; for man, being lost, proves himself wholly blind, and of men none more so than Israel to their truest glory and best treasure, Christ the Lord. And thus we have seen it from the first in the Gospel of John, who was given to treat things as they are, and as they are in presence of grace and truth in His person who reveals the Father.

Here, accordingly, it is not a prophet revealing the future of the kingdom of Jehovah over the earth, or of the judgments which will introduce it, or of the evils which must be judged before the establishment of blessing in that day. It is more than a prophet who gives out what he receives responsibly to communicate from God to man. Jesus knows not merely what is in man on earth as none ever knew, as the “Word made flesh” alone did know, but what is in God above as only a divine person could, yet now as man also. No prophet ever did, ever could, so speak as He; none but He so knew and so testified. He, therefore, could speak of things heavenly, as well as of the earthly, not as one inspired to tell of what was before unknown, but of that which He knew and saw in the communion of the Godhead! His becoming man in no way detracted from His divine capacity or rights; it was unspeakable grace! to those for whose sakes He was come from God, and went to God, not only the truth and witness of it, as He alone could be, but about to die atoningly, as we shall see shortly in this very context, that the believer might live eternally and righteously.

“What could man, angel, or any other creature avail? It was His glory, His work. The man, Adam, whom Jehovah Elohim formed, He put in Eden, chief of all creatures around him which God had pronounced very good. But the heaven is Jehovah's throne, though neither it nor the heaven of heavens can contain Him. “And no one hath gone up to heaven but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man that is in heaven.” Men have been, and will be, caught up to heaven; angels have been sent down from heaven. To Jesus only it belonged to go up, as He only came down. For He was a divine Î person, and He came in love; and love is ever free as well as holy. “Lo! I come to do thy will, O God.” In the volume of the book it was written of Him alone. And He who was thus pleased to be found in fashion as a man, taking the body God prepared Him, rejoiced ever to speak of Himself as the Sent One, the man Christ Jesus, who came down from heaven, to do not His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. He became servant, but did not, could not, cease to be God. But He is man withal, as truly as Adam; yea, He is what Adam was

not—Son of man, come of woman.

And so it is that in the form of the expression used He is stamped as having ascended to heaven, He only that descended from heaven: ■ναβ■βηκεν... ■ ■κ το■ ο■ρανο■ καταβ■ς. For as the apostle asks, That He ascended, what is it but that He also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up above all the heavens, that He]might fill all things. Only, as the apostle Paul tells us it in connection with His work and the counsels of God, so John presents it in our Lord's words as connected with the truth of His person— “the Son of man that is in heaven.” And an astonishing truth it is. To have said the Son of God that was in heaven would have been true; but what an infinite truth is that which is said, “the Son of man that is in heaven!” Impossible to be said if He had not been God, the Son of the Father, yet, what was of the deepest moment, said of Him as man, the rejected Messiah, the Son of man that is in heaven. The incarnation was no mere emanation of divinity; neither was it a person once divine who ceased to be so by becoming man (in itself an impossible absurdity), but One who, to glorify the Father, and in accomplishment of the purposes of grace to the glory of God, took humanity into union with Godhead in His person. Therefore it is that He could say, and of Him alone could it be said, “the Son of man that is in heaven,” even as He is the only-begotten Son that is [not merely that was] In the bosom of the Father. He it is who met, and more than met, the challenge of Agur (Prov. 30) speaking prophetically to Ithiel and Heal. “Who hath ascended up into heaven or descended? Who hath gathered the wind in his fists? Who hath bound the waters in his garment? Who hath established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's nature, if thou canst tell?” It is God, not man, who can take up the challenge; but it is God become man, yea, the Son of man. How suited as well as competent is He to unfold all things, heavenly, earthly, human; and divine! He is indeed the Truth.

Chapter 120

Notes on John 3:14-16

“We saw that the ascension of the Lord is grounded on His descent from heaven, and that both flow from and belong to His person as the Son of man that is in heaven. But the Lord follows this up by setting out the mighty work He came to do for sinners, that they might have eternal life—by grace, indeed, but on the footing of divine righteousness.

“And even as Moses lifted up the serpent of brass in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that every one that believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that every one that believeth on him should not perish, but have life eternal.” (Ver. 14 - 16.)

The new birth had been already insisted on for man to see or enter the kingdom of God. But so is the cross also a necessity, if guilty man was to receive pardon from God whilst living to Him. They are alike indispensable. Compare 1 John 4:9, 10. And Christ as He alone could be, so was sent a propitiation for our sins. The Lord here illustrates the latter truth by the well-known scene in the wilderness, where God directed Moses, in his distress for the guilty Israelites bitten by the fiery serpents and dying in all quarters, to set a serpent of brass on a pole, that whoever looked might live. It was the figure of Himself, who knew no sin, for us made sin, identified in divine dealing with the consequences of our evil in judgment on the cross. Impossible that sin could otherwise be expiated adequately. It must be by God's judging it in One capable of bearing what it deserved at His hands; and it must be in man, in the Son of man, to be available for man. Yet, had it been any other than Jesus, it had been offensive to God, and not efficacious for man; for He only was the Holy One, and in no offering was there more jealous care that it should be without blemish. “It is most holy,” says the law of the sin-offering. All other men were shapen in iniquity, and in sin conceived, in Him only of woman born is no sin, not only no sin committed, but no sin in Him. Therefore was a body prepared Him as for no one else, when the Holy Ghost came on the Virgin Mary, and the power of the Highest overshadowed her. Therefore also that Holy Thing which was born was called the Son of God; not only the Son of God before He was sent of the Father, but, when in grace the Word thus became flesh, perfect man, yet not the less truly God. For there was none other way, if the desperate case of man was to be remedied before God. It could only be righteously through atonement; and the Son of man was the only fitting victim. For blood of bulls and goats is incapable of taking away sins, however instructive such sacrifices might be beforehand of man's need and of God's way. “Wherefore, when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body didst thou prepare me. In burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure. Then said I, Lo I am come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God.”

Thus did the man Christ Jesus, Son of God withal, yea, God over all blessed forever, deign to suffer once for sins, just for unjust, that He might bring us to God. Only so could it be, for God could not make light of sin, however surely He can and does pardon sinners; but even He could not pardon consistently with Himself or His word, or the creature's real blessing, but through blood

of the cross. And therefore did the Lord say here to Nicodemus, who knew the law, if he had little known the prophets, “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.” Thus did He redeem out of the curse of the law, having become a curse for us. It is not a living Messiah reigning over His people on earth, but He rejected by them, sinners and lost as they were now proved to be; it is Jesus Christ and He crucified, in that character or title which connects Him with the one object for a sinful man: or, as He says Himself here, “that every one that believeth on him may not perish, but have life eternal.” By Him only thus presented one comes to God, all sins being judged and borne in His cross. Hence it is by believing on Him that one has life eternal. The believer looks out of himself to the Lord Jesus.

But this alone might leave the soul, though looking to Christ by faith, without liberty or peace, however truly blessed thus far. Hence the Lord reveals another truth. “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that every one that believeth on him should not perish, but have life eternal.” It is no longer the object and absolute need of guilty man, be he Jew or any other. There is now revealed the sovereign love of God, which confines not itself to any limits such as the law, or man under it, had contemplated, but goes out freely and fully to the world, where He was unknown and hated; and this, not in creation or providential mercies, but in such sort as to give His Son, His only-begotten, “that every one that believeth on him may not perish, but have eternal life.” It is grace to the uttermost. It is no question here of a needs-be. There was no moral necessity that God should give His Son; it was His love, not obligation on His part, nor claim on man's. Whatever need there was in man's state was amply met in the cross of the Son of man, and therein was accomplished the atonement or propitiation for the sins of those who believe. But there is incomparably more in the Only-begotten Son given by the God of love, not to the elect nation, but to the world, Thus divine love is manifested as perfectly as His just and holy requirement in judging sin; and this in Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, the suffering but now glorified Son of man, both too displayed in and enjoyed by that life eternal which the believer has in Him.

Notes on John 3:17-18

The great truth has been cleared: not only that man, sinful man, needed an adequate atonement as well as new birth, but that God loved the world, the guilty lost world, of Gentiles no less than Jews, and loved it so that He gave His only-begotten Son that every one who believeth in Him should not perish but have eternal life. It is in the Son of God that both lines of the truth meet; for He is incarnate and crucified. Accordingly the true light shines, eternal life is given, God's love is known, redemption is accomplished, salvation is come. There is more in and by Him now than if the kingdom were set up in power for which those waited whose expectations were formed and bounded by the Old Testament. Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other; and, though one could not say perhaps till that day that truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven, yet one knows assuredly that grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, and that righteousness is established and displayed in Him exalted on the throne and glorified in God Himself above. In the bright days of heaven upon the earth He is to judge His people and the world righteously, and will early cut off the wicked; for the quick must be judged by Him at His coming as well as the dead ere He gives up the kingdom to God.

But deeper purposes were in hand now that the Messiah is viewed as rejected by the Jews: eternal life in, and salvation by, the Son of God, who dies atoningly on the cross. “For God sent not His Son into the world that he should judge, the world but that the world might be saved through him.” (Ver. 17.) And as a work beyond comparison deeper and with everlasting consequences was before God, so the objects of His grace are no longer within the circumscribed limits of the land of Israel. If He is to manifest Himself now as a Savior God in His Son, it suits His love to send out the good news to the world as a whole. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them. Granted that Christ thus present was rejected; but the errand of love was in the way abandoned; rather did it enter on a new ground whence it could go forth in the power of the Spirit. For Him who knew no sin God made sin for us (that is, in the cross), that we might become God's righteousness in Him.

Thus Christ as Savior, not as Judge, expresses the characteristic testimony Of God now made known to man and here declared by our Lord, in contradistinction from His predicted glory as Messiah and Son of man ruling as He will over the earth by-and-by in the age to come. This is followed up by the result for him who receives Christ now. “He that believeth in him is not judged; but he that believeth not hath been already judged, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” (Ver. 18.) Not only is the believer not condemned, but he is not an object of judgment. He will give account, but is never put on his trial. This is explicitly taught in John 5, where the two-fold issue is connected with the mystery of Christ's person. As He is Son of God and Son of man, so He gives life and will exercise judgment, the one for the blessing of believers as owning His glory, the other for His vindication on such as have dishonored Him. Thus, as His stooping to become man exposed Him to unbelief, it is as Son of man that He will judge His despisers, which clearly does not apply to the believer whose joy is even now and ever to honor

Him as the Father. And as in this later chapter of John the believer is declared to hare eternal life, and not to come into judgment, but to have passed out of death into life, so here “he that believeth not hath been already judged, because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.” For John presents the Lord as declaring all decided by the test of His own person received in faith or unbelievingly rejected. Good or evil in all other respects turns on this, as He shows soon after. There is no such touchstone, not even the law of God, weighty and incisive as it is. Hence we see the fallacy of the older divines who drag in the law here as everywhere and thus make it only a question of moral condemnation; whereas the very point of instruction is that it is Christ Himself believed or disbelieved, though no doubt conduct follows accordingly.

But here it is not death for not doing God's commandments, but the unbeliever already judged by Him who sees the end from the beginning, and pronounces on all persons and things as they are before God. Only One can avail him who is dead in trespasses and sins; in nowise the law, which can simply condemn him whose walk is opposed to itself, but the Son who is life and gives life to the believer. But the unbeliever refuses the Son of God: carelessly or deliberately, in haughty pride or in cowardly clinging to other trusts, pleasures, or interests, it is only a difference of form or degree. But he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God, whose name is not hidden but preached. There is the fullest declaration of what He is, and is to sinners: so that all excuse is vain and can only add sin to sin. His very name implies, yea asserts, that He is the Savior, a divine Savior, yet a Man and so for men. Nor can it be truthfully urged that there is any doubt as to God's feeling and mind; for it had just been said that God sent Him into the world to this end, whatever must be the character of His coming another day when He will reckon with those who would have none of Him. But what is it to God that wretched guilty ruined sinners should despise and reject Him who is at once the only Savior of man, and the only-begotten Son of God! When those who most need mercy least feel it, when they in their utter degradation refuse the Highest who comes down to them in the fullest love to bless, what remains but judgment for those who thus render God's grace null as to themselves, heightened as it is by the glory of Him who in love came for their sakes and by the humiliation in which He deigned to come?

Chapter 122

Notes on John 3:19-21

I am aware that the Puritan divines drag in the law even here and will have it that Christ, in illustrating the certainty of salvation for those that believe in Him, shows on the contrary the condemnation of unbelievers to be twofold, one by the law and the other by the gospel. Their idea is that the unbeliever is here declared to be condemned already by the sentence of the law; which they still lie under and have it confirmed by the gospel, since they do not by faith lay hold on the offered and only remedy in Christ.

But there is no trace of such a scheme either here or anywhere else in scripture, which teaches expressly that “as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law.... in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ;” (Rom. 2:12 - 16.) Paul's doctrine therefore excludes the assumption that every unbeliever is already under the law, which would surely involve his being condemned by it, law affecting only those under it, whilst those who have it not are dealt with on their own ground. With this entirely agrees the language of our Gospel, which does not say a word about the law, even where a teacher of it was before the Lord inquiring into eternal life and salvation. It is solely a question of Christ. “And this is the judgment that the light hath come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than light; for their works were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light and cometh not to the light lest his works should be convicted; but he that practiceth the truth cometh to the light that his works may be manifested that they have been wrought in God.” (Ver. 19 - 21.)

Inasmuch as the true light now shines—no longer the law in Israel, but the light come into the world, a criterion is in force which decides for every man. There is a far deeper question than a man's own state or conduct. Indeed this too is already decided: man is no longer under probation, as the Jew was under law. He is lost: be he Jew or Gentile, he is alike lost. It is therefore a question of believing in Jesus, Son of God and Son of man, who (as we saw before) has been sent of God, not as He will be shortly to judge the quick and the dead, but that the world (not the elect nation now, but the world, spite of its ruin, in His grace) may be saved through Him. This tests to the core. All thus depends on believing in Him. If one believes not, one has been already judged. It is, not merely to fail in duty, but to fight against the grace and truth come by Jesus Christ. It is to reject life eternal, and the perfect love of God, in the only-begotten Son of God whose name one disbelieves or makes light of.

It is vain to complain of lack of light. The very reverse is true. “This is the judgment that the light hath come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil.” Terrible revelation of their state! Alas! it was our state, our affections so utterly corrupt as to prefer the darkness to the light, and this for the guiltiest reason, for a bad conscience. For our deeds were evil. Assuredly the trumpet gives no uncertain sound. Have we heard its clear warning above, beneath, the din of this world? Have we submitted to the sentence of Him who knows what is in man, no less than what is in God? Or are we unbroken still in self-righteousness and

self-conceit? Do we dare to dispute the solemn and plain—too plain to be mistaken—words of the Lord? Would we put off the decision till the great white throne? And what will He then judge of the unbelief which thus virtually gives Him the lie? For no man that believed these words of His now would put off till then, but surely cast his soul on Him who, if the Judge then, is Savior, and nothing but a Savior, to the lost one that now believes on His name.

But when eternal judgment does come, it is not true that then it is a question simply of man's unbelief. From the divine account we are given, we learn that the dead are judged according to their works. There is no such thing at any time as salvation according to our works; there will be for all who reject Christ judgment according to their works. They had refused the Savior, they had despised the grace of God through religiousness or irreligiousness, through opposition or indifference. They are not found written in the book of life, they are judged out of the things written in the book according to their works. They are cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire, the end of all who loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. Is not their judgment just? What is the Lord's moral analysis? “For every one that doeth evil hateth the light and cometh not to the light lest his works should be convicted.” How could such an one suit the portion of the saints in light? He hates the light which has come here: would he suit it or love it better on high? He is inwardly false and dishonest, deliberately and decidedly preferring to go on in his sins, instead of submitting to their complete detection by the light that they might be blotted out and forgiven by the faith of Christ's blood. Is this truth in the inner man? Does it not rather prove that such as refuse Christ are of the devil as their father and desire to do his lusts, instead of hearing the word of God and being subject to His Son?

On the other hand, “he that practiceth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be manifested that they have been wrought in God.” For the faith that is of God's elect is never powerless but living, not only productive of results while among men, but such as savor of their divine source and sphere. None makes more of the truth or of knowing God than John; none has a deeper horror of Gnosticism. It is life, eternal life; that one should know the Father, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He sent; but His commandment is life everlasting, as our Lord could say of Him who gave to Himself what He should say and what He should speak. If we know these things, we are blessed if we do them. Unblessed is the forgetful hearer, who does not practice the truth nor come to the light, but is rather gone away after considering himself and straightway loses all remembrance of what he was like. Is it not too plain that his works are at best impulsive and natural? But he that practices the truth comes to the light; walking there, he seeks to walk according to the light, trying by it his inward thoughts and feelings, motives and objects, words and ways. The realized presence of God imparts its color to his works. They were manifestly wrought in God. They bear His image and superscription. Hence when all that are in the tombs hear the Lord's voice and go forth, it is for those that have practiced good to a life-resurrection, for those that have done evil to a judgment-resurrection. There was life in the one case, not in the other. He that heard the Savior's word and believed the God who sent Him had life eternal, and hence practiced good. He who rejects the Son of God has no ground but man, and can have no power but Satan's; he has refused Him who is God's wisdom and God's power. He might not like to be lost and judged but he despises the only way of salvation open to him, the crucified Son of man, the life-giving Son of God. He will not be able to refuse or despise His judgment by-and-by.

Chapter 123

Notes on John 3:22-30

The next paragraph has for its object the homage rendered by the Baptist to the Lord. This the Spirit of God introduces by telling us the occasion of it. The conversation with Nicodemus was in Jerusalem; and in this was unfolded the absolute need of both the new birth and the cross. Only that when the Lord speaks of these things, He could not but let us know that it is eternal life which the believer receives, and that He Himself was not more surely the Son of man who must be lifted up for man's desperate case than He is the only-begotten Son of God given to the world in divine love. Salvation was in His mind, not judgment, though the unbeliever in Him must be, yea is, judged already; and this on the deepest of all grounds, the preference of darkness, that they might do their wicked works at ease, to the Light come into the world in Christ. The case then of every rejecter of Him is thus solemnly decided.

It is evident that the person of Christ is the key to all and shines out more and more in the secret scene with Nicodemus. Still it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, who gave a yet fuller witness to His glory by John at a critical moment, to reproduce this permanently for us with the circumstances which led to it. The thought might enter some minds that the Lord only used His predecessor to continue the work and outdo it. It was fitting therefore that John the Baptist should give a final testimony to Him where human nature is apt to be most grudging.

“After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there was tarrying with them and baptizing. And John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim, because much water was there and they were coming there and being baptized: for John had not yet been cast into prison.” (Ver. 22-24.) We have thus a view of what was going on previous to the public Galilean ministry of our Lord in the three synoptic Gospels. They do not touch on any work of His before John's imprisonment; whilst the early chapters of the fourth Gospel are devoted to this after the revelation of His person and glories at the beginning.

“There arose then a dispute on the part of the disciples of John with a Jew about purification. And they came unto John and said to him, Rabbi, he who was with thee beyond the Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, lo! he is baptizing and all come unto him.” (Vers. 25, 26.) A Jew's reasoning did not ruffle them; for their souls could not but feel the moral superiority of John's call and baptism to repentance in the faith of the coming Messiah; but the nearness of Jesus and the fact of His attractive power, veiled as it then might be, was a fact that disconcerted them, though the appeal to their master took the shape of zeal for one who had been prompt to own the dignity of Jesus when He came to John for baptism. But now He was baptizing and all were flocking to Him: so complained John's disciples.

Let us well weigh the reply. “John answered and said, A man can receive nothing unless it has been given him from heaven. Ye yourselves bear [me] witness that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.” (Vers. 27, 28.) It was lowly yet wise withal; it put, as truth always does, both God and ourselves in the right place, thus securing a like recognition of His sovereign disposal of all and the contentedness of each with his own lot, and, it may be added, quiet

firmness in the discharge of the duty which flows from it. For there is no greater error than the thought that our own will is really strong. Be it ever so, obedience is stronger still. “He that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” Out of this spirit of dependence and happy submission to God did John answer his disciples. If he were eclipsed as the morning star by the dawn of day, it was to fulfill, not to fail in, his mission. He, the servant and fore-runner, had never set up to be the Master, as they could all attest.

Then John applies to himself a figure taken from the circumstance of a bridal feast to illustrate his relation to the Lord, in beautiful harmony with the Lord's own use of it elsewhere. Here of course all is connected with Israel, though, when the church took the place of that nation, the Holy Spirit applies it freely to the new relationship constantly before us in the Epistles and the Revelation. “He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom that standeth and heareth him rejoiceth with joy because of the voice of the bridegroom: this my joy then is fulfilled. He must increase, but I decrease.” (Vers. 29, 30.) John was indeed the most favored servant, yea, “the friend,” of the Bridegroom. It was his joy therefore that the bride should be Christ's, not his whose highest distinction was to be His immediate herald, seeing those days which kings and prophets had so ardently desired to see, seeing Him who gave those days their brightness. It was his chiefest joy to hear His voice of love and satisfaction in those He deigned to love as His bride. His mission was closed. If Simeon could depart in peace, John could say that his joy was fulfilled. It was right, it was necessary, that He should increase and himself decrease, though no greater was born of woman. Instead of feeling a pang, his heart bowed and delighted in it. By-and-by when Christ comes in power and glory and sits on the throne of David, as well as of the yet larger dominion of the Son of man, there will be no end of the increase of His government, as the prophet declares. But John could say it now in the days of His humiliation, as His soul rests on the glory of His person, and the Spirit leads him on in the sense of what was due to Him.

Chapter 124

Notes on John 3:31-36

The glory of the person of Christ shines with rich luster here. It is not merely His nearness of relation to His people as distinguished from John, nor His increase while the greatest of woman-born decreases. He is superior to all comparison. “He that cometh from above is above all.” (Ver. 31.) Neither Adam nor Abraham, Enoch nor Elijah, could take such a ground. They, like John, did not come from above, nor could any one of them be said to be above all. Nor could our blessed Lord Himself be so described, as born of Mary and heir of David, had He not been God—the great theme of our Gospel. But this it has been the grand aim to show He is, a truth of the deepest moment, we can say boldly, not only to us the children but to God the Father. For thus and now are to be solved all the questions that had ever risen between. God and man, insoluble till He appeared, and appeared a true man, who is no less truly God, and thus both “from above” and “above all.”

And it was fitting that John the Baptist's own lips should give utterance to the incontestable supremacy of the Lord Jesus in presence of his own disciples jealous of their leader's honor. Hence follows the explanation: “he that is of the earth is of the earth, and speaketh of the earth: he that cometh of heaven is above all.” (Ver. 31.) The Lord may vindicate John; but John asserts the glory of Jesus who had lost none of His intrinsic and supreme dignity by deigning in divine love to become man. Like all other men John could not claim to have any other origin naturally than the earth. Jesus alone is out of heaven; for such is the virtue of His person that He raises up humanity into union with His divine nature, instead of being dragged down by it into its degradation as some have vainly dreamed.

Nor is it of His person only that we are here taught. His testimony is invested with kindred value. “And what he hath seen and heard, this he testifieth; and no one receiveth his testimony.” (Ver. 32.) His is the perfection of testimony; for what was there of God, of the Father, and this in heaven, that the Son had not seen and heard? There could be no conceivable defect here in the glory whence He came, and in the grace with which He made all known to man. How withering therefore the sad result! For surely beforehand it must have been universally anticipated that all but the most besotted would eagerly welcome such a witness of things divine, heavenly and eternal. But such is man's estate through sin, not only the savage and the brutal, not only the idolater or the skeptic, but those who pique themselves on their religion, whether it be theory or practice, ordinances or tradition, effort, ecstasy or experience,— “no one receiveth his testimony.” How solemn the sentence! and the more so as being the unimpassioned utterance of holiness. Doubtless they knew not what they did in their dislike of, or indifference to, His testimony; but what a state man must be in, to have the heavenly and divine Savior thus bearing witness of things most deeply needed by himself in relation to God and heaven and forever, without ever finding out the worth of the testifier or of the testimony! It is not that grace did not open some hearts, here and there, now and then: but the point which is noted is the rejection of His testimony by man, not the reserve of sovereign mercy when all was lost in sin and ruin.

Faith is in no way a growth natural to the heart of sinful man. Without faith it is impossible to please God, and without His grace faith is impossible, such faith at least as pleases Him. For they that are in the flesh cannot please God, and who are not in flesh till brought to God? Man conscious of sin and shrinking from divine judgment dislikes the God whose punishment he dreads. His grace he sees no reason, as far as he is concerned, for believing; and no wonder he sees none, for it would not be God's grace if there were a ground for it in himself. Grace excludes the desert of him to whom it is shown; and this is as offensive to his own. Self-sufficiency as it supposes love in Him whose displeasure he knows he deserves. Thus there is no disposition in his heart to believe in God's grace, ample to make him doubt, and the more as he reasons on what God must be and on what he himself has been toward God. Christ is not seen to change all, as the manifestation of love, and His death the ground of that righteousness which justifies the believer, spite of past ungodliness.

His testimony therefore puts the heart thoroughly to the test; for it tells the truth of the sinner as decidedly as it announces the grace of God; and the heart resists the one and distrusts the other. The last thing submitted to is to think ill of oneself, and well of God. But this is just the effect of receiving the testimony of Christ. We then begin to take God's aide against ourselves; for if there is genuine faith, there is genuine repentance, without which, indeed the faith is human and worthless, as in John 2, where men believed beholding the signs wrought, and Jesus did not trust Himself to them. Such faith is not of God's Spirit, but merely of the mind drawing a conclusion from the probabilities of the case. In it man judges; which pleases him, instead of his being morally judged, which is humbling and offensive. He sees no sufficient reason to reject the evidence; and, his will goes along with it, be believes accordingly. As this was the case with many in Jerusalem at the passover, so is it with multitudes throughout Christendom now and ever since. The vague creed which prevails generally awakens enough neither of interest nor of opposition to put men to the test. But when any great truth, even of that creed, is pressed on the conscience or comes distinctly before the heart, it will then be seen how little men believe what they in words accredit, only because they never seriously apply it to their souls before God.

Take the simple truth, for instance, of our Gospel, the Word, who was God made flesh and dwelling among us, or again remission of sins in His name the message to every soul, the possession of every believer: who doubts either as long as they are preached abstractedly in the pulpit? But the moment a soul receives them for his own soul, and, though feeling and owning his sins more than ever, blesses God for forgiveness and rejoices in Christ, while he worships God and the Lamb, others shrink back and cry presumption! as if such truths were never intended for the heart and life and lips of every day, but only as a religious service or rather a form for the multitude keeping holiday.

The fact is however that the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ, being perfect in themselves and in Him whose glory is adequate to display and make them good, as well as perfectly adapted to man, sinful and lost as he is, test him absolutely, “and no one receiveth his testimony.” Where the quickening power of the Spirit acts, it is far otherwise. So proper is it to win the heart, that he who is not won shows that his will is against God and His grace and truth in Christ, hatred naturally and soon following. He who bows, being begotten by the word of truth, judges himself. He has received not men's word, but, as it truly is, God's word which effectually works in the believer; or, as it is put here, “he that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal

that God is true." (Ver. 88.)

This is the essential character of real living faith. His testimony is received because He gives it: nothing more simple, but we are not simple; nothing more right and due to Him, but we have been all wrong, and most wrong to Him. It is received because He says it, not because it seems reasonable or wise or good, or for evidence of any kind; though one need not say there are the fullest evidences; and the testimony is that which alone could suit God or man, if one be a sinner, the other a Savior where His testimony is received. A divine faith is due to a divine testimony; but the faith which is grounded on human motives is not divine: only that which is founded on God's word truly searches heart and conscience. When a man is broken down to feel his own state of sin, as well as what he has done against such a God, the heart desires that the good news of the gospel should be the truth, instead of yielding to the indifference or active repugnance natural to it; and this is to believe with the heart.

Further the ground of confidence is laid plainly and expressed fully. We are not left to inference. "For he whom God sent speaketh the words of God; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure." (Ver. 34.) To receive the words of Jesus then is to receive those of God. What possible ground is there for hesitation? To faith alone belongs absolute certainty. And of this the Spirit is the power, as in Him perfectly, so in and by us as far as flesh is judged. He was the holy vessel of the Spirit, so that the testimony was poured out as pure as it was poured in, or rather as it is in Him who is Himself the truth. As for what inspired men have written, it is just the same. "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord." (1 Cor. 14:37.) In all others, whatever the power, there is no such guarantee against infirmity or mistake, though one may be perfectly kept and guided, where only and simply dependent: so real is the connection between the truth and the Spirit.

We have had the supremacy of Jesus, and His testimony, so thoroughly marking Him off from all others. But there is more. He is "the Son," and the especial object of divine affection and honor. This follows; and here accordingly we rise far above His position either as the Messiah, the Bridegroom on the one hand or the heavenly prophet on the other, whose testimony absolutely detected every child of Adam, while it brought him that received it to the knowledge of God and His mind with divine certainty. Hence we hear of the Father and the Son. "The Father loveth the Son and hath put all things in his hands." (Ver. 35.) Jesus is the heir of all, as the Son of the Father in a sense peculiar to Himself, the true Isaac who abides ever, the beloved Son who has all that He Himself has, and has all given to be in His (the Son's) hand.

Consequently it is no question here of blessing for any measured time or for glory on earth under His reign as king. All things come to the point at once and for ever before Him who is the object of testimony, and not the testifier merely. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." One need not then wait for the blessing in the days of the kingdom. Then no doubt Jehovah will command blessing, even life for evermore. But he that believes in the Son has eternal life now. For the same reason it is of all things the most fatal to refuse subjection to His person now. Therefore is it added, "and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." (Ver. 36.) If disobedience is intended, it is to Himself as well as to His words, as indeed by the obedience of faith the apostle Paul meant not practical obedience, however important in its place and season, but subjection to Himself—to the truth revealed in Him. He that refuses Him in

unbelief abides in unremoved death and the wrath of God, who cannot but resent such insult of heart to His Son.

Chapter 125

Notes on John 4:1-10

We find ourselves still in that part of our Gospel which precedes the Galilean ministry of our Lord presented in the three Synoptic Gospels, though this journey through Samaria is conducting the Lord to their starting-point. In chapter 3:24 it will have been noticed that John was not yet cast into prison. When he was put in prison (Mark 1:14), and Jesus heard it (Matt. 4:12), He came into Galilee, preaching. Our chapter speaks of a previous moment and, se usual, lets us into a deeper view of all that was at work.

“When therefore the Lord knew that the Pharisees heard that Jesus maketh and baptizeth more disciples than John (though Jesus himself did not baptize but his disciples), he left Judaea and went away [again] into Galilee.” (Ver. 1-3.)

Little did the disciples know the depth of the glory that was in Him or the consequent blessing for man, though they zealously baptized and thus exposed their Master to the spleen of those who could ill brook His increase and honor. It will be noticed that not He but His disciples did baptize. He knew the end from the beginning; and this finds its appropriate statement here. They might baptize to Him as Messiah; but He, the Son of God, knew from the first that He must suffer and die as the Son of man: so indeed He had already declared to Nicodemus with its blessed results for the believer. The baptism He instituted was therefore after and to His death and resurrection. The Son of God knew what was in man, even when he was disposed to pay Him homage because of the signs which He wrought: So did He know the effect of His disciples' activity on the religious men of that day.

It was the jealousy of the Pharisees then which in reality drove the Lord from Judaea. What was that land longer? What without Him, above all when it rejected Him and He abandoned it? They might boast of the law, but they had not kept it; they might claim the promises, but He, the promised One and accomplisher of all the promises, had been there, and they knew Him not, loved Him not, but were more and more proving their heart-estrangement from Him, their Messiah. What could the first covenant avail now? It must ensure their condemnation; it could work no deliverance. The Jew was to reap only ruin and death under its terms. We shall presently see more; yet here at the beginning of the chapter is the Son of God through the ill-feeling of those who ought most to have appreciated His presence forced out, we may say, from the people of God and the scene of His institutions, but in the power of eternal life, whatever the humiliation which the haughty religionists put on Him who saw in Him a man only, little suspecting that He was the Word made flesh.

“And he must pass through Samaria. He comes therefore to a city of Samaria called Sychar near the land which Jacob gave to Joseph his son. Now a fountain of Jacob was there. Jesus Therefore being wearied with the journeying sat thus at the fountain. It was about the sixth hour.” (Ver. 4-6.) He is as truly man as God, but the Holy One always and only. Weary and rejected, He sits there in unwearied love. The false pretensions before Him can no more hinder now than the proud iniquity He had just left behind. Jerusalem and Samaria alike vanish. What could either do for a wretched

heart, a guilty sinner? And such an one approaches.

“There cometh a woman out of Samaria to draw water. Jesus saith to her, Give me to drink (for his disciples had gone away into the city to buy provisions). The Samaritan woman therefore saith to him, How dost thou being a Jew ask to drink of me being a Samaritan woman? for Jews have no intercourse with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” (Ver. 7-10.)

He that made the heart perfectly knows the avenue to its affections. And what grace can He not show who came to give a new and divine nature, as well as to reveal God in love, where there was nothing but sin, self, and unrest? God in the lowliness of man asks a favor, a drink of water, of the Samaritan woman; but it was to open her heart to her wants, and give her life eternal in the power of the Holy Ghost, communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

Beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God cometh. So said the Spirit of prophecy by Isaiah of old; and so it will be fulfilled in its fullness by-and-by, as even now it is in principle. But what a sight to God, and indeed to faith, the Son of God, when driven out by the jealous hatred and contempt of man, of His own people who received Him not, thus occupying Himself with an unhappy Samaritan who had exhausted her life in quest of happiness never thus found! Surprised she inquires how a Jew could ask aught of one like her: what had she felt, had she then conceived who He was and that He knew to the full what she was? And how reassuring to her afterward when she looked back on the path by which God had in gracious wisdom led her that day that she might know Himself for evermore!

Alone He spoke to her alone, beginning in her soul His work for heaven, for eternity, for God. No miracle of an external sort is wrought before the eyes, no sign is needed without. The Son of God speaks in divine love, though (as we shall see) intelligence is not till the conscience is reached and exercised. The law is good if one use it lawfully, knowing that its application is not to a righteous person but to lawless and insubordinate, to impious and sinful, and in short to all that is opposed to sound teaching. But Christ is the best of all as the revelation of God in grace, giving all that is wanted, producing (not seeking) what should be, not to dispense with the absolutely needed lesson of what we are, but enabling us to bear it, now that we know how truly God Himself cares for us in perfect love spite of all that we are.

This is grace, the true grace of God. No error is more complete or perilous than the notion that grace makes light of sin. Was it a slight dealing with our sins when Christ bore them in His own body on the tree? Did law ever strike such a blow at any sinner, as God when He sending His own Son in likeness of flesh of sin and for sin condemned sin in the flesh, and thus brought no condemnation to those in Christ Jesus? Nay, it was expressly what the law could not do. The law could condemn the sinner with his sins; but God has thus in Christ condemned not only the sins but the root of evil, sin in the flesh, and this in a sacrifice for sin, so that those who otherwise had nothing but condemnation inwardly and outwardly, past and present, in nature as well as ways, have now by grace “no condemnation.” All that could be condemned has been condemned, and they are in Christ, and they walk not according to flesh but according to the Spirit.

Here doubtless there was no such standing yet existing, or consequently possible to any. But the Son was here acting and speaking in the fullness of grace which was soon to accomplish all for the believer and give all to him. Yet He lets the Samaritan know that she knew nothing. For, whatever His goodness (and it has no limits), grace does not spare man's assumption; and the revelation it bring! from God and of God never really enters till self is judged. Samaria and Jerusalem are alike ignorant of grace; and only Christ by the Spirit can open the heart to bow and receive it. “If thou knewest the gift of God.” Such is the reality and the aspect of God in the gospel. He is not an exacter but a giver. He is not commanding man to love Him, but proclaiming His love to man, yea, to the most wretched of sinners. He is not requiring the creature's righteousness, but revealing His own. But man is slow to believe, and religions man the slowest to understand, what makes nothing of himself and all of God. But such is the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation; such the free-giving of God, which the Lord was then manifesting as well as declaring to the woman of Samaria.

But there was and is more. The knowledge of the gift of God, in contradistinction from the law on the one hand or from blank ignorance of His active love on the other, is inseparable from faith in the personal dignity of the Son of God. Therefore does the Savior, all-lowly as He was, add “and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink.” For without this nothing is known aright. Jesus is the truth, and abides ever the test for the soul, which owns with so much the more decision and adoring thankfulness the glory of Him who, true God, became man in infinite love that we might have eternal life in Him. For otherwise, we may boldly say, it could not be. The truth is exclusive and immutable; it is not only the revelation of what is, but of what alone can and must be, consistently with the real nature of God and the state of man. Yet is God acting in His own liberty, for His love is always free and always holy, and the truth can only be what it is; for it is He who has brought down that love in man to men in all their sin and death and darkness.

It is the revelation of God to man in Him, who though the Son of God stooped so low to bless the most needy and defiled and distant from God as to ask a drink of water that He might find in this the occasion to give even to such an one living water. For this too He does not fail to say as a consequence, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.” For grace truly known in Christ produces confidence in grace and draws out the heart to ask the greatest boon of Him who will never be below but above the highest position that can be conferred on Him. Never can it be that the faith of man equals, still less surpasses, the riches of the grace of God. If men, spite of their evil, know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more should the Father who is of heaven give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him? If a guilty Samaritan woman is assured by the Son of God, that she, knowing the gift of God and who He is that asked of her to drink when weary by the fountain, had but to ask of Him in order to receive living water, still none that so asked and received had anything like an adequate sense of that infinite blessing, the Holy Ghost given to be in the believer.

Such is the living water that Christ here speaks of: not power in gift, nor yet simply eternal life, but the Spirit given of the Son to be in the believer as the spring of communion with Himself and the Father.

Notes on John 4:11-19

It is not then quite correct, as some have said, that Christ is here alluded to as meant by “the gift of God,” the next clause being viewed as explanatory. Undoubtedly He was the means of displaying it, but the first of the clauses in this rich word of our Lord sets forth the thought, so strange to man, of the free-giving of God. Nature as such never understands it; law alone makes it still less intelligible. Faith only solves the difficulty in the person, mission, and work of Christ who is the witness, proof, and substance of it; but it is the gratuitous grace of God that is meant. Hence the second clause, instead of being merely exegetic of the first, directs attention to Him who was there in the utmost humiliation, weary with His journeying and asking a drink of water from one whom He knew to be the most worthless of Samaritans, yet the Son of the Father in unshorn fullness of divine glory and of grace to the most wretched. And this was so true that she who was as yet blind to all this had but to ask Him and have the best and greatest gift the believer can receive living water, not life only, but the Holy Ghost. Thus, while Christ is the way of it, the Trinity was really involved in making good these words of our Lord to the Samaritan woman, all the Godhead engaged in the proffered blessing.

“The woman saith to him, Sir, thou hast no bucket, and the well is deep: whence then hast thou the living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank of it, himself and his sons and his cattle?” (Ver. 11, 12.) She comprehends none of the gracious words she had heard: they were not mixed with faith in her heart. She therefore reasons against them. If the water was to be drawn from Jacob's well, where was the bucket to let down, for the well was deep? Did He pretend to be greater than Jacob, or His a better well than that which of old supplied him and his house, a well which was now theirs? Thus the mind argues against the Lord, according to the senses or tradition: so fatal is ignorance of His person and of the truth. Circumstances are the trial of faith and the swamp of unbelief, which gladly avails itself (with or without any just title) of a great name and its gifts, alas! to slight a greater, yea the greatest.

Mark now the Savior's grace. He develops with the utmost fullness to this dark soul the unspeakable gift of God, in contrast with her own thoughts, and with those of man generally. “Jesus answered and said to her, Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water which I shall give him, shall in no way thirst forever, but the water which I shall give him shall become in him a fountain of water springing up into eternal life.” (Ver. 13,14.)

Water of whatever spring nature boasts may refresh, but thirst will come again; and God has ordered for the creature that so it should and must be. But it is not so when one is given to drink into the Spirit. Christ gives the Holy Ghost to the believer to be in him a fresh fountain of divine enjoyment, not only eternal life from the Father in the person of the Son, but the communion of the Holy Ghost, and hence the power of worship, as we shall see later in this very conversation. Thus it is not only deliverance from hankering after pleasure, vanity, sin, but a living spring of exhaustless and divine joy, joying in God through our Lord Jesus, and this in the power of the

Spirit. It supposes the possession of eternal life in the Son, but also the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.

Even then the Samaritan remains as insensible as ever. “The woman saith to him; Sir, give me this water that I may not thirst nor come here to draw. He saith to her, Go, call thy husband and come here. The woman answered and said, I have not a husband. Jesus saith to her, Thou saidst well, I have not a husband; for thou hast had five husbands, and now he whom thou hast is not thy husband: this thou hast spoken truly. The woman saith to him, Sir, I see that thou art a prophet.” (Ver. 15-19.) She would gladly learn how she might be relieved of her wants and of her labor for this world. As yet not a ray of heavenly light had entered her. Not to thirst nor to come here to draw formed the boundary of her desires from the Savior not yet known to be a Savior.

This closes the first part of our Lord's dealings with her. It was useless to say more as before. Jesus had already set before her the principle on which God was acting, and His own gracious competence to give her, on her asking, living water; He had also shown the incomparable superiority of His gift as being divine over any or every boon left by Jacob. But her heart did not rise above the sphere of her daily wants and earthly wishes. She was deaf to His words, albeit spirit and life, which disclosed what is eternal.

Had it been in vain then to have so spoken to her as He did in the fullness of God's love? Far from it. It was all-important, when a door was once opened within, to reflect and find that such riches of grace had been brought to her absolutely unsought. But it was useless to add more till then. Hence the Lord's abrupt and seemingly unconnected appeal, “Go, call thy husband, and come here.” But was the digression apart from the question of her salvation? Not so. It was the second and necessary way with a soul if it is to be blessed divinely. It is through an awakened conscience that grace and truth enter; and it was because her conscience hitherto was unreached that the grace and truth were not at all understood.

On the one hand it was of all consequence that she and we and all should have the clearest proof that the testimony of the Savior's grace goes out before there is any fitness to receive it; for this, as it magnifies God and His free-giving, so it abases and exposes the wholly evil and frightfully dangerous state of man.

On the other hand it was equally momentous that she should be brought to feel her need of that free and wondrous grace of which the Savior had assured her, in all its depths and amplitude and everlasting continuance, before she had judged herself as a sinner before God. To this point He now conducts her: for if it is impossible to please God without faith, without repentance faith is intellectual and worthless. It is man discerning evidence and accepting what he in his wisdom judges best; not a sinner who, met by sovereign grace, is judged, owning himself in his sins, but too glad to find the Savior, the only Savior, in Jesus Christ the Lord.

For the Lord still holds to grace. He does not say, “Go, call thy husband” without adding “and come here.” He does not repent of His goodness because she was dull; on the contrary He was using the fresh and necessary means to have the need of such goodness felt. How painstaking is grace, working in the soul that it may enter and abide, now that it had been testified of in all its fullness and without any preparation for it, any more than desert, in man!

The woman answering “I have not a husband” is astounded to hear the withering reply, “Thou saidst well I have not a husband; for thou hast had five husbands, and now he whom thou hast is not thy husband: this thou hast spoken truly.” She was convicted. It was in demonstration of the Spirit, and power. Yet were the words few and simple, not one of them harsh or strong. It was the truth of her state and of her life brought home most unexpectedly, as God knows how to do and does in one form or another in every converted soul. It was the truth which spared her not and laid her sins bare before God and her own conscience. She did not doubt for a moment what it was that made everything manifest. She recognized it to be the light of God. She owns His words to be not men's wisdom but God's power. She falls under the conviction and at once confesses, “Sir, I see that thou art a prophet.”

It is plain hence that “prophet” does not mean one who predicted the future, for this was not in question, but one who told out the mind of God—one who spoke by the evident guidance of the Spirit what could not be known naturally, yet what therefore so much the more put the soul before God and His light. So Abraham is a prophet (Gen. 20:7), and the fathers generally (Psa. 105:15), and the O.T. prophets in all their ministry and writing, not merely in what was prediction. The same thing is emphatically true of New Testament prophesying as we may see in 1 Cor. 14. It is communicated from God which judges the life, yea, the secrets of the heart before Him.

Notes on John 4:20-26

Recognizing the divine power of His words, the Samaritan seizes the opportunity to have light from God on that which had not been without perplexity and interest even to her—the religious difference between her race and the chosen nation, and this not merely in homage to God but in formal or express public worship. She wants to have the question, old as it was, settled for her now. The Samaritan like many another in grievous error could talk of great antiquity. Happy the soul that has recourse for it to Jesus! He alone is the Truth. Others may deceive, themselves deceived.

To this end was He born, and for this cause came He into the world that He should bear witness to the truth. What is more: every one that is of the truth heareth His voice. Alas! how different has it been with Christendom, corrupted first, then rent hopelessly, most haughty when it has most reason to be ashamed. Be it ours in such a state of ruin to keep His word and not deny His name.

A time of declension beyond all things tests the soul; for it seems proud to differ from the excellent of the earth, especially if they are many, and those who cleave to God's word are few and have nothing to boast. For this very reason it is precious in God's eyes and on small testimony to the absent Master. Still it becomes all who differ from the mass to be sure of their ground, as this woman sought when she appealed to Jesus; and the Christian need seek no other—yea, is guilty and infatuated if, where men's uncertainty is so great and grave, he heed aught other—than Jesus speaking by His word and Spirit.

“Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where one must worship. Jesus saith to her, Woman, believe me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father. Ye worship what ye know not: we worship what we know, for salvation is of the Jews. But an hour is coming and now is when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for also the Father seeketh such as his worshippers. God is a Spirit; and his worshippers must worship him in spirit and truth. The woman saith to him, I know that Messias is coming, that is called Christ: when he shall come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith to her, I that speak to thee am [he].” (Ver. 20-26.)

The Lord more than meets every desire of the Samaritan's heart. For here we have, not merely the vindication of Israelitish worship as compared with its Samaritan rival, but the first unfolding of Christian worship ever given by God to man; and this as superseding not Samaritanism only but Judaism also—a change withal then at hand. Yet is all conveyed in language that was plain enough even to the soul thus addressed, while there is depth of truth which no saint has ever fathomed, however deeply he may have drawn on it and enjoyed it.

“The Father” was to be worshipped henceforth: of itself, what a revelation! It is no longer a question of the Jehovah God of Israel, nor even of the Almighty as was the name by which He was made known to the fathers. There is a richer display of God, and far more intimate. It is not as the Eternal who put Himself in covenant and government and will surely yet make good His ways with

Israel, as He has chastised them for theirs. Nor is it the God who shielded His poor pilgrims, who hung on His promises in their wanderings among hostile strangers before their children formed a nation and received His law. It was God as the Son knew Him and was making Him known in the fullness of love and fellowship, who would accordingly bring His own who were in the world into the conscious relationship of children as born of Him. (Compare John 1:12, 13, 18; 14:20, 4-10; 16:23-27; 20:17-23.)

No wonder that, in presence of such nearness and the worship that befits it, the mountain of Gerizim melts and the sanctuary of Jerusalem fades away. For the one was but the effort of self-will, the other but the test and proof of the first man's inability to meet God and live. Christian worship is founded on the possession of eternal life in the Son, and on the gift of the Spirit as the power of worship.

In verse 22 the Lord leaves it impossible for the Samaritan to draw the inference that, if Christian worship was about to be alone acceptable to God, independently of place or race, Samaritan had been just as good as Jewish. Not so. The Samaritans worshipped what they did not know, the Jews knew what they worshipped; “for salvation,” as He added, “is of the Jews.” They had the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, the law-giving, and the service, and the promises, whose were the fathers, and of whom as pertaining to flesh was the Christ who is over all God blessed forever. Amen. The Samaritans were mere imitators, Gentiles jealous of Israel and hostile to them, without fear of God, else had they submitted to His ways and word.

Thus God's privileges to Israel are vindicated; but none the less was the Lord at that time driven out by Pharisaic jealousy, and none the less had He set aside all pretension to traditional and successional blessing. He was there to communicate from God, not to accredit man; and, He being rejected, Jerusalem and Samaria alike vanish away. Old things are judged; all things must become new. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, now that those who had the institutions of God are rejecting His counsel against themselves. And if that unbelief went to the uttermost in hatred of the Father and the Son, it would only bring out the fullness of divine grace and righteousness, leaving His love absolutely free to act supremely above all evil for His own glory, as we know is the fact in a crucified but risen Christ.

It is remarkable accordingly that the Lord does not say “who,” but “what.” For in Judaism God dwelt in thick darkness, and the testimony rendered by the whole Levitical system (with its sacrifices and priests, door, veil, incense, everything in short) was that the way into the holiest had not yet been made manifest. When Christ died, it was: the veil was rent from top to bottom, eternal redemption was found, the worshippers once purged have no more conscience of sins, and are invited to draw near. Such is Christianity, God having revealed Himself as the Father in the Son through the Spirit. To know Him, the only true God, and Him whom He had sent to reveal Him even Jesus, is eternal life. And the mighty work which was done on the cross has dealt with all our evil, so that we are free to enjoy Himself. We know therefore whom we worship, and not merely “what.” When God was hidden in the thick darkness and only the unity of His nature proclaimed, the Godhead remained vague. When the Father is revealed as now in the Son by the Spirit, what a difference

Hence this exceeding blessedness is opened in its positive character in verses 24, 25. For it is an hour when form is repudiated, as it could not be in Judaism. Reality alone is endorsed. National

worship therefore is now an evident delusion, being but an effort to resuscitate what has vanished away as far as regards any recognition on God's part. It was owned in Israel under law for its own purpose it will be so on the largest scale in the millennium; but it is not, if we believe the Savior, during the hour which then coming, now is. It is an hour now when the true worshippers worship the Father. Who and what are they? The doctrinal utterances of the apostle answer with one voice that they are God's children, born of Him through the faith of Christ, and sealed by the Spirit consequently as resting on His redemption. So the apostle says (Phil. 3:3) that we (in contrast with mere Jews or Judaizers) are the true circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God, and boast in Christ and have no confidence in flesh. But we must cite the New Testament as a whole to give the full proof, if one asks more evidence than the Lord affords in this context, though I feel assured that he who bows not to such a witness would not be won by ten thousand. A single word from God is more to the believer than every other evidence: how many would convince the unbeliever?

Further what is said of the worship excludes all but true believers. For they are to worship in spirit and truth. How can any who have not the Spirit and know not the truth? Granted, that the article is wanting. But this in such a case as the one before us adds to the strength of the statement; for it predicates a spiritual and truthful character of the worship. That is to say, the Lord's words express more than the necessity of having the Holy Ghost or of acquaintance with the truth, though this would suppose the Christian with his distinguishing privileges. But He says that they worship in that character, not merely that they have the Spirit and the truth in order to worship. Now plainly a real Christian might act unspiritually and not according to the truth. Even Peter and Barnabas failed at a grave crisis to walk according to the truth of the gospel.

However true the worshipper then, if he were grieving the Spirit or dishonoring the Lord, this would not be to worship in spirit and truth. But it remains still more manifest that none but “the true worshippers” could so worship, though on a given occasion or in a given state they might not in fact.

Moreover “the Father seeketh such as his worshippers.” (Ver. 24.) Let us weigh it. Time was when every Jew went up to Jerusalem to seek Jehovah; time will be when all nations shall flow to the same center when the Son of man comes in power and reigns in glory. But the characteristic working of grace is that the Father seeks the true worshippers. Undoubtedly when sought they gather unto the name of the Lord, and enjoy His presence by the Spirit. It is not enough that they are washed, and not by water only, but by water and blood, and thus are every whit clean; it is not only that they have the Spirit as the witness of the one efficacious sacrifice and the spring of praise and power of continual thanksgiving: the Father also seeketh such as His worshippers. What confidence for them! What grace in Him! Yet is it true of every Christian. May they answer His grace by eschewing all that is unworthy of it in this evil day!

But there are other words of profound import. “God is a Spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and truth.” (Ver. 25.) It is the nature of God which is here in question, not the relationship of grace which He now reveals in and by Christ, And this is not without the greatest importance for us. For He must be worshipped correspondingly; and He most fully provided for this, seeing that the new life we enjoy is by the Spirit and is spirit, not flesh (John 3:6), as indeed He begot us by His own will by the word of truth (James 1), and we are thus born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by God's living and abiding word. (1 Peter 1) Assuredly we should walk and

worship in the Spirit, if we live in the Spirit. He is given to us that we should judge and reject the first Adam, glorifying only the second Man, our Lord Jesus. Nay, more, as God is a Spirit, spiritual worship is all He accepts. His worshippers must worship in spirit and truth. It is a moral necessity flowing from His nature—a nature fully revealed in Him who is the image of the invisible God; and we should not be ignorant of it and its character who are born of Him as believers in Christ.

The woman, struck by words plain indeed but no doubt far beyond her, for they reach up to God as surely as they come down to man, at once thinks of the Messiah, owns her confidence in His coming, and is sure that when He is come, He will tell us all things. (Ver. 25.) Would that all who believe in Him believed this of Him! Would that, when He has spoken peace to them, they turned not again to folly! And what folly greater than to turn from His words on this very theme, and in this very chapter for instance, to follow the traditions of men and the ways of the world in the worship of God?

And now break on her ear and heart the last words needed to clench all the rest and insure her blessing evermore: “Jesus saith to her, I that speak to thee am [he].” (Ver. 26.) It might be the lowest form of presenting the only One who can avail the sinner; yet it remains ever true from first to last that every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ is begotten of God. And this the Samaritan did. Her heart was touched, her conscience searched, and now the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ was all to her. All the blessing was hers in His person who was then present and received by her in faith.

Chapter 128

Notes on John 4:27-42

What a moment, a present Messiah, and One speaking to a Samaritan

“And upon this came his disciples, and wondered that he was speaking with a woman: none however said, What seekest thou or why speakest thou with her?” (Ver. 27.) Their wonder was that He spoke with a woman: what was hers who knew that, every secret of her heart was naked and open before Him with whom she had to do? His grace however had fully prepared the way. He who searched all the recesses of her soul had already encouraged her by revealing the richest grace of God the Father—Himself, the only true Revealer of it, about to give the Holy Spirit that even she might receive and enjoy it truly. It was no question of seeking on His part or even on hers—the Father was seeking such; nor was it talking with her, but of revealing to her. The disciples had much to learn. Had they known the subject matter of converse, they might well have wondered incomparably more.

“The woman then left her waterpot and went away into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ? They went out of the city and were coming unto him.” (Ver. 28-30.) The moral change was immense. A new world opened to her which eclipsed the present with new affections, new duties, the power of which asserted itself in lifting her entirely above the things that are seen, whatever might be the effect ordinarily, in strengthening to a better fulfillment of present earthly toil. But the revelation of Christ to her soul was both all-absorbing and the most powerful stimulus to make Him known to others. Where the eye is single, the body is full of light. She felt who needed Him most and acted on it forthwith. She left her waterpot, went off to the town, and told the men of Jesus. How well she understood Him! He had not formally sent her, yet she went boldly with the invitation. Nor was it merely that she bade them go, “Come, see a man.” She would go along with them. Her heart was in the current of His grace and counted upon the same welcome for others, unwarranted though it might appear, as for herself. Such is the power of divine love even from the very first.

Yet there was no enfeebling of the truth because of His grace. They too must prepare for what had smelled her. “Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did. Is not he the Christ?” Well they knew what she had been, and if He had so dealt with her, might not they too see and hear Him? Such a personal experience has great power, and it is safe too where it is not merely an appeal to the affections, but conscience is searched along with it.

“ Meanwhile the disciples were asking him, saying, Master, eat. But he said to them, I have food to eat which ye do not know. Then the disciples said to one another, Hath any one brought him to eat? Jesus saith to them, It is my food that I should do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work.” (Ver. 31-34.) How humbling to find His disciples at such a time occupied with the body and its wants. And this the Lord makes them feel by His answer. They knew not as yet such food—disciples though they were. It is not as men often quote it, “his meat and his drink,” for there was an inner spring of loving and delighting in His Father beyond doing His will and completing His work. But this was His food. He came to do His will. In this He was never wearied, nor should we

even now, whatever might be the fatigue of the body. For, “he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” Without Him even the “youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail, but they that wait upon Jehovah shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wine; as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.” Jesus knew this Himself in perfection, and here is a sample of it.

“Do not ye say that there are yet four months and the harvest cometh? Lo, I say to you, Lift up your eyes, and Behold the fields; for they are white unto harvest already. He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. For in this is the saying true, It is one that soweth and another that reapeth. I sent you to reap that on which ye have not toiled: others have toiled, and ye have entered into their toil.” (Ver. 35-38.) Whatever might be the times and seasons of the natural harvest, the fields spiritually were ripe for the reaper. Man, the world, undoubtedly deserved judgment; but the very same state of sin which calls for judgment God uses for His call of grace. The gospel comes expressly of the ground of man's total ruin, and therefore levels all distinctions. Jew, Samaritan, Gentile—what are any now but sinners? The Jew had been under probation, but he was now rejecting the Messiah—the Son of God. All was lost, but the rejected Christ is the Savior, and now there is salvation for any, and grace carries it among such as these Samaritans.

Not that grace had failed to work during the past times of probation. Man had broken down utterly, but God was preparing the way when it should be no longer experimental dealings and man's righteousness sought, but God's righteousness revealed in virtue of the work of Christ. His witness had not wrought in vain, however little seen the effects meanwhile. But the true light was now shining, and things appeared as they are to the eye of grace. What a sight to Christ the Samaritans coming to Him! coming to hear One who tells us whatever we did! The fields were white indeed.

It is remarkable that the Lord speaks about reaping now rather than sowing, though sowing of course goes on, and has its place elsewhere, as in Matt. 13. Of old it was rather sowing than reaping; now in this day of grace there is a characteristic reaping—fruit not only of God's past dealings, but of His coming and mighty work who thus speaks to the disciples: “the reaper receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both the, sower and the reaper may rejoice together.” So shall it be in the day of glory, as the spirit of it is even now true in the church and the Christian’s heart. “For in this is the saying true, The sower is one and the reaper another.” But while there are these differences still, it remains that the apostles are characterized by reaping rather than by sowing, and so of course are other laborers also. “I sent [or, have sent] you to reap that on which ye have not toiled: others have toiled, and ye have entered into their toil.” How emphatically this was verified at Pentecost and afterward, all know.

“But out of that city many of the Samaritans believed on him because of the word of the, woman as she bore witness, He told me all things that [ever] I did. When therefore the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to abide with them. And he abode there two days; and many more believed because of his word. And they said to the woman, No longer on account of thy saying do we believe, for we have ourselves heard and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.” (Ver. 39-42.) It is cheering to see how God honored the simple testimony of the, woman. Many out of that town believed on Him because of her word. Here again she bears witness to the searching of

her conscience by His word. “He told me all that ever I did.” It is a good guarantee that the work is divine when there is no shrinking from such a scrutiny—otherwise grace is apt to be misused as a cover for sin or a slight dealing with a sinner, instead of judging all in God's light. But faith whenever it is real rises from the instrument to Him who deigns to use it, and God loves to put honor upon the word of Jesus Himself. Hence we are told that, when He graciously acceded to the desire of the Samaritans and abode there two days, “more by a great deal believed because of his word.” How sweet to the woman when they said to her,” No longer because of thy saying do we believe, for we have ourselves heard and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world!” God led them too in dropping His Messiahship, and the copyists have inserted it without due reason. Ancient authority seems conclusive that the words “the Christ” should disappear. Their confession is much more simple and emphatic when so put. They now knew and confessed the truth—the grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ. (Compare 1 John 4:14.)

Notes on John 4:43-54

Thus, without a miracle, the Lord has been owned, as we see, in Samaria, first, as a prophet by one, finally, as Savior of the world by all, who believed on Him there. Thus the fullest confession of His grace was found where one might have looked for least intelligence; but faith gives new wisdom so different from the old that those who are wise must become fools if they would be wise according to God. How blessed for those who have no wisdom to boast, whom grace forms with all simplicity according to its own power! Such were the Samaritans among whom the Lord abode for this little while.

“And after the two days he went forth thence into Galilee. For Jesus himself testified that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.” (Vers. 48, 44.) He resumes His place among the despised and lowly. The first Gospel points out that this sphere of His ministry was according to prophecy, for Isaiah, in setting forth the sins and judgment of Israel from first to last, had spoken of the light shining in Galilee when darkness enveloped the favored seats in the land. All the evangelists indeed, for one reason or another, dwell upon His ministry in Galilee—John alone bringing into prominence some characteristic incidents in Jerusalem. Mark speaks much of Galilee, because his office was to describe the Lord's ministry, and there in fact we must follow Him if we would trace its details, Luke again gives it as illustrating the moral ways of God in the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the activities of One who went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. John, on the other hand, as usual, lays it on a ground that pertains more strictly to His person. It was His own testimony that a prophet hath no honor in his own country. He had come down not to seek His own honor but that of Him who sent Him. He had riches of grace and truth to dispense He was sent—He was come to do His Father's will; content to be nothing—have nothing from men, He goes away into Galilee. But if the Galileans paid Him no honor when He was in their midst, they were not unmoved by the fame that had gone out, specially by the impression made in the capital. “When therefore he came into Galilee the Galileans received him, having seen all that he had done in Jerusalem during the feast, for they too went unto the feast.” (Ver. 45.) Galilee was not only the place where He had spent the greater part of His earthly life in humiliation and obedience, but there He had begun to make Himself known to the disciples, and there He had first wrought a sign in witness of His glory. “He came therefore again into Cana of Galilee where he made the water wine.” (Ver. 46.) That first sign held out the promise, pledge, and earnest of Israel's future joy and blessedness, and He Himself in the day that is coming will be there in the land, no longer the guest, nor the master of the feast alone, but the bridegroom. And the barren one shall know her Maker as her husband, Jehovah of hosts His name, and her Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel. The God not merely of the land but of the whole earth shall He be called.

But it is not yet the day for singing, but of sadness; not yet for enlarging the place of Israel's tent, nor of stretching. the curtains of their habitation, or of strengthening the stakes: no breaking forth yet on the right hand or on the left, no inheriting the Gentiles, or making the desolate cities to be inhabited. Contrariwise, did not Messiah come to His own things, and His own people receive Him not? Nay they were about to consummate their sin in His cross, and to seal their unbelief in their

rejection of the gospel, forbidding His servants to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins always, so that wrath, is come upon them to the uttermost, however grace may turn their fall to the salvation and the riches of the Gentiles. Nevertheless grace is yet to make good every sign which is hung out to Israel, and the Lord adds on this occasion a fresh and suited display of His power for their actual circumstances and present need.

“And there was a certain courtier whose son was sick at Capernaum. He, having heard that Jesus was come out of Judea into Galilee, went away unto him and asked that he would go down and heal his son, for he was about to die. Jesus therefore said unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will in nowise believe.” (Ver. 46-48.) How strikingly in contrast with the simpler souls in Samaria! There was faith in the power of Jesus, but it was of a Jewish sort. The courtier had heard, no doubt, of miracles wrought by Him personally present. His faith rose no higher; yet evidently, if it were the power of God, there could be no limits. Absence or presence could account for nothing—they were but circumstances, and the very essence of a miracle is God rising above ill circumstances. It is irrational as well as unbelieving to measure a miracle by one's experience. It is solely a question of God's will, power, and glory; and therefore the Lord justly rebukes the unbelief of all such thoughts.

How finely too the grace which wrought in the Gentile centurion whose servant was sick contrasts with the limited expectations of this Jewish courtier! There, just to exercise and manifest the power of his faith, the Lord proposed to go with the elders of the Jews who begged Him to come and save his bondman. But even though He was not far from the house, the centurion sent to Him friends expressly not to trouble Him, for he was not worthy that He should come under his roof, any more than he counted himself worthy to come to Him. He had only to say by a word, and his servant should be healed. This accordingly drew out the strong approbation of the Lord, not His censure, as here. “Not even in Israel” had He found such great faith.

Nevertheless the grace of the Lord never fails, and little faith receives its blessing as surely as greater faith its larger answer. “The courtier saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.” (Ver. 49.) Here again how scanty the faith if urgent the appeal! Still faith must have a gracious assurance. “Jesus saith to him, Go, thy son liveth.” (Ver. 50.) It was better for the courtier's soul in every way and more to the glory of God, that Jesus should bid him go, instead of going With him. If it crossed the man's thoughts and words, it was meant to exercise his faith so much the more. “[And] the man believed the word which Jesus had said to him, and went away.” (Ver. 50.) He had not long to wait before he knew the blessing.

“But as he was now going down, his servants met him and brought him word, saying, Thy child liveth. He inquired therefore from them the hour at which he got better. They said to him then, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. The father therefore knew that [it was] at that hour in which Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed and his whole house.” (Vers. 51-58.) Thus God took care to arrest the servants, who were all the more interested and responsible because of their master's absence. They would watch the case; they would mark the changes in the malady of the patient; and they therefore were the first to see when he began to amend. They could tell their master the precise hour when the fever left the child—the very hour, as he could tell them, when Jesus spoke the word of healing power. “This again a second sign did Jesus, on coming out of Judea into Galilee.” (Ver. 54.) It is not a sign of what He is to do in the day

when, giving life to the dead daughter of Zion, He will also change the water of purification into the wine of joy for God and man. Meanwhile He relieves the one ready to perish in Israel where there was the faith, however feeble, to seek it from Christ. It was true even then of His ministry in all its meaning and force.

Chapter 130

Notes on John 5:1-9

IT is one of the peculiarities of our Gospel that in it we see the Lord frequently in Jerusalem while the synoptic Gospels are occupied with His Galilean ministry. The miracle at the pool of Bethesda is an instance—only John records it. Both the fact and the discourse which follows eminently bring out His person. This alone abides, and it is all to the believer, with the infinite work which owes its infiniteness to it. In the other Gospels the process of probation is viewed as still going on; in John all is seen from the first to be closed before God. Hence His moral judgment of Jerusalem is shown us at the beginning in John, as its rejection of Him also. This, to my mind, accounts for the record of the Lord's work there as well as in Galilee in the Gospel of John. If all be regarded as a scene of wreck and ruin morally, it was of no consequence where He wrought. As to trial, all was over grace could and would work equally anywhere: Galilee and Jerusalem were thus alike. Sin levels all: life from God in the Son was needed by one as much as another. This our Gospel developer.

“After these things was the feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.” (Verse 1.) Mere authority is pretty equally divided for and against the insertion of the article. Ten uncials (à C E F H I L M Δ Π) insert it, ten (A B D G K S U r Λ) omit it. About fifty cursives and the Sahidic and Coptic versions are with the former, still more with the latter. If the article be received, it can scarcely be any other feast than the passover, the first and foundation feast of the Jewish holy year. Some have thought that it might be the feast of Purim, but this, would not account for Jesus going up to Jerusalem. It had no divine claim.

“Now there is in Jerusalem at the sheep-gate a pool that is called, in Hebrew Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a multitude of the sick, blind, lame, withered [awaiting the moving of the water. For an angel descended from time to time in the pool and troubled the water. He therefore that first wont in after the troubling of the water, became well, whatever disease he was affected by] But a certain man was there, for thirty and eight years suffering under his infirmity. Jesus seeing him lying down, and knowing that he was [so] now a long time, saith to him, Desirest thou to become well? The infirm [man] answered, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but whilst I am coming, another goeth down before me. Jesus Rah to him, Arise, take up thy couch, and walk. And immediately the man became well and took up his couch and walked. And on that day was sabbath.” (Ver. 2-9.)

A striking picture that scene was of man—the Jews under law. There they lay without strength, and though the grace of God might interfere at intervals, the greater the need, the less could souls take advantage of His mercy. It was what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. The impotent man was himself the witness of it till Jesus came, and, unsought, sought him. No angel's moving of the water could avail a man unable to step down and without help to plunge him into the pool. He that was stronger could always anticipate the helpless. But now grace in Jesus the Son of God looks at him who had been suffering so long; grace speaks to him; grace works for him in a word without further delay; for the word was with power. “And immediately the

man became well, and took up his couch and walked. And on that day was sabbath."

But how could sabbath be kept or enjoined on that day of man's misery? Jesus had come to work, not to rest; whatever Pharisees might urge, He would not seal up man in a rest broken before God by sin and ruin.

Thus the sign wrought on that sabbath carries out further what the Lord is seen doing throughout these chapters of the Gospel—substituting Himself for every object of trust or means of blessing, of old or in that day, without Israel and within. Even angels bow to the Son; yet was He incarnate, working in humiliation, going on straight to the cross. The law could not deliver from the guilt or power or effects of sin; no extraordinary intervention of God by the highest of creatures could adequately meet the need: nothing and no one but Jesus the Son of God. Yet hate we also the clearest proof that the Jews were so self-satisfied in their misery by a misuse of the law which blinded them to their sin as well as to the Son, that they were content to go on with such a sabbath, incensed with Him who wrought a sign that proclaimed not more surely His grace than their ruin. Hopeless too it was because of their rejection of the remedy and their self-complacency in their own righteousness.

Observe however that the Lord made the infirm feel his powerlessness more than over before He spoke the word that raised him up. He did awaken the desire to be made whole, as He looked with infinite compassion and knew the case in all its fullness; but the desire he felt expressed itself in the conviction of his own wretchedness. It was like the soul's saying in Rom. 7, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me," &c. How little he knew Who had deigned to be his "neighbor," and do the part of the good Samaritan, yea, incomparably more here where need is sounded more deeply. The Quickener of the dead is here. "He spake and it was done," sabbath as it might be; but what sabbath acceptable to God can sin and misery keep? Thank God! Jesus wrought; but they felt that if He was right, it was all over with them. Hence they judged Him, not themselves, as we shall see, to God's dishonor and their own perdition.

Chapter 131

Notes on John 5:10-18

Undoubtedly to see a man carrying his couch on the sabbath was a strange thing in Judea, and especially in Jerusalem. But it was, of course, by a deliberate injunction on the Lord's part. He was raising a question with the Jews which He knew would bring about a breach with their incredulity. It was a blow purposely struck at their self-complacent observance of the sabbath, when they were blinded not merely by self-will to violate the law but by unbelief against their own Messiah, spite of the fullest proofs of His mission and person. Could God accept the sabbath-keeping of the people in such a state? Here then the Lord commanded an act expressly public on the sabbath-day in Jerusalem.

“The Jews therefore said to him that was cured, It is sabbath, and it is not allowed thee to take up thy couch. He answered them, He that made me well, the same said to me, Take up thy couch and walk” (vers. 10, 11). The healed man was simple, and his answer bears the stamp of right and truth. The divine power that had wrought beyond even an angel's compass or commission, and without it, was his warrant to act upon the word. “They asked him [therefore], Who is the man that said to thee, Take up [thy couch] and walk. But he that was healed knew not who he was, for Jesus withdrew, a crowd being in the place” (12, 18). The Jews spoke with malice and contempt. “Who is the man?” They can scarcely be conceived ignorant that there was more in their midst, and who He was. They knew His works, if they knew not Himself; and His works, as well as ways, proclaimed a mission more than human. The very work before them, and they could not deny it, was beyond an angel; yet they asked the healed person, “Who is the man that said to thee, Take up thy couch and walk?” The Lord had ordered things so that the healed man should know no more; He had passed away unnoticed, a crowd being there.

“After these things Jesus findeth him in the temple, and said to him, Behold, thou art made well. Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee. The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well” (vers. 14, 15). It was a gracious, but withal a solemn, word. To live now, to enjoy the life that is now, is not the great matter. No cure, however bespeaking the power and goodness of God, could meet man's underlying need, for sin still remained. A cure was only provisional. The man that was cured, though it was Jesus who cured him, had to be warned “Sin no more, lest some worse thing happen to thee.” He does not appear to have then adequately judged the malice of the Jews. They probably concealed their real feelings. It is often so with men towards Jesus, especially men who have a reputation for religion. They do not believe in Him, neither do they love Him. So the healed man in his simplicity fathomed not their object, but seems rather to have assumed that they were anxious to know his wondrous benefactor. Hence he went off, and brought them word that it was Jesus who had made him well. There is no ground, I think, to suppose that he shared the feelings of the Jews, or wished to betray Jesus to those who hated Him.

But now they knew as a fact what they had, no doubt, suspected from the first—that the sick man had to do with Jesus. I do not say that their informant should not have known better, for they had

asked, “Who is the man that said to thee, Take up thy couch and walk?” He told them now that it was, Jesus who had made him well. His heart dwelt on the good and mighty deed that was done; theirs on the word which touched their sabbath-keeping. “And for this the Jews persecuted Jesus, because he did these things on a sabbath (ver. 16). It was the blindness of men, who, lost in forms, knew not the reality of God and consequently knew not themselves in His presence. Sooner or later such men find themselves in collision with Jesus: what will they feel by-and-by?

“But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work” (ver. 17). It was an overwhelming answer. They knew nothing of fellowship with the Father. He (Jesus), not they, could call God “my Father,” and loved to say that He “worketh hitherto.” For the Father could not rest in sin, He would not rest in misery. It is not yet God judging. Therefore was He working as Father, even until now, though only now declaring Himself Father in and by the Son. Even before this however He had not left Himself without witness in Jerusalem itself, as the crowd of expectant sick round the pool of Bethesda attested. But this was only partial and transient. The Son was here to make Him fully known, and known as One who could not keep His sabbath yet, whatever the Jews ignorant of, Him might Wish to say or do. “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” Jesus, the Son, had fellowship, unbroken and perfect, with His Father.

Yet the words were still more offensive than the work they had just seen, and the way in which Jesus had openly caused it to be done and seen clashed with all their prejudices and stirred the depths of their unbelief. For in so speaking His personal glory could not but shine forth.

“My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” “For this therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because be not only broke the sabbath, but also said that God was his own Father, making himself equal with God” (ver. 18). Nor were they mistaken in this inference at least. For as He did expressly charge the healed man to do what He knew would bring things to a rupture, So He did not deny, but confess, that God was His own Father in a sense that Was true of none but Himself. This is the truth; and the truth of all truths most due to God, and the turning-point of all blessing to man. By it the believer knows God, and has life everlasting; without it one is an enemy of God, as the Jews showed themselves that day, and ever since. Blinded, perversely, fatally, blinded men, who, in presumed zeal for His honor, sought the more to kill Jesus, His own. Son, come in infinite love to make the Father known, and to reconcile man to God. But God is wise and infinitely good in His work; for in letting them prove their malice to the uttermost, when the due time was come, in killing Jesus, He proved His own love to the full in atonement, making Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him.

Notes on John 5:19-24

The Lord takes up the unbelieving rejection of His person and rings out the truth which puts all in its place. “Jesus then answered and said to them, Verily, verily I say to you, the Son can do nothing of himself unless he see the Father doing something; for whatever things he doeth, these also the Son doeth in like manner.” (Ver. 19.) It is the expression of the entire exclusion of a will separate from God the Father. He speaks of Himself as man on earth, yet God withal: the especial topic of our Gospel. He was here displaying God, whom otherwise no man had seen or could see; and He displayed Him as Father, however dull even disciples might be to discern it till redemption removed the veil from the eyes and sense of guilt from the conscience, and the love that gave Him to effect it was apprehended by the heart. Hut He had deigned to take the place of man, without forfeiting for a moment His divine nature and rights: and as such He disclaims the least shade of self-exaltation, or independence of His Father. This flesh cannot understand now more than then; and as then it led the Jews to repudiate the Son, so now in Christendom largely to the open denial of His divine glory or to the practical humanizing of Him. Hence the effort of so many to get rid of such a symbol as the Athanasian creed, and the otiose acquiescence of far more who believe in Him no more than they. The truth is that scripture goes beyond any creed that ever was framed in the maintenance of His honor, and this not only in the doctrine of His inspired servants, but in their report of His own words as here. Besides however being the Eternal, God over all, blessed forever, He speaks of Himself as in this world a man, yet the Son, and as such only doing what He sees the Father do: anything else would not be to declare Him. And for this He was here. Yet so truly is He divine that whatever things the Father does, these also does the Son likewise. He is the image of the invisible God, and alone competent to show the Father. How perfect the conjoint working of the Father and the Son! So we learn here, as in John 10 their unity. It is not only that the Son does whatever the Father may, but in like manner. How blessed their communion!

But the ground the Lord lays is also to be considered. “For the Father loveth the Son and showeth him all things which he himself doeth; and he will show him greater works than these that ye may wonder.” (Ver. 20.) Truly the persons in the Godhead are real, if anything is; and as the divine nature is morally perfect, the affections that reign are not less. The joint working of the Father and the Son our blessed Lord explains by the Father loving the Son and showing Him all that He Himself does; nay, He lets them know as He knew Himself that greater works would be shown Him by the Father, as the latter part of this Gospel testifies, “that ye may wonder” He does not say believe, for He speaks, not of grace, but of power displayed in testimony to the Jews, the effect of which would be not the faith which honors God, but the amazement which is the frequent and stupid companion of incredulity.

The Lord next singles out the immense miracle of resurrection. “For even as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth, so the Son also quickeneth whom he will; for not even the Father judgeth any one, but hath given all the judgment to the Son; that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father that sent him.” (Ver. 21-23.) There can be no doubt that giving life to the dead befits and characterizes God; but if the Father

does so, no less does the Son, and this not as an instrument but sovereignly: the Son also quickeneth whom He will. He is a divine person as truly as the Father, in full right and power. But more: He alone judges. Judgment as a whole and in all its forms is committed to the Son by the Father who judges none, with the express aim that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. And so it really is; for they honor not the Father but do Him despite who honor not His sent One, the Son. It is the Son on whom by the Father's pleasure it devolves to judge; but we shall find that there is a moral reason for this which appears afterward. As it is, we learn that the Son quickens in communion with the Father, and that He only judges. Thus is His honor secured from all men, who are either quickened or judged.

But how can a soul know that he is quickened and shall not be judged? He who reveals the portion that belongs to some and awaits the rest has not left in obscurity or doubt that which is so all-important; He has told out what so deeply concerns every child of man. Only unbelief need or can be uncertain, though it indeed should not be, for its sorrowful end is too plain to others if not to itself. Defying God, it must be judged by Him whom it can no longer dishonor. What on the other hand can be more graciously distinct than the portion our Lord warrants to faith? “Verily, verily, I say to you, that he that heareth my word and believeth him that sent me hath life eternal and cometh not into judgment, but is passed out of death into life.”

(Ver. 24.) It was no question of the law, but of hearing Christ's word, of believing (not in God in any sense, as the Authorized Version conveys, but) Him that sent Christ, believing His testimony. For this had He sent His Son that He might give eternal life. He therefore that believed Him “hath life eternal.” It is a present gift of God and possession of the believer, to be enjoyed perfectly in heaven doubtless, but none the less truly given now and exercised here where Christ then was.

But there is more than the actual communication of a new life by faith, a life of Which Christ, not Adam, is the source and character; he who has it does not come into judgment (κρ■σιν). The English Testament has “condemnation;” but the Lord says more than this: the believer “cometh not into judgment.” He will be manifested before Christ's tribunal; he will give account of all done in the body; but he does not, if Christ is to be believed, come into judgment. He will never be put on his trial to see whether he is to be lost or not. Strange notion! after it may be in the separate state, departing “to be with Christ, which is far better,” certainly after being changed into the likeness of His glory, to be judged. No! such an idea is theology, the universal doctrine of Christendom, Protestant or Popish Arminian or Calvinist; but it is directly in collision with the plain and sure words of Christ.

All the great English translations are wrong here, Wiclif, Tyndal, Cramer, and Geneva, with the Authorized Version. Singular to say, the Rhemish version alone is right, in this following the Vulgate: a mere accident, I presume, for none are so distant from the truth conveyed by their own translation, from the apprehension of exemption from judgment, as Romish doctors. And none are so unfaithful in the next clause, for they actually make the Lord seem to say “shall pass from death into life.“ He really said ■λλ■ μεταβ■βηκεν ■κ τ. θ. ε■ς τ. ζ. “but is passed (the present result of a past act) out of death unto life.” Here the Protestant versions are right, Wiclif feeble, the Rhemish false. And there is not even the excuse of the Vulgate, which reads “transiit.” Possibly they read “transiet:” but if so, it was an error which some copies of the Latin would have corrected, if they ignored the inspired original.

However this be, the truth set forth by our Savior is of all moment: would that every believer knew it and rejoiced in it with simplicity and in its fullness, as this one verse presents it. It is Christ's word that is heard in divinely given faith, and this quickens the soul: no thought here or any where else of any such virtue in an administered ordinance. But faith does not slight His judgment; on the contrary the believer bows to it morally in His word now, receives God's testimony to His Son, and is phased from death unto life.

Chapter 133

Notes on John 5:25-29

The Lord has thus answered the question which His solemn words would raise in every soul that fears God. He had shown it to be no question of law or of ordinance, but of hearing His word and believing the Father that sent Him. Such only have eternal life; but he who so believes has it now. How blessed and secure his portion in Christ!

Next He turns to the more general state of things. “Verily, verily, I say to you, An hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that have heard shall live.” (Ver. 25.) It is indeed the sad truth: men in all the activities of the world are the dead. Nor is it a question of a stricter morality or of a holier religion: Either one or other or both they may acquire and yet want life. Dogma cannot give it any more than practice. It flows from the Son of God who quickens whom He will, yet is it by faith, and so through the word which the Spirit applies livingly.

Here it is that Evangelicalism is feeble and Sacramentalism is false. If the latter superstitiously gives to a creature ordinance the honor which belongs to a divine person alone, the former ignores and lowers the truth by talking of a converted character and of devoting to God what was once abandoned to self and sin; but neither has any adequate estimate of the total ruin of man, nor consequently of the absolute need and real power of divine grace. “The dead” are men universally now till born of God. It is no picture of the future resurrection, whether of just or unjust, which follows in verses 28, 29, but of the present hour, as the Lord Himself intimates; for it now is, “when the dead shall bear the voice of the Son of God.” His voice goes forth “to every creature” in the gospel; “and those that have heard shall live.” Such are the means and condition of life. It is of faith that it might be by grace. Man's utter powerlessness is as manifest and certain as His glorious energy. Those that have heard shall live. Alas! the mass of mankind have ears but they hear not, even as to the Jews, when they saw Him, there was no beauty that they should desire Him. Whether it be superstitious or skeptical man, he submits not to the sentence of God on his own estate, nor consequently feels the need of sovereign mercy in Christ, who alone can give the life he wants for God now or through eternity. But whatever the mercy of God, He will have His Son honored, and this now by hearing His word and believing the testimony of Him who sent Him. This tests man thoroughly, which the law only did partially. For never does the sinner trust God for eternal life till grace makes him see his sins and distrust himself utterly. Then how glad is he to learn that the goodness of God gives eternal life in Christ and has sent Him that he might know it How willingly he owns himself one of “the dead,” which no man does really till he lives in the new life which is in Christ! How heartily he bows to the Son of God and blesses the God who sent Him in love and compassion, willing not the death of sinner, but rather that be might have life through His name!

But the same unbelief, which of old in the Jew violated the law and lusted after idols, now in the Gentile trusts an ordinance for it, to the exaltation of those what arrogate to themselves its valid and exclusive administration, or openly distrust God and alight His Son, confiding in themselves without Him. They are the religiously or the profanely infidel. They are “the dead” and have never

heard the voice of the Son of God, but only of their priests or of their philosophers. Whatever their boastings, they shall not live, for they have not Christ, but only ideas, imaginative or rational, not the truth which is inseparable from Christ received by faith to the glory of God, and the total annihilation of all human pretensions.

It is all-important to see that all truth centers in the person of Christ, who, being God from everlasting to everlasting, deigned to become man, without the least forfeiture of divine glory, yet loyally accepting the position proper to humanity. Hence the language of the Lord in what follows, the misapprehension of which has led not a few theologians of eminence to the brink, if not into the pit, of fundamental heterodoxy. “For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment [also], because he is Son of man.” (Ver. 26, 27.) The Lord evidently speaks here as come below, a man, the sent of God, and servant of the divine purposes, not as the One who is over all, God blessed forever, though both be true of Him in His person. As the eternal Son, He quickens whom He will; as come in humiliation, it is given Him of the Father to have life in Himself. Born of a woman, He is still Son of God. (Luke 1:35.) But men despise the man Christ Jesus. Some trust in themselves that they are righteous, all disliking Him who did not His own will but the will of Him that sent Him. He who lived on account of the Father is irksome to all that live to themselves, and odious to such as seek honor one of another. They misuse His humanity to deny His deity. They have no life, for they have no faith. But they cannot escape judgment, and a judgment executed in that very nature of man for which they rejected the Son of God. It is as Son of man that the Lord Jesus will sit on the throne. Doubtless He will show His divine knowledge in judging; but, as lie says expressly, authority is given Him of the Father to execute judgment, because He is Son of man. As Son of God He quickens; as Son of man He will judge. How solemn! Had He been only Son of God, who would have dared to despise Him? The light of His glory had consumed instantly every proud adversary from before Him. It was His grace then in becoming man to save men which exposed Him to contempt in His path of lowly obedience and suffering in love. The archangel is a servant; He stooped to become one. (Phil. 2:6.) But the God of this world blinded them, so that they counted as only man Him who never more proved Himself God to such as by grace had eyes to see. If they insulted Him in His work of grace, how will it be when He executes judgment, and this as Son of man? Such is the award of God.

“Wonder not at this; for an hour is coming, in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall go forth, those that practiced good unto a resurrection of life, and those that did evil unto a resurrection of judgment.” (Ver. 28, 29.)

Thus another hour is announced distinct from what “now is,” and only “coming,” an hour not of quickening such of the dead as hear the voice of Christ, but of “all that are in the tombs” rising. It is the hour of proper resurrection; and the Lord carefully negatives the popular thought of one general resurrection. Not so; here, as elsewhere, we learn of two resurrections wholly and distinctly contrasted in character, as we find in Rev. 20 they are in time.

It did not enter into the scope of the Lord's discourse, any more than of the Spirit's design in the Gospel, to reveal in detail the order of events chronologically. This has its suited place in the great prophecy of the New Testament. But the far deeper difference of their relation to Christ Himself, viewed as Son of God and Son of man, is laid before us in a few words of the profoundest

interest—a difference which would be true if no more than ten minutes intervened, but which is rendered far more distinct and impressive, inasmuch as the Revelation lets us see an interval of more than a thousand years. How great the confusion in the theology of the schools and pulpits, which supposes a single promiscuous rising of just and unjust, and this mainly on an exegesis so absurd as that which applies Matt. 25:31-46 to the resurrection! For it is certainly a judgment of the quick, of all the nations, before the Son of man when He comes again in glory, not the judgment of the wicked dead and their works before the great white throne after heaven and earth are fled away and all question of coming again is closed. There is the further mischief resulting from this interpretation, that it tends to insinuate that just and unjust come into judgment, or that unjust come into it no more than the just, to the destruction of the capital truth of the gospel; which contrasts life and judgment, as we have seen in our Savior's words.

There is this essential difference in the two hours, that, while in the first some only by grace heard His voice and had life, in the second all that are in the tombs shall hear it and shall go forth. But there is no confusion of just and unjust longer. In the world they had been more or less mixed together. In the field where the good seed was sown the enemy sowed tares, and, spite of the servants, the Lord ruled that both were to grow together until the harvest. But in the coming hour there is no mingling more: the solemn severing of all takes place, “those that practiced good unto a resurrection of life, and those that did evil unto a resurrection of judgment.” For life eternal in Christ is never inoperative, and the Holy Ghost, who is given to the believer consequent on the accomplishment of redemption and the ascension of Christ, works in that life, that there may be the fruit of righteousness by Jesus Christ to God’s glory and praise. Hence such as believed are here characterized as those that practiced good, and as this had its root in life, so its issue is a resurrection of life; while those who had no life, being rejectors of Him who is its source, are described as “those that did evil,” and their end a resurrection of judgment. In the hour that now is they would not have the Son of God in all His grace; they must be judged by the Son of man in the hour that is coming. The two resurrections are as distinct as the characters of those who rise in each. But Jesus is Lord of all and raises all; though on a different principle, of a different class, and to a different end.

Chapter 134

Notes on John 5:30-38

Nothing can be more definite than the Son's claim of the power most characteristic of God the Father quickening, and raising the dead; nothing more decided than the Father's resolve to maintain the honor of His incarnate Son, for every title and form of judging is committed to the Son of man, and with the express purpose, which shall surely stand, that all are to honor the Son as they honor the Father.

The Lord still speaks as Son, but as man on earth, and in verse 30 binds together what lie had already unfolded with the various witnesses to His glory in what follows. He was equal to the task of judging, though the lowliest of men; and this just because He was in none of His ways or thoughts independent of the Father. It is the perfection of man: He alone was it, who counted it no object of robbery to be on equality with God. But being God He had become man, for God's glory; and so He says, “I cannot do anything of myself; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is righteous, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” (Ver. 30.) He saw, He heard, as the perfectly dependent and obedient man, though none could have taken in such a range unless a divine person. He had a will, but it was used in entire subjection to the Father. He saw whatever the Father does to do the same likewise; He heard with an ear opened and wakened morning by morning to hear as the learned, and so He judged; and His judgment was just. There was nothing to distract or mislead, though there was one who sought it with all subtlety. But he was foiled and failed utterly, for here he was assailing not the first man but the Second who had come to do the will of God. Such a purpose of heart maintains in singleness of eye and unswerving fidelity. Thus did the sent One ever walk. Who so competent and suited to judge, and this as man, mankind?

Next we are introduced to the witnesses who testify to Him. “If I bear witness about myself, my witness is not true. It is another that beareth witness about me, and I know that the witness which he beareth about me is true. Ye have sent unto John, and he hath borne witness to the truth. But I do not receive witness from man, but these things I say that ye may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and ye were willing to rejoice for a season in his light.” (Ver. 31-35.)

John the Baptist then is the first witness, whom the Lord summons in the ready and everlasting love which made nothing of His own testimony, if by any means they might be convinced and believe the truth. For this had He been born, and for this come into the world. He lived on account of the Father, who testified about Him. Never was His an interested or an isolated testimony, but He would waive it and points to His fore-runner. For this purpose had John been raised up beyond denial, and no testimony from among men could be conceived more unimpeachable. His birth, his life, his preaching, his death, all bore the stamp of truthfulness; and never had one pointed to another as he to the Lord Jesus. The Jews too had sought solemnly, and lie had not flinched. Who else had ever so testified before and after the coming of the object of testimony? He was not the Christ, as he confessed and denied not, when men were ready to give him the glory due to the Master. Nor on the other did Christ seek testimony from man; yet to what did He not stoop that souls might be saved? If a man however was to be used at all, none greater than John had arisen

among those born of women, as the Lord says. The burning and shining lamp had been a source of joy for a while, but men are inconstant, and the testimony of him who was truly “a voice in the wilderness,” was refused.

The second and greater witness we see in the works of Christ. “But I have the witness greater than of John; for the works which the Father hath given me that I should complete them, the works themselves which I do bear witness about me that the Father hath sent me.” (Ver. 30.) In every way Christ's works testify not merely of so much the power displayed, as their character. What grace and truth shine through them as in Him!

The third witness is the Father's voice. “And the Father who sent me, himself hath borne witness about me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time nor seen his shape: and his word ye have not abiding in you, because him whom he sent ye do not believe.” (Vers. 87, 88.) This attestation to the relation and glory of the Son rises still higher—we might have thought to the highest, had not our Lord added another and crowning testimony in that which degenerate Christendom is now learning to abandon with contempt to its own ruin and speedy judgment.

Notes on John 5:39-47

THE fourth and crowning witness is that of the scriptures. “Search” [or “ye search"], “the scriptures, for ye think that ye have in them eternal life, and it is they that testify of me. And ye are not willing to come unto me that ye may have life.” (Vers. 39, 40.) The practical difference between the indicative and the imperative is not great, because the context decides that it is an appeal, as it has been well remarked, rather than a command. They were not so infatuated as to suppose that they had eternal life in themselves; they looked for it in the scriptures, and so were in the habit of searching them, as they do, more or less, to this day. But though the scriptures testify about the Lord Jesus, they have no willingness to come unto Him that they may have the life He alone can give. For the scriptures cannot give life apart from Him, nor will the Father; yet are the scriptures the standing witness of Christ, continually holding Him forth as the revealed resource for man, and triumph for God, and this in goodness, not merely in judgment, to the utter confusion of the enemy and of all who take their part with him against God. The presence of Christ put to the test, not merely man in his misery and universal departure from God, but those who were intrusted with those, oracles of God; and the Savior Son despised by the Jews has but to pronounce the sentence on them thus willfully slighting their own best witnesses to Him “Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life.”

Was it, then, that the Lord Jesus sought present honor? His whole life, from His birth to His death, declared the contrary with a plainness which none could mistake. How was it with His adversaries? “Glory from men I do not receive; but I know you that ye have not the love of God in yourselves. I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not if another come in his name, him ye will receive.” (Vers. 41-43.) “Glory from men” is the moving spring of the world: Jesus not only sought it not, but did not receive it. He always did the things that pleased the Father, who gave Him commandment what He should say, and what He should speak. He kept His Father's commandments, and abode in His love. In no sense had the Jews the love of God in them: ambitious of human glory, and self-complacent, their soul abhorred Jesus, as His soul was straitened for them. His coming had put them to a fresh and far fuller test. He had brought God too close to them, yea, the Father; but they knew neither Christ nor the Father: if they had known the one, they should have known the other.

But there should be another test yet: not His coming in the Father's name with the simple aim of doing His will and glorifying Him, but another to come in his own name. This would suit the Jew-man. Self- exaltation is his bane, and Satan's bait, and therein utter irremediable ruin under divine judgment. It is the man of sin in contrast with the Son of God, the man of obedience and righteousness, and, according as we have heard that Antichrist comes, even now there have come many antichrists. But the presence of the Antichrist will be according to the working of Satan, in all power, and signs and wonders of falsehood, and in every deceit of unrighteousness, to those that perish, because they have not received the love of the truth that they might be saved. They would not have the true God and eternal life in the Son become man and suffering in love for man; they will receive Satan's man when he sets up to be God. This is the great lie of the end, and

they will be lost in it who rejected the truth in Christ.

Nor is there anything strange in such a close for those who know the ways of man from the beginning. “How can ye believe who receive glory one of another, and seek not the glory which [is] from the only God?” (Ver. 44.) Such is the world, the scene where man walks in a vain show, blessing his soul while he lives, and praised by his fellows when he did well to himself; but such shall never see light. This their way is their folly, let posterity ever so much delight in their mouth. Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning. If the “children” are told to keep themselves from idols, one cannot wonder that the idolatry of man—of self—should be the death of faith. Any object is welcome rather than the true and only God, who shall render to each according to his works; to those who in patience of good work seek for glory, honor, and incorruption, life eternal; but to those that are contentious, and are disobedient to the truth, and obey unrighteousness, [there shall be] wrath and indignation, tribulation and distress.

Does the Lord, then, take the place of accusing the Jews? Not so: they boasted of Moses, but will find in him testimony fatal to themselves. “Think not that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, Moses, on whom ye trust; for if ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for be wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?” (Vers. 45-47.) Never was such honor put on the written word. Jesus had, if any one, God's word abiding in Him. Nobody ever had the Father's words and His word as He; no one gave them out invariably, and at all times, as He; yet does He set the writings of the Bible above His own sayings, as a testimony to Jewish conscience. It was no question of superior claim in themselves, or in the character of truth conveyed, for none of old could compare with the words of Christ. The Father on the holy mount had Himself answered the foolish words of Peter, who would have put Moses, Elias, and the Lord in three tabernacles, and co-ordinate glory! Not so. “This is my beloved Son: hear ye Him.” The lawgiver, the prophet, must bow to Jesus. They had their place as servants: He is Son and Lord of all. They retire, leaving Him the one object of the Father's good pleasure, and of our communion with the Father through hearing the Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Nevertheless it is Himself who here gives to the writings of Moses a place in testimony beyond His own words, not because the servant approached the Master, or the decalogue the sermon on the mount, but because the scripture, as such, has a character of permanence in testimony which can attach only to the written word. And Moses wrote of Christ, necessarily therefore by divine power, as a prophet of “the prophet which should come into the world,” of the Prophet incomparably, more than prophet, the Son of God, who quickens every believer, and shall judge every despiser, raising from the grave these for a resurrection of judgment, as those for one of life. Had the Jews then believed Moses, they would have believed Christ: words which teach us that faith is no such otiose exercise as some would make it; for the Jews in no way questioned but received his writings as divine. But not to doubt is far from believing; and they saw not in any of his books the great object of testimony in all, Jesus the Messiah, a man, yet far more than man, a divine Savior of and sacrifice for sinners, the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. If they believed Moses, they would have believed Him, for he wrote of Him. But if they believed not his writings, the Savior did not expect them to believe His own words. What an estimate of the authority of those very scriptures which self-sufficient men have assailed as untrustworthy! They dare to tell us that they are neither Mosaic in origin, nor Messianic in testimony, but a mass of legends which do not even

cohere in their poor and human reports of early days. On the other hand the Judge of quick and dead declares that the scriptures testify of Him, and that Moses wrote of Him, setting the written word, in point of authority, above even His own. As the Savior and rationalism are thus in direct antagonism, the Christian has no hesitation which to receive and which to reject, for one cannot serve both masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one and despise the other. So it is, and must be, and ought to be; for Christ and rationalism are irreconcilable. Those who pretend to serve both have no principle as to either, and are the most corrupting dogmatically of all men. They not only do not possess the truth, but they make the love of it impossible, enemies alike of God and man.

Chapter 136

Notes on John 6:1-15

Our Gospel now gives us the great miracle, or sign rather, common to all the four; and this, as ever here, introductorily to the discourse that follows—Christ, incarnate and in death, the food of eternal life for those who believe on His name. Here it is the Son of man humbled and ascended, as in chapter v. the Son of God quickening those that hear, and by-and-by as Son of man about to judge those that believe not.

“After these things Jesus went away beyond the sea of Galilee, of Tiberias; and a great crowd followed him because they saw the signs which he wrought on the sick. But Jesus went up into the mountain, and there sat with his disciples; and the passover, the feast of the Jews, was near. Jesus then lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great crowd cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy loaves that these may eat? But this he said, trying him, for he knew what he was about to do. Philip answered him, Loaves for two hundred pence are not sufficient for them, that each of them may have some little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith to him, There is a little buy here that hath five barley-loaves and two fishes; but these, what are they for so many?” (Ver. 1-9.)

The scene is wholly changed from Jerusalem. We see the Lord in Galilee, and in that part of the lake called from the city of Tiberias, as well as from the province bordering on its western side. A great crowd follows Him because of the signs He wrought on the sick. The Lord withdraws to the high land, where He sits with His disciples, the passover being then at hand. None of the motives mentioned in the synoptic accounts do we find here: neither the beheading of John Baptist, nor the apostles' return from their mission, nor the need of rest after toils in teaching or other work. Jesus fills the picture: all is in His hand. It is He who takes the initiative; not that the disciples may not have previously been perplexed, nor as if John did not know this as well as Matthew and the rest, but because it pleased the Holy Spirit to give us Christ Himself alone master of the situation, as always in his Gospel. The nearness of the passover is noted, as repeatedly in this Gospel. Here too there was the reason first that the discourse that follows, as well as the sign wrought, is grounded on eating and drinking as the token of communion.

“Jesus then lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great crowd cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy loaves that these may eat?” The evangelist however is careful of His glory and loses no time in letting us know that it was out of no uncertainty in His own mind, but in order to test Philip: He knew what He was going to do. Nevertheless He awaits the despairing words of Philip's fellow-townsman, Andrew, and would teach all now what His gracious power loves to do with the little and despised, were it for the greatest need. Simon Peter's brother, who was even before his brother in seeing the Messiah, could think of a little boy with five barley-loaves and two fishes, not of Jesus. And where was Peter? where John, the disciple that He loved? Nowhere in faith. Truly flesh cannot glory in His presence.

Let us turn to the One we may and ought to glory in, honoring the Father in honoring Him. “Jesus said, Make the [■νθρ■πους] people sit [or, lie] down. Now there was much grass in the place. The

men [■νδρες] then sat down in number about five thousand. Jesus then took the loaves and, having given thanks, distributed to those that were sat down, and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. But when they were filled, he saith to his disciples, Gather the fragments that are over, that nothing be lost. They gathered [them] then, and filled twelve baskets with fragments of the five barley-loaves which were over to those that had eaten. The people [■νθρ■πους] then, having seen the sign which Jesus did, said, This is truly the prophet that is coming into the world. Jesus then, knowing that they would come and seize him that they might make [him] king, withdrew to the mountain himself alone." (Ver. 10-16.)

I am afraid that, poor as was the intelligence of the Galilean crowd, they understood. the import of this great sign better than the Christendom of the last seventeen hundred years. They were no doubt dull enough as to their deepest need, and they had no appreciation of the Savior's grace in humiliation and redemption, afterward fully set forth by Him in the discourse that ensues; but they had some thoughts not wholly untrue, though human and short enough, of the kingdom God is going to set up here below. Now and for many centuries theology indulges in a sort of mystic dream that the gospel or church is the kingdom of Christ, His kingdom of grace to be at the end His kingdom of glory. But they have no thought of His coming in the kingdom He will have received, that not Israel only but all people, nations, and languages should serve Him, and this too an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. A two-fold error, which lets slip the oneness of the body of Christ, the church, with its glorified Head on high, and denies the mercy and faithfulness of God to Israel who are the destined center of Jehovah's earthly plans for the kingdom, when we, changed into the likeness of His glory, shall reign together with Christ.

The crowd were struck with the fulfillment of this fresh and crowning sign. They had not abandoned as yet their hopes. They knew that Jehovah has chosen Zion; that He has desired it for His habitation; that He will abundantly bless her provision and satisfy her poor with bread. (Psa. 132) Was not He who now displayed this power of Jehovah the promised son of David whom Jehovah will set on His throne? Such was their conclusion. "This is truly the prophet that is coming into the world." They thus bound up the law, Psalms, and prophets in their testimony to the Messiah; and so far they were quite right. But not so in their desire, which the Lord knew, to force Him to be king. For this would be in no way the kingdom of God but of man, nor of heaven but of earth. Not so: as He Himself taught afterward, He was to go into a far country to receive for Himself a kingdom and to return. Not till then shall the kingdom of God appear.

Till then it is a question for us of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, and the kingdom is not in word but in power, and it is known to faith, not displayed yet. But it will not be always hidden as now nor the domain of purely spiritual power. Christ will come in His kingdom and reign till He has put all enemies under His feet, after asking from Jehovah, who will give Him, the heathen for His inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession. It will be no question then as now of patiently working by the gospel, but of breaking the nations with a rod of iron and of dashing them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Unbelief either antedates the kingdom, striving to set it up now by man's will, or abandons it for the delusion of human progress without a thought of God's purpose to establish it by Christ the second Man when the first is judged. Faith patiently waits for it meanwhile. So the Lord declined then and

went up on high—this time Himself alone. It was the figure of what is actually true. Owned as Prophet, He refuses to be man's king, and goes above to exercise His intercession, as He is now doing, the great Priest in the presence of God.

Chapter 137

Notes on John 6:16-29

BUT the Lord vouchsafes another sign to the very people who soon after ask for a sign that they might see and believe. (Ver. 30.) So blind is man even when grace is multiplying these helps for those who discern it! Submission to God was the true want, not more signs.

“But when evening was come, his disciples went down to the sea, and, having come on board ship, were crossing the sea to Capernaum. And darkness had already come on, and Jesus had not yet come to them, and the sea was rough as a strong wind was blowing. Having rowed then about twenty-five or thirty stadia they see Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the ship, and they were affrighted. But he saith to them, It is I: be not afraid. They were willing therefore to receive him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at the land whither they were going.” (Ver. 16-21.)

How striking the contrast with another storm on the same lake where the waves beat into the ship so that it was now full, and He was on board but asleep, and the disciples awoke Him with the selfish and unbelieving cry, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And He arose and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, Peace, and both obeyed the Creator of all, whom man alone despised because His love made Him the Servant of all to God's glory.

Here it is the picture of the Lord's people while Himself is on high, exposed to the storms which the enemy knows how to excite, and after much toil making little progress. So it will be also for those who follow us at the end of the age. They will experience untold trials of the sharpest kind with scanty comfort or even intelligence, save as compared with “the wicked” who shall not understand, least of all (we may perhaps add) in that day. Darkness will have already set in; but in the midst of their increasing troubles Jesus will appear, though they will not even then be delivered from their fears, for the glorious light will rather augment them, till they hear His voice and know that He is indeed their Savior, long absent, now come back. Received into the ship He causes it to reach immediately the desired haven. So it will be with the righteous remnant by-and-by. Whether for them or for ourselves all turns on Christ; and this it is the peculiar office of our Gospel to illustrate.

Matthew, who alone specifically names the church as taking the place now of the disowned people after the rejection of the Messiah, alone shows us Peter quitting the ship to walk over the water towards Jesus, to walk where nothing but faith could sustain, and where therefore we see him soon sinking through unbelief, as the church has done still more deplorably: but the Lord, faithful in His care, keeps spite of all. It is only when the ship is entered (the Jewish position properly) that the wind ceases, and He is welcomed with all His beneficent power in the land whence once they had besought Him to depart out of their borders. (Matt. 14)

Our evangelist however does not trace these earthly blessings which await “that day,” but turns to the circumstances and questions which the Lord makes the occasion of the wonderful discourse that follows. He adheres to his task of unfolding the grace and truth which came by Jesus Christ.

“On the morrow the crowd that was standing on the other side of the sea having seen that there was no other boat but one, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the ship, but that his disciples went off alone (yet other boats came from Tiberias near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks); when the crowd then saw that Jesus was not there nor his disciples, they went themselves on board the ships and came to Capernaum seeking for Jesus; and having found him on the other side of the sea they said to him, Rabbi, when cannot thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say to you, ye seek me, not because ye saw the signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. Work not for the food that perisheth but for the food that abideth unto life eternal which the Son of man shall give you; for him the Father sealed—God. They said therefore to him, What must we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he sent.” (Ver. 22-29.)

The particulars related serve to show how the crowd was struck by the mysterious disappearance of the Lord. They knew that He had not accompanied the disciples in their ship, and that there was no other in which He could have crossed the lake when He must have left the mountain. They put forward their curiosity as to His, mode of passage as a cover for their desire to profit, as they had done already by His miraculous supply of their wants. The Lord in reply strips them of their disguise and confronts them with their selfishness. It was this which prompted their search after Him, not their interest in the signs which He had just wrought. He prefaces their exposure with the formula of unusual solemnity which He reserved for the enunciation of great truths. “Rabbi,” (said they), “Whence earnest thou hither?” They had sought after Jesus; they had taken trouble to find Him; when found, they address Him with honor; but they manifest by their inquiry that it was not Himself nor yet the signs which He had wrought which attracted them. God was not in their thoughts, but curiosity about the time and mode of His coming, and at the bottom a desire after present ease, through Him. Was the Son of God here to gratify all this?

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me not because ye saw the signs but because; ye ate and were filled.” Here the Lord searches those who had been in quest of Him and searches them throughly, for a single act that looks fair may prove a character hollow and base. And He looked on and listened and did not trust Himself to them because He knew all men, and needed none to testify of man, for Himself knew what was in man. To make Him a king in order to enjoy His promised earthly favors was nothing in His eyes, nay, called for His most grave detection of them to themselves. It was no question of the Messiah for Israel now, but of a Savior for sinners. He was rejected as the Christ by those who ought most to have hailed Him with joy, but did not because His coming as He did made nothing of them and their religiousness, that is, of all they valued: and if this poor hungry crowd seemed to feel quite differently and wished to give Him the honor that was due, it was needful to demonstrate that they were not a whit better and sought their own things, not. God's glory in Him. He was really come, into a world of death over which judgment hung, that the poorest of sinners might feed on Him and live forever: what did they think of or care for this? They thought only of themselves in their way, just as their rulers and teachers in theirs. God was in none of their thoughts. High or low, they had no sense of their sins or ruin, no knowledge of God or His grace. A Messiah for temporal good was what they wanted, not a Jesus to save His people from their sins. But the Messiah as a divine person could not but lay bare their alienation and distance from God and thus became increasingly odious till their hatred ended in

His cross, which made plain the deep purpose of grace in sending Him into the world, not for Israel only, but now rejected by them that we might live by Him and He be a propitiation for our sins,

Hence He adds, “Work not for the food that perisheth, but for the food that abideth unto life eternal, which the Son of man shall give you; for him the Father sealed—God.” (Ver. 27.) It is no question of Messianic honor or blessing but of what the Son of man has to give; and as He gives the food that abides to life eternal, so man needs no less than this. It is as such that God the Father sealed Him. Toil will not suffice, nor any seeming sincerity. The humbled Messiah, the Son of man, is no less God's object in sealing with the Holy Ghost than He is the giver of the only food that abides to life everlasting; and nothing less can supply the need of lost man, be he Jew or Gentile.

But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Hence they misapply the Lord's exhortation “Work not for the food that perisheth but for the food that abideth unto life eternal” and infer their own capacity to do something acceptable to God; “They said therefore to him, What must we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God that ye believe on him whom he sent.” (Vers. 28, 29.) Jesus is the object of faith. To believe on Him is the only work for a sinful man, if it is to be called a work. It is the work of God, for man trusts it not and refuses to confide in Him for eternal life. He would rather trust to his own wretched performance, or his own miserable experience—anything rather than to Jesus only. But God will not allow men to mix up self with Jesus, whether it be a fancied good self or a confessedly evil self. It is the Son of man whom the Father sealed, and Him only can He accept as the ground of the sinner's approach to God, Him only does He commend as the food that abides to life eternal. For this He sent Him, not for man to make Him a king over a people with their sins unremoved, but to be the true passover, and the only food that He warrants. Faith however is the only way in which one can feed on Him; not of works, else the must be by the law and thus be for Jews only. On the contrary; it is by faith that it might be according to grace, and thus be open to Gentile as freely as to Jew. Truly it is not the way of man but the work of God that we believe on Him whom He sent.

Notes on John 6:28-40

The crowd was not so ignorant as not to know that the Lord claimed no insignificant place when He spoke of Himself as the Son of man. The Psalms and the prophets had spoken of such an One, and of His wide and exalted glory. Besides, apart and different from the Old Testament testimony, He had just told them that the Son of man is the giver of the food that abides unto eternal life, and that the Father, even God, sealed Him. “They said therefore to him, what should we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he sent.” (vers. 28, 29.) Thus they manifest afresh the inveterate assumption of men in every state, and age, and country, that man as he is is capable of working the works of God. They ignore their own sin, His holiness and majesty. It was the way of Cain; and professing Christendom is as infected with it as Judaism or heathenism. It is the universal lie of man, till the Holy Spirit brings him to repentance; then in the new life he feels and judges the old, and finds, as we see in Rom. 7, that it is a question not of works, but of what he is, and that there is no help for him but deliverance from all, and that in Christ by faith.

So the Lord here answers that the work of God is that they should believe on Him whom He sent. Similarly the apostle reasons in Rom. 4, that if Abraham were justified by works, he would have had matter for boast, but not before God, from whom it would detract. Scripture guards against any such misunderstanding, and says plainly that he believed God, which was reckoned to him as righteousness. The principle is thus evident: to him that works the reward is reckoned as not of grace, but of debt; while to him that does not work but believes on Him that justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned as righteousness. Man may be fully and securely blest, but it is only of grace, and so by faith, which gives the glory to God, as itself His gift. Faith is thus the work of God, and excludes man's working, not as its effect (for it produces works, and good works abundantly), but as antecedent to it or co-ordinate with it, and justly so unless it would suit God to be a partner with man, and this the believer would he the first to eschew. The sent One of the Father is the object of faith.

It was at once felt that this was to claim more and more on God's part, although He refused to be made a king by man. “They said therefore to him, what sign doest thou that we may see and believe thee? What dost thou work? Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, according as it is written, Bread out of heaven he gave them to eat. Jesus therefore said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, not Moses hath given you the bread out of heaven, but my Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven. For the bread of God is he that descendeth out of heaven, and giveth life to the world.” (Vers. 30-33.) Such is unbelief, ever dissatisfied with the admirably suited and magnificent signs of God, refusing perhaps to ask a sign when God offers, despising those He does give. They did not on this occasion say outright what they meant, but it seems to have been some such thought as this “You ask us to believe; yet, after all, what was the miracle of the loaves to that of the manna? Give us food from heaven, as Moses did, for forty years; and then it will be time enough to speak of believing. Do a work to match his, if you cannot surpass it.” The Lord answers that it was not Moses that had given the bread out of heaven, but His Father was giving them the

true bread out of heaven. The bread of God is Jesus Himself, and these two great characteristics are His alone of all men; He comes down out of heaven, and He gives life to the world. He is a divine person, yet a man here below, the bread of God for every one that needs Him. It is no mere question of Israel in the desert He gives life to the world.

“They said therefore to him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall in nowise hunger, and he that believeth on me shall in nowise ever thirst. But I said to you, that ye have both seen me, and do not believe.” (Ver. 34-36.) This is their last effort to get what they sought—bread for this world, bread evermore, if not through them in any way, at least from Him. But unbelief is every way wrong. It is life that God is giving, and nothing less meets the true need of man; and this life is in Christ, not from Him. Apart from Him, given out of Him, and thus, so as to be independent of Him, it exists not. In Him was life; in Him only is life found. He is the bread of life. He is not here viewed as the Son of God, quickening whom He will, even as the Father. Here He is the Son of man sealed, and the object of faith. “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall in nowise hunger, and he that believeth on me shall in nowise ever thirst.” Alas the crowd that saw Him had no faith in Him. Their privilege in seeing Him but added to their guilty unbelief; and, I must add, that now that the atoning work is done, and He is dead, risen, and glorified, and preached among Gentiles, it is a still greater sin where He is not believed on in the world. Yet men no more believe in Him than those who then followed Him, nor are their motives purer who profess and preach Him than theirs who would have crowned Him in Galilee.

The Lord proceeds to explain what was behind and above this in the words that follow. “All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me; and him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out. For I am descended from heaven not to do my will, but the will of him that sent me.” (Vers. 37, 88.) This then is the key, and it is twofold; and only in this largeness do we know the truth. If either side be seen to the exclusion of the other, the teaching is imperfect, and the consequences are apt to be error on this hand or on that. The reprobationist presses the first clause; the Arminian the second. Neither gives its due weight to the clause they respectively omit. The theologian who sees only the divine decrees pays little heed to the encouragement given by the Lord to the individual that comes unto Him. The advocate of what he calls free-will seeks to neutralize, if he does not absolutely ignore, the declaration that all the Father gives to Christ shall come unto Him; and no wonder, for it is an assertion of His sovereignty, which is inexplicable on his, own theory. But the hard lines of reprobationism can as little admit cordially the Lord's assurance of a welcome to him that comes unto Him. The purpose of the Father is as sure as the Son's reception of all that come to Him. The unbelief of Israel, favored as they were, did not enfeeble the counsels of the Father: and the Son would not refuse the vilest or most hostile that came to Him. The reason given is most touching. He was thoroughly the servant of God in this. Come to Him who might, He had come down from heaven to save, not to do His own will. It was for the Father to choose and give. He had descended to save, and would in nowise cast out even the man who had reviled Himself most. He was the Father's servant in salvation as in all else.

This is carried out still more fully in verses 39, 40, where the Lord says, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have life eternal, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Thus, on the one hand, He who

sent Christ, and gave Him in His sovereign grace, fails in nothing of His will, for Christ loses nothing of it; on the other hand, Christ abides the test for every soul of man who receives life eternal in Min by faith alone; while in both cases, whether for the whole, or for each individual, Christ raises up when man's day is ended forever. All hope of present deliverance for men in the flesh, or dead, as they were under the Messiah, as they fondly dreamed, was vain. The Father's will, whether for His people as a whole, or individually, shall stand: the whole that He has given to the Son shall be kept, and every believer in Him has life everlasting, as Christ's raising will prove for both when the last day comes.

Chapter 139

Notes on John 6:41-51

THE Lord is thus contrasting His glory as Messiah on the earth with His raising up the believer at the last day. Unbelief was even then using the former to overlook the latter, but the Lord here brings what was unseen and eternal into prominence, and this, because He had to God's glory and in love taken the place of a servant to accomplish purposes yet deeper. Had He sought His own will or His own name, His reign as Messiah would have been still nearer to Him than to the Jews. But no! He sought the glory and the will of His Father, and, as He gave Himself up to suffer, so He should lose nothing but raise it up at the last day. To the individual all turns on seeing the Son and believing on Him: every one who does should have life eternal, and Christ should raise Him up at the last day. Those who look for nothing but the reign of the Messiah inevitably perish. They acknowledge not their sins, they feel not for the violated majesty and holiness of God, they believe not on the Savior, and, not believing, have not life. He that believes knows Him to be more than the Messiah, even the Son of the Father; he knows that only in Him has he life eternal, and that he will have his portion with Christ in resurrection at the last day. It is no question of man or the world as they are, but of Christ then.

This was peculiarly strange to the people of Judaea and Jerusalem, resting as they did in tradition, and so we see next, “The Jews therefore murmured about him, bemuse he laid, I am the bread that come down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How then doth he say, I am come down out of heaven?” (Vers. 41, 42.) Thus they set the circumstances as they knew them (and they knew them ill) against the truth of Christ. It was judging according to appearances, and consequently unrighteous judgment. He was son of Mary—truly and properly man; else His work had not availed for man. He was not Son of Joseph save legally, but this He was, in order that He should be Messiah, according to the law, Had He been really son of Joseph, as of Mary, He had not been Son of God, or a divine person; but this was the foundation of all, and without it the incarnation were a falsehood, and the atonement a nullity. He was really Son, the only begotten Son of the Father, who deigned to become son of Mary, and by law consequently son of Joseph, who had espoused her. But as Son of God, the incarnate Word—a point of all moment for His Messianic title, for Messiah He could not properly have been unless He were heir of Joseph's rights—He was the bread which came down out of heaven: thus only could man feed on Him by faith and be blessed forever.

“Jesus therefore: answered and said to them, Murmur not among yourselves. No one can come unto me except the Father who sent me draw him, and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every one that heard from the Father and learned, cometh unto me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, except he who is of God, he hath seen the Father.” (Vers. 43, 44.) Unbelief can only destroy and trouble; it cannot give life or comfort. Man under Satan is the source of unbelief, which over leads from Christ, not to Him. But as the Father sent Christ, so He draws the believer to Christ, who raises him up in the last day. It is not man's worth or work or will therefore but the Father's grace, by which one comes to Christ. The whole work, in short, is of sovereign mercy, and so the prophets have written. All true teaching

comes from God, and all are taught of God who never forgets what is due to Christ. “Every one that heard from the Father and learned,” comes to Christ. Not that the Father has been seen by man. He is known in the Son. “He who is of God, he hath seen the Father;” it is Christ only who has.

The Lord then solemnly reiterates, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth [on me§] hath life eternal. I am the bread of life.” (Vers. 47, 48.) In truth, as the promised one, He was always the object of faith, even as being the eternal Son He had ever quickened the believer. But now He was the Word made flesh; He was the Son of God, and this as man in the world, and, as rejected by Israel, He announces that He is the giver of eternal life. This is the grand point—not the kingdom merely by-and-by, but life eternal now in the Son and inseparable from Him, but in Him now a man,

Hence the Lord says, following this up, “I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness and died. This is the bread that cometh down out of heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down out of heaven. If one shall have eaten of this bread, he shall live forever. Yea, and the bread that I will give is my flesh for the life of the world.” (Vers. 48-51.) Thus, if the Lord was typified by the manna, He went incomparably beyond its virtue. The fathers of the Jews ate the manna in the wilderness; but it could not ward off death, for they died like others. Christ is the bread that came down out of heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die. Eternal life is in the Son of God, and none the less because He was then the Son of man. Rather was the grace of God more manifest in Him thus, for, if He were a man, was it not for men to eat thereof and not die? He was the living bread that came down out of heaven. He who ate of this bread should live forever; but this, we shall see, involves another truth besides the incarnation, even His death in atonement; for the bread that He would give is His flesh for the life of the world. Here He hints at what He would open out somewhat farther—His atoning death. When His life is given, it is not for the life of Israel only but of the world. The grace of God which was about to descend so low could not be circumscribed to the Jews alone. “'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” On this however He enlarges more fully afterward. Did they strive against His words in unbelief? He puts forward the truth so as still more to offend man's pride and opposition to God, but to feed and strengthen faith in His elect.

Chapter 140

Notes on John 6:52-59

Such words from our Lord, His flesh given for the life of the world, were startling enough to those who heard them, but statements yet plainer follow. He insists on the necessity of drinking His blood. “The Jews therefore contended among themselves, saying, How can he give us his flesh to eat? Jesus therefore said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, Unless ye have eaten the flesh of the Son of man and have drunk his blood, ye have no life in you. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day; for my flesh is truly food, and my blood is truly drink. He that eateth may flesh and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me and I in him. As the living Father sent me, and I live by reason of the Father, he also that eateth me, even he shall live by reason of me. This is the bread that came down out of heaven. Not as the father ate and died: he that eateth this bread shall live forever. These things said he in [the] synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.” (Vers. 52-59.)

Thus as the Lord set forth Himself incarnate under the bread that came down out of heaven to be eaten in faith, so here we have His death under the figure of the flesh to be eaten and the blood to be drunk. It is the life given up, the blood drunk as a separate thing, the most emphatic sign of death. Of this faith partakes and finds in it atonement and communion. Without it there is no life. It was the more important, as some professed to receive Him as the Christ who stumbled at His death. The Lord shows that such is not the faith of God's elect; for be who welcomed Him as come clown from heaven would glory in His cross; and though none could anticipate His death, all who truly believe would rejoice, once it is made known and its object and efficacy opened. Those who receive the incarnation in faith do also with like faith receive His death; and these only have eternal life. For such as accept the former after a human sort are apt to cavil at the latter. Both are objects and tests of faith; and the more decisive of the two is His death.

It may be observed that, as there are two figures in the central part of the chapter, so under the last there are two forms of expression which we distinguish: the act of having eaten His flesh and drunk His blood, as in verse 52; and the continuous eating and drinking as in verse 58. This is of moment as cutting off all occasion from such as either argue for or object against severing eternal life from its source. Scripture leaves no room for the thought. The believer has eternal life, but it is in the Son, not from Him. The believer eats His flesh and drinks His blood. He is not content that he ate so once: if thus content, can such an one be supposed to have life in him? Assuredly not. If his faith were real, he would be ever eating his flesh and drinking His blood; and he who so does has eternal life, and the Lord will raise him up at the last day. The love that came down from heaven is precious, and the heart receives Christ thus humbled thankfully, not doubting but desiring that it should be the truth. And if that love goes farther, even down to death itself, the death of the cross, the heart is enlarged and well nigh overwhelmed, but it counts nothing too great, nothing too good, for the Son of God and Son of man. It bows and blesses God for Christ's dying to accomplish redemption. For the same reason, if it has tasted that the Lord is thus gracious, it perseveres, it can never tire, it feeds on Him again and again. For it is felt that His flesh is truly meat, and His blood is truly drink. Hence it is added, “he that eateth my flesh and drinketh

my blood dwelleth in me and I in him." This dwelling in Christ and Christ in him is one of the characteristic privileges of the Christian in John. It is not merely security for the Christian, but Christ the home of the soul as it is of Christ. How unspeakable the nearness! And as the life of fellowship is thus blessed, so is the effect in motive and object which accompanies it. "As the living Father sent me and I live by reason of the Father, he also that eateth me, even he shall live by reason of me." As the Father's will and glory were ever before the Lord here below, so is He Himself before the believer. Otherwise one lives to self or the world.

It is well known that many have labored to prove that the eating theft ash and drinking the blood, on which last our Lord insists as distinct from eating the bread, means His supper. This is groundless, not merely because the Eucharist was not even instituted till long after, but far more because what is affirmed of eating the flesh and drinking the blood here is wholly irreconcilable with participation in the Lord's supper; and this both positively and negatively. For it would follow that the Lord lays down with His most impressive formula of truth, on the one hand the impossibility of life save for those who have so partaken, on the other the certainty of eternal life now and of blissful resurrection at the last day for him who habitually so partakes, yea the highest privilege of Christianity necessarily attached to the constant celebration of it: Doctrine so absolute as this must be repudiated by all Catholics or Protestants save by such as are utterly blinded by superstition. But it is not a whit too strong when applied to, as it really was spoken of, feeding by faith on Christ's death.

It is not correct to say that the same topic is continued before and after verse 51. There is eating both before and after; and it is conceded on all hands that eating the bread that came down from heaven is to be understood of faith. It is harsh in the extreme therefore to contend that eating the flesh and drinking the blood means something else than partaking by faith, that it is figurative in the one and literal in the other. It is at least consistent that, as the eating in the former part of the discourse unquestionably means communion by faith, so it should continue in the latter part. The doctrine in both parts clearly refers to what was literal—the eating of the bread miraculously provided for the multitude; but the doctrine, though vitally akin, is not the same in the two parts, for the Lord's incarnation is the topic and object of faith in the former, His death in the latter. It is the way of John to hang on outward facts or miracles some essential truth of Christ's person or operation; and to it is here. He begins with Himself as the incarnate bread, as more immediately answering to the divinely supplied loaves; He goes on, when unbelief caviled, to bring out the still more repulsive truth of Himself dying.

Thus all hangs simply yet profoundly together. Christ lets the Jews know (for the discourse is to them, not to the disciples) that He had not come to be a king after the flesh, but to be fed on in humiliation, yea also in death, tale only food of eternal life issuing in resurrection at the last day, not in temporal power and present glory as the people fondly hoped who wished to crown Him now. To bring in the Eucharist here is to import a foreign element which suits neither the scope of the chapter as a whole, nor a single section of the discourse; and it is the more absurd, when we see that another topic follows the main argument as its fitting conclusion, the ascension of the same Son of man whose incarnation and death had been previously presented as the food of faith, and this as a climax for faith when unbelief had stumbled first at His coming down from heaven and yet more at His death. As was said afterward, "We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever; and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?"

(John 12:34.) “Doth this offend you?” said the Lord to the disciples when they too murmured. “What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?” It is not an institution which the Lord hints at establishing. It is throughout Himself the object of faith as the Son of man incarnate, dead, and ascended.

I am aware that a celebrated controversialist strove to persuade people that the first part closes with verse 47. But this is to the last degree arbitrary. Verse 51 is the, true transition where the bread is declared to be Christ's flesh which He should give for the life of the world. This, in answer to their incredulous query in verse 52, the Lord expands in verses 53-58. For the bread as such is still continued in verses 48-50, which ought not to be the case if we had really passed into the second part. The eating of His flesh and drinking of His blood begins properly with verse 53. This is plain and positive in the chapter; and indeed it is bold to state differently; but, if so, eating the bread pertains as clearly and certainly to the first part, as eating the flesh and drinking the blood to the second. Indeed it is assumed from the beginning (vers. 32-85), but definitely affirmed before the end. (Vers. 48-50.) Undoubtedly the language is stronger when the necessity of faith in His, death is pressed in verse 53 and what follows. But this proves nothing more certainly than the exclusion of the Eucharist, except to such as can conceive our Lord's making His supper more momentous than faith in Himself. That He would speak more strongly of the giving up of His life than of His coming down from heaven to become man, no Christian could doubt, as well as of the graver danger to man of despising His death, and of the deeper blessing for the believer of communion with it.

Nor, let me add, is it absolutely true that in the first part the Father alone is said to give, in the second the Son of man; for in the beginning of the first part (ver. 83) the bread of God is said to be He that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world, not merely to be given. But so far as it is said, it entirely falls in with the real difference in these two parts. The Father gave the Son to be incarnate; the Bon gives Himself to die, and consequently His flesh to be eaten and His blood to be drunk. Further it is not trite that the consequences stand in contrast; for as in the first part eternal life results and resurrection at the last day, so this is carefully repeated in the Second part. (Ver. 64.) It is true that more is attached to one's eating His flesh and drinking His blood, namely, his dwelling in Christ and Christ in him (ver. 56); but this is as certainly a result of faith in Christ's death as it is nowhere in scripture attributed to the Eucharist. John 15, where Christ speaks of Himself, and 1 John 4:13-16, where the apostle speaks of God, approach nearest, neither of which alludes to the Lord's supper, but one sets forth Christ as the only source of fruit-bearing by continual dependence on Him, the other predicates God's dwelling in him and his in God of every soul that confesses Jesus to be the Son of God. These then so far confirm the conviction that the Lord is in John 6:56 describing the privilege enjoyed by him who feeds on His own death by faith. No doubt he that dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him; but all flows from a new life which comes only through faith in Christ: for without faith it is impossible to please God. This therefore shows an advance, not a new and different theme, but the same Christ viewed not in His life but in His death with its deepening consequences to the believer.

Himself the eternal life which was with the Father before all worlds, He took flesh that He might not only show the Father and be the perfect pattern of obedience as man, but that He might die in grace for us and settle the question of sin forever, glorifying God absolutely and at all cost in the cross. Except the corn of wheat (as He Himself taught us) fall into the ground and die, it abides

alone; dying it brings forth much fruit. His death is not here regarded as an offering to God as elsewhere often, but the appropriation of it by the believer into his own being. Hence what was comparatively vague in speaking of the bread given from above becomes most precise when He alludes to His death. For this was in the Father's purpose and the Son of man's heart, not reigning, over Israel now but giving His flesh for the, life of the world: for, Jew or Gentile, all are here seen as reprobate, lost, and dead. He only is life, yet this not in living but in dying for us, that we might have it in and with Him, the fruit of His redemption, eternal life as a present thing but only fully seen in resurrection power, already verified and seen in Him ascended up as man where He was before as God, by-and-by to be seen in us at the last day, manifested with Him in glory.

Hence the believer is here said to eat His flesh and drink His blood, and this not once only when we believed in Him and the efficacy of His death, but continuously taking in its depth and force, as death to the world and man's estate estranged as they are from God. Drinking His blood gives the more emphasis to the expression of the full reception of His dying by the believer. Had He simply left the world, as One ever a stranger to it, we had been left behind forever, objects of the judgment of God. But, dying to it and for us by the grace of God, He gave us who believe what separated us to God as well as cleansed us from our sins. Had it been simply our death, it had been our judgment and no honor to God but rather the triumph of the enemy. Blessed be God, it is of His death, and of our entrance by faith into His death in all its reality and value, that He here speaks. It is not His supper; but His supper points as the sign to Christ's death, and these verses speak of the same death. They however speak of the efficacious reality, not of its symbol, which, when confounded with the truth, becomes no better than an idolatrous vanity, and when most stript of truth even as a sign is then made openly an object of worship. So we see in Romanism, where the votaries are sentenced not to drink the blood. Christ is contained whole and entire, as they say, under the species of bread: so that all is there together, flesh and blood, soul and divinity; but if so, the blood is not shed, and the mass is to the Romanist who communicates a too true witness of the non-remission of his sins. Such is the showing of their own formal doctrine and most trusted theologians.

It may be added that, after the rich testimony to His death as the object of faith, which should follow with its consequences, the Lord seems to me in verse 57 to shut out all excuse for overlooking His intention. It was Himself, not a symbolic act which He here meant, as should be plain from the words “he that eateth me.” Further, He unites the two parts of the discourse by the following verse which closes the part about His flesh and His blood by again using the figure of “the bread that came down out of heaven,” and “he that eateth this bread shall live forever:” a declaration as true when applied to faith in Himself as it is false of the Eucharist taken in whatever sense men please.

Notes on John 6:59-71

The Lord had now concluded in the synagogue at Capernaum His discourse, the main topics of which were His incarnation and atonement, as the indispensable food of faith, let men despise them as they might; and let them cry up the manna or aught else, which had neither such a divine and heavenly source nor such an everlasting effect but must leave men to the after all; for in Him, and none else, was life. “These things he said in [the] synagogue, teaching in Capernaum. Many therefore of his disciples on having heard said, This word is hard: who can hear it? But Jesus, knowing in himself that his disciples murmur concerning this, said to them, Doth this offend you? If then ye behold the Son of man ascending where he was before? It is the Spirit that quickeneth the flesh profiteth nothing. The words which I have spoken to you are spirit and are life; but there are some of you who do not believe. For Jesus knew from [the] beginning which were they that believed not, and which was he that should betray him. And he said, On this account have I said that no one can come unto me unless it hath been given him from the Father.” (Ver. 59-65.)

A most serious form of unbelief now betrayed itself, not among those of Judea or elsewhere only but the disciples, many of whom murmur, stumbling tit His words. If they found hard His descent from heaven or His dying, what if they beheld the Son of man going up where He was before? It was implied in Psa. 8; 80, 110, as well as Dan. 7. But Jewish will had long turned only to Israel's hopes in their land and liked not a higher aspect, any more than a lower. The cross and heaven were equally out of their field of vision. Hence the Lord here confronts them with His own ascension as a most unpalatable truth. Yet is it one which fitly follows His death, as it falls in with His coming down to be a man in incarnation. He is gone up a Savior in righteousness, having glorified God to the uttermost about sin, as surely as He came down to serve in love. All hang together here, as in fact it is while He is thus ascended on high that faith feeds on Him in life and death here below. But disciples murmuring at His words of humiliation He told of His exaltation, sad to say to still deeper offense. Had they been true, had they known and loved the truth, it had been their joy; but they valued the first man rather than the Second, and were more and more offended.

Such is the flesh even in disciples. It profits nothing. It is the Spirit that quickens, and this by and in Christ, never apart from Him, still less to His dishonor. Hence His words have a power essentially divine and of divine efficacy; they are spirit and life, as He says Himself of what He had just spoken in His discourses, stumble as men might; and few words have been more disastrously perverted to this day, idolizing the sign to the shame of Him who was signified to have thus come and died in supreme love, who blesses faith accordingly. But alas! “there are some of you who do not believe.” Not to believe is fatal to any, most inconsistent withal in a disciple. Christ must be all or nothing. If all, His words are to the believer no reproach but a delight and have power all through, yea increasingly as He is thereby better known. Jesus knew their unbelief, not by observation or experience but from the first. He is God, and none the less because He became man; and this is our evangelist's constant thesis. Yet did He distinguish between such as did not believe and him who should betray Him; but who ever gathered it save now from His own words?

Who had ever seen grace in Him falter in His ways with all? How solemn is the patience of divine love! On the other hand those who believed had no ground of boasting, for though they did cleave to Jesus, none could come unto Him, except it had been given to him from the Father. It was sovereign grace in God.

“From that [time] many of his disciples went away back and walked no more with him. Jesus therefore said to the twelve, Do ye also wish to go away? Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go away? Thou hast words of eternal life; and we have believed and known that thou art the holy One of God. [Jesus] answered them, Did I not choose you the twelve? One of you is a devil. Now he was speaking of Judas [son] of Simon Iscariot; for he was about to betray him, being one of the twelve.” (Vers. 66-71.)

Thus the warnings of the Lord precipitate the departure of unbelievers, while they knit the faithful more closely to Himself and bring out their sense of what He is to their souls. The cause lay in their own will which gave Satan power. Yet the Lord does not hesitate to let the twelve know that, while one confessed for all that He was the Holy One of God, one of themselves should betray Him. What a contrast with all but Himself, unless it be with such as have learned of Him! How different those who seek to draw disciples after them! Still His words would confirm His own, even all that were real. The more free, the more are they bound. He only is worthy, He is the Holy One.

I am aware that a learned but self-confident German pronounces the “Holy One” not Johannean. But this was a rash and ignorant judgment. It is a title given to our Lord once in his first Epistle as here once in his Gospel. He is the only writer in the New Testament who ever uses it of the Lord in relation to the saints. It is therefore more characteristic of John than of any other apostle. Mark and Luke tell us of evil spirits tremblingly owning Him thus. Well might they quail before the Holy One who is destined to deal with them in judgment. How blessed to bear one saint confess for all their faith in Him in this very character, cleaving to Him and His words of eternal life with confidence! How gracious to hear another comforting the babes of God's family with the reflection that they had received unction from the Holy One and knew all things! Antichrists might go out from among those who bore Christ's name, but they were not of the family of God: if they had been, they would surely have remained as Peter did here, as Judas did not when the last crisis came. First or last they went out that they might be made manifest that none are “of us” —of the family. For God's children the Holy One is the spring of every joy and of all peace, of repulsion for unbelievers, of terror for demons. The babes rebuke the pride of mere unbelieving human intelligence which denies the Father and the Son, yea, that Jesus is the Christ, and perishes away from Him who alone has life and gives it to every believer. So it is in the Gospel as in the Epistle.

But we see here also the vast moment of walking with Him, of open identification with Him in this way before men as well as God, the danger and ruin of going away. Faith, however weighty, is not all: one has to walk with Him here below. Where else are words of eternal life? Without may be religion, philosophy, present ease, or honor and power. With Him are those who think of and act for eternity.

Yet even the apostolate, as the Lord here shows, gives no sure ground to build on—nothing but Himself. So, His most honored servant lets the Corinthians (too enamored of gifts) know, that he might preach to others, yet, if he kept not his body in subjection, himself must be a reprobate. The Son of man, in life and death appropriated by faith, alone sconces eternal life now and resurrection

at the last day.

Chapter 142

Judgment Seat of God and of Christ

I am not aware that this expression, “the judgment-seat of God” or “the judgment-seat of Christ,” is found anywhere else than in Rom. 14 and 2 Cor. 5: in the first of these two passages with a view to present individual judgments; in the second with a view to provoke to do good. The subject in itself is one of the most solemn and at the same time most blessed, and this so much the more as we understand it rightly. I believe that each act of our lives will be manifested then before the tribunal, according as the grace of God and His ways with us in connection with our own acts will be known then. We read (Rom. 14) that “every one of us shall give account of himself to God;” and the word, in this passage, mentions the tribunal in connection with the exhortation to brethren not to judge one another in respect of days, meats, or any other such thing. I am disposed to think that the acts alone will be subject to manifestation; but all the private acts of our life depend so intimately upon our inward feelings, that it is, in a certain sense, difficult to distinguish the acts from the simple thoughts. The acts manifest the power of the thought or of the feeling. I believe that the whole of our acts will be detailed there, before the judgment-seat, not for us however, as if we were in the flesh, and thus to our condemnation, but to make evident to our own eyes the grace that occupied itself with us—regenerate or unregenerate. In the counsels of God I am elect before the foundation of the world; hence I think that my whole history will be detailed before the judgment-seat, and, parallel with it, the history of the grace and of the mercy of God toward me. The why and the how we did this or that will be manifested then. For us the scene will be declarative, not judicial. We are not in the flesh before God; in His eyes by His grace we are dead. But then if we have walked according to the flesh, we must see how we lost in blessing thereby, and what loss we have incurred; and, on the other hand, the ways of God towards us, all ways of wisdom, of mercy, and of grace, will be perfectly known and understood by us for the first time. The history of each one will come out in perfect transparency; it will be seen how you yielded and how He preserved you, how your foot slipped and how He raised you up again, how you were drawing near danger and shame and how He by His own arm interposed.

I believe this is the bride making herself ready, and I consider that moment as a wondrous one. There will be no flesh then to be condemned; but the new nature will enter into the full knowledge of the care and of the love, which, in true holiness and in righteousness and even in grace, have followed us step by step all through the running of the race. Some parts of our life, till then entirely unexplained, will be fully disclosed and become altogether plain; some tendencies of our nature, that perhaps we do not judge to be so pernicious and deadly as they are, and for the mortification of which we are perhaps now subjected to a discipline that we may not have interpreted aright, will be then perfectly explained; and, what is more, the very falls that plunge us now into such bitter anguish will be seen then to be that which God used to preserve us from something more terrible. I do not think that until then we shall ever have had a full knowledge of the badness of our flesh. How blessed for us to know that then it will be not only all over with the flesh in the counsel of God, but that the flesh will no longer be attached to us! On the other side, I doubt not, the manifestation of God's grace toward us individually will be so magnificent that even the sense of the perversity of

the flesh that we had, if it could possibly enter there, would be excluded by the greatness of the sense of divine goodness. Why do we not deny and mortify the flesh when we think of that hour? The Lord grant that we may do so more and more to the glory of His grace. This great subject of the judgment-seat brings the soul to a very full knowledge of our individual standing.

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EPISCOPACY:

WHAT GROUND IS THERE IS SCRIPTURE OR IN HISTORY FOR ACCOUNTING IT AN INSTITUTION OF GOD?

Chapter 144

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—1

In 1 Sam. 9 we have the hidden counsel and purpose of God choosing Saul in secret, who is a type of the religious system of the Jews invested with political power. He receives authority by the displacement of Samuel, who represents the spiritual power, manifested in the law and the prophets, rejected of man but owned of God, and continuing to be so secretly even when Saul—the politico-religious system—is outwardly acknowledged and under responsibility.

Now we know that the Jewish religious system did not come into the possession of political power until after the prophets had ceased to prophesy and the canon of Old Testament scripture was closed; and that though then in due time brought into manifestation and power, it was the law and the prophets which prophesied unto John the Baptist and which in truth stood for God as His witness. So we find in the whole history before us that (though Saul is brought into place and power in 1 Sam. 9 in the secret counsel of God; second, in chapter 10 in manifestation before the people; third, in chapter 11 in acknowledged possession upon proof of power; fourth, in chapter xii. in full investiture and responsibility; yet) through it all it is Samuel who stands before God and by reason of whose intercession it is that God's blessing rests upon the king and people. And when in pride and blindness of heart. Saul—the fleshly thing—ventures to intrude into God's presence on his own footing, and that with a burnt-offering and a peace-offering in chapter 13 usurping the place of Samuel—the spiritual thing—he is at once rejected as unfit for God, and another chosen in his place after God's own heart, who could occupy the place of both Samuel and Soul as prophet, priest, and king.

If we look at the account of Saul's parentage, we shall see that the Spirit of God has marked him out as a type of the fleshly religious system (chap. 9:1), Kish son of Abiel, son of Zeror, son of Bechorath, son of Aphiah, a Benjamite. This when translated runs thus—a snaring son of the “strong one,” son of “bundle,” son of the firstborn, son of the “re-created,” son of the right hand. Now if we turn to Gen. 5, which gives a prophecy of the outward worship of the God from first to last we find the same order: Lamech, “strong one,” type of the mystery of iniquity, the most perfect development of fleshly religion, son of Methuselah, “man of darts,” type of the lawless one, the most perfect development of human will in the powers of government; son of Enoch, “dedicated,” type of the church, the assembly of those firstborn—the firstborn from among the dead, who following Him ascended up above all heavens, the Son at the right hand of God.

When Samuel anoints Saul to be captain, he gives him every needed provision for his altered condition, laying one responsibility upon him in which if he failed it would be fatal. When God placed man in Eden, He made him responsible for one thing equivalent to abiding before His face. (Gen. 3:8-10.) When He was dealing with Saul He made him responsible for one thing equivalent to keeping out of His presence; and in both cases failure was the result, Adam went out and Saul rushed in. Since Cain the flesh has always thus brought upon itself the curse of God: see the men of Sodom; Korah, Dathan, and Abiram; Jeroboam, Azariah, &c. And in the account which Samuel gives in chapter 10:18, 19, of God's dealings with the fleshly nation Israel, and the result, we have

a resume of God's dealings with the fleshly king Saul, and the result. He had delivered their hand from making the pots—from all servile labor; He had brought them into a pleasant land, satisfying their mouth with good things; He had saved them and ruled them, had been Himself their King in their midst by His Spirit in His prophets and priests; and now they had rejected Him their God, saying, “Set a king over us.”

So Saul was brought out of his anxiety about the asses into the knowledge that his father was sorrowing for him. (Chaps. 9:20, 10:2.) A full and satisfying portion was given him both from God and man (chaps. 9:24, 10:4); and the Spirit of God came upon him in power, so that he prophesied in the company of the prophets; but in result he as they rejected the Lord in rejecting the word, and therefore was himself rejected. (1 Sam. 13:13; 15:26.) He is thus an exact type of the fleshly politico-religious system—delivered out of Babylon into their own land, with at least a sufficient portion of blessing; with the power of the Spirit of prophecy upon them. But the end of all was that they rejected the Word manifest in the flesh and were therefore rejected of the Lord.

Though we find that Saul is manifested as king before the people at the end of chapter 10, yet Samuel remains in power as the servant of God until the people are stirred in heart to receive Saul by his courageous deliverance of Jabesh-Gilead from the hand of Nahash the Ammonite. So we find that, though the former rule was never established after the return of the Jews from Babylon, yet as to its spirit and power it still continued in the persons of Zerubbabel and Joshua—the prince and the priest—of Ezra and Nehemiah and onward, though ever more and more brought under completer subjugation by foreign powers—Greece, Egypt, Syria, until at length God raised up a temporal deliverer, such as they had sighed and groaned for, in the person of the Maccabean princes upon the occasion of the intolerable ignominy and tyranny brought upon them by Antiochus Epiphanes; who for three and a half years deprived them of all civil and religious liberty, suspended the daily sacrifice, profaned the temple, prohibited the worship of God—the observance of His law, and destroyed every copy of the sacred books that he could find.

In the Maccabean dynasty there were united as an outward thing the functions of priest and king, and so remained until the usurpation of Herod. This was to be the character of the new order of government which God was about to set up in a man after His own heart, but which must first be manifested as a thing in the flesh to prove the weakness of the flesh, and the instability of everything founded on it. Of the circumstances above mentioned we find an exact antitype in the transactions between Nahash the Ammonite and the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead. The words “Jabesh-Gilead” signify a “dry heap of witness.” This is a most accurate description of the state of the people or worship and government of the Jews—the witness for God truly, but dry and lifeless. Against Jabesh-Gilead comes Nahash the Ammonite, and encamps against it. Nahash is a striking type of Antiochus, and indeed of Antichrist to come, not only oppressing the people of God, but bating and setting himself above God Himself. This was plainly so with Antiochus as just noted, and as to Nahash, whose name means the “serpent born of incest,” we see that it was not so much his desire to slay the men of Jabesh as to lay a reproach upon Israel (1 Sam. 11:2); and that by, putting out their right eyes. And nothing could more aptly describe what the temple and the law were to the Jews than the right eye, and also that it was the only means the Jew had of seeing the light. And just as it was at this time of imminent peril, Saul comes forward for the honor of the Lord, and delivers Jabesh, is made king before the Lord in Gilgal, and rejoices greatly with all the men of Israel. So also the Maccabeans encourage the people to stand up for the law and the name of

Jehovah, deliver Jerusalem, re-consecrate the temple; and having already taken the place of king one assumes in addition the Office of high priest, celebrating the renewal of the worship of God and the deliverance of their country by a yearly feast and the commencement of a new epoch.

In chapter 13 we find that the time of testing and trial comes upon Saul, and he proves reprobate. First the flesh appropriates the honor due only to the Spirit; for Jonathan (that is “the one whom the Lord has given” —for such is the meaning of His name) smote the garrison of the Philistines that was in Geba, and all Israel heard say that Saul—the one “asked for” by the people—had done it, for he blew a trumpet and said, “Let the Hebrews hear.” But though by these means he gets all the people to follow after him trembling, he has no power to oppose the enemy who pitch in his strongholds, and he is driven back to Gil-gal, the last place of strength which remained to him in the land. His appropriation to himself of the honor which belonged to Jonathan having failed to inspire the people with confidence in him, he next ventures to bring God upon the scene as his supporter, and to pretend to fellowship with a power from Him, making the things of God a cloak for his worldly policy.

In his reply to Samuel (chap. 13:11, 12) God never enters into his thoughts; it was how to keep the people together and to repulse the enemy—the fleshly eye upon the things which are seen. He wants to make the people trust in him, not in God. Therefore he does not offer a sin-offering, which would have been to take the place of humiliation and weakness—a place befitting him: but he offers a burnt-offering, thereby claiming acceptance and blessing—the place of honor and power—done for the sake of appearance, busied about himself, his people, Samuel, the enemy, anything but God. Samuel's answer is that of the spiritual man with God. His heart, his mind, his eye, are all upon God; he measures all things in His presence. For him the Lord is the beginning and the end. “Thou hast not kept the commandments of the Lord thy God.... the Lord would have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever, but now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the Lord hath commanded him to be captain over his people because thou hast not kept that which the Lord commanded thee.” This occurred at the close of Saul's reign, but how the Spirit of God links up the fact of disobedience which filled up the measure of transgression with the command given him in view of his kingly responsibility, before he entered upon it! (1 Sam. 10:8.) “Thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal, and lo I will come down unto thee to offer burnt-offerings, and to sacrifice sacrifices of peace-offerings: seven days shalt thou tarry till I come to thee and show thee what thou shalt do.” God would have preserved the earthly kingdom and the natural man as king of it, if nature and flesh had kept the place which He had appointed it, namely, out of His presence, approaching Him only through a mediator. But when the flesh takes the place of the Spirit, the man, that of the mediator, and presumes as one that has a standing before God to offer burnt-offerings and to sacrifice peace-offerings, it then comes into a place of judgment and is condemned and rejected forever.

That Samuel's special place, appointed him of the Lord, was that of intercessor we find in Jer. 15:1, expressly intimated at the outset of his ministry (1 Sam. 3:21; 4:1); for the Holy Spirit testifies that the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord, and the word of Samuel came to all Israel. He was the mediator of a covenant and kingdom which was to pass away (see 1 Sam. 12:18, 25; 13:13, 14 and Heb. 12:18, 28); but he was also the voice which cried concerning a new and better covenant and a kingdom which could not be moved, wherein God may be served acceptably though He be a consuming fire (Heb. 12:28, 29). In this latter aspect of

his work he is an exact type of John the Baptist. In Shiloh Samuel's work is a type of the Holy Spirit's in the law and the prophets, for from thence by him the word of the Lord came to all Israel, and the prophets spoke by the Spirit of Christ of the Shiloh to come (Gen. 44:10), of the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow (1 Peter 1:10). In Gilgal his work and ministry are typical of John the Baptist's who preached the baptism of repentance for remission of sins, and was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord and make His paths straight. (See Sam. 11:14, 15; ch. 12.)

Chapter 13. The events of this chapter, looked at prophetically, are very striking. Saul's strength lay in Michmash, that is “hidden treasure,” and Bethel, that is “house of God;"“ while Jonathan's strength lay in Gibeah of Benjamin, “son of my right hand.” So we find that the fleshly Jewish system put all their confidence as an outward thing, in the law-hid treasure—(Psa. 119:11 and 14), and the temple of God (Matt. 26:61; Mark 14:58) (compare Acts 6:11, 13 and 14:) while all the hope of the faithful remnant was in the One that was to come (Matt. 11:3), the One that was to redeem Israel (Luke 1:54 and 68, 75; 2:25, 32, 38). This hope as the end of that age drew near became bright and the means of much spiritual power in the heart of the Jew that looked for redemption: the power of the world and the flesh—the Philistine—being cast out. The fleshly system then took up the same hope in a fleshly way, but altogether without power, the result being that a greater door is opened for the intrusion of the flesh into the things of God, and the people are scattered as sheep without a shepherd; till, at length, the fleshly thing, from motives of worldly policy and love of power, despairing of help from God and seeing with dismay the advancing tide of opposing powers which had reached the word itself—for the Sadducees denied the inspiration of all the scripture except the books of Moses, denying even them in fact (Matt. 22:29, 33)—forced itself to take the place which could only be occupied by the spiritual thing that was to come, namely, the right and title to God's favor and salvation on the ground of its own sanctity and righteousness, and this the orthodox Jew claimed on the grout d of circumcision (Gilgal—Josh. 5:9; Acts 15:1, 5). For nothing else remained to them: the house of God had become a house of vanity (Matt. 23:38)Beth-even (1 Sam. 13:5); and Bethel, 1 Sam. 13:2, Michmash. As for the word the Sadducees denied it and the Pharisees despoiled it (Matt. 15:1, 20): see Matt. 23:4, 5 and 18, 28, in which chapter there is a divine description of the state of things as seen by God. But when at length the spiritual man came and the whole nation went out to meet him (Matt. 3:5, 6 and 1 Sam. 13:10) to be before God in repentance and the putting away of sins, there was nothing left for him but to denounce woe, judgment, and rejection upon the existing system, in consequence of the position taken by the rulers (Matt. 3:9, 10; 11:16, 24; Mark 11:31) who came not to the baptism of John as a body, though many individuals among them did, and to declare the bringing in of a new kingdom and a new captain (Matt. 3:11, 12, Matt. 21:18, 45, Luke 12:18, 36), leaving circumcision (1 Sam. 13:15) or Gilgal, as a ground of hope for God's salvation, and looking for the, One that should come for deliverance (Gibeah of Benjamin), Matt. 3:9, 12.,

In 1 Sam. 14 the fleshly thing, judged of God but in His long-suffering not yet cast out, is seen filling up the measure of its iniquity by seeking to slay and cast out the only living power that was in it at a time when that power had been most gloriously manifested. (Saul) had gathered around it everything that could help to keep it together—political power—(all the men of war, ver. 2)—and spiritual power outwardly—(the Lord's priest in Shiloh), while Jesus, the man of faith, born under the law, servant of the circumcision (Jonathan, that is “whom the Lord has given,” son of Saul),

has none with Him but the Holy Spirit (his armor bearer); yet the one is powerless for any good while the other passes from the rock of glory (Bozez “shining,” ver. 4) to the sharp rock of tribulation (Seneh “a thorn bush “) Ex. 3:1, 18, from the mount (Gibeah) to the hidden treasure, the kingdom of the heavens, the church (Michmash), Matthew 13:44.

The world (Philistines) gave a sign to Jesus that the Lord had delivered them into His hand (1 Sam. 14:6, 12) by their prince the adversary, the devil, for when Jesus was manifested (John 1:31) then the tempter urged Him to “come up and he would show him a thing,” first to the, edge of the temple and then to a very high mountain but only that he might if possible cast Him down. (Matt. 4:1-11.)

When Jesus gives a sign to that generation, it is the sign of Jonah, showing that when it should be God's, time and God's will He would go down to the very lowest place, even into the heart of the earth (Matt. 12:40). He goes up to the work which had been given Him to do in the posture of humility, taking a servant's form (the likeness of sinful flesh), taking His place among the grovelers of the earth, the meek One lowly in heart (1 Sam. 14:13); and at the outset He utterly sweeps away the falsities which the spirit of evil had heaped upon the law and the commandments, perfectly developing the divine mind in them (Matt. 5:17, 27, 33, 38, 43), so as to be no longer a yoke “unable to be borne” (Acts 15:10 Sam. 14:14); and the crowds are astonished at His doctrine (ver. 15), for He taught with authority, and His fame went out through the whole of Syria, for He preached the. glad tidings of the kingdom, and healed every disease and every sickness among the people, scattering on every hand by His word, touch, and presence, every ill, moral, spiritual, and physical, that oppressed the people (ver. 17). And though in it all He was ostensibly the servant of the circumcision, yet in fact it was by a power altogether outside the Jewish system as one that had gone out from it, still the politico-religious system was in authority, owned of God and under responsibility to Him (ver. 18, compare Matt. 8:4), so that it had a connection with the deliverance which was wrought (ver. 19), which Jesus acknowledged; for when He had cleansed the man from that disease which was held up by the law as a picture, of complete pollution through a multitude of sins, He says, “Go show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift which Moses enjoined for a witness to them.” a (Ver. 15, “the host:” compare Matt. 8:1-4.)

Again, when He chases away by a word the Paralysis from the centurion's servant (ver. 15, “the field"), it is shown to be in connection with the promise to Israel which is made good though the sons of the kingdom be cast out (Matt. 8:5, 18), proving that those who considered themselves the sons of the kingdom were really enemies and intruders. So also driving out with a touch the fever which had prostrated Peter's mother-in-law, casting out the spirits with a work and healing all that were ill (ver. 16, “all the people"), it is as Shepherd of the sheep, about to be stricken in fulfillment of prophecy made to the Lord's people the sheep of His pasture. (Psalm 100:3; Isa. 53:6; Matt. 8:14-17.) Yet when the representatives of the Jewish system reckon Him as one of themselves and seek in a fleshly way to connect themselves with Him, He shows that He is not to be reckoned among them but has gone out from them, and that if they are to be numbered as His it must be by a perfect separation from everything else. (Compare 1 Sam. 14:16, 18 with Matt. 8:18, 22; 10:34, 40.)

The Lord goes on to prove His power and authority from God by bringing into subjection, not oily the moral world and its action in man, as we have seen all bodily disease is the result of moral

disease, but also the powers of the material universe in their action on man and the world of spirits in power over man. (Matt. 8:23-34; 1 Sam. 14:16.) In each case the powers that would oppose perish by their own swords—fall by their own counsel. For no sooner does the spirit of self-righteousness (the bringing in of something good, or the putting away of something evil, Matt. 8:20-22) intrude itself upon the Lord's notice than its very exhibition is the occasion of its destruction. So again, when the rising against Him of the winds and the sea is brought under His notice, He rebukes them, and there is a great calm. (Matt. 8:23-27.) And when two men possessed by demons come out of the tombs to meet Him and exclaim against Him, the Lord permits the demons to have their own way, and the result is, that they go down into the abyss. (1 Sam. 14:20.)

(To be continued if the Lord will)

Chapter 145

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—2

In Matt. 9:1-8, all the power of the enemy against man is brought into the presence of the Lord in the case of the paralytic; moral disease in the scribes, physical and spiritual disease in the paralytic, thus severally manifested and dealt with by the Lord. But by saving man from the last, He brings out the first, in smiting which He takes opportunity to deliver from the second. But this exhibition of power altogether disconcerts the upholders of the religious system in authority, and provokes jealousy which causes them to oppose the work of God, using the word and name. of God as a pretext. (Matt. 9:3 and 34.) They first hold aloof themselves (1 Sam. 14:18, 19; Matt. 9:3), and then openly oppose it, preventing the people from reaping the benefit of it. (1 Sam. 14:24; Matt. 9:34, 36; 12:24, 37.) The two cases of the sick of the palsy and Matthew the publican show the result of the Lord's spiritual work. “Jesus” —the One who should save His people from their sins—upon those who, though His people, yet were enslaved and oppressed by the world and the flesh—when the paralytic is brought to Him, He immediately delivers him from his spiritual bondage; for though quickened in soul—for Jesus calls him son or child—he was as helpless for good in spirit as in body, by reason of the fleshly religious power (scribes and Pharisees, Matt. 9:8—occupiers of Moses' seat, Philistines; 1 Sam. 14:21) which kept him in deadly fear lest after all he should be among the last. Jesus therefore at once says to him, “Be of good courage, child: thy sins are forgiven,” changing him thereby from a man of doubt and fear to a man of faith, turning him from being the enemy's slave to be His own free man: from henceforth to smite the foe by glorifying God. (Matt. 9:1, 9; Luke 5:20, 27; compare 1 Sam. 14:21.)

Passing from thence Jesus sees a man named Matthew, a quickened soul (for Jesus never spoke in the way He did to Matthew to any but men of faith), but hindered, and hidden, and choked (1 Sam. 14:22) by the deceitfulness of riches, the cares of this life, the power of the world (Ephraim, the fruitfulness of the earth). He delivers him in an instant from all his foes by a word. He says, “Follow me,” and leaving all he rises up and follows Him. So that from that time he likewise becomes a smiter of the Philistines together doubtless with many others like him (Matt. 9:9, 10), “following hard after them in the battle.”

In Matt. 5; 6:7, Jesus is seen to be the Messiah—the Prophet, with power and authority on earth to reveal the truth and mind of God, but to be rejected by the Jewish system which claimed that place for itself—the power of interpreting the word. (Compare Matt. 7:28, 29; 1 Sam. 10:8; 13:8, 12.) In Matt. 8; 9, He manifests Himself as the Priest come to make intercession for the transgressors, being in His own person all that was shown forth in the ark of God Himself the mercy-seat, the Spirit of God abiding on Him, and the glory of God shining forth from Him; being in Himself the Bread of life, the fulfilling of the law and the only lawful possessor of priestly power. (Compare Matt. 8:17; 9:6, 12, 18; 1 Sam. 14:18, 19.) Again is He rejected as such by the Jewish system, for what do the Pharisees want with a Physician seeing that they are strong and not ill? or what need had they of a Priest, for they were righteous men, not sinners? Further on (Matt. 9:18, 34) He is shown to be a Prince and a Savior, Lord of all power and might, with all power given unto Him in heaven and earth; and the Heir to whom the inheritance belongs, but His claims denied and

Himself blasphemously rejected by the Pharisees, though they were their own judges in pretending to do the same things themselves.

This course of things is exactly paralleled in the history of Saul. He first usurps the place of Samuel the prophet, the one who had power with God to reveal God's mind and obtain deliverance on the ground of personal merit; thus, rejecting Samuel, he is himself rejected. He must dispense with the priests and the ark of God, really treating them as unnecessary things, though making a great show of reverence for them; talking to the priest but neither inquiring by them of God, nor waiting for a message from Him; but saying to the priest, as though finding Him a hindrance instead of a help, “Withdraw thy hand,” and hurrying of to the battle without him. (See 1 Sam. 14:18-20.) At last, puffed up by pride, he is found casting out and ready to slay the prince—the heir of his kingdom, the one who had proved that he had power from God who “had wrought this great salvation in Israel—who had wrought with God this day.” (See 1 Sam. 14:38-45.)

In Matt. 5; 6:7, Jesus attacks the enemy on the ground of the word, and drives him completely from all his positions; showing Himself therein as the Prophet, the revealer of the mind of God. In Matt. 8; 9:1, 18, He manifests His priestly power in the cleansing, healing, and casting out the demons, “taking our infirmities and bearing our diseases” (chap. 8:17), granting forgiveness of sins (chap. 9:16), healing the sick in soul; having mercy not sacrifice—having to do with sinners, not with righteous (chap. 9: 12, 18).

From Matt. 9:14-34, these lines of character are gathered up, and the third ground of authority, that of King of Israel, brought in, only to be more decisively rejected than ever by those who were leaders of the people. From verses 14-17, He reveals Himself as the Prophet, not repairing the old thing but bringing a new blessing from God and new vessels to contain it. From verses 19-22 He is seen as the Priest, the Priest after God, not contracting defilement by contact with the polluted, but communicating cleanness from Himself, who because He was the sacrifice could as Priest bring unto God on the ground of atonement every unclean one that touched Him by faith. This is linked in with His position as Messiah the King of Israel (see Matt. 18:23-34), where He raises the dead, gives sight to the blind, and casts out the demons by virtue of His kingly authority, the Anointed One of the Lord, the Son of David.

In Matt. 5; 6:7, the Lord takes an attitude of resistance and defense, driving the enemy from God's ground in the old things, which they had falsely occupied (1 Sam. 13:1, 5; Michmash— “hidden treasures;” Bethel— “house of God"), namely, the word; in chapter viii., from the man of faith; in chapter 9:1-18 from quickened souls. In chapter 9:14-17 the principle of the new thing is established and from that vantage-ground the Lord goes out to attack the enemy in his own stronghold (1 Sam. 14:28: Beth-aven— “house of vanity"); the unclean touches the clean unbidden and goes away cleansed (vers. 19-22); life comes into the presence of the dead one and the rises up (ver. 26): the blind pursue the seeing One and receive sight; the dumb demoniac brought to Him is delivered and speaks.

From chapter ix. 87, 88; x., the new thing is fully brought out—the kingdom of the heavens—its conditions and characteristics enunciated and described, its work appointed and its path marked out. In chapter 11: 2-16 the last stragglers are brought up and the tremblers that lingered in their biding places brought out; in chapter 11:16-19 the last enemy is smitten from God's ground (chap.

11:20-24), the battle carried over their own territory—hypocrisy laid bare, and unbelief and hardness of heart visited with destroying judgment. (Chap. 11:25-80.)

Jesus gathers up all His work: Prophet of the Father; Priest to God the Father; King from the Father. The Prophet-witness to the Father as the Lord of the heaven and the earth, the present Revealer of the Father to the babe of faith; the King in the Father's power over all things; the Father's Son unknown of the world witnessing of Him as its Lord; the Son known personally of the Father and personally knowing the Father, revealing Him in the same personal knowledge and relationship to the babe of faith; the Son of the Father invested with all the Father's authority and power to bring all things in subjection to His yoke of love and peace and blessing. In His whole work, character, a person rejected of man but owned of God and of faith; proved to be of God by His manifested power; acknowledged by the crowds who groaned under the bondage imposed upon them by their religious leaders, being harassed and weary as sheep not having a shepherd—led into a desert of stones and not into green pastures and still waters; all soul-good denied them, and instead only burdens laid upon their shoulders by those who, though destitute of spiritual power themselves, yet coveted to be the acknowledged exponents of God's truth to the world, in order to which end they labored to keep in abject submission those who owned their sway (Matt. 9:35, 36; 1 Sam. 14:24-26); who now gladly crowded after One bringing spiritual power, and by it bodily deliverance, and, withal rest, and liberty.

The mind is lost in wonder when considering the great salvation as to earthly things which the Lord wrought in Israel (Matt. 10); unclean spirits cast out, every disease and bodily weakness healed (ver. 1); the dead raised, the lepers cleansed (ver. 8), demons cast out; but the Lord shows that notwithstanding this His mission by His disciples would seem to fail, and they themselves be rejected through hypocrisy and unbelief and the prejudice of system. Yet through it all the remnant of faith would obtain deliverance, those who amidst conflicting counsels and the strife of men clung to Him alone, leaving with them the comforting assurance for their individual souls that no act of faith, however small, could pass unheeded since it was ministered to Himself.

In Matt. 11 the power of system over the human mind is strikingly set forth. There the one most in the mind of God and least oppressed by the tradition of men yet belonging to the old thing—the system owned of God—is so influenced by the current of thought among those with whom his lot is cast that he hesitates to take for his soul's comfort and nourishment the blessed sweet truth that He had come, even the Christ who was sweeter than honey and the honeycomb, and had power on earth to save from grief and evil in spirit, soul, or body those who should trust in Him. It is John who came neither eating nor drinking, and scarcely daring to stretch out his hand to take of the sweet spiritual blessings though in owning the Christ he had a right to all.

But the Son of man came eating and drinking, a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners, enjoying all the blessings in the land as from God and unto Him, using all for His glory, and as means and opportunities to smite the enemy (compare Matt. 11; 1 Sam. 14:24-30). At this time the moment has arrived (Matt. 12:1-8) for the Son of man to manifest Himself in His full authority as Lord of all. Even to the house of God, the temple, and the sabbath, with authority and commission from God to sweep away all the vain imaginations of men, and to break down human devices in the things of God and upon the ground of being Lord of all, and in particular the Chief and Captain of His people, answerable for them in everything, and they alone responsible to Him, does He reply to

the captious fault-finding and envy of the Pharisees. As speaking for the people He quotes the same scripture in Matt. 9:18, in proof of His right to call sinners, namely, that Jehovah had willed to have mercy upon those who had no claim in law or righteousness upon Him for the sake of His priest. And now He quotes this scripture (chap. 12: 7) in connection with David's obtaining the show-bread for himself and men, to prove to the Pharisees that they had no right to question the actions of His followers since God had willed to have mercy upon all who owned Him, and really dealt with Him alone as Head and Chief and Lord, responsible and accountable for all things done in His name, and by those owning His sway. It was not merely that the act was a guiltless one, in itself, by-and-by if it had been a guilty one, He was prepared to take the charge and consequences and responsibility of it upon Himself.

Having thus utterly routed the enemy, working by the world and the flesh in the things of God, at every point where a stand had been made, the Lord now pursues His victory still farther, carrying the battle into the synagogues on the sabbath day. (Compare 1 Sam. 14:31; Matt. 12:9, &c. Ajalon— “of a stag,” the place of a clean animal delighting in high places. So a synagogue was a place for refreshing and communion, a place of delight for those clean before the Lord.) It is here the crowning victory on Jewish ground takes place and is the occasion of the evil heart of man for the first time consciously compassing the death of Jesus; thus unconsciously beginning to work out the pre-determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God. Just so it was by reason of the people enjoying the fruits of Jonathan's victory, without acknowledging that the life was forfeited to God, thus bringing the curse of God upon Israel that caused Saul to compass Jonathan's death, falsely supposing that it was the breaking of his command that had caused God's face to be turned away.

If 1 Sam. 14:24-46 be compared with Matt. 12:1-22, the workings of the spirit of evil in the evil heart of unbelief against the man of faith—Jesus are clearly seen. Jesus is therein exhibited tasting the sweets of the power which God had given Him as Son of man, His Anointed One, to deliver His people from the power of evil. Just as honey was one of God's promised blessings to His people in the land, so was deliverance from sin, sickness, disease, and death God's promised blessings by His Messiah; and had the people but been willing to take freely of these, great would have been the salvation wrought in Israel and great the triumph over all their enemies; instead of which, blinded by the false teaching of their rulers, and their own unbelief, they repented not; they refused to be saved from their sins (Matt. 11:20-24), though willing enough to participate in their own fleshly way in the mere earthly blessings which came in as part of the results of the Lord's work as Son of man; grasping them as fleshly men and not receiving them as those whose lives were forfeited to God.

But the Lord would not permit them to deal with Him as to His claims in this fleshly way. He would not commit Himself to them, for He knew what was in man. Therefore when He had healed great crowds, He charged them that they should not make Him publicly known, in order that He might be just the meek and silent One, with gentlest touch and lightest footfall, before He brought forth His judicial victory as anointed Son of God. And when they would have taken Him to make Him king, He departed by Himself alone into the mountain to pray, and causes many of His disciples to go away back and walk no more with Him by telling them that none can come to Him except it were given them of His Father.

But like Saul the rulers of the Jewish system had a plan whereby to remedy this reveling in the things of the flesh which spread through all the people, little knowing that the remedy was as fleshly as the sin, namely, to multiply their religious duties—to observe with severest straitness all the law, maxims, customs, traditions, and observances; to roll a great stone of work and labor, not for God but man. And when these fleshly commands were obeyed and earthly things were brought under the sanction of the worldly religious system, then one might take his fill of flesh, unawed by the fact that God's wrathful judgment because of broken law hung over them.

But Jesus takes occasion by the healing of a blind and dumb man possessed by a demon to show the principles of His kingdom, opposed as it is to the power of Satan, and the power by which it is made for men and in man—the Holy Spirit—and the character of those who shall be found inheriting it when He shall come to take possession in that day of judgment unto victory. (Matt. 12:22-37.) The Lord then shows that the dreaded place of death, the valley of hell, the heart—of the earth must encompass Him ere He can take His kingdom, and that this generation would be condemned in that day since they refused to be identified with Him in that place, but chose rather to delight themselves as men in the flesh with fleshly things; and therefore when He should reign in peace and glory they should be east out into the forsaken place while many far-off ones should be brought nigh.

This period of His ministry concludes with a solemn description of the condition of Israel, associating it with the case of the dumb man possessed by a demon whom He had healed. It shows that since they would reject the indwelling Spirit—out of envy speaking injuriously of Him, therefore the great work which He Himself had wrought in their midst would be rendered abortive and that the sweeping and beautifying of the empty house, however they might boast of it, would but render them a more attractive abode to the powers of evil and the more fit instrument for the exhibition of his perfect power. (Matt. 12:38-45.)

Then He points plainly to those who should inherit with Him His kingdom by association with Himself in His work for them and persons who like Himself should be the rejected ones, who would have been the means of deliverance to. Israel but who should become their supplanters because of their unbelief. Having in plain unmistakable words pointed out what should characterize those who are to enter into His kingdom, namely, doers of His Father's will, being identified with Him in the work of which Jonas was the sign (vers. 38-42; 46-50), Jesus next proceeds to lay the same thing before the people in parables, showing the reason for the failure in, the earthly thing was not in the word, but in the people; that the same power that had wrought so mightily hitherto could continue the work until not a foe remained, but it needed faith and so long as there was unbelief and sin unjudged among the people God, would not answer nor deliver them. (Compare 1 Sam. 14:26, 37; Matt. 13:1-28.)

(To be continued, if the Lord wilt)

Chapter 146

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—3

From Matt. 13:24-43 the Lord foretells that what had happened in the fleshly system because it was a fleshly thing should also happen in the spiritual kingdom and that through the direct action of the malice of the enemy; and the contrast between God's thoughts and man's thoughts, God's ways and man's ways, is strikingly shown by comparing it with 1 Sam. 14:38-46: the Lord in His longsuffering, being full of compassion, turning His anger away (Psa. 78:38-41) until the time of the harvest in order that not one feeble blade of wheat might be rooted up in spite of the apparent utter defeat of His purpose (Matt. 13:31, 32), and the entire corruption which should seize on that upon which His name is called (ver. 33); while Saul disdains to wait upon God until He should reveal His will, but in self-righteous haste dares to call down the judgment of God: while the Holy One would hold back judgment in grace, the unholy one would force forbearance into justice. God righteous, Saul unrighteous. In 1 Sam. 14:38-46 there are three parties on the scene—Saul and Israel (the flesh and its desire) on one side; Jonathan (“whom the Lord has given") on the other, and the Lord God of Israel in their midst in judgment. Of these Israel had knowingly broken the eternal law of Jehovah and brought upon itself His utter curse. Saul being already under judgment—Jonathan had guilelessly broken the vain commandment of man in his ignorance, and man had balled upon the just and holy God to give a judgment according to truth.

As to this particular matter the guilty stand on one side, the innocent on the other, and the just Judge is to decide. Which will He—does He—has He chosen to die? The just One for the unjust! the innocent for the guilty—Jonathan for Israel and Saul, “for Jonathan was taken.” So that spite of all that man could do through pride of heart and unbelief in calling down the wrath of God and challenging His judgment, crying, “The blood of this righteous One be on us and on our children;” “God do so to me and more also” (Matt. 27:25); yet if thus called upon to choose the God of love and grace will take the innocent One and spare the guilty crowd—will use the very unbelief of man to slim forth gloriously His love and righteousness.

In Matt. 13:36-46, the Lord shows that if judgment on the evil is restrained it is because of the good in its midst. That a man at the cost of all He had has bought all, bad and good, for the sake of the good. Nay, finding one precious pearl has emptied Himself, sold all He had, and bought it. Here love goes out and possesses the object of its desire righteously. In 1 Sam. 14:38-46 it is righteousness going forth and sparing righteously the guilty out of love. In Saul the Holy Spirit shows what the spared ones are by nature, and in Matthew what they are by grace eaters with the blood individually and by nature; a treasure and a priceless pearl by grace as God's assembly.

But judgment shall not always linger, neither shall grace be abused forever. The One who should not strive nor cry, and whose voice should not be heard in the streets; who would not break the bruised reed nor quench the smoking flax, must bring forth judgment unto victory—must gather out of His kingdom all offenses, and them that practice lawlessness—must sever the wicked from the just and cast them into the furnace of fire. And shall not the men of Samuel's time rise up in judgment against that generation and condemn it, for they rescued Jonathan who had wrought so

great salvation in Israel that he did not die, whereas the men of our Lord's time were offended in Him when they saw His wisdom and His works of power, because they knew Him that He was one of themselves (Matt. 13:53-58), and when for the last time the opportunity was given them to receive or reject Him, the crowds were persuaded to beg for Barabbas, and to destroy Jesus: all the people exclaiming, His blood be upon us and on our children.

In 1 Sam. 14:47-52 the Holy Spirit gives a concise account of Saul and his connections as head over the earthly kingdom in his wars with those that spoiled Israel, and forms in type a complete outline of the work of the Jewish politico-religious system as in authority over the earthly people of God—witnesses for Him upon the earth. Saul fought against the children of Moab and Ammon, the kings of Zobah and the Philistines; which stand as types of sins of the flesh, root and branch; and worldly sins in their cause and result; he also smote the Amalekites, who typify spiritual sins—sin in spiritual things. The eons of Saul represent the threefold character of the ministry of Christ as in, connection with the Jewish system. Jonathan— “whom the Lord has given.” (Matt. 11:3, 6, 16-24.) Ishui— “like,” “similar” —the one like unto his brethren. (Matt. 13:55-57.) Melchishua— “the king of help” (Matt. 21:16, 45, 41-46; 23:36-39; 26:63-66), the anointed Jesus who should save His people from their sins; for Moses truly said, “A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto Me, him shall ye hear in all things.” (Acts 3:22.) The two daughters of Saul are types of the two religious states that owned the authority and were connected with the Jewish system, namely, the mass, Merab” a multitude;” and the remnant, Michal— “brook” (See Psa. 110:7)— “the many,” like the sand on the seashore, and “the few,” that flow away from it. His wife is a type of the character of worship which was united to the Jewish system (the woman is always the type of the outward worship). Ahinoam— “the brother of pleasantness” —outwardly appearing to be connected with pleasantness and joy, but after all springing from fear being the offspring of “wrath.” Ahimaaz— “the brother of wrath.'

In 1 Sam. 13 was brought out the failure of Saul in the worship of God, through bringing i n the flesh: in chapter 14 he fails in the service of God for the deliverance of His people from the power of the world (Philistines, sojourners, dwellers on the earth), through making the word of God of none effect by his vain commands; thereby spoiling the work of him who was appointed of God to perform it. (Matt. 15:1- 20; 1 Sam. 14:24-52.) In chapter 15 is shown his failure against the foes that had hindered the people taking possession of the land— “Amalekites,” the offspring of the restraint of praise—see Gen. 36:12—religious enemies—spiritual evil—powers of darkness—false teachers and teachings. The Philistines are Israel's foes in the land and come up against Israel to attack her. The Amalekites were Israel's enemies on the way thither, and whom they are now to go out and destroy. The world and the flesh go up against the Lord's people to attack and oppress them, but the Lord's people go out against error and false teaching to destroy it.

In Matt. 5; 6; 7, our Lord declares the failure and consequent rejection of the Jewish system in the worship of God through the bringing in of flesh, and the choice of another to be captain over His people. (1. Sam. xiii.pliv.; Matt. 7:21-27.) In Matt. 12 that generation is shown by Him to have failed and to be rejected as to service because they made void the commands of God through their tradition. He is then doomed to death by them (ver. 14). Upon that He convinces them of their sin and of judgment by conscience, verses 25-37; by scripture, verses 38-42; by fact, verses 43-45; and concludes by pointing plainly to that which should succeed them (vers. 46-50). He then illustrates by parable the whole future of the old and new things (Matt. 13:1-52), and ceases from

His works of power because of their unbelief. From verse 1-23 the word of the kingdom is sown as a test of who is worthy in the old thing; from verse 24 the illustration of the new thing begins, not a question of test now, not of natural imperfection and consequent failure. Here the harvest is secure, the seed must bring forth its fruit, no failure. The field belongs to the man, it is his field, the seed is good, and He that sows is the Son of man; it shot up and produced fruit.

The matter to be considered here is the introduction maliciously of evil amongst the good, and the thing is not to test what is good (for that is plainly evidenced by the fruit), but how to root out the evil. Just as in Matt. 13 the word of the kingdom is shown to be a testing word bringing the nation under responsibility to destroy the false and receive the true in all its fullness, the Lord at the same time foreseeing the failure and its causes of the many doing either the one or the other, but a remnant of faith should be brought into blessing; so in 1 Sam. 15 Saul's responsibility as king over Israel is used as a test to bring him and the people to the proof whether they would perform the Lord's commandments and destroy utterly the evil.

In Matthew the test is applied individually and the censers of failure are shown to be, first, the heart had grown fat so that spiritual things found no entrance whatever but lay unheeded upon the mind as a thing of little moment or value, not worth consideration, so that the evil one catches the word away; second, that they had heard but heavily with their ears—had not suffered it to take the first place in their hearts—had put it by among those things by which they should profit, but when tribulation or persecution is shown to be necessary to its development it is immediately discarded as a thing bringing trouble rather than peace; third, that while feeling the full claims and authority of the word yet they willfully closed their eyes to the practical effects of those claims in order that they might live at ease amidst the rank natural weeds of this life, preferring the pleasures of sin to the reproach of Christ.

The characteristics of the remnant of faith are that they not only hear and understand the word, not only receive it and acknowledge its claims and authority, but also let patience Wave its perfect work, give faith full scope, and walk according to the word. The one great principle taught is that the word of the Lord must have entire possession of the heart not only the first place but the only place, the whole man.

In 1 Sam. 15 the same test is applied nationally the same principle being in action, the converse truth being prominent, not so much now the aspect of the perfect reception of truth as the utter destruction of error though they are indivisible; where the one comes the other goes. In Matthew it is the Jewish system on the point of rejection; in Samuel, still under responsibility; in Matthew the test for the foes; in Samuel the proof of the many; in Matthew to discover the good; in Samuel to lay bare the evil. Faith rests upon what the Lord has done in the past and acts upon what He is in the present. “The Lord sent me to anoint thee king: therefore hearken unto his voice.” “The Lord of hosts saith, I remember, now go and smite Amalek.”

Amalek is a type of the false religious system which brings in fear and bondage into the worship of god. It was they who laid wait for Israel in the way when he came up from Egypt; and Egypt is a type of the complete bondage under which the natural man labors, both of natural sin and religious error, and though one may be delivered from the sins of nature, yet he needs also to be delivered from religious error which is sure to attack him in the way. Egypt is the bold highhanded oppressor, Amalek the crafty, deceitful, subtle foe. Egypt lays burdens upon the men, yet, nevertheless, finds

them from the flesh-pots and with the onions and leeks, but Amalek lays wait and falls upon the weak and the women, the aged and the babes, thirsting only for their blood and not for their service, therefore are they the hated of God, and if Egypt be subdued, Amalek must be destroyed. Egypt is broken at the Red Sea, Amalek pursues to the borders of the land. Egypt is done with at once and forever. Amalek must be smitten until utterly destroyed.

Chapter 147

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—4

The Kenites represent the merely natural and earthly things which are blessings to those who receive them in faith, but curses and hindrances to the unbelieving, and used by the god of this world to blind their thoughts, but which are not to be confounded with that which the Lord has devoted to eternal wrath and destruction.

Saul smote the Amalekites throughout the length and breadth of their land, just as the Jewish system swept away everything that was opposed to the law and the holy place, but as while apparently exterminating the foe, he and the people spared all that was good, utterly destroying that only which was vile and refuse. So the Jewish system while pretending to a great zeal for God, suppressing with a stern hand everything that opposed itself to the authorized worship, yet spared everything that commended itself to fleshly religiousness, incorporating with itself and using for its own glory and advancement the very things which formed the mainstay and pride of the false worship and idolatry which surrounded them, namely, fear and sensuality.

From Matt. 14 commences the final trial, failure, and consequent rejection of the politico-religious system, first as to its political aspect and character. John (of whom Samuel is a type, both, the spiritual link between the old and the new, and the real witness for God of which the fleshly manifest thing was but a shadow, yet having a connection with and responsibility towards it) comes to Herod as one under responsibility to obey the law of God as King over His inheritance, and commands him to put away his brother's wife, to slay the pleasant sine. This, Herod refuses to do, and sparing the sin he slays the witness, and is himself cut off from any part in the kingdom to come. (Ver. 13. Compare 1 Sam. 15:1-29.)

Jesus, while showing His deep and utter abhorrence of all fleshly lusts by withdrawing Himself to a desert place apart yet at the smile time makes known His complete sympathy with all the needs of man's nature no matter how common or apparently trivial. He was moved with compassion about them and healed their infirm, and when the disciples would have dismissed the crowd to buy food for themselves, Jesus sympathizes with their hunger, saying, “They have no need to go; give ye them to eat.”

In the case of Herod is seen the high-handed disobedience to the revealed will of God, disobedience to a positive distinct command for and disregard of His warning voice.

From Matthew 14:13-34 the faithful Jews as represented in Peter—who is the characteristic of the Israelite under the Jewish system—are found also failing to enter into the full blessing and power of the work of God. God commands man to exercise faith and obey His word upon the ground of what He has done in the past, and of what He is in the present, as in the case of Saul. Here also the Lord first feeds five thousand men—representing the faithful ones in Israel, with five loaves and two fishes, and when all had eaten and were filled, causes to be gathered up twelve hand-baskets full of fragments, showing that there had been enough and to spare for all Israel—the whole twelve tribes had all had faith to partake thereof. By this work He proves His

ability to supply every need; indeed making His disciples the hand by which He distributed His bounty, so that they could not have failed to be aware of the fullness of His power and grace, and with this plain lesson upon their minds He immediately compels them to go alone on board ship in order that He may test their faith and bring it into exercise. Yet having come to them walking on the sea and saying to them, “Take courage; it is I: be not afraid,” and then commanding Peter upon his own solicitation to come to Him upon the waters, expecting him to exercise faith and the power of obedience upon the ground of what He had done in the past, and of what He was as then and there present; yet Peter, though at first walking in the success of faith, fails, seeing the wind strong and fearing, and is compelled to take the place of a helpless, lost one, for beginning to sink he cries out, “Lord, save me.” Jesus acknowledges the cry of faith, catches hold of him in his extremity; points out the cause of his failure in his walk, and, having gone up into the ship, makes the wind to drop, and brings thereby the others to the perfect confession of faith, “Truly thou art God's Son.”

In chapter 15 is displayed the willful high-handed disobedience to the command of God of the politico-religious system in its spiritual aspect and character, the cause and method of the disobedience is declared, and consequent rejection indicated. Our Lord is attacked by the Scribes and Pharisees in His character as servant of the circumcision (Jesus-Jonathan) on the ground that He had broken the commands of the ancients. He replies as the sent One, the messenger of God, charging them with transgressing the commandment of God, showing that the cause of their failure both as to worship and service was that their heart was far away from God though they honored Him with their lips (Matt. 15:8, 9), and that it was not what a man put into his mouth that brought him into judgment (compare Matt. 15:11; 1 Sam. 14:43), but what, coming out, was in his heart, rebellion, disobedience, and departing from the living God (compare Matt. 14:18; 1 Sam. 15:11, 22, 23); that lip-worship and man's teaching were alike abominable to God, and that only the honoring Him with the heart and obeying His commands, were acceptable in His eight, and the Pharisees thus refusing to root up out of the things of God that which the Father had not planted, but sparing the religious things of flesh, though honorable and good, the best and fattest that could be found and bringing them to sacrifice unto the Lord, should be themselves rooted out-blind leaders of the blind would both fall into the ditch.

Matt. 15:21-28 points to the period of transition wherein the grace and salvation which was the promised portion of the Jews upon their refusal of it goes out to the outcast woman of Canaan, pleading, as to the Lord's mind about it for the whole Gentile world, which she typically represented, so that our Lord's apparent reluctance to grant her the desired blessing, was not only that her faith might be fully drawn out by causing her to see her right place, which it assuredly was, but it was also to Him, doubtless, a foretaste and commencement of the casting away of the Jew and the bringing in of the Gentile, the making of the first last and the last first, which to Him as Israel's Messiah, the One of whom John was the voice, was a sad and terrible trial and perhaps formed the subject of His prayer in the mountain, even as at another time when the rejection was completed, the measure of iniquity being full, He wept bitter tears over Jerusalem.

So Samuel also was grieved at the sin and rejection of Saul, and cried unto the Lord all night. Samuel's words to Saul about his sin have a progressive character. When the word of the Lord comes to him saying, “It repenteth me that I have set up Saul to be king,” he cries unto the Lord all night, doubtless in intercession, that Saul might even then find a place for repentance; and had

Saul taken his right place in confession, pardon would surely have been his, but instead he meets Samuel with a conscious lie— “I have performed.” Samuel does not lose hope and, still endeavoring to touch his conscience and bring him to confession, asks, “What then this bleating.... and lowing?” But instead of humbling Saul, this home-thrust only forces proud flesh to take a further step in sin, from rebellion he proceeds to stubbornness, actually pretending that his guilty act was meritorious and offering to return to God as a favor part of what he had stolen from Him as though he would make Him a participator in his crime.

This has always been the way with flesh after sin had entered. So Adam first makes a false excuse to cover his rebellion, and then—evading the direct question of God, refusing to confess his sin, which if he had done would perhaps have brought him into the results immediately of grace, showing that he was still rolling it as a sweet morsel under his tongue—he charges God with being the real cause of it, since it was He who had given the woman to be with him. So also Cain; confession coming too late, after judgment is pronounced.

Chapter 148

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—5

(Continued frees page 256.)

Likewise in Saul's case to the second convicting question of Samuel, still looking for confession, he has the hardihood as though he had nothing to look for but commendation to answer," Say on," unshrinkingly demanding that judgment according to his merits should be weighed out to him. Samuel, still lingering over him in tender pity and intercession, strives once more to awaken conscience by reminding him of what be vies, what God had made him, and His command to him as such; then, instead of finishing with the word of judgment, he in tenderness questions him as to the cause of his disobedience, covetousness, and rebellion, thus leaving an open door of humility and confession; but in vain, and this forbearance and longsuffering only produces in Saul greater hardihood and stubbornness, for he now proudly and lyingly declares "Yea, I have obeyed the voice of the Lord" —not disobeyed— "have gone the way the Lord sent me, and have brought Agag the king of Amalek "did not fly upon the spoil— "and have utterly destroyed the Amalekites" —therefore have not done evil in the sight of the Lord. He adds lies to rebellion, equivocation to lies, and hypocrisy to equivocation; then lays all the blame upon the people but suggests that Samuel's God ought to be very well satisfied since the best of the things taken, which should have been destroyed, would be sacrificed to Him, denying that God was his God whatever He might be for others—that he was his own master and could do as he liked. This is fleshly wickedness perfectly developed (see Ps. x. 4, marg.; xii. 4). This fills up the measure of iniquity; therefore judgment must fall, and it is swift, complete and irrevocable. Samuel does not wait for Saul's answer but gives God's answer to his question, stripping off the cloak of hypocrisy; he then distinctly describes the sin and immediately pronounces judgment, bringing him to the bar of God, whose sentence he had so recklessly required, and casting him away from thence. Now that it is too late confession comes, but even now is he willing to justify himself like Adam, laying the blame upon the people, caring little who suffers so that appearances and his honor among men are saved, with an eye only upon Samuel, or the people, or himself, anything but God; not seeing God in the matter at all, only the things which are seen and for a time. So he says to Samuel, "I pray thee, pardon my sin, and turn again with me;" but Samuel is in the presence of the Lord, and to Him it is that Saul is now brought, for he says, "I will not return with thee; for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel." Thrice had Saul called down judgment upon himself. The first time is to the rejection of his kingdom, having through motives of worldly policy forced his fleshly self into the presence of God as one fit to be there in worship. The second occasion had proved one of utter destruction to himself and people, for he claims God's sentence as a sinless one; but one was there a sinless one whom God chose to be a scape-goat and a substitute for all the people. The third time he himself is rejected as a servant. As a worshipper, a man under law, and a servant, is he alike rejected. But as bound to the law, he in common with the whole multitude had one to stand in his place who bore the irrevocable curse that was due; thus on that ground all alike went scot-free. It is thus that the Lord Jesus convicts the Jewish system of failure and consequent rejection: in Matt. 5; 6; 7, as to worship; 9,

10, 11, 12, 15:1-20 as to transgression: 15: 29-39, 18: 21-35 and onward as to service.

As already noticed the character of persons, to whom the blessing rent away from the Jewish system should be given, is brought out in the circumstance of the Canaanitish woman; who, when brought to the point of giving up all claim of merit upon Jesus and taking the place of an unclean outsider unworthy of any notice, receives from the Lord the bread intended for the children, the blessing provided for the lost sheep of Israel's house. She first claims the blessing as a matter of pity due from the Son of David. This proved that she did not know Him nor herself, nor the place in which alone blessing could be received and the Lord cannot allow the plea for an instant, for she was not dealing in truth. Again she seeks and now for help as one who owns Him as her Lord, but she has not yet got to the end, still finding some little strength in self, though needing help; still urging some claim upon the Lord, though that of bond-slave. At last He answers, bringing her to use an argument which could not be gainsayed, a plea which was founded on absolute grace, undeniable truth which He Himself had stated in its extremest form—what He was and what she was. The wider the contrast, the stronger her case, for now she rested her claim upon the fact that He was rich and she was poor; He full, she empty; He the Master, she a dog; He having enough and to spare, she hungering for the crumbs. The higher the ground He took and the lower he placed her, the more strongly did she bind Him to grant her desire. She was sure, if His claims were tested, the more His abundant fullness would be brought out, and if hers were examined, the more her utter need would be exposed. Here, therefore, she rested confident in the truthfulness and validity of her plea; and here the Lord acknowledges her truth, granting all her heart's desire.

From Matt. 15:29-39 the way in which mercy was to reach the Gentiles is again illustrated. Jesus goes up into the mountain and sits down there, and great crowds Come to Him and cast down their suffering ones at His feet, and He heals them all. On the former occasion the disciples brought the case of the hungry crowds before the Lord's notice, desiring that they might be sent away as those who could shift for themselves; but now they are left three days unregarded until the Lord Himself takes up their need, and having broken the seven loaves (the number of perfectness denoting a complete supply for all, be they who they may) the disciples distribute to the four thousand, and all eat and are filled; and of the fragments seven baskets full are gathered up, showing that of the Bread of life which He had to bestow there is not only sufficient for the need of those who partake by faith but also provision for the need of the whole world.

In Matt. 16:1-4 the whole fleshly religious thing, comprising within its limits every sect, party and shade of religious opinion as represented in the Pharisees and Sadducees, the ritualists and deists, is brought into judgment, proved worthless, and cast away. From verses 5-1 the remnant is shown in its connection with the religious system and bidden to beware of its corruption; from verses 13-20 their proper standing and ultimate position is revealed. From verses 21-28 the path thereto is shown and the conditions attached to walking in it, and chapter 17:1-9 reveals the chief corner-stone of the new building in the glory attaching to His character as such. The Lord convicts the Pharisees and Sadducees on the ground of scripture and common sense, declaring that, if they used the same judgment in the things of God which they did. daily in common things, they could not but discern that His wrath was about to burst and that even now if they learned from the example of some they might escape though it were from the belly of hell itself. Verses 5-12 prove that they would neither use the judgment nor learn the lesson, and are therefore counted reprobate (verses 15-20) and the kingdom taken from them and given to their neighbor better than

they. (Compare Matt. 16:1-20; 1 Sam. 15:17-31.)

Chapter 149

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—6

The two feedings clearly represent the grace of God going forth, first, to man with some strength left, therefore still under a measure of responsibility though on the way to utter failure—the remnant of faith. And second to man at the last extremity, perfectly helpless, at the point to die. Jew and Gentile alike under sin, all under the judgment of God. In the one case the Lord going out from the mountain fed them on the plain; in the other, after He had gone up into the mountain and sat down. On the plain the bread was given before the day had passed. In the mountain three days had elapsed. On the first occasion the disciples, having enough food for themselves, come to Jesus that the crowd may be dismissed in order to buy food for themselves. On the second the Lord calls His disciples to Him and tells out all His loving anxiety and compassion for the crowds and commences to give that which was more than sufficient for their own need to be a superabundant supply for the whole crowd. Twelve Jewish hand-baskets of fragments were gathered up after the first feeding—one for each tribe of Israel. Seven large baskets, enough for the whole world—of the seven loaves were taken up.

1 Sam. 15:26-35 brings to view the last act of iniquity which fills up the cup of rejection and wrath—it is an act of personal violence though but a rending of the garment—endeavoring to compel the spiritual man to perform a fleshly act—to countenance—fleshly worship for the sake of fleshly profit. This is refused; the rending of the garment follows: the rejection complete; but outward acknowledgment still continued upon solicitation for the sake of the public example in the hewing in pieces of the chief thing in it which had lifted up itself (Agag— “tall,” “very high") against God; then follows (vers. 34, 35) the separation of the fleshly thing and the spiritual never again to meet.

Thus John refuses fellowship, with and witnesses against Herod as the, political part of the earthly system, who thereupon rends the mantle of his body, which when Jesus, the spiritual Man, hears of, He withdraws. (Matt. 14:1-13.) Then follows the refusal of the spiritual man to have any fellowship with the religious part of the system, that is as to their doctrine (Matt. 15:1-29), rejecting it (ver. 7-9), hewing it in pieces and going forth from them unto the Gentiles (vers. 21, 22). Chapter 16:1-4 shows the rejection of the whole thing from first to last in all its forms, suggests the rending of the skirt of the mantle (ver. 4), and again the spiritual man leaves them and goes away (ver. 5-12): bring out the hewing in pieces of the evil thing harbored by the professing system, and verse 21 the plain declaration that the consequence would be the rending of His body by the professing system; though still continuing to acknowledge it outwardly.

Verses 22, 23, describe the hewing down of the fleshly things of nature in the heart of the remnant of faith represented in Peter, in whom the corrupt thing has found its perfect development. Like Agag he comes cheerfully in his unbelief and self-righteousness to the Lord, saying, Surely the bitterness of death is passed; “This shall in nowise, happen unto thee;” but turning round with a word the Lord smites down and hews in pieces the natural things of men, saying, “Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offense unto me.” The tendency of Peter, as a specimen of natural man at

his beat estate, was to bring his fleshly abilities and perfections before God as fit for service and worship, and the Lord had to teach him at the lake of Gennesaret that as to power for service he was utterly helpless and unable to save himself, and as to meetness before God in worship, the very best things of his natural heart proved him a Satan, a tempter, and an odor of foul savor. Previously (vers. 13-10) the Lord had expressly revealed the new thing which He was about to bring in in place of the old one which He had rejected, and the truth upon which alone it could be established. Yet Peter is found ready to ignore and give up the work of God for the sake of his natural affection, and willing that the foundation-stone should not be laid, since to do so would cost him the object of his heart's desire. But the Lord shows him that nothing of nature must be weighed against the will of God, since He alone knows what is profitable, and that the time was near at hand when it would be according to His mind that each man's doings would be weighed out to him. And in order to encourage His weak ones in the difficulties of the wilderness which separated between the house of bondage out of which He was leading them and the land of promise into which He was bringing them, He gives a promise that before they shall be called upon to taste of death at all, death which all were to be prepared for need be, they should see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.

Thus was the separation between the natural and the spiritual man finally complete—each went his own way, the one mourning for the other even unto the day of His death, but never attempting again to cure the smart or heal the wound, but ever treating the earthly things as past all cure at the point to die, the grave of judgment yawning for it, waiting only to put it out of sight in order to fully manifest the better thing.

1 Sam. 16 reveals Jehovah working out in secret the counsels of His own will. In chapter xiii., Jonathan appears as type of the Lord Jesus in His character as the Messiah, the king of help (Melchishuah); in chapter 14: 1-30, Jonathan is a type of Christ as the Servant-Prophet, the One like unto His brethren (Ishui— “like,” similar"); in chapter xiv. 31-46, Jonathan foreshews Jesus as Priest and Sacrifice, the Lamb of God, the Gift of God, (Jonathan” whom the Lord has given"). In chapter xv. Samuel appears as a type of Jesus, as the witness for God against the corrupted professing thing, and a link between the rightful heir rejected, and the new man appointed of God to possess the kingdom.

Chapter 16 describes the choosing and anointing of the new man in secret. Samuel is sent to fill his horn with oil and anoint, asking in place of Saul the one whom God had provided among Jesse's sons. He fears Saul's anger, but id directed to take a heifer for sacrifice with him and go to the house of Jesse at Bethlehem. The elders tremble at his coming but he assures them he comes peaceably, and sanctifies Jesse and his sons, calling them to the sacrifice. Eliab— “to whom God was a father” —is first looked on and refused, because though he had outward appearance he wanted heart. Then Abinadab— “whose father is noble” —is not chosen; and Shammah— “astonishment” —likewise. At length when all had passed by unchosen, David the youngest (the beloved) keeping the sheep is sent for and brought in. He was ruddy, had beautiful eyes, and goodly to look to. And the Lord said, Arise, anoint him, “for this is he.” Samuel did so, and the Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward, and Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

(Continued from page 287.) (To be continued.)

Chapter 150

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—7

These things are directly prophetical of the events occurring in Matt. 17 which is intimately linked with Matt. 3 where John is shown in connection with Jesus as the witness against the corrupted system. Here Jesus is the link between the old and the new. The same voice being borne to Him on each occasion from God the Father, giving Him honor and glory. John's baptism is used by the Holy Spirit as the occasion of the beginning of the anointing, and on the Mount of transfiguration that unto which He was anointed is manifested, but having expressly in view the sacrifice which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem (Luke 9:31), as also at His baptism and anointing (John 1:29). By the baptism of water He was shown to be the Prophet like unto Moses, from among the people (Ishui). By the anointing of the Spirit and the witness of John He is declared to be Priest and Sacrifice (Jonathan— “gift of God"), and now on the mount He is manifested to be the King (Melchi-shuah)

In the mount of transfiguration four representatives of the family of the man of faith (Jesse— “the old man"?—Abraham) are passed in review before the Holy Spirit, of whom Samuel is a type (Samuel “given of God in answer to prayer.” Luke 11:18), namely, Moses (“the law.” Eliab— “to whom God was a father"). Elijah ("the prophets,” Abinadab.— “whose father is noble") the disciples (the remnant of Israel. Isa. 52:14. Shammah— “astonishment,” Matt. 17:4, 6, 7), and lastly, Jesus Himself. Noting the fact that Elijah appears as representing two classes of which himself and John the Baptist were the types.

There are seven representative men brought together and none chosen—Moses, Elijah, John Baptist, Peter, James, John, and Jesus who was indeed to be chosen, but being rejected of man could not be chosen of God as the one among His brethren, since as such He had another work to do; but must be brought out from keeping the sheep into the house of bread (Bethlehem), and anointed there as one not of that generation (Isa. 53:8), apart from His brethren, so that though reckoned as of Jesse's family—one of the seven (1 Sam. 16:10)—the seventh (1 Chron. 15), yet if He is to be anointed for the kingdom, it must be as the eighth man—the head of the new creation—the first begotten from the dead; for while Peter is proposing to associate Him with Moses and Elias, the voice of God comes from the excellent glory, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight hear him” (compare 1 Sam. 16:12, Matt. 17:6) so that Jesus also represents two classes. He is the last Adam and the second Man—the finish of the old and the beginning of the new creation.

1 Sam. 16:14-23 describes the state of the Jewish politico-religious system as rejected of God, our Lord's connection with it as such, and the character of His ministry to it as the one anointed to supersede it. The Spirit of Jehovah departs from Saul and an evil spirit from Jehovah troubles and terrifies him, and Saul's servants, telling him so plainly, suggest that a man who is a cunning player on a harp should be sought out and brought to him, so that, when the evil spirit from God was upon him, the man might play with his hand, and be should be well. Saul assents; and one of his servants mentions having seen a son of Jesse; the Bethlehemite, cunning in playing, a mighty

valiant man, a man of war, prudent in speech, a comely person, and Jehovah was with him. Saul thereupon sends to Jesse, saying, “Send me David thy son, who is with the sheep. And Jesse took a homer of bread, a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son to Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he loved him greatly, and he became his armor-bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me, for he hath found favor in my sight. And it came to pass when the spirit from God was upon Saul, David took the harp and played with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

So from the time that the Lord was manifested on the mount as the Son of man coming in His kingdom, He takes a place entirely distinct from the Jewish system, and through all His connection with it, from this time there is no thought of restoring but of destroying it, and the secret establishing of that which was superseding it. It had rejected the witness of God and His promised restoring grace by Elijah in slaying John Baptist. (Mal. 4:5, 6.) This had been the deed of the political power in Herod, and now it was accomplishing its rejection of God in also slaying the Son of man (Matt. 17:11, 12), and this, by the religious power in conjunction too with the political, just as God had been rejected in Samuel (the representative of the law and the prophets) through political pride (1 Sam. 8:19, 20), and afterward in Jonathan (the heir to the kingdom) through spiritual pride. (1 Sam. 14:38, 44.) So that now a new thing must be brought in, but silently and in secret until God's long-suffering had run its course.

But as David for Saul, so the Lord has a work of power and grace to do for the evil thing which had compassed His death. The door of hope had been finally and forever closed upon the old, as to restoration by Him who was the rightful heir, before the new was manifested, for from that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He MUST BE killed (Matt. 16:21); and not only as the Christ should He be rejected, but as Son of man also. It was the religious power that rejected and slew Him as the Christ, but in His character as Son of man were His claims denied and Himself slain by both the political and religious powers. Therefore when speaking of His death as Son of man, He connects it with that of John the Baptist, who had been slain by Herod; and as Son of mall, the Lord shows that the whole world would be concerned in His rejection, that “men” would kill Him—Jew and Gentile. (Matt. 17:22.)

But the cause which lay at the root of the failure and complete powerlessness of the old thing, and the only source of power in the new, is brought out by the Lord in the case of the lunatic boy. On previous occasions it had been called by the Lord Jesus wicked and adulterous, yet one where grace could work; but now He describes it as an unbelieving and perverted one, where even grace could find no room for exercise; and He sighs for the time when He shall be delivered from it (ver. 17), and in this sweeping censure He includes all in the measure that they were bound to it—disciples, the father of the lad, the great crowd, and the scribes. (Matt. 17:20; Mark 9:14-25; Luke 9:37-41.) This character of unbelief which spread like a leprosy through the earthly system and all it attached to itself—looking upon the things which are seen and endure but for a time, and being blind to the things unseen but eternal, manifesting itself even in the remnant of faith by an averseness to spiritual exercises (ver. 21)—was the canker which ate the heart out of the Jewish system, leaving it but a shell which outwardly promised well, but which, when the time came for it to blossom into perfection, withered into dust and ashes.

In verse 19 the Lord shows that faith alone would be of value in the new thing about to supersede it, by which the grace and gifts of God coming down upon the thing powerless in itself, yet containing in itself the germs of life, would cause it to spring up and bear fruit to His glory, as even the grain of mustard seed, insignificant, apparently lifeless, fruitless, until in the earth the gracious influences of God descend upon it, when the life is manifested, and it springs up and bears fruit many fold.

When the power of Jesus in casting out the evil spirits is brought into notice, it is in connection with the kingdom and Himself as the anointed One (Matt. 4:24; 8:11, 16, 34; 10:7, 8; 11:22, 28; Acts 10:38), with power to do so with a word, while the Jewish system was quite unable to deliver its children from the terrible affliction.

The state of Saul troubled by the evil spirit from the Lord, and that of the lunatic lad possessed of a demon, are remarkable illustrations of the condition of the Jewish system at this time, restless and disturbed, and ever being driven by the powers of evil into opposite extremes of rigid formalism or skeptical laxity; and even as all Saul's servants were powerless for good, and David only by his skillful playing could deliver him, so not even the disciples, being as to their faith still connected with the Jewish system, but Jesus alone was able to cast out the demon from the lunatic lad. David's position in the household of Saul is also an exact type of the relation in which Jesus stood to the Jewish system; apparently its servant, but in the secret counsel of God anointed to supersede it, who as its servant brought it nourishment in the revelation of the mind of God, bore its armor in giving spiritual power to all who followed Him, and cured all its ills, moral or physical, by the word of truth and power. This double character of the Lord Jesus is shown clearly in Matt. 17:24-27, where the collectors of the tribute, which every Jew paid to the temple, claim it from Jesus, who at once asserts His right and that of His disciples to exemption, but notwithstanding commands Peter to obtain it from the mouth of a fish and pay it for both, as in a way still owning allegiance.

It is at this time also that the disciples come into some measure of knowledge regarding the establishment of the new kingdom, and begin to question and dispute as to their place in it, having a very vague conception of its spiritual character, and of what would befit them as subjects of it. Taking occasion upon a question asked by them as to who should be the greatest in it, the Lord very fully developer (Matt. 18) the character of its subjects, namely, little ones severed from every worldly bond, lost ones brought into the Father's presence, its constitution and governing power, His name and Himself, with its law—that of love. (Ver. 21-35.)

Matt. 19:1, 2, presents the Lord as the one who by His skill was able to refresh and heal and dispel for the time being all the evil that oppressed those with whom His life on earth was linked. From verse 3 to 10 He substitutes the law of the new kingdom for that of the old system. From verse 10 to 12 He shows that only those who are content to be separated from every fleshly gratification should possess the fullness of blessing. In verses 13-15 the Lord declares that little children, and by implication those who like them are helpless and trustful, are the inheritors of the kingdom of the heavens. From verse 16 is shown that natural man at his very best estate, brought to his utmost perfection, is, when all is done, utterly worthless, altogether vanity, and only to be rejected, since earthly things are to him of more value than the things of God; and that of those who do leave all and follow. Him, it is not the service which He delights in and rewards, so much as the

faith end obedience which is the spring of that service (10:1-16). And this being the case, there would be many go in to work in the expectation of, and right to, very little recompense, who would yet receive as much when pay-time came as those who, like Peter, would bargain to work for a certain wage, so that the last would be more blest than the first, though each would receive equal wages. From verse 17 the blessed Lord explains to His disciples that the new kingdom can only be built up on the perfect obliteration of the old, and that in the slaying of Him who was its rightful heir, and heir of all things, by those whom He had come to rule, and that therefore like Abraham they must be content to give up the only-begotten, in whom they justly expected the fulfillment of the promises of God, and to count that God was able to raise Him from the dead, and consequently to desire and look for nothing that was inconsistent with His character as the risen man—the new man Christ Jesus. But, just as on a previous occasion, Peter desired to gratify his natural affection at the expense of the will and work of God, so now John and his brother and mother wish to satisfy a natural ambition, praiseworthy as to flesh, and to do so at all risks, cost what it may, the rest of the disciples being filled with the same fleshliness. With what gentleness and love does the Lord show that they will have to drink a cup of death to all their earthly expectations, and to have their hopes and joy where He had His, beyond the grave in heavenly blessings, and that in His kingdom they should possess lordship and authority who were readiest to serve.

Verse 29-34. The Lord is seen to be still ministering to the need of those belonging to the old, but yet in answer to the cry of faith which looked out for the fulfillment of promise, and claimed blessing on that score. The two blind men illustrate the position of the faithful remnant of that time and of the time yet coming, which are but one generation, who, when the heavenly thing is gone from the earth, will be found crying to the Lord for sight and laying hold of the promises given in the Son of David (Psa. 13:3), and even as the then remnant had sight restored and were led out to follow

Jesus, so the blind but crying one of the coming time will be visited with mercy and healing, and will be led to follow Jesus into perfect blessing.

In Matt. 21 the Lord Jesus presents Himself as the king, Messiah, the deliverer promised to Israel, according to the word of the Lord by Zech. 9:9, only to be rejected by the nation as represented in the governing powers, the chief priests and scribes, though acknowledged thoughtlessly by the rabble and the children, yet meeting every need wherever it presented itself, and showing that, since the wise and strong ones had rejected Him, it was left to the babes and suckling the simple and weak ones—to receive Him, and the promised blessing. Then follows (ver. 17 -22) an incident designed to show that God's long-suffering had passed its last limit, and that now remained nothing but the irrevocable curse for the politico-religious system which had rejected and compassed the death of its Head and ruler. This was set forth in the fig-tree which, in spite of every favoring circumstance, yet had nothing but leaves, and was withered forever. The Lord at the same time takes occasion to show those who, as the vine, were to replace the withered fig-tree, as the fruit bearer on the earth to Him, the power by which alone any good could come from them, namely, faith.

The Lord had come into Jerusalem as the One of whom the prophets had spoken—the great King, anointed of God to deliver His people and bring the whole earth under His sway; ready to perform the work, subject only to one condition, namely, that the people should be prepared to receive

Him. If He is to fulfill the whole word, and to have His dominion from sea to sea,) and from the river to the ends of the earth, then He must be the just and the saved one; but if He is to save Himself, He cannot save His people, neither can He come as the meek and lowly one but as the avenger. Therefore does He choose the meek and lowly part—to be Himself cut off and have nothing, in order that He may come in grace and not in judgment, in salvation not in wrath.

The Holy Spirit therefore, in quoting the word of the prophet, only quotes so much as the Lord took upon Himself to fulfill at that time. Jesus then enters into the temple as prepared to fulfill the promise of the Lord by Isaiah (chap. 56.), which was made conditional upon the keeping of equity and the doing justice, but finds that, instead of being fit for a house of prayer for all people, into which place of honor and glory He would then have brought it, they had made it a den of robbers, according to the word of the Lord by Jeremiah. (Chap. 7: 11.) They had refused to amend their ways and their doings—had refused to execute judgment between a man and his neighbor—had continued to oppress the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow had trusted in lying words while keeping up all the outward forms of religion, coming into the house of God as though it were their place, yet all the while filling their hearts with their covetousness: thus making it in truth in God's sight, and treating it in their own hearts, as being a den of robbers, laying themselves and the Sanctuary open therefore to the Curse which Jehovah had pronounced upon it in such a case. The Lord, however comes in in this extremity of evil, casts out all that sold and bought, and makes what had been a den of robbers a place of healing and blessing; but this only brings out a more determined rejection of Him and the salvation He brought, for the scribes and Pharisees were indignant, and shew how utterly they denied His chains by drawing attention to the acknowledgment of them as a thing worthy of rebuke, even though it proceeded from the mouths of children; so sensitive had jealousy made them. Replying to them, Jesus shows to them from Psa. 8 that God had expressly revealed His purpose to bring in the promised universal salvation and blessing upon the acknowledgment of His glory by the weak and ignorant ones, choosing the foolish and the weak things of the world to put to shame the wise and strong.

The next day, when teaching in the temple, He proves to them that their wisdom was the cause of their ignorance, their foresight the reason of their blindness for questioning Him as to His authority for doing the things He did, He agrees to tell them, providing they tell Him from whence came the baptism of John. They, instead of replying upon the facts of the case, reason among themselves in order to make their answer fit their policy, and, this being impossible, they profess ignorance. Since therefore they are willfully blind as to John's mission, He leaves them willfully ignorant as to His authority, but lays bare their state of heart, and convicts them of hypocrisy in the parable of the man who commanded his two children to go work in his vineyard: the one who refused, but, afterward repenting, went, and the other who said, I go, sir, but went not.

In the two succeeding parables the Lord most powerfully brings before them the utter desolation which should overtake them and theirs in consequence of their unfaithfulness and terrible sin as servants and fruit-bearers to God; causing them to convict themselves out of their own mouth, and proving to them from scripture (Psa. 118) that their work as builders of the Lord's house was without avail and vanity, since they refused to build on the stone which God had appointed for a foundation: going further, to show that the stone which they rejected would become to them a rock of vengeance and destruction.

The death of Jesus is now a thing thoroughly settled and determined, only delayed until the plan of carrying it out is matured. The Lord having declared the utter rejection of the Jewish system because of unfaithfulness as servants under responsibility, He next proceeds to hew their refusal and contempt of the bounty of God, and consequent rejection as the guests of grace.

This plain speaking stirs up all the powers of the enemy, who comes against Him in the threefold manifestations of evil, namely, the world, the flesh, and the devil: the political, the sensual, and the religious: the Herodians; the Sadducees, and the Pharisees; and they each attack Him upon ground of their own choosing, each to be utterly discomfited in turn, and in proportion to the strength and artfulness of the attack, routing the first by showing what was due, as a matter of right, to God as Supreme; the second, by what was consistent, as a matter of reason, with God's nature as the Eternal; the religious enemy He takes upon the ground of religious obligation to the God of Covenant the Jehovah God; answering in each case, not the direct question of the lips, but the thought of the heart; the motive, of which the question was but a blind. Then, gathering all their attacks into a single focus, He with one question meets and confounds them forever, presenting Himself as the complete answer to everything: for if the Christ were. David's Son, then He is the true King to whom everything must be rendered; the true Resurrection and the Life, the God of the living; and the Jehovah God, commanding the obedience of love.

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Chapter 151

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—8

The Lord, having thus completely discomfited them in all their assaults, next proceeds to attack them in turn, and to hew them down root and branch. He first acknowledges their divine commission, but only the more fully to expose their unfaithfulness; then crying bitter woes upon them, He shows that they were not merely faithless servants but fierce foes, not simply untrustworthy guides, but false seducers; sepulchers truly, but sepulchers fall of corruption within children of those who slew the prophets, but surpassing the measure of their fathers; offspring of vipers doubtless, but themselves serpents.

Showing thus the tree to be not only barren, but poisonous, the Lord reveals Himself as the One from whom all blessing must be derived, and that the characteristics of those who should exercise authority in the thing which He was about to set up would not be exaltation but humility, and that their portion would not be either to slay the prophets or build their tombs but to be themselves slain and persecuted, resulting however in an overflowing measure of judgment upon the persecutors. And as He began with owning them in the place of God's appointment, so He concludes with revoking that appointment until a time of repentance and acknowledgment of Himself, leaving the temple as a thing that could be in no wise cleansed or restored, a charnel-house unfit for a clean man to enter, like its owners, fair to look on without, but within full of dead men's bones; and predicting its complete overthrow, thus including all in a common ruin, the judgment of Gehenna upon the heads of the system, the curse of Cain upon the generation, desolation upon the city, and destruction upon the temple.

The slaughter of Zacharias is typically prophetical of the slaying of John the Baptist, who was the last of the witnessing prophets of God slain for righteousness' sake up to that time. The circumstances of the time were identical in each case. The temple had been renewed just previous to their ministry with much of its former magnificence, and the ceremonies of the law restored and performed by men who walked blamelessly before the Lord in all His commandments and ordinances; but that generation had passed away, and nothing remained but an outside witness against a house that for God had become an empty shell. Indeed the judicial murder of Jesus was the final act of violence by which the false sought to get rid of the true, prolonged doubtless and consummated in effect by the rejection of the witness of the Holy Spirit in the church.

From this time the earthly system as owned of God is entirely lost sight of, and the Lord passes at once to reveal the new and heavenly kingdom, of which He was Lord and King, taking up the signs which should accompany its manifestation after the complete obliteration of the former thing, not one stone being left upon another.

These signs therefore are to be looked for immediately the Jew comes into responsibility before God as His witness upon earth, after the utter annihilation of that which had formerly ruled him. The old thing was not thoroughly leveled to the ground until Titus destroyed the temple and carried the Jews away into captivity. The Jew will not be the witness for God as a Jew until the church has gone from the earth to be with her Lord and Bridegroom forever: for before God's King shall be set

upon His holy hill of Zion and declare the decree that He is in that day, the day of resurrection the begotten Son of God, these birththroes shall come to pass. Many shall come, saying, “I am the Christ;” wars and rumors of wars, but this is not the end. Nation rising against nation, kingdom against kingdom, famines, pestilences, and earthquakes, are but, the beginning of pangs; tribulation, and slaughter, and hatred, from all the nations shall follow, and then many among themselves would be offended, and deliver up, and hate, one another; false prophets should mislead, lawlessness prevail, and love grow cold; but the one enduring to the end should be the saved; and after the good news of the coming kingdom had been declared to the heathen and the uttermost parts of the earth, then should the end of that age come.

Again, the Lord describes another set of signs parallel to these: first, the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, set there by the false king, doubtless the Antichrist, in the midst of the week; then shall follow the flight of the disciples and the final tribulation in the land, and immediately after the sun shall be darkened, the moon not give her light, the stars fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken. And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, to be followed by His coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and the gathering of. His elect. Further all these shall come to pass ere that generation shall have passed away; thus clearly showing that men should be occupying an exactly similar position when these things occur as they did then.

The Jew shall be in the possession of the land, the bulk in unbelief, but in their midst a remnant of faith. The Gentile shall have dominion in the laud, upholding the false king, the Antichrist, with whom, for the sake of temporal advantage, the worldly Jew will make a covenant, but their trust put to utter shame and to their own destruction when the scourge of God's wrath shall go through the land.

That the time of the Lord's coming, the completion of the age, and the introduction of the new kingdom should correspond to and be a part of the time that then was, is the clear teaching of the parable and the direct statement which it illustrates. When the Jew, as God's fig-tree for fruit-bearing and witness upon earth, withered because barren, should become broken in heart and should turn to the Lord—the branch become tender and put forth leaves in the power of a renewed life—then is the summer, the harvest, the end near—at the doors.

This generation will not have passed sway until all these things shall have taken place. The heaven and the earth—the heavenly and the earthly which shall intervene—shall pass away, but the word of the Lord not at all.

But as the days of Noah, and as the people, so shall the coming of the Son of man be: for when the professed sons of God should link themselves with the men of the earth, through the daughters of men and great results and much power and honor accrue, to the flesh thereby; when the natural man Enos— “a man” —should have passed away, the spiritual man “Enoch” — “dedicated” —have been taken—he was not, for God took him; when religious flesh should have reached its perfection and perished, Lamech— “strong” —777 years; When flesh in all its forms (Methuselah— “man of darts") should have been fully developed—666 (Rev. 13:18), and in the long-suffering of God permitted to overpass its limit three years; the time during which the bride is formed from the side of the sleeping Lord—then should the end of all flesh come before God. Even as the flood came and took all away, so also shall the coming of the Son of man be.

But it shall be a discriminating judgment. Two shall be in the field sowing seed—two shall be in the mill preparing bread—one is taken, the other left. Watch therefore, for ye know not in what hour your Lord comes. But if the master of the house had known the time of the thief's coming, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be dug through. Wherefore also not only watch, for ye know not the hour your Lord comes, but also be ready, for in that hour that ye think not the Son of man comes—to destroy the thief and restore His house; and meanwhile all the faithful bond-servant can do is to give the household food in season. He cannot repair the damage to the house. So doing, his Lord on coming shall set him over all His substance. But that evil servant, who takes occasion by the absence of his Lord, to live as in the night, in rioting, wantonness, and ill-treatment of his fellow-servants, while pretending to keep his Lord's charge, at the same time cultivating friendship with the world which lives in open enmity to his Lord and denial of His claims—the unexpected unknown judgment shall likewise come upon him and the own hour of darkness.

Having shown how a sifting judgment would come upon those who were in responsibility over His household inside the house, the Lord next proceeds to declare that a testing time would come upon those who waited to go in with Him to the marriage-feast; and here we get an intimation of something not within the scope of the truth the Lord then revealed. If a Bridegroom, then there was a bride having a place and portion altogether distinct from that of those who waited for the Bridegroom to go in with Him to the feast.

The witness for God upon earth is responsible for two things: to feed the household, and be a witness, a. light, in the world; and neither is a hardship, since the food for the one and the grace for the other are all treasured up in Christ, freely to be received and freely to be given. The bride of the Lamb—the body of Christ—the assembly of God in its earthly manifestation, and each member of the same, is responsible for these two things; and inasmuch as it has failed—that is, the professing system which has taken upon itself the name of God's assembly, and is therefore held responsible as such—therefore the, portion of the hypocrite and the foolish shall be its portion.

These first two parables reveal a nearer approach to church ground than the two which follow. The evil slave was responsible to his lord for feeding the household; the foolish virgin was responsible to the bridegroom for lighting him to the feast. The one dealt in heavenly truth, and the other waited for the heavenly Man. The one being set to “do,” and being glad in heart at his lord's delay, therefore did evil; the others, having nothing to do but simply to go forth and meet the bridegroom, were content to be outwardly like their companions, careless whether they would be for his honor at his coming.

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Chapter 152

Kingdom of God in Luke's Gospel and Kingdom of Heaven in Matthew's Gospel

Inquiry is often made as to the distinction of Meaning between these two terms, the “kingdom of God” which always occurs in Luke; whereas in Matthew “the kingdom of heaven” most frequently appears, that is, thirty-two times, against the “kingdom of God” only four, with one case (chap. 19:24), where the critics differ owing to a variation of reading as to which list, whether “of heaven” or “of God,” it belongs.

In commencing it may he said that sometimes the terms are equivalent, or apparently so. Compare Matt. 3:2 with Mark 1:15; again Matt. 5:3 with Luke 6:20; Matt. 6:33 with Luke 12:31; and Matt. 13:11 with Luke 8:10, with many other examples. When this identity fails, the difference of meaning arises from the term “kingdom of heaven” having more specific features given to it, whether of good or evil, over that area where the gospel is now preached, or was once preached, and which area is characterized by a departure from the truth originally set forth, the king, mark, being in heaven.

This departure is alluded to, when our Lord says, Matt. 13:11, “It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” after delivering the parable (ver. 3) of the sower, as this parable is followed by six others, where we find things distinctly good, as the pearl and the hid treasure; things distinctly bad, as the mustard seed growing into a large tree, and the leaven leavening the whole lump; and a mixture, as the tares among the wheat, and the drag net with good and bad fish; whilst in Luke 13:18 (following five chapters after the same parable of the sower) we have the parables of the leaven and of the mustard seed under the expression, “Unto what is the kingdom of God like,” but none others. Whilst then the sphere of Luke's “kingdom of God” may be equal to Matthew's “kingdom of heaven,” there is more detail of evil in the latter. In fact the “kingdom of heaven” known in its mysteries, comes into a state, or forms itself into a condition, characterized by a departure from God in those things, which the positive arrival of our Lord in heaven introduced, namely, the church and its cognate truths, which were brought about by the descent of the Holy Ghost after Christ's ascent into heaven. Speaking in the large, “kingdom of God” is a more general term in the Gospels, implying power whether morally or personally (compare Luke 17:20; 18:27); whereas, “the kingdom of heaven” is more dispensational and has peculiar earthly aspects. Compare Matt. 18:23-31; 20:1-10.

At the same time it must be allowed that if “the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:18, 20) necessitates the same interpretation, as the similar parables in Matt. 13, we must connect this term also with a departure from God: only the features would not be wrought out into such details.

Whilst then, the two phrases “kingdom of God” and “kingdom of heaven,” were in a certain sense identical in the beginning, yet “kingdom of heaven” is rarely, if ever, spoken of as a thing of power as to a man's own conversion, nor was present existence the thought but rather it is mentioned “as at hand,” ■γγικε. To Peter therefore were given the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whilst the

kingdom of God had a fresh beginning by the preaching of our Lord. “If I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come unto you.” (Luke 11:20.) But Peter opened the kingdom of heaven in the case of Cornelius and his companions, on whom the Holy Ghost descended; and thus the term may be held as including, in connection with its mysteries, every form which Christendom puts on during the time in which the gospel is preached; but in the millennium also passing into a two-fold division perfectly good, described in the words, “The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity..... Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their father.” (Matt. 13:41, 42.) “Kingdom of God” is a more general term, and “kingdom of heaven” more dispensational, with the sense of responsibility. The details of failure and apostasy pertain more to the latter; as well as descriptions of its future success. See in Matt. 25 the parable of the ten virgins.

Hence we see why the apostles never preached the kingdom of heaven, whereas the kingdom of God was common, especially to Paul. (Compare Acts 20:25.) “And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more.” Again chapter 28:30, Paul “received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus.” It is clear that he could not have preached the kingdom of heaven, for it might have been a bad thing and had, in part at all events, the earth for its sphere—and rarely had the idea of power connected with it, like the kingdom of God, which “is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. 14:17; 1 Cor. 4:20.)

As to the derivation of ■ βασιλε■α “the kingdom of the heavens,” neither it nor “kingdom of God” are found in the Old Testament, although the reigns of the kings of Judah foreshadowed both; and such language as “The kingdom is the Lord's, and be is the governor among the nations” (Psa. 22:28), pointed to them.

Probably we should find their origin (especially “the kingdom of heaven") in Daniel, clothed in such words as “the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed” (chap. ii. 44); again, “after that thou shalt know that the heavens do rule” (chap. 4:26); and more particularly in the vision of the Son of man (the title belonging to our Lord in the Gospels and under which He dies) coming “with the clouds of heaven,” when a dominion is given to Him, and a kingdom “not to be destroyed.” (Chap. 7:18, 14.) We know that being presented to Israel He was refused, rejected and crucified; but that we look for Him, received up into glory, to come again. Meanwhile, during the time He is in heaven, everything as to its proper manifestation is in abeyance. The kingdom of heaven is in a mystery; but all will be clear when He takes it in person. He ought to have been received when on earth and the kingdom to have begun, but He was not; and so, the king being in heaven, its mysteries are going on now. We must not then lose in the term “kingdom of heaven,” the fact of the king, who is to have the earth, being now in heaven.

Questions concerning such apparently minute subjects may appear trivial to some; but such an examination wonderfully unfolds the character of the Gospels—each an independent witness for Christ, both in His person and character. It was never, we are persuaded, in the mind of the Holy Ghost, that we should force these witnesses into one mold, as is the manner of most harmonies and diatessarons. Each evangelist has his own particular view of our blessed Lord, whilst the four

form a combined and admirable portraiture. Our conception of Him, must embrace the traits of them all, and thus we take in the whole mind of God, who has not written one word in vain.

W. W.

Chapter 153

Christ: Not Judaism, nor Christendom

A Reply to the Author of a Recent Letter to the Bishop of Manchester. (Wertheimer, Lea, and Co.)

Sir,

Though I have not read the Bishop's sermon to the Jews, I have a few words to say in acknowledgment of your letter, sent me by yourself or some other unknown donor.

You appear throughout to forget two things, which the scriptures you own do not fail to urge: the predicted and now fulfilled rain of the Jews as a people, and the sovereign grace of God equally assured to the Gentiles.

The law, the Psalms, and the prophets, are unmistakable that Israel were to break down as God's witness so completely that He would disown them for a season. (See Deut. 31:29; 32:5, 6, 15-20; Psa. 42 liii.; lxviii. 18; lxxxviii.; cvi.; Isa. 1:9; 6, 12:1; viii. 14; x. 20; lxv. 2; Hos. 1:6-9; 3:4.) So Ezekiel shows us at the beginning the cherubim of glory gradually departing when the first Gentile power executed judgment on Israel, and at the end the return of the glory when the last Gentile empire is judged and Israel are once more and forever blessed.

The same lively oracles are no less explicit that divine mercy should visit and bless the Gentiles during His disowning of Israel. (See Deut. 32:20; Psa. 18:43, 49; Isa. 8:16, 17; 9:1, 2; 49:6; 65:1; Hos. 1:10.)

These truths shine with light brighter than the sun in God's oracles; and the plainest facts answer to them. For on the one hand, you, the chosen people, are expelled by God (none else could have done it) from your land, capital, and sanctuary, the only spot where you can sacrifice acceptably; and without sacrifice you surely know that your worship is at an end, as is your polity also while your land is ruled by the stranger. On the other hand, those who were the vilest slaves of idolatry and moral corruption, who knew not the true God and only dreaded demons, now rejoice in your scriptures as their own, and, while you groan, they worship and praise God as their own God and Father, having renounced the abominations of the heathen.

How comes this marvelous change? When your nation fell into revolting and persistent idolatry, not only in the people and in the priests but in the king of David's line, God justly indignant as He was swept you away into idol-loving Babylon for no more than seventy years. What sin is so much worse as to account for your last dispersion during the last 1800 years? Do you not even, suspect? What but rejection of your own Messiah, Emmanuel? The greatest of your prophets lays precisely these two counts of indictment against you: first, idolatry (Isa. 40-48); secondly, rejection of the Messiah. (Chaps. 49-57.) All is not exhausted yet; but it is blindness itself to evade such a conviction of your sins. Yea, blinded by proud unbelief, you smote the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek—Him that was to be born in Bethlehem, yet to be ruler in Israel; and no wonder, for His goings forth were from of old, from everlasting (Mic. 5:1-8); and therefore has He given you up till the birth of God's final purpose of mercy and blessing for Israel. For the day comes when

they will repent and bow before the true Joseph who will then make Himself known to His brethren—that same Joseph, who even now sustains His guilty brethren, the sons of Israel, ignorant of Him, yet famishing without Him, who is exalted among the Gentiles and there has a bride, His church. I am as sure as you that this Man, whom Jehovah owns as His Fellow (Zech. 13:7) and whom you are yet to own as the Jehovah that you pierced (Zech. 12:10), will be the peace, and will fight against your foes as in the day of battle, King over all the earth. In that day shall Israel be blessed and exalted, and the Gentiles bow, and their kings minister to Zion, and your sun no more go down nor your moon withdraw itself.

You cannot suppose then that I envy, deny, or enfeeble Israel's future glory on the earth under Messiah and the new covenant. How could I who look, as every Christian ought, to be glorified in heaven with Christ? I have no sympathy with the conceit of Christendom which arrogates your blessings, as if you had lost your place and the Gentiles had gained it forever. The Bishop of Manchester might be as slow to believe that Christendom is speedily to be judged for its apostasy, as you are that Israel suffer for theirs. The mass in Christendom now are no better than the mass of the Jews when Nebuchadnezzar or even Titus destroyed Jerusalem. But I see, in the scriptures we both acknowledge as divine, that your most fiery trial immediately precedes the deliverance of such Jews as are written in the book. (Dan. 12:1.) You are destined to receive as “the king” in Palestine the basest of impostors Dan. 11:36-39); and the last empire of the Gentiles, the fourth Roman beast of Dan. 7, will play its most guilty part in it, when it revives (as it will soon) for God's final judgment. You both refused the true Christ; you are both to receive the Antichrist; when the Lord of glory will appear to the perdition of the beast and the false prophet and all their adherents, but to the deliverance of such Jews and Gentiles as will have been kept from this audacious blasphemy and wickedness.

It is a ruinous oversight of your own scriptures and of your actual history that God's anger “is appeased.” Heavier punishment is yet in store for the Jew for his tin, belief. And what evidence can be imagined lower than yours for pretending to God's favor as a people? “The gift of genius,” talents, learning, distinction, and, “last not least! the abundance of their wealth and prosperity !!!” And the Jew flatters himself that “these are stubborn facts that outweigh a thousand quotations!” So naturally does slight of their own scriptures follow slight of their own Messiah and the loss of their place and nation, and also of eternal blessedness: for if He sits at Jehovah's right hand, the true Melchizedek, what will it be for His enemies when He strikes in the day of His wrath? (Compare Psa. 45:3-6.) His glory measures His judgments, and they are guiltiest who having the word of God fail to read and understand it aright.

It is vain for you or any other to retreat from the testimony of God's word (and I have cited only what you must and do own) into questions of translation or interpretation—the constant resource of unbelief of Rabbis on the one hand, and of priests as well as rationalists on the other. Any respectable version of your own is quite enough to convict you of defying God's warnings, as you now despise the lesson of your own disconsolate condition—not only without a king and a prince, but without a sacrifice, without an image or statue, and without an ephod and teraphim. The prophet supposes, that you are no longer worshipping a false God; but he unquestionably predicts Israel's abiding many days in this strangely abnormal state without the true God or His ordinances. Has it no adequate moral cause? Did God so cast off and punish His people (now Lo-ammi) without some sin far more flagrant than their far less punished idolatry of old? What was the sin?

What does Daniel intimate in chapter 9: 26, 27? You may speak of “solace and rules of conduct for this life as well as assurance and hope for the life hereafter.” But if you have not hearkened to the Prophet from among the Jews, like unto Moses, who was to speak all that Jehovah should command Him, Jehovah declares that He will require it of you. Your own Pentateuch then demands that you should hearken under the penalty of divine judgment; and now that the judgment is on you, we entreat you to pause and consider. Even before God gave you up, when you were in the land under your own anointed kings, you were ever disposed to be refractory, disobedient, and idolatrous. What have you done worse? Will boasting of your “ancient and glorious religion” mend matters? So did they who perished under the avenging Roman.

Pardon me if I think that you talk with levity of the Messiah even in your sense, when you argue that whether He has come or is yet to come, “it does not, in the slightest degree, affect the eternal truths of our religion.” I grieve for you. This did not Abraham. Before the writings of Moses or the law, he waited for Messiah. So did Abel, and Enoch, and Noah. All their hopes turned on the Seed of the woman who should bruise the serpent's head, though the serpent should bruise His heel. The common object of faith for all the godly before the law was not Judaism, but the coming Messiah. He was the center of the promises and, I admit, of blessings for the elect people, Abram's seed, and in their land; but deeper than all and above all is the Seed in whom all the nations of the earth shall be blessed. Did you ever notice Jehovah swearing thus, after Abraham’s only son had been under the sentence of death as a burnt-offering till the third day when he was raised up as it were from the dew) by God's intervention? After the figure of death and resurrection the blessing to all the nations was then solemnly proclaimed. (Gen. 22)

I bless God for every word of His that is revealed, from Genesis to Malachi, to speak now of nothing more; but I affirm that not one distinctive good in Christianity is derived from or is to be found in Judaism. Does not Judaism deny a suffering Savior, God and man in one person? Does it not deny that the infinite sacrifice of the true atonement day is already offered and accepted of God and efficacious forever for those who believe on Him and rest on it? We, have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God: is this no good, or is it found in Judaism? We have an altar, which is so far from being derived from Judaism that contrariwise they have no right to eat of it who serve the tabernacle. So too by the Holy Spirit we were sealed after we believed the gospel, and in no way found it in Judaism. Our relationship, with God as our Father, with Christ as our Head, what have they to do with Judaism? They are founded entirely on the Messiah whom Judaism rejected and crucified, whom God raised and glorified in heaven, which is our characteristic place of blessing as truly as Canaan was for Israel.

If indeed you were sinless, one could understand the vaunt “Judaism is all-sufficient for us.” But a Jew shows less conscience than the heathen if he conceives that he can have remission of sins without blond of a sacrifice acceptable to God. You know that you have no such sacrifice; you ought to know then that, dying in your sins without blood upon the altar, you are lost. Your own Pentateuch declares that it is the blood that makes an atonement for the soul. (Lev. 17:11.) Is not this a truth of your religion? Is it eternal or temporary? If eternal, where and how do you stand before God and His word which you own to your own condemnation? If you disown this cardinal truth of the law, what can save you? Without atoning blood, you are more miserable and more guilty than the most benighted of the heathen. Alas! rationalism possesses the Jews even more than Christendom.

It is a mistake however that the failure of Christendom arises from forsaking Judaism for distinctive principles of its own. As the apostasy of the Jews was by their abandoning Jehovah and His law for Gentilism and its idols, so of Christendom by judaizing. Christianity stands by faith of Christ dead, risen, and glorified in heaven, and the possession of the Holy Ghost now on earth thereby. But Christians soon grew weary of the cross here and glory in heaven with Christ. They preferred that place of earthly glory and power with the law as their rule which God had given to Israel; and so seeking they were ruined. It was salt that had lost its savor. I go farther than you, believing that when the Lord my God comes and all the saints with him (Zech. 14), He will judge guilty Christendom no less than Judaism. This is more serious than perishing by its own dissensions or any other human cause.

Judaism then is insufficient to supply even the first need of a soul awakened to feel the burden of its sins. The Jew must either stifle his conscience by denying that he has sins, or abandon the law of Jehovah by pretending to an atonement for his soul without blood. Thus the modern Jew really gives up the hopes and promises of his forefathers. He looks for no daysman, he trusts in no kinsman-redeemer, he requires no intercession, but, like any other unbeliever, he pretends to have direct access to God Himself. And no wonder; for they have refused in unbelief their own Messiah, who, though God over all blessed forever, came in flesh to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.

You do not well to be angry if those who enjoy eternal life and peace in believing desire others to enjoy the same who are either insensible to their misery, or intensely sad, as I trust some of Israel are in their present desolation under the evident judgment of God. I admit that Jews might try to spread their Judaism or Gentiles their heathenism; and that Christians ought to compassionate efforts so futile for those who have faith. It is however no question of any right of ours, but of His authority who commanded His servants to preach the good news to every creature. It is one of the points of contrast between the law and the gospel.

Nor are you justified in drawing from God's unchanging character that the Jew must remain what he was. Notwithstanding I myself believe that there never was a moment since God's call of Abram that He had not in that line one or more faithful to His name. When the Messiah came and went out of the Jewish fold, the Jewish sheep followed; and so there has been an elect remnant of Jews outside Judaism ever since, without speaking of the Gentiles. I believe too that the day is coming fast when all of that people who refuse the true Christ will fall under Antichrist or otherwise perish for rebellion of Jehovah, and that then the nation all righteous, owning the despised Nazarene as their Messiah, yea their Lord and their God, shall be a blessing to all the families in the earth. But that day is not yet come; and whoever lives and dies hearing of the Lord Jesus Christ now but rejecting Him perishes forever. What would the most decided Jew think of the Christian's charity who yet forbears to speak of the only One who, as he believes, can save Jew or Gentile? It would be far more reasonable to doubt the charity and indeed the faith of him who could be silent when man's salvation and God's glory are at stake. It is all well to instruct and exhort and correct fellow-Christians, but this does not absolve from the duty of proclaiming the Lord and Savior. Neither the law nor the constancy of the Jew can save his soul, nor that “boundless charity” which he proposes to the Christian's emulation; but what is the Christian to do who is sure that the Jew is perishing forever for the want of that Savior whom God has given in their rejected Messiah? It is evidently a question of faith and love; and he who has them not can be

necessarily no judge of the matter.

Yours, W. K.

Chapter 154

Brief Remarks on Leviticus 16

Whatever efficacy there is in Christ's offering, we have: and what is true of the Jew is true of the Christian. Yet as to the letter, the bullock for Aaron and his house is for us, the scape-goat is for the Jew. Aaron and his house were atoned for by themselves by the bullock, as directed indeed in Leviticus 6. The sacrifice was of greater value, of weightier import than that for Israel.

But this is not all. It was complete before there was any purifying of things and places. Aaron and his house are purified for by themselves: and in the case of the goat the blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat, and atonement made for Israel also before the cleansing began. Then in Jehovah's lot begins the putting the blood on places before Hazazel. The high priest makes atonement and purifies the holy place and altar defiled by the uncleanness of Israel. It was Godward, the notion of sin as uncleanness in His sight. With this the places were all cleansed (the heavenly places with better sacrifices). But the only thing mentioned is the first goat, no doubt in respect of the uncleannesses of the children of Israel as affecting God and His presence.

Thus death had come in and a sin-offering; but it met God; and after the reconciliation of the heavenly saints the places were reconciled. And then, last of all, when the high priest had confessed Israel's sins, Hamel was taken to the land not inhabited. And this confirms the order of power; first, the church received; then the heavenly places cleansed, and lastly Israel reconciled. There is the reconciliation of the church, of the heavenly things, and of Israel. There are other precious differences elsewhere noticed, but this as to the proper order of application.

The sprinkling on and before the mercy-seat had its own efficacy before the Lord; but the cleansing then began with the holy places, &c. It may be they were sprinkled with blood, certainly if Heb. 9:21 applies to this, but this may be doubted. Otherwise it is said only of the mercy-seat and altar before the Lord; that is, incense. Atonement was made for the places; but specific mention of blood could perhaps only be on the mercy-seat and altar. In the first the question arose of meeting God as He is in His own intrinsic righteousness; and we come to be in His own presence, according to what He is; and the blessed Lord has in His atoning sacrifice glorified Him in what He is—glorified God, being a man, and that about sin and as made sin. The altar of incense too was to be sprinkled. (Ex. 30:10.) But when the tabernacle was set up, it would seem it was not sprinkled with blood. (Chap. xl. 9, xxx. 26, &c.) The brazen altar seems to have been cleansed in the blood. (Ex. 29:36.) The sprinkling with blood and cleansing leads to the judgment that it was so done with all (the altar of incense certainly) on the day of atonement. Moses' doing it would not mean more than its being done under the law. But the connection with Sinai (Heb. 9:19) tends to show that it was then and not revealed in the Old Testament. Still, Heb. 9:21 gives no clear judgment that it was at the Betting up. Verse 22 clearly generalizes it, so that we may suppose he was already gone beyond Sinai. The tabernacle is said positively (Lev. 16:20) to be reconciled. The question then arises, what is the altar of verse 18. The altar cleansed was the altar of incense, the altar before Jehovah (See Lev. 4:6, 18.) This changes the character. The reconciliation here was of the places where they went to God (only by priests). It was the holy place or sanctuary, the

tabernacle and the altar. Aaron was to sprinkle the blood on the mercy-seat and before it. He makes atonement for himself and for all Israel. He makes atonement for the altar before the Lord, that is, reconciles it. But it is not said of the mercy-seat. He makes atonement for himself and house, and for all Israel in verse 17. He makes atonement in it for the holy place, he does (ver. 16) not for the mercy-seat, but specifically for the altar. It was the idea of the people approaching. The altar without was not the place of approach save as under sin. The atonement was made there, the sacrifice whose blood was to work thus efficaciously was offered there. But it was distinctly the place of approach that was cleansed, and offered incense. The mercy-seat was what they approached, blood put upon it and before it for them. The altar without was the place where offering was made; the thing, as far as man was concerned with there, was sin. Hence we have blood put on the mercy-seat, atonement for Aaron and Israel, cleansing of holy places, tabernacle and altar; then putting of Israel's sins on Hazazel.

This gives an absolute character to our reconciliation, which Israel's has not, though in substance both are just the same. Christ was made sin for us; the old thing done away before God. It is not a question of dealing with sins. This of course would have been if that work had not been done. But Christ intercepts it, and God's righteousness is now declared, in which we stand to start with by faith and are always in. No doubt we are made to feel our sins as a means of discovering our state; but this is only the way of getting at it. We are all under sin—in this condition before God. I learn it by my sins, or much more deeply by my sinfulness. In Israel there will be a dealing with particular transgressions. No doubt if Christ had not atoned for all our sins we could not have been made the righteousness of God in Him; He did, and all scripture says it abundantly, thank God. But He was made sin, and glorified God thus about it. And it is done, and we stand in righteousness by the efficacy of His work. But Israel has to meet God about the transgressions they have been guilty of, feel (Reuben-like) guilty about their brother, and God dealing with them as His people about their transgressions. Surely it is true of us practically, yet not as His people who transgressed as such, but merely and wholly sinners, and nothing else. Hence Israel has to feel in a special way that their sins had been laid on the head of the scape goat. Our whole place is changed, to be viewed as righteous in Christ before God, Christ our righteousness. Of course if He had not done the work on the cross, this could not be. Still we came in from a place of utter sin, distance and alienation into divine righteousness in Him. The truth is that the manner and circumstances are different, we having the bullock, they the goat, yet Christ for both, and Christ ever perfect in His work.

Chapter 155

Man Fallen and the Seed of the Woman

(Gen. 3)

It is not only scripture which makes known to us that there is sin and misery in the world. There they are, even if scripture or a Savior did not exist. The world is a ruin. Man knows well that iniquity and defilement are in him; and nobody is satisfied with his portion here below, because his heart is ill at ease. The word of God explains, as nothing else can, how Satan entered the world, and reveals the consequence of sin in man's relations with God.

The first thing the old serpent did was to put something between the creature and the Creator, to put himself between God and man. This was subtle, and ruinous if successful, as it was; for the only thing which makes us happy is that there is nothing between that God loves us.

Satan begins then by producing distrust in God, and so stirring man's will into activity in lust and disobedience. Never does the enemy lead one to think of the goodness of God nor of man's obedience. The woman knew right well that she ought not to eat of the tree, and that mischief must be the result; yet she ate, and gave to her husband with her, and he did eat. (Ver. 1-6.) Thus sin is the self-will that sprang from the unbelief which doubted God. By this means Satan made a breach; he persuaded Eve that God kept something for Himself, for fear that His creature should be too happy and too blessed. But Eve was wrong in listening to Satan; she ought not for a moment to have attended to the voice which insinuated distrust in God.

God has warned man of the consequences of sin, as Adam, “in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.” But Satan, who seeks always to deny the righteousness of God, says to the woman, “ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”

Nor was this altogether untrue. The fall has rendered man much more intelligent relatively to good and evil. But Satan hid from man that he should be separated from God and have a bad conscience. “And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons.” (Ver. 7.) They acquired a knowledge that showed them their nakedness, which they strove to conceal from the eyes of themselves and each other. All that is brought near us appears to us more important and greater than what is still far off. The forbidden tree being near Eve, and the judgment of God being distant, she took of the fruit and ate.

So the spirit of falsehood tells men at this day that they shall not die, and that the threats of God shall not come to pass. He conceals the warnings of God, and then men do what Satan and their own lusts urge them on to do. If a Christian even is not watchful, his conscience will lose its activity, and, in place of seeing God, he sees his nakedness.

Man, besides, takes leaves to cover his nakedness. He does his utmost to conceal from himself the evil which has happened to him; but when God is revealed, it is quite otherwise. God draws

near, as if nothing had occurred; then the nearness to God, which would have been a joy for man without sin, becomes, on account of sin, a source of immense terror and insupportable. “Adam and his wife hide themselves from the presence of Jehovah Elohim amongst the trees of the garden.” They had succeeded in veiling their nakedness from their own eyes; they were terrified at the voice of God and strove to hide from Him. What a horrible thing for man to be in such a case as to wish concealment from God! (Vers. 7, 8.)

Adam “was afraid,” as he confessed to Him who called him from his hiding-place. Conscience trembles at the presence of God. Every hope of enjoying life is taken away when His voice is heard. Man is self-convicted of departure from God because of sin. God “drove out the man;” but man had himself fled from His presence first. His own conscience told him that he could not stand before God; and God made this evident by the words of His call to Adam, “Where art thou?” (Ver. 9.) He was gone from God, banished by conscience before God drove him out. Is he the one then to complain of unrighteousness, whose own heart condemned him similarly before Nod's sentence was pronounced? The relations of man were thenceforth broken and in a manner irreparable, as far as man is concerned. “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself.” (Ver. 10.)

Self-justification is as vain as seeking to hide from God. “And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.” (Vers. 11, 12.) How is the mighty fallen! The head of creation stooping, in order to excuse himself of his sin, to cast the fault on his wife—yea, on God Himself! How debasing is evil once allowed and dominant! No slavery more degrading, none so immediate and all-corrupting in its effects. Was the man then the weaker vessel? or this the way of natural affection?, The hardest thing for a sinner to do is to confess his sin truly and thoroughly; to judge oneself is only the fruit of grace through faith. A bad conscience dreads God and the consequences too much to confess, while it knows its sin too well to deny it.

But God will have sin out, and trace it to its source. “And Jehovah Elohim said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. And Jehovah Elohim said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: and I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Unto the woman he said, I will greatly, multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” (Vers. 13-19.)

If you had full confidence in God, and you were perfectly sure that God loved you, you would be very happy. But Satan is active, and his power consists in producing distrust, and this where there is happiness and intimate relation with God, to darken, and, if possible, destroy all in the heart. He

takes advantage of men who trust their own will and their efforts for their happiness, distrusting God, and neither willing nor knowing how to confide the care of their happiness to Him, and to give themselves up to His mighty love in Christ. And this he does now as ever. He persuades men that God is too good to condemn us because we are sinners; and man, spite of his sins and his conscience, hopes and persuades himself that he will not be condemned. It is the voice of the old serpent.

But God has proved, even by the death of His Son, that He will not endure sin, and that its wages are death, as it will be judgment after death for all who believe not. The conscience being bad, all the effort of man is to hide from himself his nakedness before God. He would put out of the world gross and outward sin, drunkenness, murder, robbery. He seeks by laws and by philanthropic efforts to blot out the exterior effects of sin which shock the world. But these are but the aprons of fig-leaves, which root out nothing whatever, but serve for the moment to conceal from ourselves our nakedness and misery, and to escape thinking of the righteousness of the condemnation God has pronounced from that day on our sinful estate.

Now that sins have come between our consciences and God, one wishes at least that there should be something to hide us before God; and it is with this view that man employs what he calls innocent things. Thus the trees were innocent enough, but what use did Adam make of them? To hide behind them from God. God had given to man all that is in the world, but man now perverts it all to escape from the presence of God, pretending the while to be innocent in such an application of what is good in itself. When the voice of God awakens the conscience, one wishes still something to hide us from Him; but this is impossible. “Where art thou?” said God to Adam, who had no means of concealment longer. If God were to say so to each of your souls, would it be your joy to be in His presence? God is really the only resource and refuge when we have sinned. It is only God who, by imputing nothing to the believer, takes away all guile front the spirit. (Psa. 32) But if you hide away from God, how do you then stand for your souls? God had not yet driven from His presence Adam, who had fled away from Him. Conscience tells us that, if we have sinned and He is a righteous God, there are no leaves or trees to hide us in His presence. Man is miserable in his conscience, and he cannot be happy in sin, save only that there is no God. All the hope of incredulity is that there is no God, or, what comes to the same thing, that He is not righteous or holy. Adam wished to excuse himself, as if he had lusted after nothing himself—he had only followed the voice of his wife, instead of keeping to the prohibition of God. But if there was no lust in us, no sinful act would result. He had disobeyed the word of God, for which he was responsible.

In the midst of all the goodness of God, who has given His Son for poor sinners, if you have no confidence in God, there is the proof of your sin. No matter how it may be manifested, is not this ingratitude and distrust? Eve listened to and believed Satan, in place of listening to God, and believing Him; and this is just what man is ever doing, while he hopes for salvation and eternal life, though he sins. All the efforts you make to be happy prove you are not. The immediate effect of God's presence in your hearts and consciences would be to stop your pleasures: if all your pleasures are thus incompatible with the presence of God, what will they be for you in eternity? Will they carry you to the foot of His throne who is holy and righteous, to show Him that you have passed many innocent hours far from Him? What is there but disobedience, distrust, falsehood, self-will, unless it be a still worse thing, the state of soul which wishes to divert its thoughts away from the presence of God?

Man may withdraw himself from the presence of God while grace lasts, but he cannot when God will judge him. Satan will help you to hide; your best friends following the world will help you also to keep away from the presence of God, to forget and deny it; but this will certainly not go on beyond the time of grace which is granted you. Therefore, while it is called to-day, if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts.

God knows that you are sinners; He knows that it is the subtle iniquity of Satan, which would make man his prey. But there is to that an answer, of which Satan knew not, any more than poor, guilty, fallen man: the revelation of the Seed of the woman (ver. 15). The question is really between the serpent and the second Man—not the first. It is neither a promise to Adam and Eve from God, nor a hope of improvement in their children; but God pronounces judgment on the enemy, and in the midst of it the revelation is made of the Savior, child of the woman who had ensnared the man to be ruined of the devil. The woman's Seed shall bruise the serpent's head, but He is bruised Himself first. What grace, yet righteousness! What humiliation, yet victory! If Adam exalted himself as a robbery to be as God, He who was God emptied Himself to be a man, and became obedient unto death, as the other was disobedient unto it. To lost Adam, the first man, there was, and could be, no promise. All the promises of God are yea and amen in the second Man; but they become the portion of every believer. Faith finds and enjoys the promise, not sin and unbelief. To Eve and Adam God only speaks of the actual consequences of sin (vers. 16-19). It is in judging the serpent (ver. 15) that He reveals the coming Seed of the woman, and the way of His victory. Thenceforward the only hope of lost man is in this revealed Savior; and before he is driven out he bears of what Jesus was to suffer in destroying the power of the devil; yet not a single sign of repentance appears in Adam after his sin: He had shown terror of God, cowardly selfishness as to his wife, as much dishonesty in his own case as dishonor done to God. But God occupies Himself only with His counsels of grace in the woman's Seed, whose person and work and glory are developed in all the scriptures.

But victory over Satan in the cross of Christ is no longer in any sense a promise; it is accomplished. Had man let into his heart that God did not love him that He kept back what wee good for him through jealousy or envy of his happiness? It was Satan's lie; for the suffering second Man, the woman's Seed, is Son of God, the true God, and eternal life, who became man to die for sinners and destroy the works. of the devil. Yet is the unbelieving heart so perverse as to refuse its confidence to the God who thus gave His Son. Jesus, instead of fleeing from God's judgment, went to meet it when the hour came, and took on Him the burden of our sins, instead of listening to the voice of man or Satan. “The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?” By His death He annulled him that had the power of death, and gives the believer perfect confidence in God, all fear of death being gone. His love puts us in peace and relationship with God, unscared by difficulties, now that we are forgiven our sins, clothed with Himself instead of nakedness or fig-leaves, with nothing but grace to stand in and God's glory to look forward to, since He bore the judgment for us.

Is your confidence then in the God who gave His Son to save the poorest of sinners? This confidence inspires and strengthens obedience. Nothing to the believer is more precious than God's love in Christ, which makes us prefer His will to all Satan can offer.

May God touch your heart, and give you to magnify Him by receiving all that His love has done in Christ!

Chapter 156

The Ministration of the Spirit

(2 Cor. 3.)

There are two characters to be noted in Christian life down here: one is running a race towards glory, as in Phil. 3:14— “I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus:” another aspect of Christian life is the manifestation of the life of Christ in the world.

The apostle shows how it is that the Christian thus becomes the manifestation of the life of Jesus. He is reconciled to God as the starting-point of his course.

Both these characters are real. We are the epistle of Christ; men are to read Christ in our lives, We are to be the “imitators of God as dear children.” There, in Ephesians, we are looked at as seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. On the other hand, in Phil. 3 Paul says, “That I may win Christ.” “If that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.” He has laid hold of us for glory; we are running the race through the wilderness, but sitting in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Men had been calling in question Paul's ministry, and he had been forced to commend himself. “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we as some others epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men.” If I want to prove my apostolic service, you Corinthians are my epistle.

They were the epistle of commendation of Paul, because they were the epistle of commendation of Christ; “Manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not on tables of stone [like the law], but in fleshy tables of the heart.” He puts Christians in contrast with the law. The Christian is a person in whose heart Christ is engraved. Just as they could read the ten commandments in the tables of stone, so they are to read Christ in you: such is the thesis of the chapter that takes up the special side I refer to. That is what Christians are, the epistle of Christ before the world, Christ being engraved by the Holy Ghost on their hearts; therefore, in going through the chapter, he puts before us the contrast between the ministration of the law and the ministration of the gospel.

We cannot understand what it is to be an epistle of Christ unless we have Him written on us by the Spirit. What is the world to read in us? Christ; but what kind of Christ? How far do you know Him?

The apostle puts the law as the ministration of death and condemnation, not from any fault in the law (the law is holy, just, and good), but from fault in us. The law wrote nothing on men's hearts; it was the testimony of what men ought to do, the perfect rule of what the children of Adam ought to be. It takes up the general principles of relationship to God and to our neighbor, which were obligatory all through before the law was given, so that “sin by the commandment” became “exceeding sinful.” The law said, Do this, and live; and if you fail to do it, you will be cursed. (Gal. 3:21.) The law is the perfect maintenance, with the authority of God, of the relationship in which men stand; the righteous measure of what they ought to be; it forbids sins, it forbids lust even.

Paul, as touching the righteousness of the law, was blameless; but when the law said, “Thou shalt not covet,” then, as he said in Rom. 7, “sin revived, and I died.” The moment he got hold of the fact that the law went to the inner maw as well as to the outward, it brought death and condemnation. The law does not tell us what we are; it tells us what we ought to be and, if it really comes home to my conscience, I know I am not that.

It is not only that the things we have done are bad things, but they are open violations of God's commandments. The law pronounces God's sentence of judgment on the person who has not kept it; and none of us have kept it. It is all well when we keep to outward commandments, like the young man who had kept them from his youth up, but who went away sorrowful because he had great possessions. There we get what the law does as a perfect rule for the children of Adam down here. That connects itself with judgment. Christ bore the curse of the law; but the gospel is just as opposite to the law as coming to pay 210,000 for one who was in debt would be from coming to demand it. The law comes and demands; Christ comes and pays—more than that, He gives eternal life. When the gospel comes, it does not say merely what we ought to be but what we are. It says all are guilty, Jew and Gentile, “that every mouth may be stopped;” none are righteous. That is where the testimony of the gospel comes and deals with man; it comes and tells us what we are, and tells us of propitiation through the blood of Christ. It is a ministration of righteousness, and a ministration of the Spirit; thousands of blessings, moreover, are connected with it.

The moment we get the least reflection of the glory of God with the law, we cannot stand it: Moses had to put a veil over his face when he came down from the mount. In John 8 the light of God comes in, where the Lord says, “He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her;” and they went right out, beginning at the eldest even unto the last; they got out of the way—out of the way of mercy too. Bring the testimony of what God is really in the light, and man cannot stand it.

Well, you see Christ comes to detected sinners. God is light and love; He cannot be the one without being the other. He comes as light to show us what we really are. “There you are, sinners before God;” then He comes, and says, “Now that is the reason I have come to save you.” Before the day of judgment the Lord comes to be a Savior; He has not waited for the day of judgment; the person who is to be the Judge has come to be the Savior. The question now is, what has He done?

Whether through the natural conscience or the law, or by Christ, I am a convicted sinner. Has He come to judge me? When I am a convicted sinner in His presence, the question is, what has He done? Then I get the ministration of righteousness. I find Christ at the right hand of God, not now on the cross. I see a Man (much more than man, the blessed and eternal Son of God, but still a man) on the throne of God: how came He there? He came by the road of the cross; He came there as the propitiation for our sins. Man is not now in a state of probation; he is lost, and God has visited him.

What part had I in the cross? Well, my sins, and the enmity that slew Christ. When we look at the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, the only part we had in it (morally I mean—we were not there in fact) was the sins and the enmity of heart that put Him to death. There I find God using this wickedness of man to bring about His own work. Full enmity was brought out, but where my sins and enmity were brought out (at the cross, I mean) before God, God was doing a work that put

them all away. Looking at the cross on God's side, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son.” All my sins, and my sinfulness too, come out, but all has been put away. God is there meeting me in my sins, making me feel them as He is light, but He is there as love too, putting them all away. I get the blessed Lord Jesus becoming a man to suffer death, and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; and I see Him now at the right hand of God. Suppose I am brought to feel that my sin has been the occasion of His death (He is not there on the cross now), I find that He is sitting at the right hand of God: is He there with my sins? No; that will not do, I find them gone—God raised Him from the dead; all is settled, blessedly settled. It is the person who is to be, the Judge who has put all my sins away; it is impossible that the person who put away all my sins could impute sin to me.

Mark, beloved friends, how this righteousness comes in: “When he had by himself purged our sins,” He “sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.” (Heb. 1:3.) That is where I know Him now; that is where I get righteousness—God's righteousness; I own I have none. Taking men as men, “there is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:10.) Where is righteousness then? It is in God: then God must condemn me, as I am a sinner. People seem to think that, because God is merciful, a man with fifteen sins may be let off, while a man with twenty sins must be condemned. You let loose thus all the iniquity of man: all sin is condemned of God—is, and must be so. People say God is merciful, and that means with them that He is perfectly indifferent to good and evil. Where am I to find the testimony and witness of this righteousness of God? In Christ at the right hand of God. “When he is come, he will convince the world of righteousness, because I go unto my Father, and ye see me no more.” (John 16:8-10.) The world sees Him no more in that character. I get righteousness manifested—how? By putting Christ, who bore my sins, at the right hand of God. Christ so perfectly glorified God on the cross, that God in righteousness set that Man at His right hand.

Supposing this righteousness of God places Christ at His right hand, where would the Redeemer be without His redeemed? This places us there—not at the right hand of God, that belongs to the Son of God—but in the glory of God. The gospel is thus the ministration of righteousness. In it the righteousness of God is revealed, and the sin of man is revealed too. Wrath being revealed from heaven (Rom. 1:18), in comes God in love to sinners, bringing righteousness, because we had none. In Christ He brings in eternal life, but divine righteousness too. The law came, and required human righteousness, but did not get it; sovereign grace in the gospel ministers righteousness to us.

There is a second thing in Christianity—it is “the ministration of the Spirit.” The moment Christ sat down at the right hand of God (it was ten days after, in fact, but morally speaking it was the same thing), the Holy Ghost came down on the day of Pentecost, and sealed all who believed the gospel. “Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. 4:6.) In virtue of this work of Christ, I, through grace, believing in it, am sealed by the Holy Ghost to the day of glory. “In whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.” (Eph. 1:13, 14.) Mark the effect of the presence of the Holy Ghost here. I see Christ sitting at the right hand of God; I am between the work of Christ and His coming again, and I have the Holy Ghost, the blessed seal of the efficacy of all He did at His first coming. I own in myself that I deserve utter condemnation; not only am I

guilty, but lost. It is not a question now of what I can be for God. The gospel has come, and told me what God did when I was lost.

The love of God is now shed abroad in my heart; I see the infinite love of God. Who put it into His heart? He has given the very best thing in heaven out of His own heart to save us, and now He has given His Spirit that we may believe in this love. That is not all: I find in John 14:20, “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” People say that I cannot know; Christ tells me I shall.

Further, He is the Spirit of adoption: I know I am in Christ before God, and I know I am a son, I cry, “Abba, Father.” Mark the practical power of this. Suppose a child with his father; if there is a question as to whether it is his father or not, he cannot have the affections of a child. A child has a nature capable of those affections, but he cannot have the feelings proper to a child till he knows his father. We are in the consciousness of relationship; the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost. I know I am in Christ, and Christ is in me, and I cry, “Abba, Father.” In the gospel of Christ I get the ministration of righteousness from God to me, and I get the ministration of the Spirit; I get the Holy Ghost sealing me for the day of redemption. There is no question as to love now, for God has given His Son; none as to righteousness, for Christ is at the right hand of God; nor as to relationship, for the Spirit teaches us to cry, “Abba, Father.”

Mark where we have got now. We have got righteousness; we have got life; we are in Christ; we are loved as Christ is loved. When we appear in the same glory as Christ, the world will know it, but He gives it to us now. The love of Christ is perfect. I may love a little, then I shall give a little; I may love much, then I shall give much; but if I love perfectly, I shall keep nothing back. This is the way Christ gives; this is the meaning of the sentence, which is very sweet to me, “Not as the world giveth give I unto you.” (John 14:27.) “The way Christ gives is to introduce us into all He has Himself. I do not speak of His eternal divine glory, but into all He has as man. “My peace I give unto you.” (John 14:27.) “For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me.” (John xvii. 8) “And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them.” (John 17:22.) All that He has as man He has introduced us into; He has given Himself for us: when He comes He brings us with Himself.

I am looking for this, “That I may win Christ” (Phil. 3:9); I say “That is mine—it is my portion; I must get that.” I have got it in title, but not in fact yet. We are in Christ before God; but then another thing is true, Christ is in us. The Christian is running the race towards glory, and he has to manifest the life that is in him. Duties always flow from the place we are in. You never could make yourselves my children, or even my servants; but if you were my children, then the duties would follow. When I am a Christian, then I have Christian duties: I had duties as a man, but I was lost on that ground. Redemption puts me on higher ground. Christ is in me; I am to show Him out. I cannot show out Christ if I have not got Him. The great principle for us is Christ in glory. I am redeemed: glory is mine. Christ is our forerunner: I am in Him before God (every Christian I mean). Now I have one single object (“a double-minded man is unstable in all his ways"). I want to win Christ in glory: I want to win Christ, and to be with Himself. You cannot have two objects, and run after them. The only thing I am looking for is to “be conformed to the image of his Son” (Rom. 8:29); that is the reason that there is no such thing as perfection here. If I have got Christ here, I cannot be satisfied till I get Christ there “Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,” we “are changed into

the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18.)

This is where progress comes in. Suppose I am in a straight passage with a lamp at the end of it, every step I take I shall have more of the light of the lamp, more of the lamp too, though I do not get the lamp till the end.

There is a great deal in 1 John 2 about "children" and "young men;" but what is all the apostle has to say about" fathers?" That they "have known him that is from the beginning." Real knowledge of Christ is the thing. The thing that characterizes the Christian as such is that he has been made "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." What made the thief meet? We have blessed testimony of conversion in his case (we do not get, perhaps, so striking an instance as this in the word of God); but there was no time for progress: yet he was fit to be Christ's companion in paradise. The Christian who has the Spirit of Christ is running after Christ in glory. We are in Christ, and Christ is in us. "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body." (2 Cor. 4:10.) Men are to read Christ in me. There is progress there; still the principle from the beginning is that Christians are the epistle of Christ: scripture does not say ought to be, but are. (You are my son; do not dishonor the family.)

The Christian is to manifest Christ in everything. There I find (not the running after Christ in glory, as in Phil. 3 but) in a world of temptation, a world that does not know God, that I should be a constant witness of what Christ is.

The way of that is seeing the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. I have got settled in my place before God; I have got Christ in me—Christ is my life. We have the two things in Gal. 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live, by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

You are the epistle of Christ: the world is to read Christ in you. We "beholding....are changed." The Spirit of God works, making me see these things; there is progress here—there ought to be, of course. Such is the Christian, Christ's epistle in this world, in which men are to read Christ; the living expression of Christ because he is in Christ, "accepted in the Beloved."

There is no perfection till we get to glory. There is nothing before me as an object of attainment but to be like Christ in glory. "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure." (1 John 3:3.) Every step he takes he sees more of what Christ is.

Are you thus before God in the sense of the infinite love that gave Christ, and that, Christ being our righteousness, we are before God in the value of what Christ has done, brought thus into divine favor?

If your souls are before God on this ground (conflicts you will have, and plowing too, the deeper the better), then are your hearts content to say, "I want nothing but Christ; I do not care what it costs me?" While we have Christ as our life, the flesh is there still, but I am not in the flesh, I have got into a new place before God. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8:1.) Not only is the blood on the door-posts, but we are out of Egypt, "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of his dear Son."

It is not only that life is in me, but that I ought to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus." I must apply the cross constantly to the old man. God has "condemned sin in the

flesh.” (Rom. 8:8.) It does not now disturb my peace, but I am to reckon myself dead. Faith puts me where God has put me: the flesh is not changed, but I put the cross on it.

Paul could say, “We which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake:” we must often say for our own sake. There we get the apostle practically carrying it out. I would like to leave on your hearts the perfectness of God's love, and the sense that His love has done all that is needed for us. Let me ask the question—Are you content to be this? Are you content to be the epistle of Christ, or would you like a little of your own way?

God's love was not exhausted—it was proved at the cross.

It is most important to remember that there is positive strength in Christ to deliver us from every temptation.

The Lord give us to know what it is to have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Chapter 157

My Father Worketh Hitherto and I Work: Part 1

It has struck me whether our Lord does not begin another action in John 8, by sovereign power and effectual grace (which is continued in the four following chapters); and that this new action is consequent upon His return from “the Mount of Olives,” with which the first seven had ended.

If so, it is dispensationally in keeping (and will be morally so too in His future dealings with Israel) to find Him “early in the morning in the temple,” sitting down to teach again the people. Equally in character with this position on His part was the act of the Scribes and Pharisees, who brought before Him the “woman taken in adultery,” that He who alone could pass judgment on the sin should take this place, and in righteousness condemn her. This scene not merely opens out the trespass to which their thoughts and intentions were limited, but has a far wider and more serious application to the nation and its rulers, under the guilt of whoredom and adultery, which should have lain heavily upon their consciences, in the presence of their Jehovah-Jesus! Is not this the iniquity which has first to be judged and tried by the bitter water of jealousy, according to “the law of jealousies when a wife goeth aside to another, instead of her husband, and is defiled?” Prophet after prophet had been sent unto them, saying, “surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the Lord.”

The Scribes and Pharisees, who brought the woman and accused her, declared that “Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned;” but they are not in the current of His own thoughts about the deeper trespass which had been brought to light by His own presence in their midst. How could He judge or condemn the woman, and not in righteous jealousy curse them? They had set her “in the midst,” and demanded “what sayest thou?” To His eye they had by their own act set themselves in the midst with her, and passing beyond the statute laws of Moses (see Num. 5:17) into the depths of His own feelings about them, He refused to take their accusation. Long ago He had sent Jeremiah, saying, “Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, thus saith the Lord, I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown;” and now one greater than a prophet is come to win her heart back to Himself by His own grace. If He applied the law of Moses to the nation, as the accusers wished Him to, do towards the adulteress, He must have taken “holy water in an earthen vessel, and of the dust that is in the floor, and put it into the water, and as a priest of the tabernacle bring up the question before the Lord.” This He refuses to do, and now mark how He passes into His own heights and depths of love (cost what it may in the end) to justify Himself in not condemning either the woman in her sin, or the nation in its greater trespass. “Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground [as though he heard them not];” for in the love which had brought Him amongst them, and in which He was come to work, the sin of her who was taken in the act, and the sin of Israel, though equally under “the eye of the sun” for righteous judgment, was written on His heart in grace. He who came out from God came not to put her away, but to put away her sin, and to cleanse her and make her whiter than snow. Viewed in this light, how significant of their state, and of His own purpose in love, are the words which He spate unto them, “he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her; and again he stooped down and

wrote on the ground!" He rolls the sin and the accusers away from the floor, and thus purges it; nor will He gather up the dust thereof in any earthen vessel or prepare "the bitter water of jealousy" between Him and them. He walks in a higher path of His own, which none but He could make; and so goes out of the midst, and away from all their accusations and questionings, saying to them, "I am the light of the world, he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He was left alone and the woman standing in the midst. "When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers hath no man condemned thee?" She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, "Neither do I condemn thee, go and sin no more."

As "the light of life," He has thus purged His floor cleaner than by the law of stoning! Blessed Jesus, He has made all the sin his own, and will eventually pass into the ground and take the curse Himself, and die the death, that what He wrote upon it in the day of His grace, may (whenever gathered up in jealousy) be pardoned and obliterated by the blood of atonement and reconciliation, through the depths of His own sufferings.

If this chapter 8 has introduced the national charge of Israel's departure and estrangement from Him who had espoused her to Himself, and come after her as we have supposed, chapter 9, is equally significant as showing their individual state and national blindness, As the former could only be portrayed by the woman taken in adultery, so in this it is by "a man which was blind from his birth." The state of the nation was not in either case beyond the typical virtue of the balm of Gilead, or the skill of the great Physician; and this instance only calls forth the power and grace of Him whose prerogative it is to give sight to the blind. It is remarkable that Jesus refuses to take up this case, in the form in which the disciples view it, when they asked, "Master, who did sin; this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" He will not look at it in this light any more than judge the treacherousness of the nation by the woman. In the governmental ways and dealings of God with men upon the earth such a question might fairly arise as this, for He did "visit the sins of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation;" but taken outside the responsibility of man, and viewed in connection with the counsels of the Father and the Son, "Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his patents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

In the pathway of the Word made flesh we follow Jesus thus "showing forth his glory;" and so the man that was born blind serves as exactly as the woman did for its display; yea to the condemnation of those who stood around in unbelief and said they saw. As "the light of the world" He passed out from the temple, and from the midst of the woman and her accusers. In His true greatness, He refused to use that light in which He walked for condemnation, though He commanded it to Shine in upon the consciences of each, so that all were convicted and made their escape from its searching power,"‘ beginning from the eldest even unto the last." There was yet another use of the light, and that is what we are now considering, in the case of the man born blind; "he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

It is a great action therefore that occupies Jesus at this time; not merely opening the eyes of the blind by sovereign power, but giving Himself as the object of sight in effectual grace to the man and to the nation if they will accept Him—being likewise the light without which the eye, though opened, could not behold Him! In view of this Jesus said, "I must work the works of him that sent

me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.” Observe, day and night get a new meaning, when they are looked at in reference to Christ's continuance and work upon this earth. “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world. When he had thus spoken, he spat on the ground and made clay of the spittle, and he anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay.” The dust of the floor; and the water, and the earthen vessel which would have made up the compound in “the hand of the priest” for the infliction of the curse and the rot, upon the trial of jealousy and unfaithfulness, had been refused. He who alone can “bring meat out of the eater” gives, us now to learn instead the virtues of the spittle, and the ground, and the mystic clay in the, hand of Him that is come to work the works of God. Jesus said to the man “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam (which is by interpretation Sent). He went his way therefore, and washed and came seeing.” The dust of the ground, out of which the first man was “made in the image of God,” had been cursed because of transgression and Satan; but now, under the power of Christ it is reclaimed and made available by the “sent” One through His spittle for bestowing an eye of faith to behold Him who came to bear away every curse, let it lie on whatsoever floor it may; and turn “the curse into a blessing!” The Light which had filled the temple just now and emptied it of every accuser, (how could they abide in its searching power?) leaving the woman alone with Jesus, does the same thing among the Scribes and Pharisees, now that the man who “was born blind” is brought into their midst. How well has the compound of the Apothecary done its work in connection with the sent One? “If this man were not of God [he says to them], he could do nothing. They answered, and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? and they cast him out,”

Jesus and the woman were left alone. And now the man who had walked in darkness all his days, but who has got “the light of life from Christ and confesses His sovereign power is turned out of the synagogue to follow Him.” “Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him [as in grace He would], he saith unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? he answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?” Two precious assurances flow from the lips of Jesus upon this inquiry, as He unveils Himself to the outcast one; “Thou hast both seen him [the new object to the opened eye], and it is he that talketh with thee; and he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.” New relations are thus formed which lead the Lord to take (in chap. 10) “the place of Shepherd” to this cast out sheep, and to declare His love for the flock as well as His protecting care against every foe. He also reveals the secret of the double title and interest which the Father's love as well as His own have over the sheep. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one.” We cannot fail to notice in these narratives how Jesus comes into the world, and accepts it just as it was by Adam's sin and Satan's power in death, to show Himself equal to every claim which the misery and wants of those in it daily and hourly brought across His path. More than this: for He passes through the world with the Father, in another and higher character than that by which as Creator-God, the heavens and the earth were made by Him and all that they contain. Earlier in this Gospel Jesus said to the Jews, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,” introducing thus a power which could turn everything round to His own glory and the development of the hidden purposes of divine love. “The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.” In this equality with God, there cannot be any uncertainty as to the nature of this new power, or its exercise; “for as the Father raiseth up the dead and

quickeneth, even so the Son quickeneth whom he will" is its scope; and we are the blessed objects in whom it is made good. (To be continued, if the Lord will)

Chapter 158

My Father Worketh Hitherto and I Work: Part 2

(Concluded front page 108.)

John 11 gives occasion to our Lord to pass into a yet further glory, upon the death of Lazarus; and to act by sovereign power in His higher titles, as “the Resurrection and the Life.” Here also Jesus refuses to hold His intercourse with them about death, as they viewed it in relation to Lazarus; but teaches the disciples to look at it in the presence of Himself and His Father; that they may understand Him, and the new doctrine which He declares. “This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.” How else could He act in character as “the Resurrection and the Life,” without a Lazarus who was dead (in the twelve hours of man's day) and buried, and had been in the grave four days already, so that those who loved him said “by this time he stinketh!” Death and the grave and corruption looked at in their condemning and separating powers in relation to God in His righteousness, and man upon whom death was inflicted on account of sin, are indeed fearful; all men are guilty under the weight of this penalty, and every mouth is stopped at the grave of Lazarus. Jesus is alone here with God, in the presence of Satan and his greatest power! The blindness of the man who was born so, whether through his own sin, or the sin of his parents, left him yet alive in this world; and the transgression of the woman who was taken in adultery, and whom Moses commanded to be stoned, forfeited her own life to the curse of the law she had broken; but “God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.”

Jesus took this place in the temple and passed before the Scribes and Pharisees as the light of it; but they left Him alone with the convicted woman as “the light” to her, who under the law which they used was appointed to death. He had also come to the man who was born blind and had so filled his vessel with “the light” from Himself, that the man needed only to learn further the Person who had brought to him “life,” in the confession of “the Son of God,” whom he worshipped.

Happy deliverances and trophies were these for themselves and for Him who was passing this through the world in a power that was able to turn the very causes of human misery out of it; or in the meanwhile to find a new use for them for “the glory of God, that the. Son of God might be glorified thereby.” This is what the Lord is doing as “the potter with the clay,” and under His skill everything is seen to suit Him and serve His purpose very well for glory or beauty, and just as it is! The language and actings of Him, who now comes into Bethany as “the Resurrection and the Life,” are all in correspondence with such a title. “He saith unto them, our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.” In the hands of Him that quickeneth and raiseth, “this sickness is not unto death,” though, speaking as those about Him do (after the manner of men), Lazarus was dead and buried, and in corruption.

Passing this however, we see that even the faith of Martha and Mary, which recognized a “resurrection at the last day” (for this was their hope) must open itself out to take in Jesus in the light of His own perfections “while it is called to-day,” and learn all these lessons afresh in this connection with the Son of God. “The last day” therefore is out of place when Jesus is in their

midst, to act as the Resurrection and the Life.

Here we may well challenge our hearts upon the importance of such a revelation as we are considering in all its parts. “Now that Christ is come,” He calls us out to learn our new lessons as “the truth is in Jesus” in His company, and as He teaches us, by act and deed. Old things are passed away in His creation, so that “sickness unto death” and almost everything besides, which is the natural order and relation in Adam, have given place to another order in the Son of God, who was dead but is alive again and “liveth for evermore, and has the keys of death and of hell.” How slowly we make room, like the two sisters and the group at Bethany, for the display of “the glory of God,” above and beyond all that sin and Satan brought into the world and put us under in the cruel bondage of death and corruption; not seeing that the Son of God has laid bold of it all for Himself, to be glorified thereby, down to the grave by means of death; and up to the right hand of the throne of God in glory, by means of resurrection! What a pathway of trespass and guilt—sin and blindness—sickness and death—have these chapters opened up; and what misery would they still record, if Jesus had not passed through the midst as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” and made all its stumbling-blocks His own stepping-stones, up to the right hand of the Father, and the crown of glory which adorns the victor's brow. “When Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here my brother had not died.” But in this confidence of her love, she is not near enough to His own heart, in the secret that all He is, as the Son of God, He is for the objects of His affection, for “Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” He did not come to reach His glory by preventing death, as Mary supposed (for He abode two days in the same place where he was) but came to win His spoils by means of death; and to bring in “the Father of glory” in due season to His own sepulcher, that He might raise and glorify His Son with other glories, besides those which He had with Him “before the world was.”

We may remark here that this visit of Jesus as the Son of God to Bethany, and the rolling away the stone from the mouth of the cave, to bring out man who lay therein “with the napkin about his face and bound hand and foot with grave clothes,” is a companion picture to “the exceeding high mountain” in the other Gospels, upon which Jesus stood and was transfigured before His disciples. His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light, “when he received from God the Father honor and glory, and there came forth the voice to him from the excellent glory: This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” The Son of man in righteousness, thus accredited to us by His transfiguration upon “the holy mount,” was at His height in majesty and glory upon the earth—further He cannot rise that way, unless He goes up alone to God, in the title of His own worthiness. On the other hand, Lazarus in his cave “bound hand and foot with grave clothes” under the power of death, was sunk down into the depths of corruption These two extremes are met in the Person of the Son, who passes through John's Gospel (not so much in “the coming and majesty and glory of his earthly kingdom") as in the veiled power and title of “the only begotten of the Father;” to work the works of God out upon the new platform and footing, that “neither hath this man sinned nor his parents,” that he was born blind; or as to Lazarus, “this sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.”

Such an one in our midst makes the depths of this ruin and disgrace to man His own, and it is to be rolled away out of the floor in the title of Him who has written it upon His own heart, as before and with His Father, in the fire of His jealousy, and “the zeal for His house which had eaten Him

up.” How will He and the ground and the dust thereof (out of which Adam was originally taken) settle this new and last question, now that man has been driven back “unto dust,” by that death which his Creator inflicted upon him as a sinner? The work, the sad work of Satan, is before the Son of God at the grave—where man who “was made in the image of God” has been laid in the separating power of death, the keys of which the usurper held upon the cave and over the captive dead; buried out of sight from those who were in tears at the felt desolation of that hour. “A groan” goes up to God from the heart of Jesus, who has come into such a scene of helplessness and misery to “work the works of God” in the face of Satan's power and title at the grave's mouth. The groan found its answer between the Father and the Son, “and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, Father I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me, and I know that Thou hearest me always.” Nor is this new work of Jesus as “the Resurrection and the Life” to be only for the glory of God (as the first object, ever before His soul) but in truest sympathy and love for the oppressed and bereaved, He adds “because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent me.” In whatever way this grace could associate others with itself in such an act, it is ever the delight of His unjealous love to do! How like Himself is it, when Jesus bids them begin this mighty action, saying, “take ye away the stone;” an act only to be rivaled when all was over, by the same love which bade them “loose him and let him go;” what a moment for them, for they did it! The groan to God brought its answer from above to the opened, ears of Jesus. Perfect in the expression of His sympathy, to the sorrowing and helpless ones with whom Jesus wept, they looked that these tears should be wiped away by power from Him, as the Son of God. Jesus is left in possession of the entire scene, and “cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth, and he that was dead came forth,” bound hand and foot! “A new thing” had been wrought already in the man who walked about upon the earth, with his eyes opened by means of the clay, which Jesus made out of it; but now a greater wonder is to be wrought in reply to the groan and the tears and the loud cry; for Lazarus comes forth from the depths of the grave, at the bidding of Jesus the Son of God passing through the ruins, as “the Resurrection and the Life.” Blessed Jesus, Thou hast won back all that the enemy had plucked from the hands of men, from Adam in Paradise to Solomon in his kingdom and majesty in Jerusalem, as declared when Thou wast transfigured upon the holy mount. In this Gospel Thou art come down from that height, that Thou mightest be seen also to enter into the palace of the strong man and spoil his goods, and take from him all his armor wherein he trusted.

John 12 opens after these triumphs, and presents Bethany under quite another aspect. It is no longer the house of weeping, for “there they made Jesus a supper, and Martha served and Lazarus (whom the grave and corruption had given back out of the womb of death) was one of them that sat at meat with him.” One crowning act only remains to be done for “the glory of God, and that the Son of God may be glorified thereby,” in order that the counsels of the Father and our eternal blessing may be established beyond the reach of Satan's power, and outside the range of sin, and the judgment of God. Who could take up this work, and by what new paths in life or death, incarnation or ascension, could such an end be reached; but by the Son of God come down from above, in the mystery of “the Word made flesh,” that He might accomplish it? In this spirit, Mary took “a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.” Elias and Moses, the two men who appeared in glory, on the top of the exceeding high mountain, spake with Jesus of “His decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem;” and He carried this secret down with Him

into the house of Bethany, that He might declare it to those whom He loved, and in connection with this anointing. To the natural thoughts of Judas (like the inquiry respecting the man who was blind from his birth, and its causes) this use of the ointment is but waste, and should have been sold for three hundred pence and given to the poor; but Mary is in the current of her Lord's thoughts, and He said, “let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.” The act of Mary had this significance to the heart of Jesus, and He prepares Himself for the path by which the causes of human misery, and God's dishonor, and the world's bondage should be met and overcome. Long ago the Spirit of prophecy had cried, “O death, I will be thy plagues, O grave, I will be thy destruction;” and now He is come to whom that finger pointed. Jesus knowing that His hour was come speaks to His Father about it, and says for Himself, “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” He who proved Himself as “the Resurrection and the Life” at the cave of Lazarus, has in view His last and greatest work of expiation for the guilty. He sets Himself to descend into the belly of the earth, that the dust of the tabernacle-floor—the writing of the finger—and the original curse upon the ground—may get their answer, and be set aside in His own death, as “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” God, the Father of glory, may then take His new place, and raise up Jesus out of His grave on the third day, as the proof of His own glory over sin by death, and of our redemption; for “God hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” A deeper path than all these groans and tears at the grave of Lazarus, opened itself to our Lord and Jesus said, “now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy name.”

It is no longer merely Adam's sin that is in question, or the transgressions of his posterity, multiplied as they may be; for “God manifest in flesh” has come into the midst of the family as a man and brought every adverse power into crisis in His own person at His cross. Satan's usurped rights over man were challenged and set aside by the perfect obedience in life and death of the Second Adam. Tempted by the devil in the wilderness (when the temptations were ended) Jesus said, “get thee hence, Satan.” So again in Gethsemane, when “his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground,” in the knowledge that this was Satan's hour, and the power of darkness; still He accepted it in the confidence that it was the path of “the pre-determinate counsel” that led to the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby in life and in death, and at the right hand of the Father!

Obedience unto death was the only measure of His perfectness as the faithful servant who loved his master, his wife, and his children, and would not go out free. The sin and the iniquity of His own, the flesh, the world and Satan; the majesty and righteousness of God in their own nature, as well as in holy judgment against all evil, were gathered up by Christ at that hour, and made His own care at the cross. He not only vindicated the rights of God in His ways with men in government, but glorified the Father according to His own essential being and Godhead; and in doing this, proved at the same time who this Son of man must be, who did it. He who in grace to us, and in infinite love to the Father, made all these His own care, wrought them out in His atoning sufferings and death, when “he said, it is finished: and he bowed his head and gave up the ghost.”

In the righteous judgment which He bore, as the Just One for the unjust, it follows that the prince of this world must be cast out. In the same judgment which He took and because of it, He further said “now is the judgment of this world.” Unrighteousness must in due time be as publicly judged by

God from heaven, because righteousness in the suffering victim was cast out by the world and its prince; and Jesus was with the Father. As to Himself in grace to us, Jesus said, “and I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me. This he said signifying what death he should die.”

Precious Jesus, what Thy people owe Thee; who hast broken through every yoke—borne the curse—put away sin by the sacrifice of Thyself—destroyed him that had the power of death, that is the devil—brought life and incorruptibility to light—and set us in relationship with Thyself, and Thy Father as our Father, and with Thy God our God!

Chapter 12 closes however “in darkness” as regards those in whose midst He was thus shining forth, as “the light of life,” and lighting up the darkest places of the earth by taking possession of them in His own glory, and so drawing out “the sting of death” itself, if they would only let Him, because He could not be holden of it. But they listened to the law, instead of beholding the glory of the Son and said, “we have heard out of the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest Thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? who is this Son of man?” and they too are offended at Him. Nevertheless Jesus presents Himself once more to them in this group of chapters, as the light of life saying, “while ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light,” lest darkness come upon you.

Like the accusers of chapter 8 who went out one by one, and left Jesus alone with the woman; or like the Scribes and Pharisees who cast out of the synagogue the man blind from his birth, who confessed Jesus and worshipped Him; so these in their turn compel Jesus to take an action for Himself (a last and final one) but in judgment against them; “these things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them!” The sun which had risen in such brightness upon them, and shed its beams across their path, has gone down in obscurity—and set, till another day, because of their unbelief. They have lost Jesus, and the light of the world has left it!

The first seven chapters of this Gospel ended by every man going to his own house, and “Jesus to the mount of Olives;” they then parted company till His feet shall stand thereon another day. These five chapters finish, as we have seen, by Jesus hiding Himself from them and the world. Chapters 13 and onward open the new and blessed subject of the Father's house, and of our union there by grace in all the counsels of the Father, to the glory of “the departed One” who is the Son of His own love.

J. E. B.

The New Jerusalem: Part 1

The system of the writer has at least the merit of being clearly presented to us.

“Nothing can be more flagrantly inconsistent than to assert that all the prophecies concerning Israel in the Old Testament are to be understood literally, and at the same time to teach that this chapter must be explained away and spiritualized” (p. 190). We are to understand the contents of Rev. 21; 22, literally. To interpret them as spiritual things communicated to us in figure is to explain away.

Is this, then, the principle on which the Book of the Revelation is to be understood? or is it possible to deny that the general scope of it is symbolic? When, then, are we to begin to take it literally? If it be supposed that what is addressed to or spoken of the church must be literal, the writer himself maintains the contrary. For, in speaking of chapters 2, 3, he says, “Every figure in these epistles to the seven churches is Of a Jewish and Old Testament cast and character” (p. 216). There are, then, figures in the book; and when the churches to whom as a whole it is addressed are specifically the matter in hand, every figure is of Jewish and Old Testament cast and character. There is nothing inconsistent, then, as to the form in which the truth is communicated, if the church be still the subject matter in chapters 21, 22., although it be cast in Jewish figures. On the contrary, I think it will be found that nothing could be “more beautifully in harmony with what scripture would lead us to expect.” Nor need the most earnest advocate of the literal interpretation of Old Testament prophecy for the Jews fear that this will be touched, save to confirm it by the use of the realities of their coming earthly glory, as figures of a heavenly glory beyond and above theirs.

I will now ask any simple Christian to read again the description of the glorious city in Rev. 21; 22, and tell me if it conveys to his mind the idea of what is material; and, if he is still in doubt, to turn to page 219 of this paper, and see what materialism involves the writer in. “As to its shape and form, we cannot pretend to any degree of certainty, but, from the description, it would seem to be material, to be in the form of a lofty pyramid, of which the height to the top-stone, &c?· The top-stone, the chief corner-stone will crown the pyramidal city, and forming thus the center in which all its lines shall meet, will, with exquisite suitability, form the material representation and glorious monument of the exalted living stone.” A material inhabited city in the shape of a pyramid! And this is Rev. 21 “in its natural sense!” But verse! 16 will settle this point for a mind subject to scripture. “The length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal:” the city is presented as a cube. What could be more evidently symbol, whatever the thing symbolized? For this we must take the scripture before us, and see if it will not be its own interpreter.

But, first, the structure of this part of the prophecy calls for attention, as evidently forming an important feature in the interpretation of it. What is the reason of the break at the end of verse 8? If there be none, and the course of the prophecy be simply continuous, why is it said at this point, “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the “seven vials full of the seven last plagues"? Has not such introduction of angel messengers been previously marked in the book, and generally connected with some change or first beginning made in the communication of it?

(See chaps. 5:2.; 7:12; 8:23; 10:1; 14, 15:1 17:1; 18:1; 21:1.) Is there nothing to arrest the careful reader here?—no break or change indicated? Why, too, one of these particular angels, and the similarity of the circumstances under which John was shown the mystery of the woman and the beast that carried her, in chapter xvii.? Are not these things significant at least, and likely to bear on the right understanding of the passage? All is passed over without notice by the writer.

It is time we should inquire what maybe their import. The historic sequence of the first eight verses of this chapter, with the events described in chapter 20, may be assumed as unquestioned. The “great white throne, and him that sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them,” introduces naturally “a new heaven and a new earth (chap, 21.), for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” It is the eternal state, the distinguishing characteristics of which are given us in these verses. Let us weigh them well. And first and most marked of all as to God Himself. We know something of the immensity involved in the way in which God is revealed and known. This forms, and contains in itself, the blessing of His people in every age. God speaks of it to Moses: “I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name Jehovah was I not known unto them.” (Ex. 6:3.) This was reserved as the order of Israel's blessing. Full and rich as were the resources of faith in these early days—found, in God revealed as Almighty, and Jehovah in unchanging faithfulness—it was not enough for Him, in the full knowledge of and nearness to Himself into which He would bring His people. Even “I am that I am” was involved in inexplicable mystery that none could fathom, till He came who alone could tell it out—the Word that was with God, that was God. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth.” It was now the only-begotten Son “telling out all that was in the bosom of the Father, to bring us into relationship with Him as His children. And when He had finished the work by which God was perfectly glorified in His own nature, and, as to sin, He could say, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, to my God, and your God,” and send down the Holy Ghost to be the power in our hearts of a relationship so intimate and blessed. Again, the name involves the blessing, and “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” contains in it all the richest possible, as it is ours thus to know Him forever.

But not so does the Revelation give Him to us; for Christianity, as such, is not the subject of it. nor the revelation of God that forms it. It is the Son of man as judge first, and the time was come that judgment should begin at the house of God. Thus we have, in chapter iv., the glory of God in creatorship and providence, chapter 5 bringing out the title of the Lamb to the inheritance on the ground of redemption; then the judgments that put Him in possession of it, till He comes Himself to take possession in chapter xix. This gives its character to the revelation of God in the millennium, and the blessing of that glorious era. It is the direct government of the throne, the Lamb reigning in manifested glory. See Rev. 5, where His title is celebrated in heavenly praise before the hour of actual triumph is looked at as come. “Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever.” So again, when in chapter 7:9-17 we are carried on to the scenes of the millennial joy: “Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple, and he that sitteth on the throne shall tabernacle over them,.... the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them,” &c. See also chapters 14:1-4; 19:6-9. Everywhere it is God and the Lamb that marks the blessing of that day. And “he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet: the last enemy that shall be destroyed is

death."

Accordingly the destruction of death, when the resurrection of judgment has made the separation of body and spirit no longer the existing state of any one, is given us in Rev. 20:14. But now what follows in the passage I have referred to, for the expressed order in which these closing events of time take place? "Then cometh the end, when he delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father. When he shall have put down all rule, and all authority, and power.... and when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under Him, that God may he all in all." The dispensation of the fullness of times had come; all things in heaven and earth had been headed up in the once despised Nazarene, everything laid low at His feet. But what is it for? That He should give up the universal sovereignty as man. The Son also Himself became subject unto Him that put all things under Him, in order that God should be all in all. Exactly in accordance with this, in the description of the eternal state given us in the opening verses of our chapter, God is revealed as all in all. "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and he their God." This is the sum of eternal blessing. "What for us could go beyond God thus known, and dwelling with His people? Is it not the very point to which we are already brought by faith in the Epistle to the Romans, as the climax of our joy? See chapter v. 1-10; and then verse 11, "Not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation." So also in 2 Cor. 5:17, 18, it is similarly realized as the fruit of the new creation ground on which we are brought in Christ— "Old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new; and all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ." This, then, is the brightest distinguishing feature of the new heavens and the new earth, when "the former things are passed away, and He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." God is all in all.

But hardly less marked as to man's state is the fact that all the distinctions that came in by sin in time and upon the earth are lost. "We hear no more of nations. In the new creation and therefore already to faith "there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all." (Col. 3:10, 11.)

"The people are one," as at the first before man's pretension and pride of unity forced God to scatter and divide. One distinction alone remains, "the tabernacle of God is with men." But this was not the fruit of sin in the flesh in time, but of the counsels of God before the world was. It is the church: not (as it is found only in Paul's epistles) the body of Christ, but in a twofold relationship: to Christ, as the bride adorned for her husband; and to God, as His tabernacle, the eternal dwelling-place of His glory. Both are found in Ephesians the first in connection with Christ's love that is preparing for presentation to Himself in glory all that He can delight in, chapter v. 25 - 27, and the second in chapter ii. 21, 22, when all the building fitly framed together is growing unto a holy temple in the Lord—the result reached for both in Rev. 21. The kingdom was prepared for the blessed heirs of it "from the foundation of the world," and when set up will last as long as time lasts (see Psa. 89:4, 27 - 37); but the church belongs to eternity, according as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world. I shall have to refer again to the subject, of the giving up of the kingdom', but now pass on to other characteristics of the eternal state.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 160

The New Jerusalem: Part 2

“These was no more sea” (v. 1), no part of the new creation that is not brought into order and blessing.

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.” God rests at last, when there was fully come the declared and precious object of the manifestation of the Son. “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” It was clean gone now.. No trail of the serpent defiled the new creation. God had gone to the source of all that brought in sorrow, and swept it away in the judgment of the cross. The former things were passed away. The God, who had had to drive out the man and woman in tears from the Eden He had made for unfallen creatures, is able to meet us on the threshold of a new heaven and a new earth as the wiper away of all tears from our eyes. “And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the” end.” What words could more solemnly close the eventful history of time, wherein God had used the proved ruin of man to bring out to His own infinite glory what He Himself is, to be the fountain of eternal flowings of refreshment for His people.

“I will give unto him that is athirst of the water of life freely.” Already we are at the source. He could say who came to make Him known, “the water that I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” Here is the full realization of it in eternity. “He that overcometh shall inherit these things, and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.” Such is the close of the conflict, and such the position and portion of the overcomer in God's own presence and blessing. Then one last word that fixes in terrible contrast the eternal and unalterable doom of the lost that have “their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” Here the veil of the future, lifted by Revelation, drops; as well it may. The historic sequence of events has been opened out prophetically to its term. The waves of succeeding ages break no longer on the shores of time. This is eternity, and then beyond the utmost bound of the everlasting hills faith knows its portion.

Yet once again the veil is lifted, and a scene of great glory is opened to us—some of the elements of it such as have been already before us in the description of the eternal state, yet not without sufficient to distinguish it, as we shall see—with even points of contrast. If it be so, what is the glory that is portrayed from verse 9 to chapter xxii. 5? We must look at it a little in detail, for we are told “there is an absence of all the church's distinctive characteristics” (p. 216).

“And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain.” Now, surely it is not unworthy of notice that at this point the position of John changes. It is not often that it is so ordered in the course of the communications made to him, yet never, we may safely say, without design and fitness; though whether we are able to discern it is another thing. But is an interpretation of the

passage likely to be the true one that makes nothing of such a change? Nay, that has for its principle that there is none, but that in orderly connection of the parts, the scene is one in chapters xxi. - xxii. 5, and John is carried away in spirit to a great and high mountain? At verse 10 too he shows what he has already seen and described from verse 1 - 8. This is the system of the paper (see p. 219, where the argument is founded on it). “Thus we see the millennial city and earth are at end before this city descends, which is confirmed by the word that there shall be no more death.....So also there shall be no sun, and yet no night.”

But I turn to the word, for true light we want, which is surely not lacking in it. The introduction seems to carry us back to chapter xvii. This is certainly a striking parallel in the way John was shown the very different scenes before him there. “And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters.....So he carried me away in the Spirit into the wilderness.” Then it was to see the unholy alliance of the apostate church with the world, in the last form the Gentile dominion assumes, that is, the revived Roman empire. How suited the wilderness, from which John looks out on the moral chaos where no fruit of the life of Christ was found to be fruit for good. Yet was there never to be a true connection of the church with the world? Absolutely none with the world as it is, out of which Christ is rejected. “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

But what when the kingdom of this world becomes the Lord's, and He sits on the throne of His glory? We shall reign with Him. Scripture is perfectly clear as to this, in spite of our author, who asks, “What has the church to do with the new earth; is not heaven, with the many mansions now being prepared, her home?” It tells us, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” Again, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even, as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 2:21.) If it said, This is in the millennial earth, and not the new earth, we have seen the church's connection with the latter as the tabernacle or dwelling-place of God.

The truth is, that much of the confusion of this paper is to be traced to the mistaken thought of uniting the truth of the church to that which is specially revealed of it through Paul, that is, its unity as the body of Christ. Yet even there, as we have seen, it is also the temple of God. But besides what the church is corporately, there is, first and highest of all, the relationships in which those who compose it stand individually with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus, as Eph. 1 unfolds them to us. It is full association with Him in all that He has entered into as man with His Father and God. Hence His place always gives us ours. If hidden now, our life is hid with Him in God: if about to be manifested, then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory. In fact, He comes “to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe,” in bright contrast to the day when He came alone, and men “saw no beauty in him that they should desire him.” As the prism catches the ray that falls upon it, and, breaking it up into its several colors, reflects it thus in its varied beauty and perfection; so will the church be to Christ in the coming day of manifested glory.

This is what is given us in the description before us, not the home of the Father and the Son, the borne of our hearts even now in a love that goes beyond the glory, because the glory can be displayed, but the love never, but the displayed glory of the kingdom, and the church's necessary and blessed association with Christ in it, the heavenly Eve of the last Adam heir sharer with Him of

it all. It is especially the heavenly part of, it, where the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. (Matt. 13:43.) But there is seen church and state in true connection with one another, when it is no longer Satan's skill in counterfeit, but the fulfillment of the purpose of God for the glory of His Christ. We see thus the reason of the link between chapters 21 and 22, if only to bring out the contrast of the things that are depicted. And do we not enter in some little measure into the wisdom and preciousness of the grace that does not give us the glorious espousal of the church, as in chapter xix., until the overthrow in judgment of that which had held the place and profession of the Bride in the awful Satanic Counterfeit? nor finally close the [Revelation without the true and recognized place of the church in the kingdom, when the time had come for it, according to God? What more in keeping too, than that one of the angels of the vials, by which judgment was executed, should be chosen to show John the full positive result in glory and blessing?

May I ask here what could be the meaning of one of the vial angels being thus introduced according to the scheme of interpretation (if so it can be called) that—I am examining? According to the paper this is eternity; and therefore the thousand years of the kingdom have intervened between the pouring out of the vials of wrath and the glory here set out before John. Why this link taken up with events of time so long past?

But let us look at the details presented to us. John is summoned to behold the Bride, the Lamb's “wife. Now this is not the first mention of her in what I conceive to be the order of the prophecy. She has been already introduced as such in chapter xix., in “the day of her public espousal in glory. And this our author fully recognizes. The wife who had made herself ready in chapter xix., “the Lamb's wife, so loved betrothed, and married, we see in her eternal home” in chapter xxi. This is important. We may turn to chapter 19. (unnoticed in the paper save in this cursory way), for if the bride of the Lamb be Israel in chapter 21., it must be Israel in chapter 19. Now I maintain that the terms of the description in the latter preclude the possibility of it. Let me ask, Is the scene heavenly or earthly? Verse 1 settles it. “After these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven.” It is heavenly—not the new heavens and the new earth, where all is eternal—but heaven, in contrast with the earth that had just been the scene of the judgment of the great corrupting whore, whose smoke rose up forever and ever. Heaven is the scene of the joy and worship that attends the marriage of the Lamb, before it opens in verse 11 to give Him forth in the last stroke of judgment that puts Him in possession of the kingdom. Who is owned as the wife that has made herself ready? The system of the paper makes it Israel in resurrection, saved, not as individuals, but as a nation (p. 189). I do not stop here to notice this extraordinary misapplication of Rom. 11. But the remnant of Judah had never yet looked on Him whom they had pierced, to say nothing of the ten tribes needed to make up all Israel as a nation, who are only brought in after Judah is first settled in peace with Messiah in the land. The heavenly glory of the nuptials settles in itself who is the subject of them.

It is the church thus publicly owned in suited heavenly glory, when judgment had first set aside on earth that which had falsely borne His name, and assumed her place. And she is owned according to the Lamb's delight in her. In chapter 21 characteristics are added suited to the place she is called to take with Him in the kingdom, as well as of her own personal condition, which, being perfect in glory, 13 of course eternal. And so John saw “that city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.", It is the church as the heavenly seat of the administration of the

kingdom (chap. 22:4), as Jerusalem is the earthly.

Such is, I submit, the only consistent interpretation of the symbol. Every figure is (still) “of Jewish and Old Testament cast and character;” but the question is, What is the thing thus figured? Now, let me ask my reader, if the church is destined for this place of rule and administration under Christ in the kingdom, what more expressive as a symbol than Jerusalem, the well-known seat of royalty and center of government on earth?—a symbol, not of its highest relationships, and of that which is therefore nearest to our hearts (though it flows from them), but of its place and connection with Christ in the kingdom.

“Holy,” as to its state, other distinctions follow: it “descends out of heaven,” its source stamping its character, “from God.” It might have been from God, and earthly. It might have been heavenly and angelic. It was neither. It descended out of heaven from God. “And is set up—settled in the new earth among the nations” (p. 184,185). Such is the writer's system. But where is there a trace of it in the passage? Does descending out of heaven involve settling on the earth? Take a parallel case in 1 Thess. 4:15, 16: “The Lord himself shall descend from heaven.” Must we adopt the conclusion (of current theology indeed) that He comes to the earth? We know that He does not; but, caught up with the dead in Christ first raised, together we meet the Lord in the air— “a glorious apparition in the clouds” (if the writer likes), “as some have” —not so strangely, after all— “imagined” (p. 219)—even before the day of the millennial Jerusalem.

But we must proceed with the details. “Having the glory of God.” Wonderful privilege! Well may it arrest us, as we ask, to whom belongs this intimate connection with the divine glory? Has not divine grace made it already the Christian's in hope? “We rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:2.) We “reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the coming glory to be repealed to us.” He has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. The earnest expectation of the creature waits for our manifestation in His glorious image as the sons of God. But the church is set to be the display of it morally now as the epistle of Christ in the world. (2 Cor. 3) And the power for this is given us in the last verse of the chapter. “Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord, the Spirit.” The glory of God shines before us in the face of Jesus, and we gaze on it in peace, for every ray of it brings into our souls the sweet witness of the perfection of His work that has sets us thus in presence of the glory, and as we gaze we become like Him.

But this will be found to come out further in the symbols before us: “And her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” The word for “light” is more fully “shining” (φωστ■ρ), only used before in the New Testament, in Phil. 2:15. “Her shining” is like jasper. The force of this is at once seen by the only previous use of jasper in this book. He that sat upon the throne “was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone” (chap. iv. 3), as the symbol of the glory of God. It is the same thing already beautifully expressed for faith, in 2 Cor. 4:6, “God hath shined in our hearts for the shining forth (φωτισμον) of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” So again, in the passage before referred to, where the very word is found (Phil. 2:15), we are set to be the display of the glory in its moral characteristics in the world, “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights {φωστ■ρα) in the world” for this is just what Christ was. The only difference is that now we possess the treasure in an earthen vessel that too often

obscures the manifestation of it.

But in the new Jerusalem the vessel is suited to the glory it contains, and there is the perfect shining of it, “like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Now all this is of no account with the writer, who says, as he passes over it, “the next feature that bears on this inquiry is the great high wall” (p. 185). The glory of God is not a feature of any significance. Let the simple Christian judge who has no theory of interpretation to maintain.

“And had a wall great and high.” Let us see how this is treated: “There was ever in Israel one characteristic which distinguished its constitution from that of the church, namely, the wall of partition, by which its exclusive right to God's presence and blessing was asserted against the nations round about.” Now, if we look at Eph. 2, where the middle wall of partition is spoken of, it is the symbol of the enmity between Israel and God, as much as between them and the nations—“even the law of commandments contained in ordinances:” So little is the writer's account of it the truth. And this was abolished in the death of Christ. But it is well to note how easily the writer himself abandons his theory of the material. For it could not be seriously maintained that this is the ordinary purpose and meaning of the wall of a material city. It is its defense and security; nor otherwise does verse 27 consistently interpret it. The heavenly city is enclosed and shut in thus against all that is unsuited to the glory of God, of which it is the dwelling-place. And the suited material of the building of the wall of it was jasper (ver. 18), that which symbolized the glory. A “middle wall of partition” has, indeed, no place in the constitution of the church. But is there nothing that answers to the wall of the heavenly city, in the responsibility of the church as the house of God on earth to maintain the holiness and truth that alone consists with His presence? And if it is just in the breaking down of this that it has utterly failed, how blessed to see that no thought of God shall fail of its full accomplishment! The glory of God will itself maintain what is suited to it and to His dwelling-place in the day of glory.

But what of the angels at the gates (ver. 12)? The paper is silent, for, according to the system of it, it would be hard to account for their place. But “to angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come whereof we speak” and this is just the subject before us. To whom, then? Now this is given us in the names of the twelve tribes of Israel written on the gates of the city. For it is not denied that every figure is still of Jewish and Old Testament cast and character, and that the cast of this is taken from Ezekiel's prediction of Jerusalem on the earth. But here it is an expressive symbol of what is deeper. The gate is the place where rule is administered in the East. The order of government on earth was ever connected with Israel and its twelve tribes, as the center of it. But now that which is thus its fitting symbol is found connected with the heavenly city, in the names of the tribes inscribed on the gates. To us, the heavenly saints, the church, under Christ, is entrusted the judicial administration of “the world to come.” “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” (1 Cor. 6:2.) “He that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations, and he shall rule them with a rod of iron.... even as I received of my Father.” (Rev. 2:26, 27.) “I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them.” (Rev. 20:4.) “All doubt as to its being the special home of Israel must now be removed, for not only the nation, but its tribes, are all found there, each with its own special portion” (p. 186). Where is there anything of this in the passage? There is not a word of the nation, nor of the special portion of the tribes. There are the names of the tribes, but that is all; fulfilling a most leading part, as we have seen, in the symbolic representation of the church's ascertained place in the kingdom.

It is its polity that is described in its special millennial place. The inhabitants come afterward as a distinct thing.

In full consistency is the Connection of the twelve apostles with the foundations. “And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.” Certainly they were not the foundations of the relationship in which Israel has stood, or will stand, with God. That they were to have a special place of privilege in the administration of the kingdom we know from Matt. 19:28. “Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon, twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.” Yet was the church, as the habitation of God, builded upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Their promised place in the kingdom would not in any way interfere with their being of the body of Christ when it was formed at Pentecost, for the church was also to have intimate connection with the kingdom, as we have seen. Yet to Paul was as specially assigned the revelation of that higher heavenly relationship, but in nowise shutting him out of part in the earthly. (See 1 Cor. 4:8.) Thus all is consistent. Divine distinctions and order were to be observed as fully in the introduction of the twelve here as in the omission of Paul. To be of the body of Christ was much beyond any special place of rule in the kingdom reserved for any, but such was not here the subject. I have said so much, because the paper says, “Paul &c., saw no place found for them in the new Jerusalem.” But the church did not cease to be the body of Christ and the tabernacle of God, because it was also to be the Lamb's wife and the new Jerusalem. I would note here that, in page 186, Matt. 19:28 is quoted for the system of the paper, which is that Rev. 21; 22 is the eternal state. But is “the regeneration” equal in force to “the new heavens and the new earth?” And does the Son of man sit in the throne of His glory eternally? 1 Cor. 15 tells us expressly that He delivers up the kingdom to God.

But other points demand our attention. “The twelve gates were twelve pearls, every several gate was of one pearl.” That which first meets the eye as a walled city is approached in its gate. Thus at every approach there shines out amid the surrounding Wall of the divine glory the pearl—the chosen symbol of what the church was to Christ, of His own special delight in it as He saw it in eternity, into His own thoughts about it— “who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.” Every several gate showed out this.

And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.” The gold of divine righteousness, the glass of transparent purity, are but the symbols in glory of what the new man is already created in, “which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth.” (Eph. 4:24.) “And the street of the city” was of the same material. (Vet. 21.) What rest it will be to walk where there is nothing ever again to defile! In danger of defilement now at every step, there the very streets we walk on will answer perfectly to what we are, and both to what God is. And I saw no temple therein, “for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” True to the characteristic privileges of the Christian, as is every detail, all that marked the distance of Israel's relationships is. unknown. The millennial Jerusalem on earth will have its temple, but not so the heavenly city. The unveiled presence of God is there, where we have been brought even now by faith. “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 (or lamp) thereof.” It is the light that has made all so bright for our hearts already, “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.” It is the glory of God on the face of Jesus—God ever to be known, in Him in whom He was manifested in humiliation, the man Christ

Jesus— “the Lamb is the Lamp thereof.” And we can gaze un-dazzled upon the brightness of glory, because we see it in the face of Him “who loves us, and has washed us from our sins in his own blood.” And so we gaze already by faith, “and are changed into the same image from glory to glory.”

“And the nations shall walk in the light of it.” “Of them that are saved,” as is well known, has no authority, and it is. “by,” or “by means of,” rather than “in,” as in the received text. The world should have been able to walk by the light of the church now. “Ye are the light of the world; a city that is set ori a hill cannot be hid.” (Matt. 5:14-16. See also 2 Cor. 3:3-5-, Phil. 2:15, 16.) In a sense it is so, in spite of all the church's failure, for, apart from the revelation of God in Christ possessed by it, there is nothing but darkness in the world. But when the Lamb is the Lamp, the faithful and true witness, if all else has failed, the church will fulfill its function to the nations according to the mind of God, become in glory the perfect vessel of the display of the light in which they walk.

“And the kings of the earth do bring their honor and glory to (ε■ς, not ■ν) it,” owning it in its due place as the heavenly metropolis of the throne of God and of the Lamb—so verse 26.

“And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, for there shall be no night there.” The light of an endless and unclouded day is the sure and sufficient protection of the entrance to the city, even as it is given us already as the Christian's armor— “the armor of light” (Rom. 13:12). For that which doth make manifest is light. It detects and exposes all that is unsuited to itself, and thus guards the avenues of the heart against everything incompatible with the enjoyment of His presence who is light—where we have been set. Hence verse 27, “There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.”

Here, for the first time, we have the thought of inhabitants of the city. Up to this it has been the church corporate, in its relation to the millennial earth, expressed by the symbol of a city.

The view of the water of life has its source there from the throne of God and the Lamb, the figure being still unquestionably borrowed. from the future Jerusalem on earth. But, as we have seen in each fresh characteristic given us of the heavenly city, the thing symbolized in glory has been already made true by the Holy Ghost to faith in the Christian. So here— “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: but this spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” (John 7:37-39.) The Holy Ghost, come from the glory where Jesus is, and dwelling in us, brings into our hearts in the knowledge of Him more than all the joy of the millennial feast of tabernacles, and makes us channels (though much more, being in communion with the source; it is “out of his belly shall flow") of the living waters now.

In the glory of the heavenly city there is also found another church link, in the symbol of that which gives special character to the church's testimony. The tree of life is there, already given in promise to the overcomers in the epistle to the church at Ephesus “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God” and here there is not only unhindered access to and enjoyment of it for ourselves forever, but “the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” The church will be still in millennial glory the witness of grace to the nations, in marked contrast with millennial Jerusalem, which preserves its character too, as

connected with, and the earthly center of, God's ways in government— “the nation and kingdom that shall not serve thee shall perish.” (Isa. 60:12.)

“And there shall be no more curse.” Here the Jerusalem of that day, that has supplied us with many a figure of a glory beyond hers or Israel's, gives us a contrast, for there the curse still lingers, if only upon the sinner— “the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed.” (Isa. 65:20.) “But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and his servants shall serve him.” How sweet the assurance for any who have sought to serve Him now ever so feebly, and who know the grace that makes so much of the least done truly to Him! It shall be theirs to serve Him without hindrance or ceasing forever.

“And they shall see his face.” “For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, then shall I know as also I am known.” Thus the Lord meets the longing He has Himself created in our hearts, as He knew nothing else could meet it. We shall reign, and that forever, for the throne never passes from Him as it did from one to another before Him, though He gives it up as man to take it as God. But, more blessed still, a witness of all that is deeper and more intimate in our association with Him is preserved in simple words, but how full for hearts that know Him— “they shall see his face.”

“And his name shall be in their foreheads.” Surely there ought to be the moral imprint of Christ left by the glory in which we know Him on our hearts and lives now; but how marred, how dimly seen, is His image in any of us—bearing His name too often to His dishonor. Then we shall bear it before every eye, no more to fail to represent or glorify Him in anything.

“And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God shall shine upon them (not as more feebly giveth them light'), and they shall reign forever and ever.”

(Continued from page 29..),

(To be continued.)

The New Jerusalem: Part 3

This leads me to notice the foundation of the argument of the paper I am commenting on, namely," that Israel is the elect nation of God to hold an eternal place before him, not only in this world, but also in the new." this that had to be proved is assumed on page 184 at the very outset, although proof "for the benefit of those who have never perceived it" is attempted at page 188

Now the texts on which this rests are all from the Old Testament, save one in Rom. 11, which is to dispel the last lingering doubt of any one who demurs to the startling doctrine, and Rev. 19; 21, which has to be proved to have anything to do with them. But I doubt whether this treatment of the subject will commend itself to those who read their Bibles. Of such I would ask if it is in the Old Testament that the veil is lifted to let in the light of eternity, where eternal life is only twice mentioned, and the eternal counsels of God are not revealed according to the express statements of the New. (See 1 Tim. 1:9), "Who hath saved us.... according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and incorruptibility (for that is the word in the original) to light through the gospel." And Titus 1:2.: "In hope of eternal life, which God that cannot lie promised before the world began, but hath in due time manifested his word through preaching, which is committed to me." (Rom. 16:25, 26; Col. 1:25, 26.)

The New Testament is the revelation of eternity, and sheds the clear light of it on the passing scene of this world. The cross, that is the ground in time and on the earth of the fulfillment of the promises made to the fathers, lays also the foundation for the bringing in of that which was before all promise—the eternal purpose of God.

The counsels of God are thus connected with eternity, as the promises made to the fathers are with time. Now, the only passage quoted from the New Testament to prove that these last are eternal is Rom. 11. But this scripture brings us down in express terms to the tree of promise on the earth. God had not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Some of the branches had been broken off because of unbelief, and branches of a wild olive-tree grafted in to partake of the root and fatness. These are warned that they only stand by faith, and may in their turn be cut off, and the natural branches grafted in again into their own olive-tree. Even so it shall be; and in this way all Israel shall be saved, as a nation, instead of a remnant, blessed as now according to the election of grace. And so Isa. 59:20, 21 would have its fulfillment: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." But if blessing had come to the Gentiles through their fall, how much more through their fullness; "for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" So then, what Christianity as a professing system had been cut off from on earth, Israel is to be graffed into again. This, we are told, is eternity, and the proof of Israel's portion, "of eternal distinctness" (p. 188), and "in exact correspondence with Rev. 21" (p. 189). Is the reader at a loss for any trace of such a correspondence? The author supplies it, by introducing in the bias of his system a resurrection

condition of things wholly foreign to the truth of Rom. 11— “in a risen people, a people raised from the dead, Abraham shall read the fulfillment of the everlasting covenant. And so in resurrection all Israel shall be saved, not as individuals, but as a nation.” It remains for us to consider what is the force of the Old Testament expressions that seem to make the duration of Israel's blessing eternal. The Psalm (89) I have already referred to must be held to throw important light on the subject; see verses 1-4; 28-37, in which Israel's full future blessing is before us, founded on the mercy and faithfulness of Jehovah, and set up in the king of whom it is said, “I will make him, my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth.” But how is the duration of the blessing defined? “His seed also will I make to endure forever, and his throne as the days of heaven.” Again, “As the sun before me; it shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.”

The use of the expression is the more remarkable as applied to that which is eternal, according to full New Testament revelation, that is, the throne which never passes from David's Son, though He gives it up as man to take it as “God all in all.” But even when that part of the blessing which is essentially eternal is spoken of, the language used does not go beyond the utmost limit of time— “it shall be established forever as the moon.” The last verses of Isa. 66 are quoted (p. 188), as though the new heavens and the new earth spoken of were identical with the new heavens and new earth of Rev. 21:1. It is easily seen that this is not so by the mention of them in the previous chapter, 65:17-25, which describes the course of government against the ungodly and transgressors. It is the great moral change that takes place in the regeneration, when “the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption with the liberty of the glory of the children of God,” that is spoken of—not the heavens and the earth of the new creation.

Two passages remain to be noticed as supposed to “bear upon this study.” (See p. 217.) The first is Gal. 4:26, of which it is said, “this has been supposed to confirm the view that Rev. 21 describes the church.” “We shall see whether it does or not. “But examine the passage with its context,” and see if it says anything like what the writer makes it say— “To Israel has been committed the oracles of God, and through Israel, that is the inspired Jews whom God employed to write and preach the glad tidings, have the Gentiles received the grace of life: Israel is therefore the mother of us [all].” This is the result of our author's reasoning, that “our mother must be something of the past,” instead of examining the passage with its context, in which we find the apostle explains himself by quoting Isa. 54:1. This speaks of what Jerusalem is yet to be by grace, as free, in contrast with its condition under law. In that coming day of its millennial liberty and joy, Jerusalem will look back and own us Christians, the children of promise, as Isaac was (ver. 28), as her children, and that thus the period of her apparent desolateness was really fruitful to her. in the richest way: only that, while the apostle speaks thus, he adds a word which just connects us with even a higher thing than Jerusalem emancipated, namely, “Jerusalem, which is above all, is free.” There is a heavenly Jerusalem as well as a restored earthly one.

Many a passage of Old Testament scripture gives us the earthly; Rev. 21; 22 gives the heavenly, and in this the Christian has his portion, “for our citizenship (πολ■τευμα) is in heaven.”

“Another passage quoted against this interpretation,” according to the author, is Heb. 12:22, though he does not say where he finds the argument (p. 218), that “ye are come to the new Jerusalem,” means that we are the new Jerusalem! I am glad to be able to accept in the main what he says of it, that it is “an enumeration of the glorious circle of the saints' inheritance.” It is the

circle of things we are connected with by grace, through a glorified Christ, in contrast with a living Messiah on earth. The passage says nothing as to “the nature of the connection,” and therefore cannot be taken in proof of the writer's interpretation any more than of that which is opposed to it. Still I do not think the order is without significance, or that there is wanting in it what confirms the truth, as we have seen it, of Rev. 21; 22. For is there not an ascending and descending scale of glory here, so to speak?

The eye first rests on “Mount Sion” on earth, the seat of the nation's establishment in grace under the king (see for the type 1 Chron. 15-16; 2 Chron. 5:2: Psa. 78:67-72.)

Then the eye lifts, and sees what is connected with the center of earthly blessing, but yet is above it— “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” Then, as more immediately connected with the divine center of all— “an innumerable company of angels, the general assembly.” But in the innermost circle round the throne, the church, in its own proper character as “the church of the first-born which are enrolled in heaven.”

Then, having risen up “to God the judge of all,” we come down next “to the spirits of just men made perfect,” the Old Testament saints, in their ordered place and blessing; “and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant,” thus looked at, in connection with the people to whom it belongs; “and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel,” inasmuch as it lays the ground for the whole blessing in both its heavenly and earthly parts, instead of crying for judgment.

Thus, if place was found in this circle of glory for the church's connection with the kingdom, as Mount Sion naturally leads on to it, we have it in its own essentially heavenly character and calling as well.

I do not know that there is anything else in the paper that calls for remark. The Lord give us a deeper understanding of the things so freely and richly unfolded to us in His word, and, above all, the abiding enjoyment of them as the things in which we live in communion with Him. J. A. T.

(Concluded From Page 48)

Chapter 162

Notice of the Rev. F. Bourdillon's Tract

Many are the writers who have undertaken to tell us about the soul under its difficulties, and the soul in its experiences, when seeking to be “free from the law of sin and death.”

In itself the subject is of the greatest moment; for the soul, in such exercises before God, must necessarily be occupied primarily with what He is in His holiness, as well as with what we are, who were “born in sin, and shapen in iniquity.” The most efficient guides to a soul when under such experiences will surely be those who have passed out of them into the enjoyment of that “liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free.”

The knowledge that such guides have, in their own exercises of soul, gone down to the extreme point of “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” commends them to those who still need help, and gives the proper character and weight to these words, “I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” Those who are out can lead out.

My reason for saying anything on Mr. Bourdillon's tract on Rom. 7, and “the experience described,” is, that I more than question whether he is a guide of this kind. Moreover, as the tract is stated to be “the substance of an address delivered at the aggregate clerical meeting held at Tunbridge Wells,” and since “published by request,” it takes a place of unusual importance under this commendatory form of clerical sanction, and leaves it fairly open to remark. It is not my purpose to review the tract, but to state the main design of the writer, so that, if his object is unscriptural, one may be excused following the course he pursues for himself and recommends to others for accepting the experiences of Rom. 7 as properly descriptive of the Apostle Paul and ourselves, or of a Christian state. The object of Mr. B, is to make this scripture “the narrative or picture of a soul's progress and condition. Yet, though an individual history, it has (he tells us) at the same time a representative character—it furnishes a sample, an instance.” He says that “the apostle describes himself—here Paul appears in every word. It his own soul's autobiography, it is his portrait self-drawn.” Mr. B. is true to his object in the use he makes of this scripture, sad having declared it an autobiography of the apostle and a portrait of Paul, he attempts to reduce the declared wretchedness of the soul's experience down to the lowest dilution by a misapplication of other scriptures in Paul's writings (such as, “lest I should be a castaway,” &c.) Mr. B. turns the key in the door upon the apostle finally as to all hope of actual deliverance out of the prison and his captivity, and calmly says, “it is the voice of distress, it is an appeal for help; yet I hear not so much in these words the cry of a chained captive to be set free, as that of a soldier in conflict, who looks round for succor.”

I quote no farther for the moment, but turn most gladly to say, what a mercy, and what a comfort, for us, as believers in Christ, that another ear was open to that cry of wretchedness, and a heart that could interpret it so differently as to give deliverance (not through our incessant conflict as soldiers, and continuous cry for succor), but by His own death and resurrection out of it, and ours too. “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord,” is our song!

Here let me remark, how needful it is that we should be on the same degree of latitude, and sailing by properly adjusted compasses, if we would make even our ordinary geographical observations with correctness and certainty. Surely it is of much greater importance for the soul and its exercises that the guides should remember Paul's own exhortation to his son Timothy, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” And now let me seriously ask those who read their Bibles for themselves, is this the purpose and object of the Holy Ghost in writing the Eleventh chapter of the Romans, namely, to show a man that “in himself, that is in his flesh, dwelleth no good thing” and to leave him under the power of the evil that he would not do? Is the object of this scripture to pass and re-pass a soul through life-long experiences under the holy law of God, which lead him to cry out, “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?” and then to leave him in hopeless conflict with self and indwelling sin, with a parting word that the wretchedness and the cry are not so bad? In short, is the individual a soldier in conflict (a faithful soldier, too; as Mr. B. tells us), or does Rom. 7 describe one who is “sold under sin” — “brought into captivity” —instead of ever getting out, or gaining an inch by conflict, and finding instead that the tyrant in power (sin); “taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him,” and turning it to his own advantage, by means thereof slew him? The idea of conflict as a soldier entirely foreign to the chapter—there is no battle-field named—we do not fight with “the law of God:” It is not the surroundings that are in question, nor it by enemies that the soul is confronted,—but the question whether the law is a power in my hand for life, by obedience, and for righteousness before God; or whether the commandment which was ordained until life, I found to be unto death? Did it detect the very lust in myself, and give me the mastery over it? Or did it convict me of indwelling sin only to give all its strength to sin, and prove it to be my master, with power to lead me into “captivity” by the law of sin, which is in my members? Another, stronger than myself or that which chains me down as a captive, can alone deliver; and, instead of being like “a faithful soldier,” I find myself a slave to sin and lust in my members; a criminal by the law of God, which forbids it, and under death and condemnation, as the judgment of Him against whom I have offended. Will a culprit in his cell fight with his walls, or a slave in his chains with his manacles; much less talk of being a soldier, and “a faithful one,” in conflict? Nay, a slave has the experiences of a slave, and a culprit the feelings morally of a culprit, under the law, as in this chapter, which forbade and detected the sin, in the very lust that conceived it. It is the discovery of oneself and “the motions of sin” in one's own members, which raises the cry of “O wretched man that I am.”

There is no thought of another person, much less of an enemy, external to oneself, with whom to fight; nor is the cry to be delivered from outward enemies (like the cry of soldiers worsted on the battle-field), but “wretched man that I am,” one who has found out another and deeper kind of wretchedness in the sense of what I am, in relation to all that is in myself and what I carry about with me, as part and parcel of myself, when brought to light, and tested by the righteous claims of God upon me, through “a law which is holy, and just, and good.” The human way of deliverance from an exacting power is no doubt by means of conflict; but the divine way is by death (our old man has been crucified with Christ), in which every claim is met and answered; for who can press a demand on one who has died, or who can arrest a dead man?

Mr. B. does himself an injustice, therefore, by thus denying there is full deliverance out of the wretchedness of chapter 7 into “the glorious liberty of the sons of God,” chapter viii.; and he does

the scriptures a greater wrong, and Paul who wrote them, by declaring “that from verse 7 to 13 he describes his past transitional state; and that from 14 to 25 Paul describes his present and spiritual condition,” This is too in the face of the confession,” O wretched man that I am,” and in presence of the cry, “who shall deliver me?” We may well ask, are these the meager fruits and spoils of Christ's sufferings and death? are these the poor triumphs of His glorious ascension? is this the liberty wherewith Christ makes free—a closed door, and a cry from within? On the contrary, does not chapter 8 declare our deliverance from “the body of sin and death” by our own death and resurrection with Christ, and that “there is no condemnation?” Does it not affirm that “we are made free by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus,” and that “we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit?” Moreover, we have life in union with the risen and glorified Christ, we enter upon our new relations with God the Father, as suited to such a life as we have in the ascended Son of man, the second Adam, and “have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father?” Further, “the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” We have thus been delivered from the condemnation and wretchedness felt by the quickened and renewed soul when passing through the experiences of one “ender law,” as in Rom. 7, without “power to perform,” and are established in the life, and liberty, and love of God, through grace, as indwelt by the Spirit, the witness and seal of the promised glory, till Christ comes to carry us there, of which Rom. 8 treats.

We may fairly ask each other, in the joy and deliverance of this chapter, were not these the objects of the Father's counsel, and of the work of Christ by His death and our redemption? What a triumphant answer verse 29 gives to this question— “Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren!” Dare we say we are left as soldiers, to fight our way out of wretchedness in a hopeless conflict, if we can, and perhaps to fight our way into the liberty and blessedness of chapter viii. as we best may, or gladly own positive and actual deliverance out of one and introduction into the other by the grace of God, through the trouble and travail of Christ's soul (rather than by exercises of ours), when He suffered “the just one for the unjust, that he might bring us to God?” Finally, what a different object the Holy Spirit puts before Paul, and those whom he represents, to what Mr. B. does, who locks them up under the law! What different utterances they employ, if we will only let Paul speak of their “present spiritual experiences” for himself: for “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

If Mr. B. had told us how necessary it is that we should have “the sentence of death” written upon the flesh, and all the expectations as to the works of the flesh under the law, and that we should individually accept this sentence in our souls before God, and say, “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing,” he would have done some service at the present time. If he had further shown the hopelessness of any one in that condition striving to get out by any efforts of his own, and had “shut him up to the faith of Christ” as his only Deliverer, he would have really helped on many souls, by showing death at the cross to be the door of deliverance, and not their own conflict with some foreign power. If Mr. B. had written as “one who knew the law” in this respect, and spoken as Paul did to others “that knew it,” and said, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are

become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God," he would not have sung the dead march of despair as proper Christian experience, but have gladly celebrated his deliverance and marriage with Christ on the bright morning of His resurrection, with all those that are His.

M. B. does violence to Paul in chapter 7 by shutting him in upon the wretchedness which it describes, and does dishonor to Christ by denying Him there as an actual Deliverer. Mr. B. says truly, "we tread on holy ground when we enter on this question; let us walk warily, let us think gently and reverently. But I cannot but believe that this faithful soldier was sometimes worsted." Be this as it may between Mr. B. and the apostle, our question is not whether Paul was worsted or anything of this sort about Paul, but whether Christ was worsted, so that He did not actually take His people out from this wretchedness of chapter vii. and put them, by His own death and ours, into the liberty and glory of chapter 8?

Is a Christian to be told, as Mr. B. does, that deliverance is not a change of place and relationship with God, in and with Christ by the Spirit, according to the utterances and experiences of chapter 8, but a temporary and occasional relief, &c., "to a weary and a faithful soldier in conflict?"

"The experience described" denies it to be one of a spiritual crisis merely, a stage or period passed through once for all, and then done with; but of a state, an oft-recurring conflict. "Again and again was the attack renewed, for the evil was ever present with him, again and again the battle had to be fought. Often, less, the conflict was short and sharp, and often must the same experience be gone through."

Let me solemnly ask, is all this exercise of one under the law to be falsely styled Christian conflict, in the very forefront of its companion, chapter 8, the magna carta of our Christian deliverance, and privileges, and victories? "Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us."

There are conflicts, as in Eph. 6, and elsewhere, proper to a Christian as such, when consciously seated in heavenly places with Christ, as the Head of the body, the church; and would to God Mr. B. had led forward the soldiers of the cross to that struggle, as Paul does there— "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the heavenlies."

Will Mr. B.'s tract lead his readers out upon that battle-field? Nay, may I not, in faithful love, ask rather this question—are Mr. B. and "the aggregate clerical meeting" there for themselves, and have they ever taken rank or place in this conflict?

Whatever Rom. 7 may be and is, it is not wrestling with wicked spirits, much less in the heavenly places; and whatever questions are raised, they certainly are in connection with "flesh and blood," and the law given by Moses. The "aggregate clerical meeting" will do well to ponder these things at their next gathering, or before. On the other hand, it is possible to "frustrate the grace of God," as the Galatians did, and to resist "the truth of the gospel," by "building again the things that have been set aside or destroyed." Suppose Paul had fraternized with the Galatians in the objects they were pursuing, would he not have been as foolish and bewitched as they? Did the path they took

confirm them in the liberty of Christ and of the Spirit, or lead “back again into bondage?” Will Mr. B., in the face of this Epistle to the Galatians, venture to shut up Paul, and those whom he represents, in the hopeless captivity and wretchedness of Rom. 7, or hear him, as he warns those who desired again to be in bondage? “My little children, of whom I travail in birth again till Christ be formed in you; I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you.” It is a serious consideration, that in this way there may be a resistance of God and a fighting against Him, by denying the rights of Christ as our Deliverer and refusing the deliverance which He has effected for us from under every yoke. This unbelief as to our complete deliverance out of our natural Adam-standing and sin-state, as well as from “the body of this death,” as described in Rom. 7 in and through Christ, is surely no conflict with the devil, or the wicked spirits, either in heaven or earth, but a very unchristian resistance of God in “the truth of the gospel” respecting Christ Himself and His saints, which those who are guilty of it will do well to confess before God and the church. One is led to ask, why are these efforts made by such as the Revelation Mr. B., and sanctioned by aggregate clerical meetings, with requests that their statements may be published, &c., which, in effect, lead back again, or confirm souls in the captivity and wretchedness, on account of which Christ died and rose again, that He might deliver them, and set free forever?

Does Moses and the law suit them personally, and perhaps ecclesiastically, better than the Headship of Christ, and the action of the Holy Ghost in the church? Does Judaism, with its ritual and liturgy and distance from God, correspond more with their order and worship than “the rent veil” of Christianity, and our liberty to enter into the holiest, “as kings and priests unto God?” Otherwise it is more than strange after “the house has been broken open,” and a full deliverance preached by Paul himself, that he and those whom he represents should decline to come out into the liberty of Christ through death and resurrection—strange that he should have once stood up for his own freedom and rights “as a Roman” citizen, against the authorities of the Philippian prison, and compelled the rulers and the magistrates to come and beseech them, and bring them out, and desire them to depart out of the city, and yet that when the title and rights of Christ, and Paul's too are fully in view, as in Rom. 8, he should not insist upon his heavenly privileges against the authorities of the law, and the body of sin and death, to detain him, as a free-born citizen of heaven! Unpardonable that he should forget “the old man had been crucified with Christ,” and lead us back (as the apostle of the Gentiles) into captivity, and put us with himself under their dominion, to experience deeper wretchedness, and cry out for deliverance never gained, and there abide in that state, as “our present spiritual condition.”

But the apostle neither says nor does nor accepts nor suffers any such things as are reported by Mr. B. in this tract as “his present spiritual condition.” On the contrary he cries out to the Galatians “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” When Paul writes to these Philippians of his “present condition,” as to sufferings and conflicts, they are entirely of another character, and spring from another source than Rom. 7 “for unto you it is given on the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.”

By these remarks and quotations, I mean to show that there is in this way a fighting against God, and a departure from Christ, by the unjudged evil and hardness of the natural heart, through which the wilderness journey is turned again into a provocation, and, as a consequence, the people of

God, in the experiences of their souls, are kept out of their rest, and turned back in heart to Egypt. In principle this is done by Christians, when they refuse deliverance out of all their captivity through Christ their Deliverer, and declare they are “tied and bound by the chain of their sins,” and confess themselves to be, what they originally were, “miserable sinners,” in spite of all that He has accomplished below, and the place He has taken as their intercessor at the right hand of God in heaven, as the second Man crowned with glory and honor. They will neither go out by redemption, nor enter in by faith, with their Forerunner; they will not quit Egypt and cross the Red Sea with a song in their mouths, nor go over Jordan with their Joshua into Canaan, or take possession (in present communion with the Father's love and the Son's joy through the power of the Holy Ghost) of their proper birthright, in the heavenlies.

In conclusion, let me say, there is a widespread religious system in Christendom at the present day, a corruption of Judaism and of true Christianity, which falsifies the believer's present standing and state and experiences, as accepted and complete in Christ before God even our Father. Moreover, it falsifies the relation of the Holy Ghost as the witness and seal of our union with Christ in life and righteousness and earnest of glory, and of ourselves as indwelt by the Spirit, and knowing “our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God.”

Paul says to us, “Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh;” but Mr. B. would bring back, and keep the apostle (and those whom he represents) in the captivity and wretchedness of one under the law. Mr. B. leaves Paul and others in the experiences described in Rom. 7, crying out for deliverance, and yet never actually delivered out of them, nor brought into liberty for present communion and joy. All will do well to mark the contrast between these two systems. J. E. B.

Chapter 163

Review of Dr. Bonar's Work Entitled the Rent Veil: Part 1

If it were only Dr. Bonar's returning to his vile and miserable thought of Christ being banished, or the persevering insolence, of mind with which he changes scripture to suit his own purpose, I should take no notice of his book, “The Rent Veil.” Christ has directed us what to do with the blind leaders of the blind—to let them alone. But the book is written with another object. Dr. Sonar resists truth in every shape. In another book he mocked at the conflict of two natures in us, and that in a way which makes it mocking Paul's own words on the subject. Here the object is to set aside the sure settled standing of the believer before God. Dr. Bonar is evidently not in the liberty wherewith Christ sets us free, and he naturally teaches from the ignorance in which he is as to it. Only it is a sorrowful thing when ignorance is taught. He gives no sort of heed to the statements of scripture. He invents views of his own, and sets them forth as truth, with entire neglect of the word. Happily this enables us to detect how utterly groundless his statements are.

Two things alone occupy me here—his view of the Hebrews, which in every particular is the opposite of the truth, and the, effort to continue on the first Adam by uniting Christ with him, instead of basing all the first Adam being judged and rejected—on the last Adam, Him risen from the dead, when redemption is accomplished, with whom alone, when glorified, there is union. These two are vital points at the present day. Dr. Bonar is seeking to destroy what the Spirit of God would press on the heart especially now. I shall, however, show that his statements on all connected with these points are wholly unscriptural, that godly souls may distrust his statements, and be on their guard. He seems to allude to perfectionism of Mr. Pearsall Smith's class. This I have met and answered in its place; and not only in print, but have had much to do with it where it is current. I should not notice it here, but to remark that, what is one great source of their errors, Dr. Bonar equally fails in the knowledge of the use of water for cleansing in scripture. They are really, on the same ground: for both, if there be failure, there must be a re-application of the blood; of the water, the washing of the feet, they are alike wholly ignorant. It forms no part of their system.

But, to pursue our inquiry into the statements of the book, Paradise is treated as the place of God's dwelling, which there was no veil to hide. Man could go in to speak with God. God came out to speak with man. It was not till after man had disobeyed that the veil was let down which separated God from man, which made a distinction between the dwellings of man and the habitation of God. All this is a fable. There is no hint of paradise being the dwelling-place of God. “The Lord God took man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it.” (Pp. 39, 40.) You may see a still more definite statement, that God was there even when man was turned out, “Both the veil and the flame said, we guard the palace of the great King, that no sinner may enter, yet they said the King is within.” All this is a fable. One has only to read Gen. 3:22-24 to see it is pure invention. The cherubim and the flaming blade of a sword, turning on itself, were set at the east of Eden, to keep the way of the tree of life, with this express and only object. Dr. Bonar slyly leaves out the cherubim.

Now for him they are always the church; but to make the church keep the way of the tree of life against man, as God's judicial watcher, would not have done; so it is left out. “God's first words to man were those of grace,” page 16. There is not a word of grace addressed to man at all-temporal judgment, and that only indeed. In the judgment on the serpent it is declared that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. But Adam was not the Seed of the woman. His faith may have laid, I trust did lay, hold of it; but it was laying hold of another, not grace addressed to himself: a difference of all importance, because it brings forward the Second Man, in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen, and is no setting up of the first again. We are told that (p. 17) man was allowed to build his altar, and worship at its gate. At the gate of paradise the first altar was built,” &c. But man must remain outside meanwhile; he was not allowed to enter the place as holy, only he sacrificed at the gate of it. All a fable.

Page 19: “God then began to teach man by means of sacrifice. This method of teaching him concerning grace and righteousness widened and filled up age after age. For this fuller education the tabernacle was set up Not till man, the sinner, should master the profound and wondrous lessons contained in that book (Leviticus), could the veil be removed, and access granted.” Was this so? There was no growth, but the whole thing established according to the pattern showed in the mount. There was no such education. The apostle (2 Cor. 3) declares that, from the very origin, they could not, and never did, see the purport of this, in truth, most instructive system when we have the key. What the world learned of it Dr. Bonar must tell us. The whole thing is clean contrary to scripture. The importance is that it is, in Dr. Bonar's scheme, bringing on and educating the first man, and so bringing in blessing. The apostle is proving, on the contrary, the impossibility of this with man; that is, he teaches the exact contrary of Dr. Bonar's teaching.

We are told (p. 22) “The second veil allowed any one to look in.” Not only is this untrue as a fact, they could not see through the veil at all, nor is there any trace that the ordinary Israelite ever went beyond the brazen altar. The brazen laver was for the priests only, but the word declares the contrary in the strongest possible way. If the most privileged class of Levites saw anything inside of the tabernacle, it was death to them (Num. 4:20, and what precedes). That is, scripture carefully teaches, as to the essence of the position, the contrary of what Dr. Bonar teaches, and what he teaches as giving its character to the state of things, his whole system, of which this is a part, is the exact contrary of the truth.

I turn to the cherubim. “Doubtless,” we are told, “Abraham, &c., knew about them.” All, this is to carry on the alleged teaching of man. It is naught; no trace of it in scripture; a false conception of the position of Abraham, the root of promise, not of law. The cherubim wore in the pattern on the mount. “The cherubim and the M (p. 28) are all of one; the church is represented in the tabernacle as one with Christ—members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. Israel was taught that the church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) was as truly the body of Christ as the church at Pentecost.” “These cherubim symbolized the church of the redeemed.”

Page 55, where it is said, “He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are all of one,” “there is no thought of the unity of the body; indeed the assembly, as the body of Christ, is never spoken of or thought of in the Hebrews; “They are all of one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto thee.” All is carefully individual, even when the assembly or church is spoken of.

Priesthood for men walking on earth, while the high priest is in heaven, is the subject of the epistle, not union with the head on high. But of this anon.

But the statement of page 28 has Dr. Bonar's authority, but not even an attempt is made to found it on scripture. That there was an assembly in the wilderness no one in his senses denies; but what assembly? The nation of Israel, and nothing else; a body which excluded Paul's account of the founding of the church. That assembly in the wilderness was based on the middle wall of separation being strictly kept up; the assembly of which Paul speaks is based on, its being wholly thrown down. “The church is represented in the tabernacle as one with Christ, members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” “Israel was taught that the church in the wilderness (Acts 7:38) was as truly the body of Christ as the church at Pentecost.” Paul tells us the mystery had been wholly hidden-hid in God. But Dr. Bonar does not tell us how Israel was taught it, or how it was represented; how even it was in the cherubim, and “they symbolized the church of the redeemed.” Would my reader take a Concordance, and trace the word cherub? The cherubim are the seat of Divine authority in the exercise of judicial power. They are found when God judicially excludes man from the tree of life. They constituted the throne of God in the tabernacle. “He sitteth between the cherubim.” “They were made out of one piece with the golden cover of the ark.” There God judged and had His throne; therefore blood had to be brought to make propitiation. See 2 Sam. 22:8, and following. There the cherub is in the strongest way the seat of judicial power. “The Lord thundered from heaven, and the most High uttered His voice. And He sent out arrows, and scattered them by lightning, and discomfited them,” &c. Let my reader turn to Ezek. 1 and x., where the judicial and throne character of the cherubim is displayed in so solemn a manner. If chapters 1-10 be read, the judgment of Jerusalem at that time will be clearly seen.

It is evident that the cherub is the judicial throne or power of God. That the members of the church may come in as instruments of that power when they reign is very possible, as the angels may in their own time and place. But to make what kept the way of the tree of life—what fills the first scenes of Ezekiel's vision—the throne in the tabernacle, or the careering judgments of 2 Sam. 22, the church, as such, evidently is duality, endowed with liberty and intelligence like every human individuality He was, by virtue of this humiliation, enabled to enter into a human development similar to our own.” Can we—we at the age of twelve years, and that without having received a divine and entirely new life—say, “I ought to be [occupied] in my Father's business?” M. Godet is not even satisfied with that, but goes yet farther. Being unable to deny that He said, “My Father” at the age of twelve years, he takes pains to testify to us that that “in no wise involved a precise dogma in the thoughts of the child; a moral relationship was all that was in question.” (p. 144.) “At the hour of His baptism” it is “a revelation which He received from the Father,” or (p. 145) it is “here again, a fact of intimate life, by which Jesus is rendered conscious of the relationship of love, which united Him to Him who spake to Him thus.” Also, in speaking of Jesus entering into glory, M. Godet says, page 132, “Here, then, is human nature elevated in its normal representative to the possession of divine life.” Is this, then, He of whom John spoke, when he said, “The Word was God. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness apprehended it not.” The Christ presented to us by M. Godet is another Christ than that of the Word, whom they alone have received who were born not of the will of man, but of God. Also, when M. Godet (p. 151) quotes the beautiful passage of Phil. 2:6-8, he entirely falsifies, it, and then, at the close, adds, “being found in all things as a man.” Notice well that the Christ of M.

Godet's system is a man who begins His exaltation in order to advance on to the glory. In the passage quoted from the word, the Christ descends lower and lower, till God exalts Him, and places Him in the glory.

It is important to notice the bearing of some other remarks of M. Godet in this matter. Page 101: “Before Christ's advent, it could be said, ‘that which is born of the flesh is flesh:' since His appearing, the true meaning of history is expressed by, that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” This is thorough nonsense. I have another object than showing it to be such, in now quoting it. I desire to ask, are we really born of God?

At page 150 we get Christ who made Himself of no reputation, rendering Himself poor, and living in indigence, just as a king would who became a simple citizen. This comparison has no sense whatever. Christ has ever remained King. We read, page 153, that the very moment of His abasement was for Jesus the starting-point of the lifting up again. In proportion to His development as a child, a relationship of the most intimate and tender nature was formed between Himself and God.... it terminated in the spontaneous utterance of that expression, “My Father.” Then at page 160, “Christ having been the first to supply the glorious career [of from innocence on to glory], invests with His power to supply it after Him.” At pages 112, 113, the “sanctification of man life, which He accomplished in His person, He, in fact, purposed to reproduce later in all those who were linked to Him by faith.” At page 94, “He makes Himself worker together with every man in the realization of his supreme destiny:” At page 98, “His life is the realization of the normal development to which every human being is called in principle.” At page 101, “The normal development of humanity, interrupted by sin,” has recommenced. The thought of the new birth is excluded from M. Godet's system. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” is but the history of that which has taken place since Jesus came. That “the Son quickens whom He will” has no place in this system. There is “a moral obligation,” and in that domain (p. 94) Christ is the “genie” which becomes the mainstay to the work of all others. He groups around His person all those worthy of that name. It is man as he is a sinner—aided by Christ, who can attain this absolute perfection. Man's natural condition is presented in a manner totally contrary to the word, as well as to the glorious person of the Savior. That there is none who seeks after God—that we must be born again—that thenceforth Christ becomes our life—that it is no longer we who live but Christ who lives in us—that in us, that is to say, in our flesh, no good dwelleth—that the flesh lusteth against the Spirit—that to be without law is to be without restraint to such a degree as to have required that God should send the deluge to cleanse the defiled world—that the flesh, the nature of fallen man, does not submit itself to the law of God, even when that law is given to it—that that which has crucified the Lord of glory, when He came in grace, cannot be subject to it—that it lusts against the Spirit in the Christian—that it seeks to puff up with pride a man who has been in the third heaven—that no fresh grace delivers it from its pride and its egotism—that even to an apostle a thorn is needed, a messenger of Satan, to buffet it;—all these teachings of the word are utterly set aside.

Christ, says M. Godet, recommences the development of the innocent man (p. 191). “On the one hand, He [Christ] has perfected the development of humanity which had remained unfinished by the sin of the first man; on the other, He has re-established fallen humanity, and reinstated it on the path where it can henceforth reach its destiny.” He had (p. 192) to “re-knot the thread of the normal development of humanity at its point of severance, recommence the moral work which was

to conduct man from innocence to holiness, accomplish that series of acts of obedience, each of which was a sacrifice of natural life, and attain that elevated sphere of existence which scripture calls spiritual life." Christ, then, had no spiritual existence till He had attained it. "This is what Jesus has done." (Ibid.)

"Now," adds M. Godet (p. 193), "Christ has not only perfected a humanity which had been arrested in its development, but has re-established a fallen humanity." This is the second part of the work He has accomplished for us, "Then (p. 159), taking possession of the condition to which it [human life] was destined [holiness], He, from the heights of heaven, works towards His own, through a daily Pentecost, the miracle of sanctification, which He has perfected in Himself, and thus prepares their elevation to the position He Himself occupies in the glory." "God all in one, and by Him, one day, all in all; this is the means, this the aim." Will you know more of this? Read page 160: "He desires nothing less than to make each of us another self, a representative of this supreme type, the man—God." Compare page 159: "Why should not human nature, created in the image of God, have been destined from the first to become the free organ of the life of God, the agent of His omnipotence?" "The man—God would in that case have been nothing but true man, that is to say, that which God had eternally conceived and intended him to be." And immediately the author presents these imaginations as the expression of Rom. 8:29, from whence it would result that we are all men—God.

We shall be all like Jesus, all conformed to the image of God's Son. I must leave to the appreciation of each Christian a teaching which states that the union of the divinity and humanity, such as they exist in Jesus, is a purpose of God which ought to be realized in every Christian. Now this is systematically the anther's plan. Thus, at page 204, "After having, during His sojourn down here, completely appropriated the divine Spirit, and made it His own personal life, as God Himself, He has become the sovereign dispenser of it towards His brethren." Then, at page 160, "What matters it if our life be a pathway of suffering, passing by Gethsemane and Golgotha, provided it terminate at the Mount of Olives and the ascension?" Not that M. Godet thinks the flesh does not exist, or that it improves. At page 208 we read, "Christ being born, and growing in us to such a degree as to fill our heart, and to gradually banish our natural selves—our old man—which never improves, and has nothing else to do but to perish." At page 191, it is "the result of a series of completely voluntary decisions in the sense of goodness." Then, page 205, "This work (that of realizing perfect holiness in a flesh like ours, once accomplished in Jesus, His Spirit emanates from His, glorified person, like a quickening power, gaining in us the same victory that Jesus gained in His person, and which realizes in our life, as Jesus did in His, the righteousness demanded by the law.." The thought of being born anew completely and systematically fails throughout. It is progress in sanctification by the power of the Spirit, in gaining the victories Jesus gained in His person. At page 208 we have, "a free and moral process." "The process in Jesus and ourselves is identical." (p. 209.) Is this, then, a work perfectly resembling that accomplished in the sinner, to change innocence into holiness? In order to make these two so very different things meet, M. Godet says that Jesus has conquered sin in His person, and that He reserved it to Himself to conquer it in humanity. But in fallen humanity sin dwells in the will. To Christ sin exists outside Himself. How, then, can there be room for a work perfectly similar in Him and in us?

Chapter 164

Review of Dr. Bonar's Work Entitled the Rent Veil: Part 2

(Concluded from page 252.)

As regards propitiation and substitution, they are points of great importance, and important to distinguish; but in order to deny the true import of these words, and the truth connected with them, Dr. Bonar has made confusion and indeed most mischievous error out of it. That Christ, for God's glory, stood as the representative man before God, and in a certain sense took our place, and died for all, making propitiation for the whole world, is true; and, I add, that if Dr. Bonar chose to call this substitution, though I should regret it as unfitting, and enfeebling its use in other vital aspects, yet it would not be my place to prescribe words to him. But he does a great deal more than this. By his hatred of the truth, and fondness for his own views, he has upset the whole gospel. “The blood brought within the veil,” he tells us (p. 109), “contained a world-wide message, so that each one hearing of that atoning blood might at once say, then God is summoning me back to Himself,” &c. Be it so; but then “propitiation,” he continues, “rests on substitution. In all these symbolical transactions we have one vast thought, the transference of guilt from one to another, legally and judicially.” If this be so, then if each one hearing of it could apply it, the guilt of all had been transferred to Christ, and it cannot be untransferred, or transferred back again, for Christ has died under it, a work “perfectly valid for all ends of justice;” consequently there can be no imputation of sins to anybody at all—the guilt has been transferred. Scripture carefully distinguishes propitiation and the transfer of guilt, Jehovah's lot and the people's lot on the great day of atonement. Sin being come in, God's glory was in question, and our sin too. The blood was brought under God's eye as propitiation, and the sins of the people were laid by their representative on the head of the scape-goat. Both ends were met, God glorified in what He was, and the people's guilt put away. So Christ appeared at the end of the world to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; but, besides that, He was once offered to bear the sins of many.

Dr. Bonar confounds it all, and there is no sure gospel for the believer; for the transfer of his guilt to Christ does not assure his salvation, nor set him in divine righteousness before God; for this is equally true of the lost, according to Dr. Bonar, and there is no true gospel for the sinner, for propitiation and transfer of guilt are the same; and the latter is not true, or all the world is saved. God has been perfectly glorified in the work of atonement, and that in the very place of sin, that is, Christ made sin, His righteousness against sin, His love to sinners, His majesty, all He is. God has been, then, glorified in the Son of man; and the testimony of grace founded on propitiation can go out to all the world. But, besides that, in the same work He has borne the sins of many, and they are cleared forever. Propitiation, by the force of the term, refers to God—substitution to men. And though propitiation is by reason of man's sin, yet it refers to what God is. His nature and character, and God's glory, is involved in it. It goes a great deal further than meeting the sin which may have occasioned it. Substitution takes up the sins it is occupied with, as its whole subject and measure. But on this I will say no more here. if blessed truth is to be spoken of, it must not be in answering such a book as Dr. Bonar's.

Only a point or two remains before I say a few words on Hebrews. He quotes the beautiful Psalm (of confidence) 16: “Therefore my heart is glad, yea, any glory rejoiceth” (p. 88). Here is his commentary. “He speaks as an exile far from home, weary, troubled, exceeding sorrowful even unto death” (p. 94). “Looking upwards to the happy heaven which He had left, He could say “How many servants in my Father's house have bread and to spare, and I perish with hunger” (p. 97). The statements in pages 152, 153 are all utter confusion and mistake. In 1 Cor. 3 the apostle is insisting on the responsibility of man in the work; and where it was of wood, hay, and stubble, all would be burned. Nay, more; if a man corrupted the temple, he would be destroyed. It is the temple of God, not now such as is spoken of here by Dr. Bonar, but that temple under man's responsibility. And Paul speaks of laying the foundation of it. Strange if Old Testament saints were in it! It is confounding what Christ builds and what comes of man's responsibility;—just what God is carefully distinguishing now, and which Dr. Bonar confounds together, without finding out the difference which stares us in the face, in the passage he quotes.

How completely the work of Christ is looked at as completing the progressive operation of God in the education of the old man may be seen in page 79: “The ages of delay are over; the day of expectation has come to an end. The purpose of Jehovah is now consummated. The Father now delights in the accomplishment of His eternal design. Now grace and righteousness are one. So long as one burnt-offering remained unpresented, there was something wanting—something unfinished. But now the last of the long series has arrived. The type is perfected, the last stone has been laid; the last touch has been given to the picture; the last stroke of the chisel has fallen upon the statue. The imperfect has ended in the perfect—the unreal in the real.” It is arrant nonsense; but what a place it puts the previous series of sacrifices and Christ's in!

But I turn to Hebrews, my main object in all these lines; and very few words will suffice. “It assumes throughout,” says Dr. Bonar (Preface), “that the present condition of the church on earth is one continually requiring the application of the great sacrifice for cleansing. The theory of personal sinlessness has no place in it. Continual evil, failure, imperfection, are assumed as the condition of God's worshippers on earth during this dispensation. Personal imperfection on the one hand, and vicarious perfection on the other, are the solemn truths which pervade the whole. There is no day nor hour in which evil is not coming forth from us, and in which the great blood-shedding is not needed to wash it away God's purpose is that we should never, while here, get beyond the need of expiation and purging They who, whether conscious or unconscious of sin, will take this epistle as the declaration of God's mind as to the imperfection of the believing man on earth, will be constrained to acknowledge that the blood-shedding must be in constant requisition, not (as some say) to keep the believer in a sinless state, but to cleanse him from his hourly sinfulness.”

Now that the blood of Christ is the eternal security of all blessing, even in the new heavens and new earth, I wholly believe; and that no saint is personally perfect, I entirely accept. I see no perfection for a Christian but likeness to Christ in glory. That is before his soul now, and hence the intelligent Christian can have no thought of perfection here. He purifies himself as He, Christ, is pure. That in many things we all offend, as a fact, I believe—not taking my own failure as a rule from scripture itself. But the necessity, as “God's purpose,” that we should be always sinning here, as Dr. Bonar would have it, I reject. We should be walking always in communion, and manifesting the life of Christ in our bodies, always bearing about in the body His dying. That, and that only, is the normal state of the Christian. To say that we do fail is a very different thing from saying we

must. I can never excuse myself, for Christ's grace is sufficient for me, and His strength made perfect in weakness; and God is faithful not to suffer me to be tempted beyond that we are able. If we are vicariously perfect, that is, perfect through Christ before God in God's sight, we cannot, in coming to Him, come with a bad conscience.

I have given thus fully, with a short clearing up of the point as to personal perfection, the statement of Dr. Bonar, to show that it is in every point exactly the contradiction of the epistle he is speaking of. Our imperfection in sinning is never spoken of in the Hebrews. When sinning is spoken of, it is unbelief; as Israel in the wilderness sinning willfully after the knowledge of the truth, apostasy, and profaneness, and in every case final hopeless and irrecoverable ruin. When sinning is spoken of in this epistle, it leaves a man without remedy, as chapters 3, 6, 10, 12. Priesthood, as now exercised by Christ (I do not speak of the work of the great high priest on the day of atonement, that is finished), is not for sins in the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is for grace to help in time of need, mercy and goodness in all our temptations and trials, that we—may be sustained, and not sin, but not for sins. The doctrine as to a perfect conscience, taught in chapters 9 and 10, would make it wholly out of place here. The conscience, in direct contradiction of Dr. Bonar's statement, is always perfect. For him the blood-shedding is in constant requisition. “There is no day nor hour in which.... the great blood-shedding is not needed to wash its evil away.” The epistle is just to show that in contrast with Judaism, where such repetition went on, it is not the case. Let us ask the epistle itself. Chapters 9 and 10 are the special chapters on this point. I beg my reader to read them through, and see how, once for all, 'eternal' is repeated. I can only quote a few texts directly to the point; and note, the question is purging the conscience, not merely putting away the sins before God, which of course must be done to purge it. He begins his great thesis in chapter 1. “When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down,” And this sitting down he emphatically uses afterward. “We have such an high priest, who is set down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.”

And now for the conscience—the value of Christ's work as to it. “Christ entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our conscience?” That is its character and value. “He is not entered into the holy place made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” “Nor ye that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others, for then must be often have suffered since the foundation of the world.” But I must be more precise. The point in question (9: 9) is making him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience. What meets this is (ver. 12): “By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place.” This blood (ver. 14) purges the conscience.

Further, “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” “Christ is entered into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (ver. 23). Always there in the virtue and efficacy of that which he has wrought. Nor can He “offer himself often as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood for others, for then must he often have suffered.” There can be no renewal of imputation or guilt, no expiation, no blood-purging, but by taking the guilt, and drinking the cup. If Christ expiates and purges (that is, with blood), He must suffer. But He “hath appeared once in the end of the world to put away sin,” been “once offered to bear the sins of many,” and “appears the second time to them that look for him” without sin, χωρ■ς ■μαρτ■ας having nothing

more to do with it for them. Could anything more distinctly exclude repetition of purging, or repeated purifying, to make the conscience perfect? But is there not a repeated application of what is here spoken of as done once for all?

Let us see the next chapter, where this comes practically up. Dr. Bonar insists on repeated purging, repeated application of the great blood-shedding; that it is in constant requisition to cleanse him, is needed to wash evil away, and that in order to the worshippers drawing nigh. I read that the old Jewish sacrifices could not make the corners thereunto perfect, the repetition being a remembrance that sin was there; but if it had made them perfect, the purging and offering would cease, as Christ's sacrifice did, because the worshippers once purged would have no more conscience of sins. Does this look like admitting a perpetual cleansing with blood, once purged have no more conscience of sins? But it is more explicit still. Christ comes to do God's will in grace. “By the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (10: 10). The Jewish priests were daily standing to accomplish a never-finished work; “but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God, expecting till his enemies are made his footstool.” For His friends He had no more to do as to this conscience-cleansing work. “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” And this word forever, in verses 12 and 14, is not the word forever used when it is said a priest forever; ε■ς τ■ν α■■να, it is ε’ς τ■ δι η νεκ■ς—uninterruptedly, without discontinuance. Thus those sanctified by Christ's offering are continuously, perpetually perfect, as Christ sits continuously at God's right hand.

There is no interruption in that perfectness, no more conscience of sins, and this gives them boldness to enter into the holiest. There is not only no hint of reapplication of the blood, but a declaration of no more conscience of sins, that the sanctified ones were continuously perfect, uninterruptedly so, so that they had boldness to enter into the holiest. It is not personal perfectness, but it is perfectness of conscience uninterrupted; Christ appearing before God for us, sitting continuously at God's right hand, because all is done, and we are perfected forever-hence, in going to God, no more conscience for sins. It was the church not holding this fast that laid it open from the beginning to absolution and sacramental grace, and, till absolution was invented, that there was forgiveness for one sin after baptism: after this you must leave a sinner in God's hands. This is clear that the teaching of the Hebrews is formally, in a set and purposed way, the positive denial of Dr. Bonar's teaching; its object is to teach exactly the contrary to what he ascribes to it. There is, we learn elsewhere, a sprinkling of blood to seal the covenant, to cleanse the leper, to consecrate the priest; but not repetition. The repetition of the application of the blood is a denial of the gospel. And this truth comes in here, which I will notice to make all clear.

When it is not a question of conscience, and imputation, and guilt, which does require blood-shedding to put it away, but of communion, there is a cleansing of the state of the soul, but this is by water. The righteousness and propitiation remain unchanged in their value, and are the foundation of the other. In 1 John communion is spoken of. There, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.” But an idle thought interrupts communion, and that has to be restored, and Christ's advocacy comes in. So John referring to what He does on high—He washes the disciples' feet, once washed and in this sense forever clean (this also with water); bathed as the high priest was, they have need only to wash their feet, where they have picked up dirt in their walk. But it is no repetition of blood

applied: there is no such thing in scripture for a Christian. Practical cleansing for communion there is, but imputation, guilt, has no place; expiation, propitiation, no place; “the Lord imputeth no sin.” Christ must suffer often. If the sin is borne, put away, and He has washed us from our sins in His own blood, all that is done once for all; but to clear the conscience by blood Christ must suffer, but that is done once for all. He sits at God's right hand, because the sanctified are perfected forever. Dr. Bonar has no idea of anything but personal holiness, or perpetual cleansing by blood. If he will read the Hebrews, he will find perpetual perfectness, no more conscience of sins: There is besides this a washing of the feet with water, a kind of cleansing, which all who do not see the perfectness of conscience taught in the Hebrews always leave out, do not apprehend. The apprehension of what is taught in Hebrews takes the cleansing out of the domain of righteousness, as to which we are perfect, and places it in that of holiness and communion with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Water is the remedy for that; the word, that is, in the power of the Spirit, as blood is for expiation and remission.

I will only add further, that Hebrews never contemplates the church as such, but the people of God walking in weakness on the earth, and Christ for them a separate person on high. Union with Christ is not its subject, and it is just this gives it its preciousness. Nor does it speak of the Father, but how we believers stand with God, and how we approach; and that is with a perfect conscience through Christ's one offering, so that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins. If the reader examine the statements of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he will find that it is the work itself, or the offering of Himself, or it by Christ to God, not the process of application to us, which is spoken of; the effect is, but not the application. Thus we have, through the Eternal Spirit, offering Himself without spot to God, blood-shedding, the sacrifice of Himself, one offering, entering once into the holy place, not without blood, or in the power of His own blood, into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us. It is the offering of Himself, or entering into the holy place, but no trace of application to us as the means of its efficacy, still less repeated application. By one offering He hath perfected forever, in perpetual continuance, them who are sanctified. They have no more conscience of sins. J. N. D.

Chapter 165

Original Sin

My Dear Brother,

I find in general, that people do not know what they mean by original sin. Is it a taint, an evil in nature, or a relative state with God! For instance it is said, By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.

But it is never said, Christ has put away sin in any sense. He came once in the end of the world to put away sin. But the result is not yet produced. Faith knows it is effectual and rejoices. But the Holy Ghost convicts the world of sin because they believe not in Jesus, so that there they are, sin increased upon them by the death of Christ. But, I repeat, it is never said Christ has put away sin. He has done the work that does it, so that in the new heavens and new earth righteousness will dwell. Hence my first answer must be the question, What do they mean by, original sin? if it be the nature (as for instance in the Thirty-nine Articles), it is not put away at all, but condemned in the cross. If it be the relationship and standing of the sinner, it is not changed till he believes. Only the cross is the adequate and glorious ground on which, God being glorified and the blood before His eyes, He can send to every sinner beseeching him to be reconciled; but this proves he is not till he answers to the call.

If it be meant that sins are put away (which is not original sin in any sense), and we remain guilty of unbelief, it is wholly anti-scriptural. The Lord says, “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins;” and Paul, “Let no man deceive you; for because of these things the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience.” And men are judged according to their works for the deeds done in the body. Only remember with the vague word “original sin” we must know what they mean. The text generally, I suppose, applied to it is Rom. 5:19. But this says nothing as to putting away. And it is never said Christ has put away sin at all.

Your affectionate brother in Christ,

J. N. D.

Original Sin

Dear Mr. Editor, It does seem to me a pity that our valuable and able brother J. N. D. should be so fond of making startling statements, which tend to puzzle and distress serious minds. Himself endowed with a keen acute mind, he should have mercy on more simple ones. He says, “People do not know what they mean by Original Sin.” If so, why does not he tell them what it is? Many quite understand a passage of scripture, or a truth, and hold it to their souls' comfort, that are unable to explain what they believe. J. N. D. says, “It is never said, Christ has put away sin.” It is very sad to make such statements—I mean to put it in that way. Tens of thousands, and that multiplied by tens of thousands, have received deep blessed comfort from the thought—a correct one—that their sins were “put away,” pardoned, that He (the Lord) had “by himself purged our sins;” that we ought not to “forget that we are purged from our old sins” and so forth. All this J. N.

D. would heartily agree to: why then startle and confuse dear saints by saying, “It is never said, Christ has put away sin?” It is not true to the believer. It is true to the unbelieving world on whom sin lies, and so under judgment. It is true in one sense that God never has forgiven, and never will forgive sin—but if I say this, which is true, without saying that, God having laid the sin and the wrath due for sin on another—even the blessed Lamb of God, I make that which is true untrue. If a poor distressed soul comes to me, and asks “Can I obtain forgiveness?” and I say “God never forgives sin,” without saying “the Lord laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all, so that he that believeth is forgiven and justified,” I say what is untrue as to the inquirer, though a blessed truth as maintaining the righteousness of the Just One. But, blessed be His name, “God is just, yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.” But J. N.D. says, “The result is not yet produced.” It is to the believer. “He has done the work that does it.” Could not J. X. D. have said “Dear saints, you are reconciled to God by His blood, you have redemption by His blood even the forgiveness of sins?” “You that are Christ's have passed from death unto life;” but the blessed work of Christ has not been of use to them that believe not, nor will it be completed even to them that are saved, until the last saint is gathered in. Again, as to original sin, why does J. N. D. make difficulties? It may show great acuteness, but it shows little mercy. A saint may not be able to give a logical definition of the term, but a believer knows that “all men are by nature children of wrath,” as “by faith in Christ Jesus children of God.” He knows that man, in his will, affections and understanding, comes into the world corrupt—that he cannot make the “flesh” good, but that he must be “born again of the Holy Ghost” and be “made a partaker of the divine nature.” Christ did put away sin; that is He did that by which I, a “child of wrath,” am by faith made a child of grace. I, dead in trespasses and sins, am quickened by grace— “all trespasses being forgiven” —and “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed.” That sin lies on the unbeliever, and judgment for On, I believe the word says so; and therefore sin to them is not put away, but “the wrath of God abideth on them.” In fact, the Holy Ghost convicts the unbeliever of sin, because he does not believe that sin is put away.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

Dear, Mr. Editor, I cannot answer for letters put in by those who have received them, because the inquiry to which they are an answer may be met most justly by that answer, but does not appear in the answer. But I have more to say. Original sin is theology, and not scripture, and the fruit of men's minds, which have not to be explained but refuted as not the expression of God's. In this case it has no really ascertained meaning at all. My explanation of it would be merely my thought; and it is constantly used and said to be put away and used for children's salvation, entirely out of the bounds of scripture; and those who use it do not know what they say or whereof they affirm; and it is very useful for them to know this. Such I judge is the case of your correspondent, though I have no wish or reason to complain of his note. If your correspondent uses the statements of scripture which he quotes and drops the theological expression of original sin, he will be all right. But his letter shows that he has everything to learn on the points he speaks of. He confounds, from the outset and all through, sin and sins, being born of God with forgiveness and divine favor. Speaking of sin in contrast with sins, scripture never speaks of its being forgiven at all, and carefully makes the difference between the two. It is just the vagueness and confusion which is on your correspondent's note which leaves so many souls in confusion and uncertainty, and binders their progress. Many of your readers know that the Romans treat distinctly, and with diligent care,

in two different well-defined parts the question of sins involving guilt, and sin, as the state which is the subject of deliverance, not of forgiveness, giving to each part a statement of resulting blessing. The last phrase of your correspondent's note I totally deny as wholly erroneous.

J, N. D.

Chapter 166

The Presence of the Holy Spirit on Earth, Consequent on the Work and Exaltation of Christ. John 1:26-34

This chapter is remarkable as bringing before us the various titles or names of Christ, almost all that He is in His varied titles, unless indeed the relatives ones. He is not viewed as bead of the church, or as priest, or Christ, but as only-begotten Son of God who reveals the Father, Son of God and King of Israel, the Lamb of God, the Life, the Light, the Word, the Creator, the Son of Man, the baptizer with the Holy Ghost, all the names that tell what He is in His own person. In an abstract way we have what His nature is, then man's condition is brought in with His personality, light, life, only that then with the testimony to what man is as rejecting Christ. “The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” The three other Gospels present Christ to man to be received, and close with His rejection, but this Gospel takes up His rejection from the very beginning. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and his own received him not.” Then we have what grace does and the objects of grace distinct. After the abstract statement of what He was, comes the testimony, not of what Christ was, but what He became. “The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” His person, as incarnate, is brought out, not what He was abstractedly, but as “made flesh.”

Then, in the verses read, follows His work. We have thus what He is essentially and in His nature, then what He became—incarnation in a word, and also His revelation of the Father, “For no man hath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.” Also we receive of His fullness. He becomes the source, and He is the fullness of which we have all received.

But in the verses read it is rather the work of grace from the very starting-point of the Gospel. And this work has two parts. Of the second I shall chiefly speak. The first is, that He is the Lamb of God; the second, that He baptizes with the Holy Ghost. It is not that He does not exercise also His priesthood, for He does; but this is not the subject here. I guard it because it is important to remember that He is priest. But here He is the Lamb of God, and He that baptizes with the Holy Ghost.

This last is a wonderful expression, containing in it the whole power of our relationship with God. It does not weaken the truth that He is the Lamb of God; yea, it is as to us founded on it. He is that, as is said in Gen. 24, “God will provide himself a lamb:” One therefore that is fit every way, perfectly acceptable and accepted, as perfect for the thing He had to do as God's mind was who gave Him to do it.

He is God's Lamb. Just as the first man brought in sin, so the Second was to put it clean out of the way. Those who rejected Him, of course, as He said, died in their sins, but He is the One that takes away the sin of the world. There will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness; that, and that only, will be the full result. The sacrifice has been made, the Lamb has been slain; but the grand result will be that God will have a heaven and an earth before Him in

which there is not a shade of sin, but wherein shall dwell righteousness. We had an innocent world, paradise; that was soon over; then a sinful world, though with grace working in it; but we shall have, not an innocent nor a sinful world, but a righteous world. It will be founded on that which can never lose its value, so that itself never can be touched, it is the immutable basis of God's new creation, which is therefore immutable in its blessing where all His ways are manifested. That will be the full result of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The first world was set in blessing, but it depended on the faithfulness of him who was placed at the head of it; the final one rests secure on the value of that which is perfected, coming after a work finished and done—a work in which God has perfectly glorified Himself. The basis of the new creation on which it is founded is finished, finished completely and absolutely. The work is finished upon which the security, morally speaking, of the new heavens and the new earth is founded, finished so that

Christ who wrought it is sitting at the right hand of God, sitting there until His enemies are to be dealt with. The work is finished: nothing can ever be added to it, nor can it lose its effect with God; and the blessed result is that which will come in, as I have said. The work is done; all moral questions have been settled at the cross, what sin is, enmity against God; what perfect love to God the Father and obedience in man to Him is; what righteousness against sin is has been proved; and love to sinners has been shown in the same wondrous work. Unless in the cross, men try in vain to reconcile righteousness and love, grace and God's dishonored majesty, truth as to the wages of sin, and His goodness,—all the attributes together.

If Adam and Eve had been cut off when they ate the fruit, it might be very righteous: you might say they got what they deserved, but there would have been no love in that. Or suppose, on the other hand, every sin had been passed over in what people call goodness: the natural man would think this very right and call it love; but then sin would be no matter, and righteousness not exist; and so the majesty of God, which has been utterly trampled in the dust by the success of Satan with man, must remain so cast. down. There would be no means of conciliating the righteousness and majesty of God with His love. The moment I get the cross, all that is settled. We see there how it became God, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. This became God. His majesty is maintained in the highest way. The Son must suffer if He takes up this cause. Then I find perfect righteousness against sin, but along with it infinite love to me, a poor worthless sinner. There I get, consequently, the Son of man glorified and God glorified in Him, and all moral questions in presence of God's revealed nature settled forever. All is perfectly settled according to God's nature and for God, and by that which passed between God and Christ alone, perfect consequently according to their perfection. As to myself, if I look at the cross, I own that the only part I had in it was my sins and the enmity that crucified Christ. I am put in my place and humbled; and yet I see the great righteous basis of all-divine counsels in it and infinite love to me; but this brings me to know myself too. Nothing ever showed like the cross the full development and manifestation of evil. Let people say what they like, the perfect development of evil was there on our part, and the full development of good before and from God.

When I look at the present effect of all that in this scene (in a broad sense there is none), the scene is not changed, looking at the general state of things. Christ has gone to heaven when He had by Himself purged our sins; but as to the state of the world at large there is no effect, though many souls are saved. You get new forms of evil,—infidelity as to this love and righteousness, and so on; but as to the state of the world, it remains in the same state, modified only by its rejection of

Christ. Sin has not gone out of the world; men are trying to bind it and restrain evil, as of old they bound Legion with fetters and chains; they have set-to to do their best, and a bad set-to it is, but there it is to be bound. They talk of progress, and in a certain way, as to physical discoveries and conveniences, there is; but is there morally? I do not see any progress in the obedience of children, nor in the devotedness of servants, nor in faithfulness in all the relationships of life; but I see wonderful restlessness, and greater than ever. There is progress in railways and telegraphs, and so on, or we might not have been here together as we are; but this has nothing whatever to do with the relationship of man to God or to his neighbor. Cleverness in what is merely material is neither here nor there as to moral state. You might get the cleverest man in telegraphs or science, and find be was a blasphemer, or a man walking near to God; they have nothing to do with it. And, after all, when you die, what will it be to you whether there is a telegraph or not (the soul's state belonging to another sphere of things), save as it ministers to his will and lusts, in which good and evil are brought to an issue through the cross and God revealed in grace and righteousness, perfectly glorified, as indeed there only, as well as our sins borne. The work is all done and finished on the cross, and accepted too in righteousness, and Christ is sitting down at the right hand of God until He takes His great power and reigns. When the Lord Jesus Christ comes again, He will reign until all His enemies are put under His feet, and blessedness is complete in a new heaven and a new earth.

But then I get a second thing, which is that in order to do all this He became a man, and, consequent upon His going up to God, risen from the dead, the Holy Ghost has now come down. The presence of the Holy Ghost on earth is consequent upon Christ's exaltation to the right hand of God. His presence here is that which puts a man down here who has the Holy Ghost into association and relationship with Christ in heaven.

And, further, there is the great fact that God now dwells down upon the earth, and this is an immense truth. It never was the case before redemption. God never dwelt with Adam innocent, nor yet with Abraham though He came down to visit him. But the moment that Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, He says, in Ex. 29:45, 46, “And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God, and they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them.” And all this was written for our admonition, for God chewed Himself in the shekinah-glory of the tabernacle dwelling between the cherubim upon the mercy-seat.

Now, however, it is the Holy Ghost who is come down, and who dwells either in the individual believer or in the assembly of God, the temple of the living God; and the consequence of this to me is that I have the knowledge of the whole value of the work that is done, and I have got, through the Holy Ghost here, complete and entire association with Christ where He is. Thus I rejoice in hope of the glory of God, and, till it actually comes, God dwells already in those who believe in Christ. Mark how it comes in. Christ was anointed with the Holy Ghost. “And I knew him not, but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” Before I get the baptizing (Christ is said to be not baptized but anointed and sealed) on the day of Pentecost, Christ had been anointed and sealed. He had taken His place as a man, as the pattern of it all; as Son, as a man here, the place into which He introduces us by redemption, the relationship in which He is with the Father and into which He introduces us.

Is Christ alive for evermore? Well, He is our life. Is He righteousness? He is my righteousness; and, though all the results be not yet accomplished, we have certain knowledge of the work He wrought, and we now rejoice in hope of the glory. The heaven was opened, the Holy Ghost came down like a dove, and Christ took this place amongst us, the Son of God amongst men—us—Himself the expression of the place into which God by grace brings every one that believes on Christ. You read in Prov. 8— “I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him, rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.” And when the Son of the Father became a man and the Word was made flesh, as set out in this chapter, we find the angels declaring God's predilection as to the race of men, and it is beautiful to hear them, with unjealous hearts, delighting in God's glory, announcing the blessing to others:— “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men.”

I speak of the thing in itself, not of the accomplishment of the results, for the present effect was not peace but division; but when His people take the first step in the right path in obedience to the word, He falls in with them, they indeed confessing sin, He fulfilling righteousness; and thus, at His baptism I see the blessed Lord, coming as a man, as He did publicly then, in full obedience, entering by the door, whilst He receives the Holy Ghost, who comes down on Him as such. And how could He receive the Holy Ghost? Because He was righteous in Himself, we through His work. Then He was both anointed and sealed, and thus we find Him attributing His works to the Spirit: “If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils.”

It is remarkable how the Trinity is brought before us in this. The Son wrought on earth, cast out demons by the Spirit, and the Father that dwelt in Him—He did the works, His work showing how the Trinity is brought out in specific connection with that purpose in man, through which the Son became man. It is first fully revealed in the passage in Matt. 3 Christ the Son was there, the Spirit descended upon Him, and the Father owns Him a man on the earth as Son. So, through the eternal Spirit, He offered Himself without spot to God. God anointed Jesus of Nazareth, says Peter, with the Holy Ghost and with power.

Now I notice all this to show how He who was God over all, blessed forever, took in sovereign grace His part with man. This was the great preliminary path to all blessing. He upon whom the Holy Ghost descended and abode, He it was who baptized with it: not that it was only this, for we must be sprinkled with blood to have it, and He must be glorified as man to give it. Hence we read, He, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, hath shed forth this. But here He entered truthfully on the path of all this; He associated Himself with the godly remnant, Himself to be the channel, through redemption, of His own blessings to others. Thus Christ was anointed as man and was baptized with the Holy Ghost. We enter into the intelligent place of the blessings which are ours in Him, before the accomplishment of the result. We are brought into the same place and relationship, and know the fruit of His being the Lamb before the results are actually produced externally.

But, further, before we arrive at the glory, He is entered in as man, He is glorified; and so we get an object. I rest in the thought of being glorified with Him, but I cannot rest in myself. I look all around on the world and try everything in it; and Christ says “Are you weary of all that?” “Yes.” “Then you come to Me, and you shall find rest.” Here is that which gives the heart rest. You may be weary and heavy-laden without being able to explain it; now, are you so? Christ is the true rest.

God found His rest in Him, and never anywhere else. God could not rest even in the exercise of His love, or in any object till Christ was there. He could exercise His love, but not rest in it; but in Christ God did find His rest. I do not talk of His own blessed nature (of course, sufficient to itself), but never anywhere else here could God find rest. And so can I, a poor wretched creature, a vile sinner. But, “come, see a man that told me all that ever I did,” and this is the One who can be my rest, for He knows all and is perfect love and grace to me when He does. As an object, I have nothing more to seek; I have found my rest where God found His, and I have found God Himself in love. As to my circumstances and sinfulness, I find a full discovery of all that, and at the same time in the Lamb of God, who meets it all and puts it all away forever, and so through Christ I know God. Very glad I am that God does know all. Thus all was in that which He did, and now I can have truth in the inward parts in God's presence.

As to the poor woman that was a sinner, the Pharisee thought, “If he knew what she was, he would not let her touch him; he is no prophet;” but Christ shows He was a prophet, for He tells out what was gassing in Simon's heart. He did know all, but there was that which Simon did not know, the perfect grace of God towards the sinner; and then He takes up the poor woman's case, saying to her, “thy sins are forgiven,” “thy faith hath saved thee” (this goes further), “go in peace.”

We have the real declaration of the Father in Christ, and His love shown by the work in which righteousness was established. I find the perfect love of God, honesty in the conscience and heart by the knowledge of it, and I find these nowhere else. I cannot find a person that is perfect in searching my heart out to the bottom, and with perfect love to me, or one that has the right to be perfect love to me. But I have got all this in Christ. I find the blessed One, the perfect sinless man, and Him sealed with the Holy Ghost that I might understand He so came, and that I might be sealed with the Holy Ghost through the work that He has accomplished.

If an angel wanted to see God, he must look on man, on Christ, “God manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.” Then, with all this goodness towards us, where has this Man gone, the one who glorified God perfectly in the place of sin? He was God, manifested in love to man; and, if you have not yet got the blessing of it, still it was God coming to win back the confidence of your heart to God.

The beginning of all sin was loss of confidence in God. The devil suggests to Eve, “Why should God keep back the fruit of that tree? He knows if you eat it, you will be like Him;” and so confidence was lost. But, if I do not trust God to make me happy, I must try and make myself happy, and thus enter lust and sin and transgression and ruin. But Christ comes into this world where I am a sinner, and in Him I find God winning back my heart to Himself, not by hiding my faults—for they are all told out and put away—and the confidence of my heart is won, so that I can trust God; and, more, I know God's heart a great deal better than I know my own. I cannot trust my own heart a minute. Test it: I say that I love the brethren; but am I not cold sometimes? What a double heart! I do not say willfully, but there it is; and I must humble myself before God about it, but I cannot deny it. Do you find anything like this in God? I find the perfect love of God in the gift of His Son, and there is no double heart there. And so I have rest. If our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence before God.

But this is not all. If Christ was the manifestation of God in love to us, He was man made sin before God; and, if won by His grace to confide in God, you set out towards God, you will find the cross in

the way, and Man made sin before God, but then the whole question settled there. And, coming by faith, the question is settled for me, touching all my sins in His presence, settled by what is done and finished, and this according to the glory of God's own nature; so that I can even look sin in the face fully, and find it has been judged for me; while also I have the perfect love of God resting on me in perfect holiness and righteousness, and I am standing in the light as God is in the light in virtue of that which is finished. Through Christ I am brought into God's presence, accepted in the Beloved as white as snow, while God is perfect in righteousness in accepting me, and grace reigns through righteousness.

Thus it is we have the double character of Christ manifested down here, God in grace towards us, and Man made sin before God, but as putting it away for us by His work in drinking the cup His Father had given Him to drink of. And, mark, the only part that we have in this work is the sins that put Him to death; and the hatred that did it, when He gave himself up to it in love. But it is all finished; and when Christ had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, and thereupon not only is it the fact that the Holy Ghost comes down, but Christ receives it again. “Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.” And I find this, that in virtue of the work of putting away my sins, and of having cleansed me and washed me and justified me and redeemed me to God, the Holy Ghost also is given that I may go and understand and enjoy all that Christ is, all that Christ has done, and that He has made my portion in consequence. True, I am here in weakness, a poor earthen vessel, that the excellency of the power may be of God; all quite true, but I have the relationship. I am a child, I want to be taught by my Father, and alas I it may be sometimes a naughty child, and needing to be whipped by my Father, but I am a child, a partaker of the divine nature.

Now it is this distinctive character of the Holy Ghost come down that I wish to speak of. It is what constitutes the state of the Christian, who is a man that stands between the first coming of Christ and the work He then accomplished, and the second coming of Christ, when he is going to enjoy the glory; and, between these two, he has the Holy Ghost. He has all the benefits, not as to his body, but as to his standing before God, of Christ's work. Look a little at what this means.

Him that has taken this place, as now redeemed, I speak of those who are believers—the Holy Ghost has come down to dwell in. So you find in Leviticus; that when the leper was cleansed, he was washed with water, sprinkled with blood, and anointed with oil, the figure of the Holy Ghost; the word of God applied to us in the power of the Spirit, the water;—the blood, now the blood of atonement;—and the anointing. To be quickened or born again of water by the word must go first, and then the blood; but the Holy Ghost is there too, and the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us. Just trace this a little.

The first thing. I find in chapter 3 of this Gospel is that we are born of the Spirit, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit; and in this is the weighty truth that we have a nature capable of enjoying all divine things, which the flesh is not. I have often said, were a natural man put into heaven, he would get out of it as fast as he could; for what is it that he likes there? Even an honest worldly man will own that. Then in John 4 there is another thing; Christ speaks of the gift of God which should be a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. It is not only life holy in its nature; but, in consequence of the Lord Jesus Christ having gone up, I have the whole power of life there, and

I go right up into its blessed results through the Lord Jesus Christ, who has associated my heart livingly as born of God with all the things that belong to one born of God; with that of which he that is born of God is joint-heir with Christ. He became a man, and will be a man forever; as in one sense He will be a servant forever.

In Ex. 21 a Hebrew slave who had served seven years was to go out free; but if his master had given him a wife, and be said, I love my wife, I love my children, I will not go out free, then his master was to bore through his ear with an awl to the doorpost, and the slave was to remain so forever. So the Lord could have had twelve legions of angels, and gone out free. But He would not, and so He is a servant and remains so forever.

In John 13 again we read “when Jesus knew that his hour was come that He, should depart out of this world unto the Father, and that He was come from God and went to God, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end,” and, “He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garment, and took a towel and girded Himself; after that, He poureth water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.” He would still be a servant, could no longer (it is true) have part down here with them, but He would not give them up, and so they must have part with Him. They were clean by the word spoken, but in their path could pick up dirt: as this will not do for heaven, the blessed Lord still does the work of a servant. I, says He, am going to wash them. Peter hesitates, and the Lord says, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me. You are clean, but you are taking up dirt on your feet in the way; and so the Lord washes them. This is His present service.

So, further, in Luke 12. He says, “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.” “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching; verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” As if the Lord should say, “I am going to be your servant in heaven.” We are going to sit down and eat things in heaven, to use His figure, which acquire infinite value from His ministering them to us.

The next thing is a clear distinct consciousness that the work is finished. The Holy Ghost is sent down from Christ when He is glorified, and God has given the positive testimony that He has accepted that work and of that to which it leads. Christ has gone into the glory, and I am going to be like Him; and thus I get the blessed assurance of the efficacy of His work when He came first. He says, “Now are we the sons (children) 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.” No question about that. He came to be man (all alone however) amongst men, and ever accessible, until He had redeemed us; and now He has taken us into association with Himself, and I know it by the Holy Ghost. By the Holy Ghost also I know that I am in Him there now, as John 14:20. We have not yet got all the fruits, but I have the knowledge of the fruits of what He has done by the Holy Ghost.

In John 14 He says, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also.” This was the first great point and final result in blessing. Then He shows them what they should have upon earth meanwhile. They knew where He was going and the way, for He was going to the Father and they had seen the Father in Him. The revelation of the Father in the Son gave that which was the highest heavenly blessedness, was the full revelation of all the blessedness that is to be theirs,

and revealed the way, because in coming to Christ they had found the Father. Philip says, “Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” And now I know what the springs of blessedness are in heaven, because I have seen the Father in the Son. Do not believe for a moment that God has not revealed the things He has prepared for us. “God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit,” and “We have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” I find thus the Father revealed in the Son; but there was yet more present comfort by the Holy Ghost. They ought to have known the revelation of the Father in the Son; but one thing they could not know until the Comforter was come, even “In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you.” You shall know that you are in Me. People tell me that I cannot know, that I must wait until the day of judgment; but in that case I cannot have any peace here, because I do not know how it will turn out then. Am I not to have part in the day of grace? And this is now. And what is it that I have? What I really have is that Christ has put away the very sins for which otherwise I should have to be judged. And, more, I know that I am in Him, and He is in me. But they say it is so presumptuous to say I am in Christ. Presumptuous! Why, Christ told me I should know it. It is therefore very much more presumptuous to doubt it.

“And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” And do you think God dwells in me without my finding it out? I may not be able to explain it to another: this is a question of intelligence in Scripture and even of gift; but “where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.” “In that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” The Holy Ghost dwells in us; and there is the power to overcome temptation, wisdom from God, power to realize the presence of Christ, to live looking on the things that are not seen, joyful liberty in our path with God. Mark the practical consequence of this knowledge as to the character of our walk. Do you say I am in Christ. But you cannot be in Christ without Christ being in you; then do not let me see anything else in you but Christ; do not let the flesh come out. We fail, I know, but this is the right practical consequence. So what is to be looked for in the Christian is that he is to be the epistle of Christ. This is my place, and the practical measure of my walk is—I am so truly dead, and the power of the Holy Ghost within so full, that nothing but Christ should be seen. We are in Christ, and is Christ in us.

And, consequently, there is another thing. If I am asked to prove the love of God, I say, “hereby know we love, because He laid down His life for us,” but, as to enjoying it, “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” I know the love of God, by His dwelling in me who is love; God is love, and the Holy Ghost dwells in me. Not that you cannot learn more, infinitely more. I know my Father, but there are ten thousand things in His mind that I do not know yet. For a man to say he does not know his own father would be dreadful, though there are multitudes of things in his father's mind and character that he may not yet know. “We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” “I am in the Father,” (says Christ of His place,) and we are in Christ.

There is not only the fact of acceptance but relationship, for we are sons. And the Holy Ghost gives us the consciousness of it. And what do all duties flow from? Relationship. You cannot have

the holy affections and true duties of a child of God without being a child of God, and knowing that you are one. The Spirit of God “beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God,” and so I enjoy the affections which belong to a child. Now is this connected with coming before God as a Judge? It is in virtue of Christ's work, which put away my sins; I am a child in virtue of that which has made me as white as snow. True, if I merely take a cold dead sense that I am safe, there is no affection in it. But our relationship with God and our Father is identified with our being safe. Christ's death for me is indeed a motive to make me feel thankful beyond all expression. But there is beyond this, as present power, that we are taken into an association with Christ, which is so complete, that we know—know now—that “when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” He would not leave us without our knowing His love perfectly in the way that He has established me in blessing; and, while I have the perception of the glory and the earnest of the inheritance, the love of God is already shed abroad in my heart, the Holy Ghost dwells in me and gives me consciousness of all that has been done for me, of all that has been given to me.

And if this is true, if I have indeed come to Christ and drunk, then out of my belly shall flow rivers of living water,—flow out, that is, to others. God first gives us to enjoy Himself (“We joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ"), and then there is the activity of His love reproduced in our little measure, though in the truth of its nature in us.

“You know me?” He says. “Oh, yes,” I say. How do you know it? “Because I was a poor vile sinner, and Christ came and laid down His life for me.” You know that? Then go and carry it to other people.” I was a poor sinner, and an made the righteousness of God in Christ. Think what a blessed place that is! And I have that blessed place before God, “blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,” and in spirit I can now enjoy it, and that is the place I get with God, even a son, as Christ is Son, as to relationship with the Father, “my Father and your Father;” and then He gives me a share in the activity of His love in carrying it out to others. “This spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” Plainly this is not the Spirit as He wrought in them to make them believe (for those who believed should receive Him); but, in virtue of the work of Christ gone into the glory, the Holy Ghost has come down and associated me with Christ in all that He has as man, and then sends me to bear witness to others of it.

But, if He takes the things of Christ and shows them to me, what is the effect on me as I pass through this world? “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain until now;” and “we groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of the body.” What was Christ in this world? And what does He feel about this world? Could He set it to rights? It could not be. If He was love, could He look with indifference at its misery? Neither was that possible. His holiness and His love must be sources of sorrow in this world, as of blessed communion above whilst He was here. Having the Spirit of Christ, I may be privileged to suffer for Him, I must suffer with Him; my heart takes up the voice of the groans of creation and carries them up to God. I may not know what to ask for as a remedy: there may be none here. But being here with the spring of divine love in me, the mind of the Spirit is here, the Holy Ghost intercedes in me according to God. It shows what an astonishing place we are in, what a wonderfully blessed place God has put as into while not yet in the glory.

Again, the Holy Ghost having sealed my pardon, and given me the consciousness of my relationship as a son, with all that I am in spirit walking in, I turn to see the full effect, before the glory which He has revealed to me is mine in possession. The Holy Ghost cannot reveal a glory to me which He does not reveal as mine; but these glories are given us because we are sons, and are joint-heirs with Christ. We are predestinated “to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren;” and, whatever the Holy Ghost has revealed of all this blessedness, He reports it to me as mine. To the glory of God by us, it is said, and, again, which God ordained before the world to our glory. 1 Peter 1:10-13 shows very clearly the order of the revelation of all this. The prophets of old “searched what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow, unto whom it was revealed that not unto themselves” (not that they will not be there, but their actual condition is what is here spoken of) “but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” We have them not yet, but they are revealed and reported to us. Then gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.”

The Holy Ghost has been sent from heaven for the purpose of this revelation. “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.” The apostle does not quote the passage to show it is our position, as so often quoted, but exactly the contrary: such was the Old Testament state; but we have received the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. I have got into the relationship of a son and I know it by the Holy Ghost. My chief joy surely is fellowship with the Father and the Son, and this hereafter in glory in the Father's house. Do we know nothing of what is there? Much, in one sense everything; it is revealed; but take yet another blessing. Besides the actual fact of God's presence, the Holy Ghost shows me another thing. There is not one of you that I shall not see perfectly like Christ in the glory. The Lord Jesus “shall come to be glorified in his saints and to be admired in all them that believe.” Think of my seeing Christ admired in all of you! What is my desire now? That you may be like Him. This desire will be satisfied perfectly, and it is an immense joy. Nothing is too great for us to expect, now that we know that the blessed Son of God has suffered for us and been made sin.

And how does Christ give! “Not as the world giveth give I unto you.” The world gives and gives away; Christ never gives away. The way He gives is to take us into the enjoyment of all that He has Himself. He wants to have us in the same blessedness with Himself: “Peace I leave unto you, my peace I give unto you.” He says, “My joy fulfilled in themselves,” and “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me,” and “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them,” and “That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them,” but the way of it is by having brought us into the joy of relationship to the Father with Himself. It is the Giver that makes the blessedness even more than the gift. Suppose my mother gives me a trifle; it is not the value of the trifle in itself but the giver that makes the value.

And I know all now by the Holy Ghost, so that I abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost. There are two kinds of happiness. There is the happiness of hope that we have; and what is the other kind? Rest in perfect affection. God loves me as He loves Jesus, and I rest in that. To talk about our love to anyone is no proof of love. The deepest affection may show itself, but is not

loquacious about itself, at least when it confides in its object. Nor is the declaration of our great love a proof that all love much, nor complaint of our want of affection a proof that love is wanting, though it may be often that we are thinking too much about it. If there be confidence, the heart rests in the value of the love of the one confided in, and rests in thinking of its object, which is true affection. Supposing a child told me, “I love my mother quite enough,” I say, “You are an unfortunate wight; you do not love your mother a bit, if you say that.” But suppose a child says, “If you only knew my mother, her unwearied love, her patience with me, and I often so foolish, forgetting her wishes! I made a noise when she was sick, and yet her love never falters, never wearies;” I say, “That child loves its mother.” When we have a sense of the love that outreaches all our thoughts, we adore and bless, and wonder at the greatness, and in the sense of it, our hearts, thinking of Him, that is love to God. But, if I look into my own heart (I do not speak of judging known failure), and measure my love, and complain of my not loving God, in such case you are under law as to it. The law required it, and necessarily and rightly; but it is law. Herein is love, not that “We loved him, but that he first loved us.” Hence too, when our loving Him is spoken of in 1 John 4, it is not we ought to love Him, true as it may be, but “we love him because he first loved us.”

But the practical effect of receiving the Holy Ghost and abiding in Him is that I am called upon to walk as Christ walked; “they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh, but they that are after the spirit the things of the Spirit.” You cannot have a man living without an object; and, whatever the object may be, it characterizes him. If it is money, he is a covetous man; if it is power, he is ambitious, and so on; but if I get Christ the object of my love, I follow Him, and the Holy Ghost reveals to my heart all things that relate to Him.

You cannot have the love of Christ in your heart without loving what He loves, and this not only as to the things the heart delights in, but the persons dear to Him. We shall love all saints, even when going astray, with the patient love with which Christ loves them, if filled with His Spirit, and walking with Him in the joy of communion. See the Apostle in the opening of 1 Corinthians when he saw them at Corinth all going wrong. He begins by saying all the good things about them that he can; “enriched” by Him in all utterance and all knowledge, “coming behind in no gift,” “waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,” who would confirm them, to the end that they may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; God was faithful, and so on; and then he begins to blame them for everything they were doing.

Men falsely suppose that the full assurance of salvation, of final salvation, weakens the bond of duty. First, it is a base principle that only dread of damnation can keep us in the path of duty. But further a child's duties are always there, because he is always a child from never can be anything else. All duties flow from the place you are in. You can speak of duties only in the relationship from which they flow. You must be a Christian, a child of God, to be under obligation to fulfill the duties incumbent on such. And, indeed, the affections belonging to their relationship also have no place till then. The consciousness of the relationship must be there. How can a child love a father if he does not know whether be is such? We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Scripture does not recognize as a Christian a person who does not understand that he is a child of God; he may be on the road, but he has not arrived at his Christian standing. I want no self-confidence, but I want honesty—a divinely given recognition of the relationship in which God has set us, and of which we have the consciousness

by the Spirit. It is true that in vain we pretend to such a place by merely seeing what scripture says about it. I would rather see anxiety for holiness and God's glory in a person who had not assurance but who was in earnest, than confidence in one who was careless. I quite understand how many dear souls regard this as presumption, remembering when I was awfully afraid myself.

But what scripture tells us is, “we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.” Being children, we are not to be looking up to God as a judge. I am not thinking of God that way; He is one of course, but that is not my habit of thought about Him. The very person, who is presently to sit as Judge, hung on the cross for my sins, and put them away before He comes as Judge. God would have us before Him in reverence surely, but not in terror. I come to Him as a Savior, and I find the sins I should have had to be judged for have all been judged already; and when I come before Christ on the judgment seat, as we shall, why, there, as the judge, is the very One who has put them all away. How can He impute them to me? We must all appear at the judgment-seat of Christ; quite true, but remember that we shall be glorified before we go there. We shall be raised in glory if we have died, or be changed into the same if yet alive; as it is written “our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change this vile body and fashion it like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.”

One word more. Knowing I am a child and that here, and in a path according to God's will led by the Spirit of God, how far can I at present look to be like Christ in this world? I look to be quite like Him in the glory. There is a great deal, and among true souls too, of looking to be conformed to the image of God's Son now. Now there is utter deadly error in that, though not intentional error. They reason, from the desire of conformity in the renewed soul, to the possibility of it by faith. But this leaves the truth of God out of sight. If I say I have no sin, I deceive myself; but Christ had no sin. Have you no sin in you? It is not said that we ought to be like Christ down here, but that we ought to walk as He walked. Again, when I know redemption—and only then, for this is properly deliverance, having died and risen with Christ, not merely knowing that He has borne my sins—then “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” The word free has two senses in our language: one, as when you say “that horse is free from vice,” that is, he has none; and the other, as when you say, “that slave is free,” which is quite a different thing, and it is in this sense I am free from the law of sin and death. I find sin is in me, though it was all condemned on the cross of Christ; but I am free from its law, and it is by the knowledge of redemption and deliverance that I get into this.

Who shall deliver me? Why do not you deliver yourself? I have been trying at it, but I cannot. I do not submit to the condemnation of sin in the flesh, so us to understand that it was put to death on the cross, I do not come to this until I find I cannot myself get the better of it. You get all that in Rom. 7. It is not the true Christian state, but the one there finds first that there is no good thing in his flesh at all. And what next? Why, that it is not himself, “it is no more I.” What next? Oh, I must get the better of it. Try away, I say, try away. I cannot succeed. And now you learn that there is no power in yourself to do it. “To will is present with me, but how to perform that which is good I find not.” I need another, a Deliverer, and I learn the power of life in Christ, of Christ Himself; but with the knowledge that I have (as regards the old man) died with Him, and that there sin in the flesh was condemned when He was a sacrifice for sin; but this was in death, so that I am dead to it for faith. And I do not believe, as I have said, that a person has ever got out of Rom. 7 who has not

got into it.

In my case, like thousands of others, before I got forgiveness, I had found out what I was; I learned the seventh chapter before I learned the third. But when a full gospel is preached and forgiveness known, the knowledge of self will still be by law; but the form of it is modified. The way more often is, I hope I am not deceiving myself, I thought I was forgiven: how is it I do so and so? How is it I find the power of sin still here? The flesh is never changed. The truth is they are distinct points, and treated apart; only self-knowledge is the deeper point, and so treated last. But it is law, not for condemnation but powerless to free, though it may kill, and condemn too. (Compare 2 Corinthians 3)

After man sinned, the whole history is that, whatever God sets up right, the first thing man did was to spoil it. Adam eats the fruit of the tree. Noah is put in authority, and the first thing he does is to get drunk. God gives a law, and they set up a golden calf. The priests are consecrated and offer strange fire the first day and die; and Aaron is never allowed to go in his garments of glory and beauty into the most holy place. Solomon fails in the kingdom, and it is divided. Nebuchadnezzar is set at the head of the government among the Gentiles, but he sets up a great idol and punishes those that servo the true God, and Gentile authority becomes that of “the beasts.” The world put Christ to death when He came in grace; flesh lusts against the Spirit when He comes, and if one is called to the third heaven, it would puff him up about it. And now, it is not that there) is any change in the flesh; but I am not to fancy that, because flesh is there, I must let it act. No, I must reckon it dead, and should in practice “always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.”

The Holy Ghost gives us a blessed sense of relationship with the Father. And what, accordingly, the Christian is called upon to do is, in the power of the Holy Ghost, to live and walk so that nothing but Christ be seen in him.

Chapter 167

Correspondence on Present Matters

My Dear ——,

One thing that you relate gave me much to think of, as indeed it has been a subject of thought pretty often for a long while, nor am I sure that I have the Lord's mind clear upon it. I think evangelizing the greatest privilege of any in respect to gifts, though I am not an evangelist, only when I can doing the work of one as well as I can. This is not my difficulty, but what you say, that the evangelization has enfeebled the teaching the saints. The gifts are clearly distinct; but I do not see that one should enfeeble the other. Paul assuredly evangelized, and as surely taught, and taught in evangelizing. Witness the Thessalonians; and if he did not look for, he certainly found, present fruit. He distinguished being a minister of the gospel, and a minister of the church, to fulfill [complete] the word of God. This is not in the Thessalonians: all is personal, not corporate. We must be with God for each, as called of Him to it; and then I do not see why power should not be for both.

But a certain salvationism, instead of Christianity, I think, has to say to it which God may bless, but which carries its effect with it. Few carry in their mind, “I endure all things for the elect's sake.” It is a general idea that God is love, and would have all men to be saved, which is blessedly true; but thus it ends in being saved—man's safety. There is no purpose of God in it—no glory of Christ—all called upon to bow to and own Him. Hence, as to the preacher's state of mind, when he has got the person saved, and this confessed, he is content, going no farther. God's interest in His own is lost, which leads on to building up. If we were with God about them, the heart would soon be drawn out in testimony to them.

There is another thing—glory to Christ in His church. This, I confess, greatly absorbs my spirit, though I be a poor hand for this work too. But this leads us to prayer for saints, so also to testimony to them. The evil is not earnest devotedness to evangelizing, which is itself the way of blessing to an assembly, or rather God working in one by His presence builds up the other; it is being absorbed by it. But this affects the evangelizing itself; there is less of Christ in it, more of man's importance, and when pursued in a revival way, more of delusive work; it never gives a solid foundation to build upon.

I should be most loath to weaken evangelization; I believe God is blessing it, especially for, gathering out in these last days; and it is healthful for an assembly that their hearts are engaged in it. At the very beginning it characterized Brethren, and I trust still does, though it be more common now on all hands. The love exercised in it binds also saints together; but God is in a great professing body, awakening them to their state, and this has its importance also. The cry that awoke the virgins was not the gospel, ordinarily so called. Finally, the hand cannot say to the foot, I have no need of thee. I do not reject the joy of counting converts, but we must not lean upon it. “When ye have done all things, say, We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.” The bond of service to Christ is kept up, and this is of great importance. It is not referring the effect to our work, but our work and heart to Him. I am sure, if we were near Christ,

we should do both well, assuming of course that Christ has called us to do it. Do not be content to put one in place of the other, but see what Christ means by it. Be with Christ about the saints when you have to say to them. Be with Christ as to both, and then see what is the result. The question in general has long pressed upon me in connection with the spiritual activities of the day. I have never been allowed to see much fruit, and have been more blessed in bringing to peace than awakening. There is One, I thank God, who is above all, and does all: let us, look to Him. The Lord be abundantly with you, and guide you both in heart and work, and keep you in much enjoyment of Him, as well as for Him.

II.

We must be more than content, if the Lord says “He hath done what he could.” We, at least I, cannot say it, though I seek to serve Him. It is a comfort that He says to Philadelphia, I know thy works—without saying more—and thon hast a little strength, so as We are kept faithful, not denying His name, and keeping the word of His patience. How very gracious of the Lord It changes nothing, it is true, but we should notice these ways of the Lord; He is gracious on the way as He is at the end, and it is always Himself. I think it is striking, the Lord letting Moody's and Pearsall Smith's work run over the world as it does. In Switzerland they are full of the latter, at least in Basle. I do not fear it: it is wakening up as all these revival works. God graciously allows the work to go on, that there may be this, and people called out; for it has a popularity most useful to it as service (but which it would soon lose—perhaps would never have—if they were faithful), which I certainly do not covet. The establishment missions wrought of old somewhat similarly, and I doubt not there were many conversions, and rejoice with all my heart in it; but all beyond is worldly, and lowers the standard of Christianity. If the brethren keep up their testimony, it will have its full place, besides the preaching of the gospel of the grace of God; and may it be with renewed energy Church and remnant work, and the Christian's place, of which they know nothing, remains where it was. A full plain gospel I have to work through with all of them—the perfectionists, as Moody's people. They teach what ignores and denies it; but then we have only to add this, and make it plain, not oppose. For this I have a full opening both at New York and here. I learn they are getting on nicely at New York. Kindest love to the brethren. In general we have cause for thankfulness here, but I should, as man, like to see things go faster, but you have to bring in a full gospel everywhere. No one has an idea of what God's children get as their teaching. But I must close.

III.

I think that Brethren are entering into a new phase of existence, which increases danger to them, and brings greater, or at any rate more manifest, responsibility. It does not arise merely from that justification or excessive praise like ——'s, which good taste would let drop, though flattery be dangerous to any heart, but [it arises] from the now generally spread feeling (whatever effect it produces, for it is very diverse) that. Brethren have something which other Christians have not got. This is often refuted, hated, opposed, may be often it matter of curiosity, sometimes (and may it be increased!) of true inquiry; but it is felt. The world feels it and would use it to show the inconsistency of public profession. In many cases they would be sought and courted from their knowledge of scripture; their books read to have the truth without acting on it. Others, who still cling to the professing church with partial apprehensions of truth and much error, make their boast

that it can be had without leaving the systems around us—nay, sometimes openly arguing continuance in them; but it is felt that they have what others have not. I believe they have. But what is important is, not “the Brethren,” but the truth they have. I could state it definitely, and have ere now done it; but it is not my object here. God could set them aside, and spread His truth by others—would, I believe, though full of gracious patience, if they be not faithful. Their place is to remain in obscurity and devotedness, not to think of Brethren (it is always wrong to think of ourselves), but of souls, in Christ's name and love, and of His glory and truth only, not to press Brethrenism, but to deal with each soul according to its need for Christ's sake.

But if attention is drawn—and it is—to the truth they possess through grace, their responsibility is greatly increased. If more general and personal devotedness is not found in them, they would be a stumbling-block against the truth. Unworldliness, nonconformity to the world, self-denial, abnegation in love to others, is what is called for, for love is the end of the charge.... out of a pure heart. Let them walk in love in the truth, humble, lowly, unworldly, and all for Christ, as little and content to be little as when they began, and God will bless them. If not, their candlestick may go (and, oh, what sorrow and confusion of face it would be after such grace!) as that of others.

Let there be no mixing with the church-world—what are they if they do?—but show grace toward it, that early beacon-light, to win the precious from the vile, and they will be as God's mouth. I repeat, let them in no wise mix with the mixture of church and world. The meaning of their existence is a testimony against this, with that earnest gospel energy to souls that Christ may have His own, but the fullest testimony of God's free love, for this God would have and delights in, or it would be as though faithfulness chilled it; doing the work of evangelists, making full proof of their ministry, humble, lowly, devoted, and simple, because devoted in heart and separated to Christ.

As regards all the activity outside them, it is one of the signs of the time, and they should rejoice in it. If Christ were preached of contention, they should rejoice, save where they have given occasion to it by failure in themselves, which is possible: but it does not give their testimony at all. God is sovereign, and can work in love where and how He pleases, and we should rejoice in it; but there is no separation from evil, but the contrary in general. It is, as to this, just the mixture out of which God is bringing. For a year or two, at the beginning, I preached everywhere they let me, and others have done it, but it was, after all, another thing; though the trumpet gave an uncertain sound, it resulted in bringing out some, if the gospel only wore fully preached. Now the question is fully raised, and the testimony has to be clear, yet the fullest preaching of the gospel and of the assurance of salvation.

I do not believe attacks on anything to be our path, but to be superior, and for the truth, in grace. Peter never attacked the chief priests, but went on his own way. It is a descent from the high ground of the truth we have, from the Christian position. That, and a full gospel used in grace, should distinguish us; the testimony against evil should be in our own walk and ways. Be assured, when real, it is fully felt. Occasions may arise where truth is in question; self-defense is every way to be avoided. The Lord will answer for us if we do His will.

Union is sought now by indifference to truth, in this country [America] avowedly so, as exchanging pulpits with infidels, and indeed openly everywhere: I say avowedly. Patiently waiting, where in present darkness it is only ignorance or error, is most necessary; but truth and holiness, love in the truth and for the truth's sake, characterize Christ's revelation of Himself, and His influence in the

last days. God has no need of us, but He has need of a people who walk in the truth in love and holiness. I find in the Old Testament, “I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of Jehovah;” and I find the same spirit in Jude, who speaks of the mixture which would bring on judgment: “But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.” The gospel we may, and must, rejoice in, yet it only makes the testimony of Brethren outside the camp more necessary than ever; but it must be real. May they indeed be waiting for the Lord, and as men that wait for the Lord! His love is not wanting. May we, in earnest love to Him, be waiting for Him, because we do so love Him, and be found watching!

I thought of writing to you, dear brother, not having heard for a long while, and my thoughts flowed on, for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Now I cannot doubt the work—at least the testimony—is going on. The way it is telling, though only as a sowing time, and what I hear and know of Europe, have partly led me to this train of thought, for it presses just now on my mind. May the beloved brethren be found of Him in peace, and watching; devotedness maintained and increased; their whole body, soul, and spirit, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ!

At Boston I have just published another tract on Perfectionism. Error, from Germany, is largely mixed up with active religious minds here: I have written on it, but I do not know what I shall do with it; but the subject calls for watchfulness. The brethren are getting on happily here, and with blessing, and I hope roused up and cheered, with some nice persons added in Boston. There has been blessing outside too. If Brethren fall in with the current Christianity inside the camp, they would be just another sect with certain truths. J. N. D.

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Chapter 169

Progress in the Truth

True Christianity has such a wonderful vitality, that it makes its way through all impediments. Even where its very elements only are seized, fruit will appear, and indeed fruit, if there be any reality, beyond what those elements might be expected to produce; for the Spirit of God will exceed the limits of exact scriptural knowledge, if there be earnestness in the recipient.

Looking at the stepping-stones or stairs of truth for bringing Christians up to more high and intimate communion with Christ and with one another, we notice that usually the first truth which an exercised soul apprehends, upon the ground indeed of its own recognized inability to meet God on equal terms, is that" Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Cor. 15:3, 4.)

It seems to have been the first truth preached by the Apostle Paul. It is plain that such a truth does not in itself clear us from the world, nor connect us with Christ by union. It is something done for us, and does not in itself include relationship, although it is marvelously suited to show the love of God, the measure being the gift of His Son. There are multitudes of persons, to whom we should not deny the Christian name, who reach only to this state. They would mourn over any teaching which did not embody the death of Christ as the only meritorious cause of their acceptance—a death to save the lost. Hence they would alike repudiate both the ritualism and the rationalism of the day—both the pomp of symbolism, and the intellectual setting up of man, and, if they went so far, would insist on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. "With this class of persons, you will find it difficult to maintain a spiritual conversation. They can talk with real earnestness of the results of Christianity, such as schools and reformatories and sermons; but how can they talk of Christ Himself, since they only know of what He has done, rather than of what He is in Himself? Such persons, alive to the necessity (which conscience tells them) of a religious life, are safe as to proprieties of conduct. It belongs to them to cultivate the arts and sciences, and to show a respectable, nay, even a religious hue over everything around them; for ignorant of "the sentence of death" in themselves (2 Cor. 1:9), they must fill up life by embellishing "the old man;" in short they would get the unrenewed man out of the public house, by presenting a man's own self to him, under a more attractive guise. They are not deeply experienced in the ruin of human nature, but think that something good may yet be made out of it; and all this without at all meaning to deny Christ.

Now the next step, which ought to be known after the fact of Christ dying for our sins and rising again, is that we died with Him. This is unfolded in Rom. 6 "We have been buried with from by baptism unto death." "Our old man has been crucified with him." It is a wonderful advance. To be dead with Christ is a different thing from Christ dying for us. If truly received, it closes our eyes to many things to which they were before open. It is a help to us even when we are unspiritual. It forces us against our will. A temptation arises, it may be some cast of the eye to which the flesh would give way; but I say I cannot entertain it because lam dead. People may remain in this state a long time. Their demeanor is, to a certain extent, doleful. They begin to understand the science of

Christianity, but they are not in the experience of the life that comes out of death.

The next stage is that I am not only dead with Christ but alive with Him from the dead— “If ye then be risen with Christ.” (Col. 3:1.) Then quite a new scene opens. When I only knew that I was dead, there was divine certainty that the old man was sentenced by the death of Christ but no joy. Still it was a point gained in the way of salvation, and it led me to shut my eyes upon the world. But to be alive with Christ from the dead not only gives me to see the blue sky of heaven, but also a person—a glorious object before me, with all His surroundings; and I am capable of divine intercourse with Him on high.

But although, as before remarked, the Holy Ghost generally overleaps the limits of our special knowledge, yet this in itself is not union; at all events it does not set forth the relationship of Christ to a body. Here let us remark, that it is of primary importance to bring habits of devotion into every truth we hold; that is, that every truth ought to have a corresponding power of walk. All true devotional feelings ought to arise out of our knowledge of the ways of God. If there be devotedness or devotional feelings out of God's order, failure and disappointment are sure to be the result. It is this that makes the study of the word so needful. I must go to the word of God to find out the ways of God.

In reviewing our steps, we have first then Christ dying for our sins and rising again; secondly, our death with Him; thirdly, life in Him as risen: all progressive, but as yet no understanding of the descent of the Holy Ghost, although all these previous states have been wrought by the Holy Ghost. Nay more; in the Epistle to the Romans, a man being met as living in sins but justified, he has the Holy Ghost as the power of walk and individually indwelling him, and so in Christ (chap, 8.), yet be has not, properly speaking, the truth of the membership of the body of Christ. It is to this as a further step we are now coming.

Among the present operations of the Spirit is that of forming a body on earth in union with the Head in glory. This is announced to us in the Epistle to the Ephesians. When we speak of being indwelt by the Spirit, we should know what His operations are. It is not enough to know that we are indwelt. That is a doctrine, but every doctrine has its practice. We cannot progress unless we own the relationships which God has established. Now among the things which I learn of the corporate action of the Holy Ghost is this, that we “are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:22.) It is not only that we, both Jew and Gentile, “have access through Christ by one Spirit unto the Father” (ii. 18), but that same Spirit forms us unto something down here on earth. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” (1 Cor. 12:13.) In the same manner, without entering into particulars, we are variously called the temple of God and His house. (1 Cor. 3:16; 6:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Heb. 3:6, &c.)

Thus we learn our proper relationships to one another— “members one of another,” in union with a living Head. In Eph. 4 we find that, from Christ on high as the Head, “the whole body fitly framed together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth.... maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love;” and in Col. 2:9, the apostle warns them against “not holding the head, from which all the body, by joints and bands having nourishment ministered and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” How helpful is this knowledge, because it throws our thoughts into the current in which the Holy Spirit is working! In other words, we yield ourselves into that form to which He would mold us.

If ever Christians, saints, are to live together according to New Testament thoughts, they must work out these truths which, whether they know it or not, the Holy Ghost works in them; if not, they fall into denominationalism. True fellowship must ever be based upon real relationship. It is normally true that “we ourselves are taught of God to love one another.” This is always to be cultivated, yet must I know the membership of the body in which this love is intended to exist, if I would fully realize it.

If we look at Christendom in. the large, we find many who have never imbibed, or who having imbibed, have escaped out of, the grosser forms of Romanism or ritualism—systems which go upon ordinances, and teach only a more or less refined symbolism. Freed from such things, they have formed, themselves into societies which age has stereotyped. They exist by the pulpit, and some of the members of such societies are the excellent of the earth. But how is it they do not corporately progress in spirituality? For certainly the general cry is that they do not. The reply must be that they are not formed according to the true fellowship of the Holy Ghost.

Love is inherent among Christians. “A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another.” “We ourselves are taught of God to love one another.” We are advocating the knowledge of the place into which we are put, and our relationship to one another, as incentives to this love. It is a family love. Saints gathered as congregationalists are not in the way of realizing it. The joints and bands are not made apparent.

How marvelous are the ways of God! That the church should be on earth connected by the Spirit with an ascended Head—formed into membership with Him, and with one another. “As the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many, are one body, so also is Christ.” (1 Cor. 12:12.)

What an insight it gives us into the character of God! That the fall of Adam should have resulted in such a glorious restoration! The truth of Christ, a center to which we are gathered by the energy of the one Spirit, must put an end to all denominationalism. There can be no separate cause, where there is but one Head and one body. The exercise of a pastorate within the limits of those whose names are upon church books, or within the limits of a geographical radius, gives way to “He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Their sphere is considered as having to do with all the members of Christ: as it is said,” till we all come, in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to a perfect man.” Thus learning from the word of God His purpose in Christ, how thankfully may we take our place as recognizing the unity of the Spirit, and “endeavoring to keep it in the bond of peace.”

It is inconceivable what a breadth is given to our thoughts in discovering the church's position in the affections of Christ. The more we realize it, the more do we love Him and one another. Saints soon fall into the conventionalism of forms. They get into shoal water, and run aground in acting towards one another unless they are constantly realizing the depths of God's love. “We are members one of another,” and the resources of God in Christ are always sufficient for the mold into which He has cast us. Paul's love for the saints was just in proportion as he realized Christ's interest in them; and John's epistles give us the measure of our action. “Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.”

W. w.

Chapter 170

Remarks on an Address for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness

I have received the address of the Southern Ohio Association for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness. My simple business here is to see whether this system is based on scriptural ground. I cannot say I believe in associations for holiness, unless it be the church of God; but I let that pass.

Imperfection is now admitted. It is “Christian, not sinless perfection,” and the Christian is “full of shortcomings, An absolutely sinless life cannot be realized.” I wholly Object to the distinction, as vaguely allowing some measure of sin and yet speaking of perfection. It is founded on error.

My first remark is, that the system (and I beg attention to this) ignores the communication of what in itself is sinless life, a life that cannot sin, the seed of God in the soul—what is born of the Spirit and is spirit, the new man after God created in righteousness and true holiness. It is nature Or imparted grace.” A real being born again, the communication of a new life; the very starting point of the Christian state (not standing) is supposed, and all depends on this.

Next, we are told that Christians “are constantly needing the application of the cleansing blood.” Now there is no such thought in scripture as a renewed application of the blood of cleansing. As to this, scripture tells us that without shedding of blood there is no remission: otherwise, the apostle tells us, Christ must have often suffered. But by one offering he has perfected forever (ε■ς τ■ διηνεκ■ς) them that are sanctified. There is in scripture no re-application of the blood to cleanse. That is, the two essential foundations of the Christian's state before God are set aside. And we must remember that we are sanctified through the truth. The system is, wrong in its first principles; it denies the two capital points of true Christianity.

The notion that after we come to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, we hate to grow up into Him in all things, is assuredly not found in scripture, but is a simple absurdity. I am arrived at a perfect man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, and yet am to grow up farther! I suppose they may have founded it on some mystical sense of into, but there is no ground for “into” instead of “unto;” it is the same word as “to” a perfect man, “to” the measure.

The mere words in the second paragraph, though unscriptural, I do not speak of, but they are all founded on a totally false and unscriptural notion of the new birth, or rather are really the denial of it. “Perfect love” is in God, not in us; “full salvation” is only in glory.

That, as stated in paragraph third, habitual victory over known sin is found in the Lord Jesus Christ, I fully admit. “Rejoicing in the possession of a pure heart created through faith by the ‘falling' of the Holy Ghost,” is an utterly unscriptural way of putting the matter, and, as far as true, is true of all Christians. But it is not a definite and distinct work of the Spirit which was the promise, but His presence. It is for every one; but a person is not in the Christian state without it, and by it his body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which cannot be by any distinct work.

John 14:17 is quoted to prove that Christians knew the Spirit. This is all a mistake. Christ is speaking of the Comforter not yet come (see ver. 16); “dwelleth with you” is the same word as “abide.” Christ could not abide with them, this Comforter, when He was come, would, and be in them, which Christ could not then either. But the Lord is distinctly speaking of the Comforter not yet come. He is speaking in express terms of the gift of the Comforter. I admit, and insist on the sealing as distinct from conversion and quickening. But all is confusion here. This sealing is not “revealing the Son in us.” The expression refers, as. Paul uses it, to Christ's, making Himself known to him. He was sealed after that through Ananias laying his hands upon him. “Strengthened with might by the Spirit” is the desire of the apostle for those who had received Him, as the apostle expressly declares, (Eph. 1:18.) “Dying and rising again” is our state in Christ, and belongs to all Christians.

The great mistake of this system is, that it makes an extraordinary mystical condition of what scripture speaks of as the only true Christian state; and so fills with thoughts of themselves those who think they have got it (possibly have been sealed). And further it is all man's will And heart, not grace and the power of the Holy Ghost, as is said indeed in this paper: “It is not of the mind, but a matter of the will and of the heart;” but of its being a matter of the Holy Ghost's presence and power, which makes a person, to be of Christ, not a thought. The body is dead because of sin, the Spirit life because of righteousness, if Christ be in us; if not, we are none of His, if even like the prodigal on the way.

Dead and risen with Christ, and we in Christ and Christ in us, is the Christian state; different from conversion, I admit, different from being born again; as the prodigal converted, repentant and returning,. was different from the prodigal with the best robe on him, and the ring on his hand, and then only fit to go into the house. We cannot be in Christ, without Christ being in us. (See John 14:20; Rom. 8:1, 9, 10.) One is standing, the other is state. Romans however does not give rising with Christ now as a present state, for this epistle looks on the man, as an actual living man down here; Colossians does, but speaks of all Christians, when it does. “Obtaining the glory of Christ” now is a simple delusion. Our calling is above, in heaven, and, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; we shall be glorified together.

To the rest of this paragraph I have no objection, save that. it is mixing what is sober and scriptural, with what is false and illusory, and thus discrediting all.

“Soul union with Jesus” is language unknown to scripture. “He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit,” anti by that Spirit, we know, we are members of His body and in Him, and He in us. Hos. 2:16, 19, 20, applies to Israel, and has no reference to “soul union.” In Rom. 7:4 they have been betrayed by the word “married” which is not in the original; and further this should have simian them that it is a question of the Christian state; for, till then, those spoken of were in the flesh, not of Christ; and it is by the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, that they are not in the flesh. (Rom. 8:9.)

“Abiding in Christ” no Christian can speak against; but it has nothing to do in John 15 with any special privilege. It was the duty of all, and applied then before the Holy Ghost was given. The same as to holiness; without it no man shall see the Lord. We are called to it; but Ezek. 36:23-29 refers first to Israel, and then, according to John 3, to the new birth; 1 Thess. 5:23, 24, to the Christian's whole walk in holiness, and no special gift— “full salvation.” These quotations are a general wish for all Christians; and the fact that God will not let us be tempted beyond our force, is

a blessed truth, but common to all saints. Neither of the quotations has anything to do with full salvation.

As to Christian perfection, perfect (τ■λειος) means “fall grown,” translated in Heb. 5 “of full age.”

But the passage in Phil. 3 just shows the falseness of the view. This perfection the apostle had not attained—sinless or Christian. Our strangely deluded friends may think they are beyond him; they cannot be surprised if others demur to such a pretension. But he tells us what it is—the resurrection from among the dead, and winning Christ in glory; his calling was (■νω) above, heavenly glory and nothing else. And “perfect” means, when applied now, the knowledge not merely that our sins are forgiven, but that we are in Christ, have this new place with the Second man in glory, the mystery which God ordained before the world to our glory, as is expressly said in 1 Cor. 2:7.

“Heart purity” I have not a word to say against, only that there is nothing peculiar in it; but it is attributed to receiving the truth, to faith, or to all faithful Christians, in the decay of the church.

What is said of the “peace of God” is a mere blunder. It is of the peace in which God is Himself. The passage speaks in respect of our cares, which we bring to Him, and it keeps our hearts, not our hearts keep it. It is a direction to all Christians.

The “anointing which abideth,” presented as a special experience, is expressly and with purpose spoken of babes in Christ, in contrast with advanced Christians, to encourage them against seducers. “Being filled with the Spirit” is an exhortation addressed to all Christians, because they all had it. If they had not, they were none of Christ's. (Rom. 8:9.) And this I would press; for this is the grand and mischievous mistake of all these Christians. They give as extraordinary, and an acquisition of their own what scripture teaches as the only true Christian place of any. I admit the low state of the Christian church has given occasion to this; but our bodies being the temple of the Holy Ghost is given as a motive for the avoidance of the lowest and grossest sin.

“Life more abundantly” is again a true and blessed thing, but the only true Christian life. I do not deny that multitudes do not realize it, and that insisting on this is most profitable. My objection here is not to the fact, but to its being mixed with false pretensions and errors which discredit it.

So again of “following fully;” it is the duty clearly of all Christians. Christ is all, and they should walk as He walked—do this one thing—have no other motive for anything.

John 7:33, 39, is stated of all believers, characterizing the dispensation of the Spirit, if I may so call it. John 3 gives birth by the Spirit; chapter 4, communion in the power of eternal life; chapter vii., the Spirit flowing out in spiritual blessing to others, in contrast with Christ's presence in the world.

“Risen with Christ” is clearly of all Christians. Press its realization; you cannot do better.

The “life of faith” is the only Christian life.

The “rest of faith” is all a delusion; we are in the fight and labor of faith now, being told (in the passage referred to) that there remains a rest, and that we must labor to enter into it. It is the object of the passage to show that Christians are not in it. It is said that believers are those who enter in, but not that they are entered. Life in the land shows the absurdity of it, for our land is

heaven, and we are not there. And the passage insists on those in the land not having the promised rest.

The citation in Heb. 4, though wrong, they may be excused; for many take it falsely thus, but to quote chapter iii—is too bad. “The riches of full assurance” might be passed over too, only that it marks the excessively careless and unintelligent use of scripture. In Col. 2:2 it is the “full assurance of understanding to the acknowledgment of the mystery,” &c., and refers only to being guarded from philosophy and vain deceit by sound divinely-given knowledge. There are full assurance of faith and hope (Heb. 10:22; 6:11); on this they may rightly insist. What they quote has nothing to do with the matter.

Deliverance (Rom. 7) is all right. It is what is the real truth of the high pretensions made by them and mysticised.

“Dwelling in love” is all right, only, though it may be more or less realized, a matter of real importance; it is expressly said of everyone who confesses that. Jesus is the Son of God. “The fullness of the blessing of the gospel” is the character of Paul's visit to Rome. The rest are all well, but the duty and privilege of every Christian.

I have omitted “life in heavenly places.” (Eph. 1:3; 2:6.) Both places refer to the Christian position as such. The first says nothing of how fax it is realized; it is simply God's thoughts about Christians in contrast with Jews: Christians are blessed in that way. The second is a careful statement of the position of all Christians or Gentiles.

The use of “apprehension” taken from Phil. 3 shows only a mixture of ignorance and carelessness. Apprehension is just laying hold of that for which Christ has laid hold of us; that is, heavenly glory, resurrection from among the dead, the changing of our vile body. So Paul tells us that he had not attained it. The present state was “conversation in heaven;” the unattained was “the calling above.” There were professors who had their mind on earthly things; but their end, as such, was destruction. It is utterly false, that what he was pressing after was anything down here. Paul states the contrary, and it is the folly of mysticism to pretend it has apprehended what Paul had not. The addition of “apprehended of Christ” ought to have shown them that the word could not have any spiritual signification. Was Paul spiritually apprehended by Christ?

The passage in Eph. 1:18, 19, is falsely quoted, and only so can be misapplied. It is God's calling and God's inheritance (an inheritance which the chapter expressly declares we have not yet got): the Spirit is the earnest of it. God's calling is in verses 3-5. How far it is realized in spirit now, actually when we are in the state to which we are called by God, is not touched on. It is simply what the calling is, which he desires they may all know.

It is really a weariness to discuss quotations made with no attention to the mind of God, and applied nearly all of them falsely to what they in no way refer to in the text. Knowledge is not everything; but when persons set about to teach, they ought to have respect for God's word and acquaintance with it. I reject their views. There is a setting aside of the true Christian state (not standing) which I believe most mischievous, to turn what God states of it into an experience of which they can boast; an art they have learned, an expression they specially approve of. I believe Christians are in a low state; but they hinder the deliverance by connecting it with error, and by the abuse of scripture taken apart from the context, and the mind of Christ revealed in it. Receiving the

divine mind from the word of God is not theory, or calling anything by a right or wrong name. Theory is neglecting it for men's experience.

I have thought the best and most useful thing to do was to analyze briefly their use of scripture, and see, thus far, what their statements are worth. They substitute a work of the Spirit and their experience according to a low human theology, for the presence of the Holy Ghost and the revealed state of Christians according to the word. According to scripture a man is in the flesh, if the Holy Spirit does not dwell in him. This gives the deliverance they speak of; and Christian universal responsibility flows from it.

J. N. D.

Chapter 171

Elements of Prophecy: 3. The Four Empires

It has been already shown that the clearness or the obscurity of prophecy is independent of its fulfillment, and that Protestants and Futurists have been almost equally guilty of mistake as to this. For many among both have assumed its necessary obscurity when unaccomplished and its clearness when fulfilled. Both also have been eager to avoid the objection of novelty against their own system, and anxious to claim the consent of antiquity, not knowing that the Fathers were serious offenders against the truth and particularly ignorant on the subject of prophecy.

Nevertheless it ought to be not a matter of litigation but certain that the Protestant exposition in all its peculiarities is at direct issue with the early ecclesiastical writers who stood on the main foundations of Futurism, except indeed as regards the restoration of Israel to their own land, which many Protestants allow no less than Futurists. In this at least no instructed mind can agree with the Fathers; and the difference enlarges according to knowledge. Of the other presumptions for or against their respective systems, enough has been said already. As to such a protracted application as Protestant writers conceive, the Fathers knew nothing, expected nothing, of it. Some of the earliest held with the Futurists that the prophecies of scripture are mainly occupied with the grand crisis at the end of the age; but the fact is however that very few appear to have known anything worth notice about these subjects.

We may now enter on a direct examination of prophecy, at least of that portion which is most in debate. And here it may be well to bear in mind its distinctive character. Prophecy is not, like Christianity, the revelation of God's counsels but rather of His kingdom or of His ways in bringing it in. It is occupied, not with heaven and the sovereign grace that gathers to Christ there, but with the earth, and hence with the judgments of God which put down evil in order to the reign of righteousness. No mistake can be more profound than the notion that its main subject is the outline of secret providence during the last two thousand years and more. Daniel in the Old Testament shows us the rise and fall of the four great Gentile Empires, the Revelation in the New Testament adding much light on the last phase of the fourth; hut this is an episode rather than the direct subject of prophecy, which necessarily has Israel in view as the central people in the plans of God for the government of the world. Only their history branches into two divisions:—Israel under the first covenant, failing at every point to the uttermost; by and by Israel under the new covenant met, delivered and blessed in divine mercy, and then used for His glory among all nations here below. All turns on Christ. There was idolatrous apostasy of old, which was judged in the Babylonish captivity but when He was rejected by them as a nation, what could there be but misery and ruin? When He is by grace received, there will be abundant fruits of mercy and goodness. The interval between His rejection by the Jew and His reception is filled by “the times of the Gentiles,” under the fourth empire the gospel also going out and the church of God coming in. After the last empire in its last condition is judged at the Lord's appearing from heaven, the regular order of prophecy resumes its course, and Israel becomes the head and center of all nations, the Gentiles the tail. The Jews, no doubt, were blindly ignorant, and did perversely distort the word of prophecy; but it was a worse error which brought on their final catastrophe and dispersion. It was

their insubjection to God, their, self-righteous refusal to repent, their rejection of the Messiah and of the Gospel. All through their history they only served God according to His law who looked for the Messiah; and, when the Messiah came, those who received Him not were alien from all His will and ways, no less than from the object of faith that grace now presented to them. So now it is evil to slight prophecy, but it is not wise to exaggerate that evil, for there is one still deeper underneath, the evil that slights Christ and consequently resists the Holy Ghost as well as the authority of the word of God in general. Faith in God is the great want of souls. How solemnly the Lord has the lack of it before His Spirit when anticipating His return to the earth! I see no room for boasting in Protestants against Futurists, or in Futurists against Protestants. Mede, Vitringa and Bengel were men of piety, seriousness, and learning; but it is impossible to have the requisite spiritual intelligence for apprehending prophecy, or the word of God generally, till the Christian calling on high is discriminated from the earthly calling of Israel, and this intelligence is equally and conspicuously absent from both schools. It is a mistaken thought that any but a very few Futurists ever doubted the ordinary meaning of the four Gentile Empires, or of the other prophecies in Dan. 8 ix. xi. The mass of Futurists agree with the mass of Protestants as to these elementary outlines. They may differ a little as to Matt. 24, and still more as to the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse. On the other hand there is no doubt that, as to an alleged succession of the horns and the little horn of the fourth beast, the abomination of desolation, the man of sin, Babylon, &c. the historical school departs widely from the ancients.

But, as to the four Empires in general, there is no real discrepancy among grave and thoughtful Christians. When we come to the details of the fourth or Roman Empire, the divergence is considerable. A few eccentric individuals in modern as in ancient times have indulged in doubts and broached strange theories; but all sober persons apply the visions of the great image (Dan. 2) and of the four beasts (chap, vii.) to the Empires of Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece and Rome. The broad truth of this is indisputable. They were successive kingdoms, to which God allowed universal supremacy from the ruin of the Jewish state by Nebuchadnezzar till the Messiah. But this advent, as it was an enigma to the Jews who looked for His glory and not His sufferings, seems scarcely less an enigma to Christendom, which looks at His sufferings not at His glory as returning to judge it—one knows not how soon. It is particularly in view of this last point that difficulties are felt and found among interpreters. The soul that does not judge the present state of Christendom will no more understand prophecy than the Jew who failed to judge according to God the Jewish condition when Messiah first presented Himself. Without faith it is impossible to understand the word, any more than to please God in our ways. Accurate statement, sound reasoning, gravity and reverence are excellent; but, without the faith which applies the truth with a single eye to judge oneself and all things else in relation to God, they are wholly unavailing.

Further, not only are the Four Empires acknowledged to be successive in their rule, but they correspond respectively in each vision. The head of gold in Nebuchadnezzar's dream answers to the lion, the breast of silver to the bear, the middle of brass to the winged leopard, the lower extremities of iron and clay to the unnamed ravening beast of the prophet's vision. Only the great image was the more comprehensive of the two, that of the four beasts much the more detailed. The Son of Man's kingdom is evidently that which answers to the vision of the little stone which becomes a great mountain. The doubts of the late Drs. Maitland and Todd, as of Grotius and others before, are mere incredulity. They never exercised the slightest influence among spiritual

men. It is as to the course and conclusion of the last of the beasts or Empires that we find the greatest disagreement. But there ought to have been no hesitation that, as the third means the rapidly acquired Macedonian kingdom of Alexander the Great, so the next is the Roman. Its place as the fourth (recognized in the New Testament as then in power), its strength, its subsequent division, its mingling with the seed of men, its sudden and utter destruction at the Lord's second advent, point unanswerably to the same conclusion.

Here the Revelation supplies the most weighty intimations to help us out of difficulties; for it tells us of the fourth beast that “it was, and is not, and shall be present;” and, further, that its future re-appearance is to be “from the pit or abyss.” One can understand the ruin of that empire which played its part in the crucifixion of the Lord, and which will revive by diabolical energy in the last days to oppose Him when He returns from heaven to restore the kingdom to Israel.

Here is the statement of the man who did most to lay the foundation of the Protestant school: “Nebuchadnezzar's image points out two states of the kingdom of Christ, the first to be while those times of the kingdoms of the Gentiles yet lasted, typified by a stone hewn out of a mountain without hands, the monarchical statue yet standing upon his feet, the second not to be until the utter destruction and dissipation of the image, when the stone, having smote it upon the feet, should grow into a great mountain which should fill the whole earth. The first may be called, for distinction's sake, regnum lapidis, the kingdom of the stone, which is the state of Christ's kingdom which hitherto hath been, the other, regnum montis, (that is of the stone grown to a mountain, &c.) which is the state of His kingdom which hereafter shall be. The intervallum between these two, from the time the stone was first hewn out (that is, the kingdom of Christ was first advanced) until the time it becomes a mountain (that is, when the mystery of God shall be finished), is the subject of the Apocalyptical visions.”

“Note here, first, that the stone is expounded by Daniel to be that lasting kingdom which the God of heaven should set up; secondly, that the stone was hewn out of the mountain before it smote the image on the feet and consequently before the image was dissipated; and therefore that the kingdom, typified by the stone while it remained a stone, must needs be within the times of those monarchies, that is, before the last of them (namely the Roman) should expire. Wherefore Daniel interprets that in the days of these kingdoms (not after them, but while some of them were yet in being) the God of heaven should set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed, nor left (as they were) to another people; but should break in pieces and consume all those kingdoms, and itself should stand forever. And all this he speaks as the interpretation of the stone. ‘Forasmuch’ (saith he) ‘that a stone was hewn out of a mountain without hands and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver and the gold.' Here make the full point; for these words belong not to that which follows (as our Bibles by mis-distinguishing seem to refer them) but to that which went before of their interpretation. But the stone becoming a mountain he expounds not, but leaves to be gathered by what he had already expounded.” (Mede's Works, pp. 743, 744, 4th Edition, London, 1677.)

But the little stone is plainly the kingdom of God in Christ which was only seen to come after the image was fully out, even to the toes; and its first action was to smite the feet and toes, reducing the whole statue to powder, after which it grows into a mountain and fills the whole earth. That is, the gospel, or the kingdom of God now known to faith, is wholly excluded from the prophet. The

vision looks at nothing but the second advent in power and glory, beginning with the judgment of the imperial system in its last form, and then the kingdom of God diffused to the blessing of all the earth and His Own glory forever. The Protestant idea of a “regnum lapidis” going on from the incarnation of Christ through the whole course of ancient and modern history is a mere interpolation. Even Theodoret had better light. One can have no sympathy with, the unbelief which overlooks the solemn place of the Roman Empire, past or future; but why should one countenance the fable of a “reghum lapidis” meanwhile? It is possible and the fact that more than one untoward Futurist denied the fourth kingdom to be the Roman Empire, and this to relieve the Papacy as well as to shake confidence in Protestant views. The truth is that there is no vitality, nor sanctifying power, save in the word received in the Holy Ghost. To slip away from this into the study of the elder commentators, especially the Fathers, does pave the way for a relapse into the idolatrous embraces of the mystic Babylon, which might well turn to her own account the fable of the “regnum lapidis.” For she at least desires to reign now as a queen without sorrow, instead of being content with the apostles and saints to wait, apart from the world and in present rejection, for the Bridegroom, that we may reign together with Him at His coming.

I am not disposed to deny an application of prophecy, especially of the Apocalypse, throughout the middle ages; but it must be owned by fair minds that the resemblance between the prophetic visions and the historical facts is slight and vague. Who can wonder then that the injudicious efforts of most commentators known to Protestants, who sought to prove the most punctual fulfillment in the past, led to that reaction which is commonly called Futurism? The Christian will do well to study the written word in peace, undistracted by controversy, profiting by every real help God vouchsafes him, but holding firmly to dependence on the Lord to open His word to him, whether prophetic or any other. It is the Holy Spirit who alone can, who will do so only where grace makes one true to the glory of Christ. For this He is sent down; and He at least is true to the divine purpose.

But on the other hand one may ask of those zealous for the past application of Dan. 2, 7., where is the complete and exhaustive likeness they profess to find between hordes of barbarians breaking up a long sick and expiring empire into some (say ten) portions in which they establish themselves, in the course of a century and a half, and a power of extraordinary vigor with ten kingdoms as the expression of its strength, swayed by one mind, which gives all unity, whether first to wreak God's vengeance in idolatrous corruption, or finally to conspire against the Lamb to their own destruction?

In fact, even when one looks into the prophecies which deal with the times of the Gentiles, it is not true that their object is to enter into the details of succession (Dan. 11 being only in part an exception for peculiar reasons), but the Spirit is content to give the broad general facts with distinct light converging on the solemn crisis when God displays and establishes His kingdom on the rebellious ruin of man's. The reason why people prefer to apply it historically is, because this transfers the mind's attention to what the world has written and gives a certain scope to human ingenuity as well as research. But it weakens the impressive lesson of divine judgment on that which is highly esteemed among men. The true view recalls the conscience to God and His word, concentrating our attention on the evil and ruin of the first man, and oh the sure coming and reign of the Second.

Chapter 172

Elements of Prophecy: 4. The Vision of the Ram and the He-Goat

The dream of Nebuchadnezzar, as the vision of the prophet in the first year of Belshazzar (Dan. 7:1), embraced the entire circle of the four world-powers. The vision of Dan. 8 stands strikingly contradistinguished in this that here we have only to do with the second and third of these empires, though (as it will be shown) we are brought down to the time of the end in an off-shoot of the third empire. No grave Christian doubts, what every dispassionate reader of the prophet must see, that the ancient Medo-Persian and Macedonian powers are set before us.

It seems surprising that any one should make more than their worth of the singular speculations of the late Dr. Todd. For who can fail to see the unusual distinctness in the interpretation supplied by the Holy Spirit Himself? One need not reason on the date or the scene of the vision: verses 20, 21 are decisive to any simple mind. On the one hand the final superiority of the Persian over the Median is evident when we compare verse 3 with verse 20; the Eastern source of it on its course of conquest westward, northward, and southward, being marked in verse 4. On the other hand the Macedonian conqueror and his overthrow of the great king appears most graphically in verses 5 - 7 as compared with verse 21. History may and does illustrate; but no believer needs more than is here given to have a clear intelligent certainty of conviction as to the prophecy and its application. Verses 8, 22 plainly point to a fourfold division after the death of Alexander the Great (not by defeat or when internal discord dissolved the kingdom, but, contrariwise," when he was strong, the great horn was broken"), "four notable horns;" and so there were as is commonly known. It was absurd therefore to argue from verse 17 in Gabriel's explanation that all the vision related to "the time of the end," or that the powers represented by the ram and he-goat are future.

But it is a characteristic and all hut universal error of the historical school that they enfeeble and lose sight of the truth that the main object and interest of the vision hinges on "the time of the end," the end of the indignation which rests on the Jewish people. There ought to be no need of proof that the end of the divine displeasure with the ancient people is certainly yet future. It is in vain to refer to Dan. 9:26, or 1 Cor. 10:11, to turn aside the phrase from its bearing on the end of the age. For the prophet in the one expressly limits the end to the city and the sanctuary, and brings in a definite subsequent period before the way is open for blessing; and the apostle means in the other that the ends of the ages are come, or met, on us, Christians. Matt. 24:14, which is also appealed to, really confirms the future view; for "the end" there spoken of is assuredly not yet come.

It may be added that there is really no difficulty in the way of applying the host of heaven and the stars to the Jewish system and its rulers, though at this time supposed to be subject to the Gentile beasts politically. The people may be Lo-Ammi; but such a designation, though it be not the figure of the day of Jehovah but rather from the night during which they feebly shone, was at any rate a testimony to their hopes whilst it acknowledged their true estate meanwhile. The last king of the north finds himself in collision with Christ, the Prince of princes, and perishes by divine judgment. But this king of the north is as distinct from the willful king who will reign in Palestine as from the last head of the Roman empire, though all of them daring enemies of the Lord at the same, epoch,

as will be shown presently at greater length. Ancients and moderns have generally confounded all three.

Observe again the fact that the very language is changed, which from chapter 2 was Chaldee. Now from chapter vii., as bearing on that which, while connected with the Gentile powers, specially touched the ancient people of God, Hebrew is employed. Were it the design to draw particular attention to Cyrus and the details of that victorious career in which he had just entered when the vision was given, the propriety of this would be by no means apparent. Nor is it at all convincing that the reason for representing the second and third empires by the ram and goat (that is, not beasts of prey, but animals of sacrifice) is their favoring Israel, when both had been represented in the chapter before to the same prophet under the symbol of the bear and the winged leopard; yea, when in this very chapter the grand point is a king mighty, but not by his own power, who shall destroy the Jews, but himself be broken without hand—a vision which affected the seer yet more deeply than that of chapter vii. No one denies the admirable symbols employed to depict the comparatively slow and heavy aggressiveness of the Medo-Persian, and the amazing rapidity and impetuous force of the spirited Greek; also the subsequent division of the Syro-Greek kingdom of the north. But all this, however full of interest, is preparatory to the main design for the latter day, when a mysterious king shall meddle with the Jews to the hurt of many among them, but to his own destruction. That Antiochus Epiphanes answers in part to the little horn in the vision (ver. 10) I do not for a moment doubt.

Only it is well to remark three points: first, the parenthesis consisting of verse 11, and the first half of verse 12, in which “he” takes the place of “it,” apparently looking onward to the great personage of the close rather than to the horn of the part that typified him; secondly, that verses 13, 14, do not necessarily go beyond the defilement which has already taken place; thirdly, that the interpretation concerns itself with the crisis at the end, only linking on the proximate Medo-Persian and Greek empires with that tremendous issue, but with an enormous gap manifestly between the circumstances then at hand and the last end of the indignation of God against Israel. To deny the all-importance of the crisis in order to eke out a case of continuity here would be mere infatuation, the effect of a blinding system.

Chapter 173

Elements of Prophecy: 5. Supplementary Observations

There are two matters which it seems desirable briefly to meet before passing on to fresh matter, as the true solution may confirm what has been already urged," and clear the way for what is to come. One is the question as to the identity of the two little horns of Dan. 7; 8; the other the use of the word "kings" as equivalent to kingdoms. These are handled in this order.

The two little horns.

The tendency of ancient as of modern times has been in prophecy, as everywhere else in scripture, to confound things that differ. Thus, on a large scale, the trials and hopes of Israel have been merged in those of the church, to the enormous loss of intelligence in the mind of God as revealed in His word; on a lesser, we see a similar confusion as to the great actors of the latter day, which inevitably narrows the scope of prophecy and spreads a haze over the solemn issues of the final conflicts of good and evil. From this the futurists have never fully emerged, for they in general make the Antichrist of the end to be the last enemy of the church instead of being the head of the Jews and Christendom apostate, and they leave no room for the other foes of the Lord, making all the prophecies of evil powers at the end concentrate in that great adversary. Now though it is natural for us to feel a special interest in the West, we ought not to lose sight of the East if we would have an adequate view of the field.

The truth is also that obvious uncertainty surrounds every school of interpretation as to the little horn of Dan. 8 Thus; while the ancients with almost one voice conceived that it presents the character and persecutions and end of Antiochus Epiphanes (some also maintaining a future reference to the wicked or lawless one, the Antichrist of John), Sir I. Newton (followed by his Episcopal namesake) and not a few others applied it to the Graeco-Roman empire; but far more since view in it the Mahometan power, some of them interpreting it of the Turk. Others refer it, like Dan. 7, to the Papacy. No reader will be surprised to hear that the latter theories were not held of old, but that men, Jews and Christians, held then that Antiochus Epiphanes was meant, though many felt that more was included in the prophecy and regarded that enemy of the Jews as typical of their final adversary. Sir I. N. reasons thus against the view so long prevalent: "This horn was at first a little one, and waxed exceeding great; but so did not Antiochus. His kingdom on the contrary was weak and tributary to the Romans, and he did not enlarge it. The horn was a king of fierce countenance, destroyed wonderfully, prospered and practiced (that is, he prospered in his practices against the holy people); but Antiochus was frightened out of Egypt by a mere message of the Romans, and afterward routed and baffled by the Jews.

"The horn was mighty by another's power, Antiochus by his own. The horn stood up against the prince of heaven, the prince of princes; and this is the character not of Antiochus but of Antichrist. The horn cast down the sanctuary to the ground, and so did not Antiochus: he left it standing. The sanctuary and the host were to be trampled under foot until two thousand three hundred days, and in Daniel's prophecies days are put for years. But the profanation in the reign of Antiochus did not. last so many natural days. They were to last until the time of the end, till the last end of the

indignation against the Jews; and this indignation is not yet at an end. They were to last until the sanctuary which had been cast down should be cleansed; and the sanctuary is not yet cleansed." The utmost then which can be allowed is that the prophecy had only a preclusive and partial accomplishment in Antiochus. Its proper fulfillment is future.

On the other hand, they are wholly mistaken who, futurist or historical, identify the little horns of the two prophecies. (Dan. 7; 8) No doubt there are points of resemblance between them, as there are between all men; but how absurd to deny their distinctness! It has been well shown that there are at least ten particulars pre-dicted of the first horn: its rise from the fourth beast; its co-existence with ten kings, and its subjugation of three; its eyes as of a man, and a mouth speaking great things, and its judgment by the Ancient of days; diverseness from the other kings; blasphemy against God; persecution of the saints; changing of times and laws; and continuance for a time, times, and the dividing of time.

Again, at least twelve points are given as to the second horn: its rise from the he-goat or Grecian empire in one of its five divisions; its great increase of size and power, and the three directions of its conquests; its trampling on the stars of heaven; opposition to the prince of the host; removal of the sacrifice and casting down of the sanctuary; the time (two thousand three hundred days) of continuance or of some related events; its might not by its own power; its fierceness of countenance; its understanding of dark sentences; its triumph by policy; and destruction without hand.

The truth is that the marks of likeness between these two powers are of the most shadowy character, those of difference sharply defined and numerous. They agree in being enemies of the Lord and of His people, as well as in their awful end under His judgment when He appears and reigns; but even here the form, circumstances, and precise epoch differ widely. The question is in no way one between the historical school and futurists, for some of both see aright, the mass of both indistinctly, and some who reject both see at least not less clearly than any of either party.

The prophetic significance of kings.

On this one may be brief, as scripture shows that, while "horn" means a kingly person or power, it may according to the context mean a succession and not merely an individual. It cannot he assumed that a succession is always meant, for it more frequently refers to a single person. But in Dan. 7:17 - 23, we have the decisive proof that a king may mean morally a kingdom. To treat this however as a license for so interpreting universally in these prophecies is unwarrantable.

Elements of Prophecy: 6. The Seventy Weeks of Daniel 9

THE SEVENTY WEEKS OF Dan. 9

The main defect in the historical school here is one which vitiates almost every writer pertaining to it—the assumption that the seventieth week terminates, either with the death of the Messiah and its immediate results, or at most with the destruction of Jerusalem under the Roman power. There are not a few varieties of exposition among moderns as among older writers; but the error named has been and is an insuperable hindrance to a real understanding of the vision as a whole.

They all shut out the future from the last seventieth week, which nevertheless can be demonstrated to be exclusively unfulfilled. Most of them deny a break or interval in the chain which nevertheless can be proved to be required on any right view of the prophecy. They thus destroy the analogy between this and all the other visions of Daniel, which from first to last bring us down to the point when the guilty Gentiles vanish under the judgment of God and give place to Him whose is the kingdom, and whose reign shall not pass away.

Further, those who regard every vision in the book of Daniel as going on to the future, that is, to the end of the age (though for this very reason not continuously, but with a broad and in general a well-defined gap), in no way deny truths common to almost all who have studied the prophecy. For instance, it is maintained by all save three or four pseudo-literalists of no spiritual weight that the first advent and death of Christ is foretold here, as well as the overthrow of the Jewish polity; secondly, that the weeks or sevens are to be reckoned as of years and not of days; and, thirdly, that 7+62 (=69) such weeks were to elapse from the Persian decree to build Jerusalem before the cutting off of the Messiah. Rightly understood this, like all the visions in Daniel, goes on to the end of the age.

It is interesting by the way to note that the oldest extant exposition of the book approaches more closely to the truth than most of the works written on the prophecy since. For Hippolytus of Rome is distinct in this at least that the last week is occupied exclusively with the future immediately before the appearing of our Lord in judgment of the quick. There is not only mistake as to the starting point but the ordinary confusion of the Antichrist with the two little horns of Dan. 7; 8, the first beast of the sea, and the Assyrian or king of the north. This however need not surprise any one acquainted with the views which have prevailed and still prevail. It is the common state of all, whether historical or futurist. The good bishop's chronology seems defective enough in thinking that sixty-two hebdomads of years (even adding the previous seven) would cover the space since the return from Babylon to Christ's coming; but there can be no doubt that he interpreted the last hebdomad of the future, as indeed Primatius was disposed to do. Compare Hippol. R. Opp. ed. De Lagarde, pp. 23, 104, 108, 114, 166, 187.

There is the manifest and striking difference in this prophecy from the previous ones, that it is occupied mainly not with the Gentile conquerors so much as with Jerusalem, its sanctuary, and Messiah, with its glory and spiritual blessedness at least at the close, but with disasters and ruin to

the last degree, not only during the last week, but for a term unmeasured before it.

From the beginning of the chapter we learn how unfounded it is to wait till a prophecy is fulfilled before profiting by it. This did not Daniel, who understood not by a special intimation to himself but “by books” the number of the years where of the word of Jehovah came to Jeremiah the prophet. Himself a prophet too, he shows us the importance of weighing the prophetic word already given. Babylon was taken punctually: were not the same seventy years to issue in the return of the Jews from captivity? No sign of this favor of God had yet been given, save so far as the fall of the captor city might be its earnest. Daniel, not doubting but believing, sets his face to the Lord Jehovah to seek by prayer and supplication with fasting and sackcloth and ashes. Such was the effect on one who judged the present in the light of the word and of prophecy among the rest: not occupation with political speculation, but confession and humiliation and intercession before God. Daniel identifies himself with all Israel. “And I prayed unto Jehovah my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him; and to them that keep his commandments, we have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments; neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land.” There is thorough vindication of the Lord and condemnation of all Israel. (Vers. 7, 8.) There is a pleading of His mercy and forgiveness (ver. 9), but a renewed acknowledgment of disobedience and transgression on the part of all Israel, to which the curse written in Moses, under which they were groaning, is imputed. (Ver. 10-12.) It is owned that, though the Lord had smitten them, they had not entreated His face that they might turn from their iniquities and understand His truth (impossible otherwise); and therefore the Lord could but watch to inflict more and more. (Vers. 13, 14.) Reminding the Lord of His mighty dealings for Israel from the beginning, the prophet renews his confession but beseeches that His anger and fury be turned away from Jerusalem, and this to the removal of the burden and reproach of their sins (vers. 15, 16), and begs in answer to his own prayer that His face may shine on that long desolate sanctuary, and His eyes may behold their desolations and the city called by His name for His great mercies' sake (vers. 17, 18), winding all up with a succession of most brief and earnest appeals. “O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name.” (Ver. 19.)

Nor did the answer tarry. But it was strictly and exclusively in reference to what the holy prophet had besought the Lord—Jerusalem and the Jews. “And whiles I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before Jehovah my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, whiles I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.” (Ver. 20-23.)

Then follows the prophecy, “Seventy weeks have been set [divided] upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish [or close] the transgression, and to make an end of [or seal up] sins, and to atone for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up vision and prophecy,

and to anoint the holy of holies." This is the consummation of grace—the establishment of Israel at the end of the seventy hebdomads specified; for it will be observed that it is not simply the accomplishment of the efficacious work of propitiation and its consequences, but its application to the Jewish people, which alone can meet the prophet's desires and God's message in reply. Chiefly then to provide for the steps in the fulfillment of the prediction, and to mark where the interruption comes in, and to warn of the awful trouble which precedes the final blessing, we have the seventy weeks, not only summarized or viewed in their completion in verse 24, but next also broken into portions in the verses following.

"Know therefore and understand: from the going forth of the word to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the Messiah the Prince [shall be] seven weeks and sixty-two weeks: the street and wall shall be again built, and in times of pressure. And after the sixty and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off and shall have nothing; and the city and the sanctuary shall the people of the coming prince destroy; but the end thereof shall be with the flood; and until the end war [and] desolations [are] decreed."

If interpreters had looked into scripture for the decree which exactly answers to that which the prophecy describes, it is hard to see how there could have been hesitation or even delay. At least it is plain enough that it was neither Cyrus nor Darius, but Artaxerxes who issued such a command first in his seventh year, and then later in his twentieth year. But of the two a close comparison will soon show that the first, like the decrees of Cyrus and Darius, had regard to the temple, theirs for its rebuilding, his for providing its due order and service; and this was naturally entrusted to Ezra the priest. (Ezra 7) But the later one was just as characteristically entrusted to Nehemiah the Thirshatha, and it is patent that his commission, as it grew out of his complaint that the city of his fathers' sepulchers lay ruined and its gates consumed by fire, so was distinctly for the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem and its restoration in general.

It would seem that most have been turned aside through their adopting the vulgar reckoning (a.o. 445) of the date of Artaxerxes' accession, and consequently of the twentieth year of his reign. But the fact is, that Bishop Lloyd here departed from Archbishop Ussher's correction, who very deliberately records it as his judgment that the common reckoning places the first year of Artaxerxes nine years too late. The grounds of this the reader may see in his Ann. Vet. Test. A. M. 3531 (Whole Works, viii. 292). People could not reconcile the dates of the prophecy with those ordinarily current, and hence have been disposed to adopt the seventh year instead of the twentieth. But I shall presently show that this view does violence to the sacred text and therefore must be discarded, for it brings in the last week wholly, or in part, to eke out the reckoning, whereas it is certain that the last week remains altogether unfulfilled.

It is plain on the face of Gabriel's message that the division into seven weeks and sixty-two weeks had a special meaning: as otherwise such an arrangement would never be made, especially where the style is so singularly concise and pointed. The seven weeks or forty-nine years, then, embrace the restoration of Jerusalem; and the book of Nehemiah shows us in what times of trouble the work was begun and continued. To these add the sixty-two weeks of years already named, and the next announcement after that term is one of the strangest sound and most solemn import, not the birth, nor the reign, but the cutting off of Messiah. No wonder that Jews wince, and avoid or wrest, such a prophecy. Yet was it no Christian who wrote the startling prediction but their

own prophet Daniel, a man greatly beloved. Why should the Talmudists or others slight the writings of one so singularly honored by his inspired contemporary Ezekiel? If it be the fruit of an evil conscience, it is intelligible. For nothing can be plainer than that he who predicted without a date the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven when it is a question of His kingdom in power and glory, predicts here, after a chain of sixty-nine weeks of years, the Messiah cut off and having nothing (that is, of the kingdom that should have been His among the Jews). It is just as in Isa. 49 Christ had spent His strength for naught and labored in vain, as far as His ancient people were concerned. Only the earlier prophet shows His confidence that His cause was with Jehovah and the recompence of His work with His God; and the answer is, that it is a light thing to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel: Jehovah appoints His rejected but accepted Messiah for a light to the Gentiles that His salvation may reach to the end of the earth, as the gospel now testifies. Whereas the later prophet abides the herald of captivity and of sorrow for the returned captives, who should know a flood of desolations after Messiah was to be cut off.

The Vulgate understands the clause following to mean, “and shall not have his people who should deny him.” This is not only an intolerable paraphrase, rather than a version, but it narrows the sense unduly Òåì åéÅà to His people as no more His; whereas it means very simply “there is not (or shall not be) to him.” Its object is to show that, as the consequence of excision, He was to have nothing of all that might have been looked for according to promise. Every Jew would naturally anticipate all blessing to themselves, all glory to Messiah at His corning. Who could have foreseen that He should be cut off and have nothing? Yet the spiritual man feels that it could not be otherwise, for sin was there as everywhere, and not even adequately confessed, still less judged according to God. Here (ver. 26) it is not the efficacy of His death for others that is taught, as our English translators seem to have conceived, but the guilt of it on those who cut Him off out of the land of the living.

Hence follows a flood of sorrow and overwhelming desolation, at first and precisely under the Roman people who should destroy the city and the sanctuary. But this was not the end; for a vista opens of war and desolations to the end, and that by God's determinate decree. (Compare Isa. 10) The indignation of Jehovah against His people is not yet complete. How amazing that men, pious men too, should have overlooked the broad and plain signification of a timeless interruption after this, including the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, and all the long line of humiliating trouble on the Jew since, especially on Jerusalem and its temple! For beyond controversy the chain of weeks is here broken, as (to be exact as well as just), it ought to be. The series was unbroken from the Persian decree to restore Jerusalem till the sixty-ninth ran out, after which Messiah was cut off. How could this bring aught from God righteously but a breach and woes on those who by lawless hands had slain such a prince?

It is in vain to drag out of verse 27 the cessation of sacrifice in order to put it into verse 26. The true connection is thus destroyed, and a meaning is given by such a transposition to that suppression of Jewish worship which differs wholly as we shall see from that which is really attached to it where God has petit. And this also disturbs the true chronology by bringing in the last week, wholly or in part, and tacking it on to the sixty-nine weeks. Not that the cutting off of Messiah is said to be at but after the sixty-ninth week. This leaves the dates somewhat open; it could not be before, it might be a little after. But with the seventieth week, as far as the prophecy teaches, it has absolutely no connection. On the contrary events are named as posterior and evidently judicial

consequences, although different in character, at the hand of Gentile oppressors, which are by no fair means within the course of the seventy weeks, but rather when the gap came following the cutting off of Messiah.

How long that interruption was to last, Gabriel had not come to declare. But the picture disclosed in the latter part of verse 26 naturally takes in all the woes of Jerusalem since the Romans took away their place and nation. The disastrous end is not yet come. For it is remarkable in more respects than one that the destruction here is attributed not to the coming prince but to his people, the Roman people beyond controversy. They came and destroyed. But their prince did not yet come—I add is not even yet come. We shall hear of him in the verse following when the seventieth week begins.

For on all just principles of exposition the last week remains till the Jews are once more back in Jerusalem and their sanctuary rebuilt. This is implied in what follows, however it may grate on those who slight the prophetic word through their confidence in present appearances. Alas! the Jews will be again there, the mass, not many only, of them (for this too the last verso teaches, as in many another word of the prophet elsewhere) in unbelief and ready to apostatize. And herein is found the true bearing of him who strengthens a covenant with the many for the one week. (Ver. 27.) It is the coming prince, a prince of that people which after the death of Messiah destroyed the city and the sanctuary. It is the Roman chief, the little horn of the revived fourth empire, who is to confirm a covenant with the multitude of the Jews at the end of this age. This is the simplest reference grammatically, as none can deny, not to the cut off Messiah, who in no sense ever did or will make a covenant with any for one week, still less with “the many” or mass of the Jews, in this book bearing no good character (compare with this verse 27; chap. 11:33, 39; 12:3: the more strikingly because of a different sense in chapter 11:34, 44; 12:2, 4, 10, where the article is not used). It is in no way the covenant, still less the everlasting covenant, but a covenant. It is mere assumption to say (what the context explodes) that it must be a covenant with God. Have men never read Isa. 28:15, 18, that they so pertinaciously cling to the violent perversion of this verse to Messiah, overlooking the explicit teaching that Messiah had long before come and been cut off, and that we were told afterward of a coming foreign prince, whose people destroyed Jerusalem? It is a future Roman prince who is to confirm a covenant for seven years, not with the godly remnant but with the mass of the Jews before the new age arrives when Messiah even Jehovah of hosts shall reign gloriously in Zion.

But the strongest hopes of man are weakness itself if God sanctions not. And how could He sustain what put His people into alliance with death and hell (Sheol)? The confirmation of the Roman empire no more stands for the Jews than its seal of old could hinder the resurrection of the buried Messiah. Hence we read that in the half or midst of the week he will cause sacrifice and offering to cease. This suggests the scope of the covenant named. It appears that it will be a solemn engagement to permit the Jews to carry on their temple ritual. This he now terminates. But there is far more than this shown us. “And because of the protection [literally, “wing"] of abominations, a desolator [shall be].” So I understand this phrase. No one can dispute that it is quite as good a rendering as the unmeaning “on the pinnacle of abominations a desolator.” For the Hebrew word is used for a wing and hence protection as decidedly as for a wing or pinnacle of a building.

The desolator is sent retributively by God because this Roman prince breaking covenant with the mass of the Jews is allowed to suspend their legal worship and enforce idolatry. (Compare Matt. 12:43-45 and 24:15 with Dan. 11:36-39 and Rev. 13) So we saw in Isa. 28:18. The overflowing scourge there is the desolator here, who will tread down the Jews once more for their guilty yielding to Satan's wicked triumph in the latter day. No doubt the Jews would scorn the imputation and count such a concession to the Gentile who once destroyed them an impossibility. So would they have said beforehand of the rejection of their own Messiah. But unbelief of danger is the path of ruin, not of preservation. And those who refused the Christ who came in the Father's name are yet to receive Him who comes in his own name, that is, the Antichrist, the willful king of the Jews, who, in league with the Roman beast, alike wicked instruments of the idolatry and worse evil still in the temple of God at Jerusalem, shall bring down the overflowing scourge or last desolator, the Assyrian of Old Testament prophecy, “and that until decreed desolation be poured on the desolate,” that is, on Jerusalem thus righteously wasted till He come and reign whose right it is.

It is no wonder then to my mind that the confusion of verse 27 with 26, common to most of the Christian commentators, should expose their interpretation to the lawless attacks of rationalism. The view here presented however maintains all that is certain as to the past (whether in the restoring of Jerusalem under Nehemiah, or in the cutting off of Messiah, as in the subsequent though undated destruction of the city by the Romans, with its disastrous history up to the present), whilst it preserves the natural meaning of the last week for the end of the age, when the Roman chief of that day will meddle with the Jews again in Jerusalem and their worship, to his and their destruction under the Lord's judgment when He appears and we with Him in glory.

Elements of Prophecy: 7. The Scripture of Truth

(Chap. 7)

THE SCRIPTURE Of TRUTH.—Dan. 10—xii.

This prophecy differs from all the preceding visions in the minute consecutiveness with which it presents to us, not so much the succession of the Persian empire down to the struggle with Greece, as the conflicts of the Syro-Macedonian kingdom with Egypt. But even here the historical thread is interrupted, partially in the prefatory part as we shall see, still more conspicuously at the epoch of Antiochus Epiphanes, the close of whom furnishes the point of transition where an immense gap occurs, and we soon after find ourselves in presence of the willful king in the holy land, with the last embroilment of the last kings of the north and south. If the futurists are inexcusable in caviling against the fulfillment of Dan. 11:1-32, they of the historical school may find it convenient to slip out of all reference to verses 36-45, not to speak of chapter 12 where their own erroneous interpretations are no less palpable, though in the opposite direction of applying to the past what is wholly unaccomplished because future.

The barest outline must here suffice to set forth the true object of the Spirit, how far the prediction has, been fulfilled and what remains for the great crisis at the end of the age; for this will be found to be the common issue and meeting-place of the great closing scenes in the book of Daniel, and we may say in the prophets generally. The revealing angel declares (10: 14) that this vision refers to the Jew and the latter day—not of course its starting-point of sorrow and trial, of weakness and shame, but its bright end when God will bless His people and land with power and glory.

Very briefly is the Persian sketched in the three successors to Cyrus, Cambyses, Smerdis, and Darius Hystaspes, till the fourth, Xerxes, famous for his “riches,” attacks the realm of Grecia. The “mighty king” that stands up is Alexander, the great horn of the Grecian goat of chapter 8: 5-8, 21, whose sole kingdom breaks up, followed by four notable horns, two of which are thenceforth described in these wars, intrigues, alliances, with Palestine between them, often their field of battle, oftener an object of their strife. Here we see Ptolemy Soter and Seleucus Nicator; Berenice, daughter of Ptolemy Philadelphus and Antiochus, and the tragic end of that business; Ptolemy Euergetes and his successes over Seleucus Callinicus, who afterward came against the kingdom of the south; then, after the death of his brother Selencus Ceraunus, the antagonism of Antiochus the Great and Ptolemy Philopater at considerable length, as the Jews figure in it; the failure of his policy in giving his daughter Cleopatra to Ptolemy Epiphanes, and his defeat by the Romans; then the tax-burdened reign of his son Seleucus Philopater, murdered by his treasurer, Heliodorus; and lastly Antiochus IV his brother, surnamed Epiphanes but called Epimanes by his own subjects in derisive resentment. The Maccabees record his impious and sacrilegious madness.

But need we dwell here on the details of the Lagidae and Seleucidae? No sober Christian doubts the application of these continuous predictions from verse 5 to 32. Even the infidel is compelled to take refuge in the hopeless theory that they must have been written after the event! being as

perspicuous as the histories of Justin and Diodorne. One might go farther and affirm that no history contains so exact, concise, and clear account of that period, the Spirit of God dwelling with especial fullness (ver. 21-82) on the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes, as the last of these kings in the past; and this, because he defiled the sanctuary and sought the apostasy of the Jews, thus becoming of all these the only remarkable type of their enemy at the end of the age.

It is here that historicalism betrays its inherent weakness, especially when it forces scripture to comply with its presumed law of unbroken continuance. Every other vision in the book refutes this presumption; and if there be in this chapter an unusual and double line of kings traced, even here the beginning and the close protest against those systematizers who refuse to learn from the chapter itself its own contents. Verse 2 leaps over several kings from Xerxes to Alexander the Macedonian, who overthrew the Persian empire in the person of Darius Codomanus. But a far greater gap is apparent at verse 35. In the former there is no intimation of it; in the latter room is left expressly and indefinitely after all intended. Indeed it is evident that the transition extends through two or three verses, “And they that understand among the people shall instruct many: yet they shall fall by the sword, and by flame, by captivity, and by spoil, [many] days. Now when they shall fall, they shall be holpen with a little help: but many shall cleave to them with flatteries. And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed.” (Ver. 33-35.)

The last clauses of the quotation can leave no doubt that here we are transported from the Maccabean struggle to “the time of the end,” wholly passing over the first appearing of the Lord and the gospel state of things. Suddenly in verse 36 we look on the willful king of the last days in the holy land, with the kings of the north and south once more. Of this there can be no question for any intelligent and unbiased mind. In the course of the description of the conflict it is positively declared to be “at the time of the end,” and the connection with the succeeding chapter (“at that time") is alone consistent with such an epoch and character of events; but it is the end of the age, not of the world save in that sense. It is immediately before the time of reward for the righteous on earth, the time when waiting melts into blessed enjoyment for the saints in the kingdom of God.

Evidently therefore the effort to find here the Papacy or even Mahomedanism is a delusion; as also still more the old empire of Rome in the east. It is a feeble interpretation that finds in the Gospels and Acts “such as do wickedly against the covenant,” or in the language of the chief priests to Pilate, the promise of Pilate to release whom they would, the address of Tertullus to Felix, and the wish of Felix and Festus to do pleasure to the Jews, examples of corrupting “with flatteries.” And we need to look in quite another direction, beyond the Acts and the Epistles, for the just application of the words “the people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.” It is the glory of the Christian to suffer; the Maccabees really did exploits. So too the Maskilim were among the people, the Jews; and “the many” in verso 33, not in 34, is a technical phrase meaning the mass of that nation. Their troubles are plainly set forth, and a persecution which was to have a sifting effect then, and up to the time of the end. And I have little doubt that there will be an analogous state among the Jews in the land when the time of the end comes—analogous, not in heroism, but in tribulation. The mistake is in applying all this to the intermediate Christian state.

Once “the king” is introduced on the scene, we recognize the great personal rival and usurper of the rights of Christ in the holy land. So interpreted, and only so, the prophecy flows on clearly and

smoothly. It is St. Paul's Man of Sin, as opposed to “Jesus Christ the righteous,” who according to 2 Thess. 2 is to sit in the temple of God showing himself that he is God; it is he who coming in his own name is to be received by the Jews that rejected Him who came in His Father's, the Antichrist of John. Here he is” the king,” an expression borrowed apparently from Isa. 30:33, (cf. 57:9,) where he is really distinguished from the Assyrian, as here from the king of the north. The article does not necessarily imply a reference to some person or power already revealed to the prophet, but one already so familiar to the Jewish mind that they at least should be in no danger of mistake who believe the prophets.

We have seen that it is not Antiochus Epiphanes, but a king after the great gap and in the time of the end. No doubt it will be before the judgment of the fourth or Roman beast, which is to revive once more by a sort of resurrection power of Satan before going into perdition. (Rev. 13:2, 3, 5; 18:8.) But the willful king's rule is in the land of Israel, as his blasphemous self-exaltation is pre-eminently in the temple of Jerusalem, and his prosperity is till God's indignation against Israel is accomplished. It is arbitrary, yea contrary to the scope of the passage, to transport the willful king to Rome, or to conceive that the proper seat of his power is in the west, or anywhere but in Palestine: verse 39 is as decisive for this as verse 37 that he is a Jew, though apostate; and this is confirmed by verses 41, 45, though the subject be no longer the willful king, but his enemy the last king of the north. Everything however fixes the scene as in the holy land just before the final deliverance of the Jews. This king of the north is the little horn of Dan. 8, the king of fierce countenance, who shall stand up against the Prince of princes but be broken without hand. So here he comes to his end, and none shall help him.

Chapter 12 repudiates every effort to turn away any of its parts from the last great crisis for Israel. Daniel's people shall then know the tribulation that is without parallel even for them; and they have tasted bitter times enough under Nebuchadnezzar, Antiochus, and Titus. But after the future and worst they shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. God will make it a means and occasion of purging them. It is true that the resurrection in verse 2 is figuratively spoken, but it is of the Israelites, and not confined to those “of a clean heart,” who now lie as it were dead and buried among the Gentiles, but who then shall come forward, some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. It is the time of the judgment of the quick, when evil men are no longer tolerated, and intelligence and zeal for the Lord meets its recompense. (Ver. 3.)

Again, the sealing of the book (ver. 49) points to the end of the age among Jews, in contrast with the portion of the Christian in the truths now revealed, as we see in Rev. 22:10. So too the three years and a-half (ver. 5-7): apply as people may to others after a protracted scale, there can be no doubt that it is expressly said of the Jews at the end. A fuller revelation comes by John to us, not to Daniel. (Ver. 8, 9.)

The brief period of the crisis is strongly confirmed by verses 11, 12, in the former of which it may be observed we have the true source of the Lord's reference in Matt. 24:15: not Dan. 11:31, which is exclusively past in the days of Antiochus, but Dan. 11:11, which is wholly future and speaks of Antichrist only though no doubt sustained in it by the fourth beast or Roman empire. Compare Dan. 9:27, and xi. 36 -39.

We have thus taken, not a collection of extreme views, but what is set forth by an advocate of historicalism who is more than ordinarily alive to the future, in order to show that the system in its best shape fails in representing the true scope of prophecy. The main error is preoccupation with ourselves, instead of seeing that Christ's glory is the true Object of God in scripture, which accordingly shows us Him in heavenly places as the head of the church, but Him also about to appear as the King of Israel and as the Son of man to reign over all nations.

Chapter 176

Elements of Prophecy: 8. General Conclusions

Maxims have been drawn from traditional views of Old Testament prophecy, applied to Daniel in particular, which it seems well to notice before passing on to those of the New Testament.

1. The law of departure, which has been thus stated: every detailed prophecy must be viewed as commencing with the chief present or next preceding event at the time when it is given, unless direct proof to the contrary can be brought forward.

2. The law of continuity, which supposes that each prophecy is to be viewed as continuous, unless when there can be assigned some strong internal proof that the continuity is broken.

3. The law of progressive development, which conceives each prophecy that is added to give a fuller expansion of what was seen more briefly before.

4. The law of prophetical perspective, or the notion that distant events are described more briefly in comparison with those near at hand.

5. Now no sober believer will be disposed to doubt the general truth of the first principle, though he might not think it reverent to treat the word of God as one speaks of creation around us, and to formulate canons of interpretation in prophecy as theologians have done to the great detriment of revealed truth in general. As the rule, prophecy, especially detailed prophecy, starts from facts present or imminent. It supposes failure in what is actually before us, the judgment of which God pronounces, in order to make way for “some better thing.” But herein lies the fatal defect of the first.” law,” that it is a mere intellectual deduction, even if true, which is not always apparent, leaving out man's sin and God's judgment, as well as His intervention another day. The moral side is thus overlooked, as well as the divine glory; that is, all that is of chief moment for God or man. But it is plain that in this cold, scientific dissection of the prophetic word the alleged law cannot be justly applied to the famous Seventy Weeks. If the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem was only in the days of Artaxerxes Longimanus, the terminus a quo of the series, this can scarcely be said, without extreme harshness, to have been either the chief present event, or one preceding the prophecy which followed immediately after the fall of Babylon. The object of all this is mainly to involve the reader in a preconceived theory of the Apocalypse, as well as of the Lord's prediction on Mount Olivet, which evidently are each as distinct from one another, as both are from the book of Daniel with its distinct visions, going down from each respective starting-point to the end of the age.

The Apocalypse alone contemplates not only the millennial reign from first to last, but the events which follow, and even the eternal state. How groundless, then, to frame laws from the book of Daniel for what is so obviously different!

Then we have seen that though there may be a measure of continuous order, every vision of Daniel from which the law is avowedly drawn shows a break, more or less distinct; and the same principle is certainly true of the Lord's prophecy. It is confessed that there is one apparent break in

the last. It would be truer to say that they all exhibit, after a certain continuity, a distinct gap, before resuming the commotion of each with its results in divine judgment at the end of the age.

If it be merely meant that each successive prophecy adds more light to what was already vouchsafed, the third maxim would be true enough, and almost a truism.

The alleged “prophetical perspective” seems to be as purely imaginary as can be conceived. The fourth empire has far more details than any of its predecessors in Nebuchadnezzar's reign, as it has also in Daniel's vision of the beasts. So have the little horns in Dan. 7; 8 On the Seventy Weeks the law does not in the least bear; and it is reversed by the enormous disproportion given to Antiochus Epiphanes in the last vision, and still more by the space occupied by the final struggle (Dan. 11:36-45; 12).

But further, to reason from the state before Christ to the eighteen centuries under the gospel, to assume that now we ought very plainly to expect a peculiar fullness of prophetic revelation, and this respecting the ordinary events of God's providence, proves nothing but the extreme pre-occupation of a special pleader. We must weigh the predictions of the New Testament themselves, without drawing rules from the visions of Daniel, so obviously different in order, to control their application as men desire. It is as true in prophecy as in the truth as a whole, and in practical conduct, that “if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be fall of light.”

Chapter 9. the Lord's Great Prophecies in the Gospels

Matt. 24; 25; Mark 14; Luke 21

It is allowed by the historical school that there is a real difficulty in every hypothesis, so as to make caution peculiarly needful in treating of this prophecy; and indeed that many who differ from the Futurists elsewhere seem almost ready to adopt their exposition here. The prophecy begins with troubles in the apostolic age; it closes with the second advent of our Lord; yet there are express words in it, besides the apparent connection of its parts, which seem to confine it within the limits of one generation. But these considerations being inconsistent with each other, which of them must be modified or abandoned?

Three answers, it is alleged, have been given. That of Bishop Newton and others, who adopt a figurative construction of the closing scene, and thus cut it off from all immediate or direct reference to the Lord's personal return; that of the Futurists (Burgh, McCausland, Tyso, &c.), who sever its beginning from apostolic times, and regard all as converging on the end of the age; that of Bengel, Horsley, &c., who would trace a continuation from the siege of Titus to the second advent. As the moderns confess the untenableness of the first view, which chiefly rests on an unfounded restriction of “this generation” to the apostolic age, we must look a little more closely into the other two.

The truth really is, that Luke 21 furnishes, not a parallel to Matt. 24 or Mark 13, but a most important supplement. This is lost, if one regards his verses 20 et seqq. as an inspired paraphrase of the two other Gospels, and thus miss the true force of “the abomination of desolation” on one side, and of “the days of the vengeance” on the other. The parallelism of the prophecy is admitted; but this is perfectly consistent with the belief that the Lord uttered truths, some of which the Spirit led one to omit and another to record, and vice versa. No parallel in the Gospels is absolute, nor indeed in any part of scripture. The measure of correspondence depends on the degree in which the divine design in each permits or opposes it. It was the same occasion, and substantially the same discourse; but the design of the Holy Spirit working by each writer accounts for the difference in each reproduction of the prophecy. Inspiration is characterized by the Spirit's selection in accordance with His special object by each instrument. This is the true key, not the notion that Luke 17 is the real parallel to Matt. 24.

Again, the point of departure in no way decides this question. Granted that in all three Gospels the prediction starts from times close at hand, instead of pointing at once to the end of the age; but how does it hinder the Spirit from vouchsafing the true link of transition in one Gospel, while the other two pass this and converge on what precedes the close which it omitted? It is the less reasonable to reject this solution; as it is confessed that between the first and second Gospels there is a very general agreement in the words of the prediction, while in the third there are much more numerous deviations. To assume that a marked deviation in Luke is a comment on Matthew and Luke is of all explanations the least satisfactory; that it should supply what is lacking in the others, because in accordance with its own design, is as simple as sure, and worthy of God who

gave them all. The meaning, of “the abomination,” &c., in Matthew or Mark is not therefore to be explained away by the compassing “with armies,” any more than “the holy place” points to the mountain on the east, or the “desolation” is that which has now lasted almost eighteen hundred years.

But it is a total misconception that the denial of the absolute parallelism of Luke with Matthew and Mark involves the thought that no part of the prophecy relates to that destruction of the temple which was then imminent, for this never should have been a matter of hesitation to any believer. Further, it is puerile to say that the abomination [or idol] of desolation corresponds in identity with our Savior's words a little before, “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” This is no better than verbal trifling. Nor does the historical fulfillment of Luke 21:20 afford the least evidence as to the true and proper meaning of Matt. 24:15; for this is the question—its meaning, rather than its fulfillment.

It is a plain error that our Lord's prophecy is professedly an answer to the specific inquiry about the destruction of the temple for they say, “Tell us, when shall these things be, and what the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?” For larger and more remote events were thus in question. It is not a choice therefore between the views which look only at the next ensuing generation, or at the last generation before the second advent; for the truth is that, while all three Gospels start from events at hand, and all close with the presence of the Son of man in power and glory, only Luke 21:24 gives the transitional “times of the Gentiles,” during which Jerusalem is trodden down by them.

Again, it appears to me demonstrable that, as Dan. 11:31 refers to the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, long passed when our Lord prophesied on Mount Olivet, so the reference in Matt. 24:15, Mark 13:14, is exclusively, as well as certainly, to Dan. 12:11, and therefore an event not only not accomplished at the siege of Titus, but wholly future and bound up with the final tribulation and deliverance of Israel. It is ridiculous to identify, as some of the historicalists do, Dan. 11:31; 12:11, for one is wholly past, and the other absolutely future, and neither of them in any way connected with Titus. It is allowed that the phrase, “in a holy place” (■ν τ■π■ ■γ■■) is not so precise as those in Acts 6:13; 21:28; but the other part of the clause is not “an,” but “the abomination of desolation,” and means that idol which brings desolation on the Jews, their city and temple.

The true place of transition is then indicated in Luke 21:24, but this is an added statement, owing to the peculiar design of his Gospel, and in no way a comment on one word in Matthew or Mark. But the great and unparalleled tribulation in these two Gospels is clearly proved by Dan. 12:1 to be not a past but a future event, just before Israel's blessing at the end of the age, and far more precise than the mere “days of vengeance” in Luke 21:22. His comparatively moderate terms, in verse 23, “there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people,” were historically verified, and are in the clearest contradistinction from the statements of Matt. 24:21, 29 and Dan. 12:1, which, beyond doubt, are future, and as yet unfulfilled.

It has not been adequately considered how completely Luke 21:32 settles the real bearing of those much-debated words, “This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.” As long as they were regarded only in the light of Matt. 24 and Mark 13, there remained room for doubt; and certainly there could not but be doubt without a just and sure understanding of their context; and this was

the very thing most contested. Those who restrained the chapters to the apostolic period, or to the end of the age, interpreted the clause according to their respective theory. But the truth is larger than either of these human views; and when its extent and precision withal are seen, the light which flows from these words of our Lord is no longer hindered or perverted. To this end the third Gospel contributes invaluable help, not certainly by swamping the other two, but by the fresh wisdom of God communicated by Luke, making us understand each so much the better because we have all, and thus furnishing a more comprehensive perception and enjoyment of the entire truth.

Here then God has taken care for the first time to introduce “the times of the Gentiles” still going on after the Roman siege of Jerusalem and the dispersion of the Jews. Then from verse 25 we have the signs of the last days, and finally the Son of man seen coming in a cloud with power and great glory, proving the futility of the scheme which would confound Titus capturing Jerusalem (Ver. 20-24) with the Son of man appearing in verse 27. But it is after this that we read in verse 82: “Verily, I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.” It is not till they “begin to come to pass,” of which we do read in verse 28, and a call to the faithful when they see it to “look up and lift up their heads.” This generation is not to pass till ALL be fulfilled (γ■νηται). No language can be more accurate. This Christ-rejecting, unbelieving, stubborn and rebellions generation of the Jews should not pass away till then. A new generation will follow. The expression has a moral, and not a mere chronological, sense. (Compare Psa. 12:7 (Heb. 8) in contrast with the generation to come. See Psa. 22:30 (31), 31, (32). The clause therefore seems to be meant in its unlimited strength, and so put by the third Evangelist as to render all other applications impossible. Nor is there the least ground for taking it otherwise in the corresponding places of Matthew and Mark; but Luke demonstrates this.

The case then stands thus. On the one hand Matthew and Mark do not notice the times of the Gentiles, which Luke was inspired to present very distinctly as well as the successes of the Gentiles, not only when their armies conquered Jerusalem, and led the people captive into all nations, but also during their continued occupation of that city as in fact has been the case for 1800 years. On the other hand Matthew and Mark, but not Luke, notice distinctly the setting up of the abomination of desolation and the unequaled time of trouble just before the Son of man comes for the deliverance of the elect in Israel at the end of the age, passing at once from the early troubles in the land (while Jerusalem was still an object of testimony) to the last days, when it re-appears with its temple and the Jews there, but alas! the deceived of Satan and his instruments till the Lord appears in judgment. Hence it will be observed that there is no question in Luke 21 as to “the sign of His coming and of the end of the age.” In all this I see not confusion, but the perfect mind of God giving what was exactly suited to each Gospel. It is the comment which confuses the truth, instead of learning from each and all. In Matthew and Mark the future crisis follows a preliminary sketch of troubles put so generally as to apply both to the apostolic times and to the earlier epoch when the Jews return and rebuild their city and temple in unbelief before the age ends: Matt. 24:4-14 (Mark 13:5-13) being the general sketch, and verses 15-31 (Mark 13:14-27) the crisis at the close or last half-week of Daniel's unfulfilled seventieth week. Luke alone gives us anything like continuity in the very brief words of chapter 21: 24, as he alone gives us distinctly in this prophecy the past destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, as he does also in chapter 19: 43, 44. Chapter 17: 22-37 I do not doubt also refers to Jerusalem, but exclusively in the latter day,

when the Son of man is revealed, not when Titus sacked it. In that day there will be a perfect discrimination of persons in the judgment, which proves it to be divine, not a mere providential event however awful.

Chapter 178

On the Putting Away of Sin

The question having been raised as to verse 26 of Heb. 9 and the putting away of sin, I send you a few lines on this subject.

In the first place, I have frequently insisted on sin being put away by the sacrifice of Christ, in the sense that the believer stands before God perfectly justified and accepted, the Lord imputing no sin; he is perfectly clear before God. And this, thank God, I believe as I ever did. It is our blessed privilege in Christ. May every quickened soul enjoy it God forbid that any nicety of expression should enfeeble it. But when expressions, not actually the word of God, are used, and conclusions are drawn from them, as if they were scriptural statements, we are forced to be more accurate. And this has been the case in the statement that sin has been put away by the sacrifice of Christ. This, scripture does not state. He appeared once, in the consummation of ages, for the putting away of sin (ε■ς ■θ■τησιν) by the sacrifice of Himself.

I had, long ago, noticed that the expression, “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world,” would have its perfect completion, only in the new heaven and the new earth, though the work on which that state was based was finished by God's Lamb once for all on the cross; but the force of Heb. 9:26 had not been so especially noted. Yet it is essentially the same truth. Sin, that hated thing, must be put out of that world which God created for His own glory.

We must not confound clearing our conscience and redeeming us, and putting away sin out of God's world as that which is offensive to Him. Verse 28 speaks of Christ's bearing the sins of many. Thus they are perfectly cleared.

But sin remains in the flesh and in the world, and it must be set aside, all things in heaven and earth reconciled to God; and that will take place. The work on which it is based, in virtue of which it will be accomplished by power, the work in which God is morally glorified, perfectly and forever is accomplished, and Christ sits at the right hand of God in virtue of it. But the sins of the many who come under grace have been borne by Him, and the believer has been washed from all. Nor is this all as to him. Not only has Christ borne all his sins, but, for faith, he has died with Christ, and as dead, he is justified from sin; the old man has been crucified with Christ. Sin, in the flesh, was condemned on the cross, and there is no condemnation for him.

It is in this general sense of our standing before God that it has been said that sin was put away, and, thank God, it is so. But the real thought was all guilt and imputation in our standing before God. But the putting away sin has a wider application in scripture; all things in heaven and earth are to be reconciled to God. Righteousness is to dwell in the new heaven and the new earth, and in a modified sense, this will be the case even in the reign of Christ. Then it will be effected by power. But the work by which, morally, that is done in righteousness and for God's glory, in which it is really done in the moral sense, is accomplished, all that God is having been glorified on the cross where Christ was made sin; and faith lays hold on this.

Alas! very few Christians even make the difference of sins or guilt, and sin. Our sins are all forgiven, we are perfectly washed from them; and besides this, as dead with Christ, the old man is, for faith, put off; its condemnation was in Christ's death. We are not in the flesh, though actually the flesh is in us. But the putting away of sin goes far wider, the putting it away out of God's sight in the world. And this, as a result, is not accomplished, though the work be perfectly accomplished on which that result is founded, and that work is in one dense more important than the fact, because God has iron perfectly glorified there, in virtue of which it will be accomplished; and faith knows this work is done, and rejoices that there is no condemnation for the believer before God, the conscience being purged from sins, and sin in the flesh being condemned in the cross. So that there is no imputation and no condemnation. But sin exists. The effect of the work, as in God's purpose, is not. as yet made good. Even as to the believer, he cannot say, I have no sin. “He that is dead is justified from sin” (not sins) here; but I have this title to reckon myself dead, Christ having died to sin.

If I say sin is put away, I weaken the force of “putting away,” for sin is still there. It is not the world in which righteousness dwells. The sins of God's people have been borne, and the blood of propitiation is on the mercy-seat; so that we can go to the world and beseech sinners to come, as though God did beseech by us, in our little measure. That work is all done and accepted which enables me to do it. I can say to the believer that he is all clear, white as snow before God. But the putting away of sin is a wider thing. John 1 itself shows this—the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (not has taken away, nor sins). It is the removal of sin in God's sight in the world, a result not yet accomplished. This passage refers specifically to the result, Heb. 9:26 to the purpose and means of its being done, verse 28 to the other question of our actual guilt.

Incorrect expressions I should not make a fuss about: God graciously bears with them, if the heart is earnest and right. I do not stand in the gate to make a man an offender for a word. Here I inquire merely what is correct when the question is raised. Conclusions from what is not in scripture I do not allow.

J. N. D.

Revelation and Man's Mind

SPECULATION AND THE MASSES.

I think that the mass of the poor have more reality of thought than reasoners, and see more justly the true character of things. Their occupation with labor gives this; they toil to exist. That is now God's ordinance. What they get outside this must be real. Speculation has no place here. They may know nothing of a revelation, but if they have the thought that there is one, they want one that is a revelation from God,—something He has told them, not an improved Shakespeare. If they have Diana and Jupiter, they take Diana and Jupiter as realities. If they are under the law of Moses, they will not spiritualize everything with Philo, or his modern imitators. They will take it as Moses gave it, or not at all. If they are idolaters, they will be idolaters bond fide, not readers of Lucian. If they are skeptical,—if this pervades the population, not merely religion but the state is near its end: by that I mean society. When man speculates on the sanctions of social life,—when the divine ever-living power of faith is gone, what holds man subject to something superior to himself,—when what links man to man is gone, self is dominant, conscious that it is self. A few minds may speculate on how much may be true, and seek refined notions out of the condensed mass of materials; the mass of men will be indifferent to all. Despotism or anarchy ensues. How long did the Roman empire survive Lucian, who was but a sign of the times? or the French monarchy the Encyclopedists? On the fall of Rome, Christianity came in as a bond. Now I see not what will, save the faithfulness of God, and the Lord Himself from heaven.

REVELATION AND MAN'S MIND.—The revelation of God is, for me, the putting an immortal soul through grace in communication with the eternal fountain of blessedness, of light, of love—with God Himself. Doubtless most important revelations accompany it, necessary for the existence or full development of this. I have God manifest in the flesh. I have the blessed relationships of Father Son, and Holy Ghost, without which it is impossible for man to be thus connected with God. Besides, I have the church united to Christ; subjects into which I cannot enter now, but which, while, when revealed, they give to us conscious links of union with what is divine, and develop divine affections in the relationships they place us in, must be the subject of revelation. Man's mind cannot go beyond its own sphere. It is not God, and if it is to be really elevated, it must be elevated by something that is outside and above itself. That is, there must be a positive revelation of something not within the sphere of its own proper apprehensions. It may develop its own powers, it may create poetically what is within the sphere of those powers; but in the nature of things it cannot by itself get beyond itself. You may have Shakespeare to give all the scope of the human mind, all its workings, in a course of pictures from its highest to its lowest forms, with a graphic truth which may interest in the most absorbing way inferior minds to his—minds which cannot do this for themselves; but it is always and must be the human mind, and within the sphere of its own limits, or it would not be the human mind. The consequence is, that though it may elevate these inferior minds above their level, it contents them with man, and in result, by excluding God, degrades them from what they might be. Poetry is the effort of the human mind to create, by imagination, a sphere beyond materialism which faith gives in realities. But then it cannot rise

above the level of its source, whatever displays of force there may be by its being conducted in a secret channel, and not exposed to be wasted in the open intercourse of the world. In result, it sinks down to the level towards which all human nature runs, and then settles, not to rise again. There may be a certain subjective development of mind in its use, but no more.

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Modern infidelity will allow Christianity as much as you please, provided Christ be, as another, a minister to elevate humanity as it is, comes in in his own place as one eminent instrument, and man, I, be all. I maintain the authority of God's word because it is God's, that man is lost in himself, and that God has appeared. Owned, we possess Him in blessing; rejected, we are His self-condemned enemies. I maintain redemption, which brings man out of the condition he was in, into another new and blessed one before God, according to His own righteousness and holiness. I do not want humanity educated, but God known.

LIFE AND REDEMPTION.—You must give up that which alone elevates man, his association with God, or associate him with Him according to what He is. The nature and character of God must be maintained, or it is not with Him I am associated. And I must have morally the qualities which judge of good and evil, as He does, to be really associated with Him. But I do judge the evil, and see the guilt. Now Christianity meets this, and gives me a full blessing, because it gives me life. He that hath the Son hath life. He is a life-giving Spirit.

But then, besides giving me that life, it takes away all guilt from me. I can judge evil fully in my heart and conscience, because I know I shall never be judged for it; that Christ has by Himself purged my sins, and sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

I affirm that, without these two principles, a new life and the perfect purging of sins according to God's nature by redemption, no real moral elevation of man can take place, because he cannot be spiritually associated with God according to the perfection of God's nature. The communication of the divine nature, though absolutely necessary, does not suffice, because the communication of that nature makes one judge evil, as God does, at any rate in principle. I see the selfishness and impurity that is in man's mind—that is, now, in mine. And for that very reason I see guilt and wretchedness in myself. I have the conscience of evil or guilt (not necessarily by crimes or vices, but by comparing my whole inward life with the loveliness of the Divine nature) on my soul; conscience must be purged for God, as a consciously responsible creature before Him, that my heart may be free before Him, that His holy nature, which must repel evil, and which is the very source of my delight, may be maintained even for my soul to enjoy.

THE WORD OF GOD.—No one ever produced anything like it. You have only to read Apocryphal books. There is effort in them; there is none in Scripture. Not once do you find an epithet attached to Jesus, (this were a human feeling, perhaps a right one,) but what He is to tell its own tale of what He is. What human writer in recording His history would have kept uniformly to this Yet how it becomes a divine person! Every epithet would lower. They may be put as the expression of my sentiment, but not as the cause of them. And how it has forced man to deal with it. Infidels or not, they must deal with it where it is. It is God telling us in grace, but telling us of Himself, telling of heavenly things, and for man. What can num do? It concerns him. He may be angry with the grace, angry to be forced to say he does not like what is heavenly, he may exalt heathenism which

has been tired of itself; but there it is; and he has to say to it. Blessed they who have tasted that God is in it, speaks in it, and that have found Him to be holy, as He must be, but love in revealing Himself to them, and in bringing them by redemption and Divine righteousness to Himself to enjoy Him forever.

MIRACLE.—I believe that in a certain sense the physical world is subject to man, and, if God allow him, I know no limit to his employing the powers of nature. Miracle is divine power over nature, the will of God in exercise not ordinarily but extraordinarily, whoever may be the person who brings that will into play. The powers used are, to my mind, immaterial; they may be natural or supernatural; but when natural powers are in exercise according to the prescribed course of things, there is no miracle. The power exercised may be as great, or greater, but it is the ordinary course of nature. But when not in that course, even though it be the same power, but by an extraordinary occasional action of the Divine will any event is produced, this is a miracle.

COSMOGONY.—Ones we have seen the laborious efforts at cosmogony which occupied the heathen world, and that not one ever arrived at the simple fact of a creation, the force of Heb. 11:3 becomes obvious. One sentence of revelation from God settled what all the profound elaborations of man never could arrive at; and, what is not very much to the honor of man's intellect, once the fact is stated, there is the consciousness that it could not be otherwise. Yet, instead of the best and most probable account (as the skeptic calls it) that could be given, it is in absolute opposition to the uniform and universal view of the matter in every known record.

DO YOU LOVE THE TRUTH?—When infidels speak of a love of truth, they never go beyond Pilate's question, what is truth? It is never a holding fast truth they have got, but a casting doubt on what others believe, and professing to search for it always to be ready to receive it because they have never got it.

The word of God gives you many certain truths, and it makes you doubt of nothing. It has no need, for it possesses the truth, and gives what is positive. This is an immense difference. It stamps both morally.

We are in serious, most serious times, and there must be reality. Only the Lord keeps us from pretended love of the truth, which destroys the truth we love; which has nothing to keep, and hence has nothing to lose, and can be always seeking. When conventional systems are crumbling around, and evil raises up its head, may men be seen who can walk peacefully, because they possess what can never crumble till God makes all things new according to the truth He has revealed.

The question for a soul now in Christ, that blessed person who reveals the Father; the truth of a living acting Spirit, the Comforter, given; and the revealed written word of God, the only source and standard of truth, and that which we are called to confess is the truth, known by the Spirit from that word, known in the heart with God, and while acknowledging we may be mistaken in a hundred points, knowing that we have the truth for which martyrs have died, and that we had rather give up our lives than lose or deny it. The Lord Jesus is at the right hand of God the Father. He may suffer us to be tried, but He is above all and will prevail. He watches over us always as the good shepherd, and will in the Father's own time come and receive us to Himself, that where He is we may be also.

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Christ has been manifested to put away sin out of God's sight, out of man's heart, and out of the world. The great work which does it is accomplished, the results not all accomplished in power.

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He who does not see the principle and nature and guilt of sin, as it stands in man's self-will, has not the estimate which the knowledge of a holy nature in reconciliation to God gives.

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It is a deadly principle, making men's present habit of thinking the measure of the fitness of God's word; and thus gradually leading to the belief that it was the product of the age and country it was written in.

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The cross made an impassable gulf between the Old and the New Testament; yet the New confirmed and adopted the Old; and the Old predicted and prepared the way for the New which yet set it aside. This remarkable phenomenon stands alone. No two systems on earth stand in the same relation as these do to one another.

THE LAWFUL USE OF LAW.—The true secret of putting us under the law is, that, having nothing of the discipline of the primitive church, they are obliged to modify the gospel, and make the law a schoolmaster after Christ to keep men in order. Then all naturally fall under it. Because man has the keeping of it, it flatters man; if he has a tender conscience, it tortures him, as we often see; if not, he thinks of himself, takes for granted some failure is to be there, judges it perhaps pretty easily, will really sorrow if the new nature be there; but in any case he can think of himself, and this the heart likes. A man likes thinking badly of himself, and saying so, better than not thinking of self at all, and simply displaying Christ's precious life by thinking on Him only. We have to judge ourselves; but our right state is thinking of the Lord alone.

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True simplicity is forgetfulness of self; and there is only one way to arrive at it (for it is as all spiritual life, a matter of overcoming), and that is by being much with God, and God known in grace, because then self (the opposite of simplicity) dies down.

Chapter 180

Ritualism and Christianity: Part 1

This epistle to the Hebrews throws great light on the question of ritualism so rife in our days. In the first epistle to the Corinthians is found the Christian man's directory for public worship, and the second chapter of the first epistle to Timothy contains apostolic instructions for those who meet together for prayer.

No thought have we in the word that assemblies, or churches, have power to decree rites and ceremonies in connection with public worship, nor are individuals at liberty to choose for themselves how they will approach their God. What might be wrong at one time may be right at another. What is suited for a former dispensation may not, in God's mind, be in harmony with the character of a later one. It was wrong for Cain to draw near with the fruits of the ground and not with a lamb like his brother Abel. Yet in after ages the children of Israel were enjoined to present their basket of first-fruits. (Deut. 26) An offering of the fruits of the ground was not wrong in itself, else Israel never would have been commanded to present it; but of the time, and the occasion for its presentation God, not man, was to be the only judge. Again, before the giving of the law there was no distinction, that we read of, between a burnt-offering and a sin-offering; but after God had communicated to Moses that elaborate ritual, which is often called by the lawgiver's name, no one in Israel would have ventured to follow the example of Job by offering a burnt-offering on behalf of those who had sinned. The sole authority however for this change from patriarchal practices was the Lord's revelation to Moses. (Lev. 4:1.) It was right of Job to offer burnt-offerings for his sons, when he thought they had sinned. It would have been utterly wrong in an Israelite thus to have acted. Job too was free to offer for his children; but each one in Israel had to bring his offering for his own sin, when the law enjoined it, if divine forgiveness was to be assured to him. So what Cain ought not to have brought certainly without a lamb, the children of Israel were commanded to put in a basket, that it might be set by the priest, unaccompanied by any sacrifice, before the altar of the Lord their God. On the other hand, what Job was free to do, would have been disobedience if attempted by any of the children of Israel; and no plea, based on the antiquity of the custom, nor urged on the ground of patriarchal usage, would have availed before God, when once the different laws as regards sin-offerings and burnt-offerings had been communicated to His people. For God was the sole judge of what was fitting for His creatures to do in connection with worshipping Him.

Now this always holds good. And ever since He has been pleased to give His people a written revelation, He has set forth in that word both how He would be worshipped, and the characteristic features of such a service.

Before the giving of the law heads of families acted as priests, officiating, as need might require or desire might stimulate, at the altars reared up by them, wherever in the land they might sojourn. Thus at Shechem, at Hebron, at Beersheba, at Bethel the patriarchs reared up altars, and sacrificed on them. No one place in the land was regarded as their sanctuary; wherever they were, if so minded (Gen. 12:8), they could erect an altar, and sacrifice thereon. Nor was this confined to the eldest male line of Abraham's descendants. Job acted in a similar way in his family, and Jethro

filled that office, it would seem, among his people. (Ex. 2:16.) By the law however all this was changed for Israel, and for those who might cast in their lot with them. A regular order of priesthood was established, restricted to the family of Aaron, and one altar only was recognized, whereon the sacrifices and the offerings of the people could normally be laid. (Lev. 17 Deut. 12:5, 8.) Altars and sacrifices had been resorted to from the beginning, now an order of priesthood and a sanctuary were duly appointed by God, with a ritual of divine institution which continued in force till after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. By His death the house at Jerusalem was left desolate (Matt. 23:38), for never after His resurrection did the Lord enter the temple. He was seen upon earth, He was met with, handled, conversed with after He had risen, but only by His own disciples, whether in Jerusalem or in Galilee.

The Mosaic ritual was but a shadow, the substance had now appeared. Types had found their antitype. Things figurative were to give way before that which they prefigured. The pattern or type, shown to Moses in the mount, was to be a substantial reality for the true children of Abraham. The holiest of all in the most complete sense had been entered by the High Priest, who was greater than Aaron, and the people whom God now owned were to go forth unto Christ without the camp. But how were they to go? As exiles carrying with them all that they had once valued, their worship, ritual, priesthood, and sanctuary? or as a people going forth to meet the Lord, to learn what He had to say to them? The epistle to the Hebrews gives us the answer to this question, as it traces out characteristic features common to Judaism and Christianity, and at the same time draws attention in the most pointed way to the marked differences between them.

Now there were four things in connection with the Levitical ritual of which the Jews could boast, namely, a high priest, a sanctuary, a sacrifice, and an altar.

Four things are there of which Christians can make mention, a High Priest, a sanctuary, a sacrifice, and an altar. At first sight then it might be thought that Christianity was but a development of Judaism, and that the ritual, given to Israel through Moses, might fitly be regarded as in some measure a pattern for the order and character of Christian worship. Now this is what has really taken place, and sanction has been sought for ritualistic ways and sacerdotal dresses from God's commands in the Old Testament scriptures, men little thinking that such ideas, when carried out, result in the denial of verities of the faith. But some may ask, Are we wrong, when we venture to copy what we find in the word as expressly authorized by God? The answer is simple. Scripture truth may be misused so as to undermine Christian doctrine. Of this the Galatians are a notable example, and the epistle addressed to them exposes the fallacy of such a position. They were right in the thought that they must be connected with Abraham, but they were wrong in the way they attempted to secure it. Their teachers insisted on their submitting to the rite of circumcision, enjoined by God on Abraham and his descendants, and on their observance of the law given by God to Moses, if they wished to be saved. Such grounds doubtless to the uninstructed must have appeared unassailable, and scriptural. The apostle showed them, and teaches us, that such doctrines really subverted the Christian faith. Christ could on such terms profit them nothing. They had fallen from grace.

The appeal then to scriptural practices of a former age may be a most dangerous thing. The way of worship before the introduction of Christianity is not of necessity any guide to the true way of worship now, nor can the scriptural expressions of a liturgy make that liturgy scriptural in itself. For

our worship to be scriptural we must worship God in spirit and in troth, that is, in accordance with His nature, and in conformity with the revelation which He has vouchsafed us. This, be it remembered, was the Lord's deliverance about worship, when questioned by the woman at the well. The claims put forth by the Samaritans for Gerizim over Jerusalem, He set aside in the most absolute way. But whilst vindicating the claim of the temple at Jerusalem, He announced the change which was to take place. Jewish worship was inseparably connected with the house and the altar. The divine sanction for what then went on at Jerusalem, viz., the observance of the Mosaic ritual was here (John 4) expressly given, though the Shechinah had never illuminated the oracle of Herod's temple, nor had fire from heaven ever burnt on the altar of stone which occupied the place of the old altar of brass. The Lord however intimated the change that was at hand, and unmistakably declared, that the closest association would be maintained between God's revelation and the new character of worship. Not that this in itself was anything new. It has always held good, that men could only worship God acceptably, as they worshipped Him in strict conformity with the revelation vouchsafed to them. It was this principle which Cain ignored, but to which Abel conformed. And we all know with what result.

Now a characteristic feature of Judaism was this—there was a remembrance again made of sins every year. (Heb. 10:3.) A characteristic of Christianity is this, that by one offering Christ hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. (Heb. 10:14.) Perfection is a marked feature of the latter, imperfection stamps itself indelibly on the former. (Heb. 7:11, 19; 9:9; 10:1.) To mingle the two is to spoil both. To graft spiritual worship on Jewish rites is to surrender the foundation truths of the faith. The distinctive features of Christianity are thereby lost sight of by the soul, and the preparative character of the Mosaic ritual, leading men to look forward to a sacrifice to be offered up, is obliterated from the mind. What was meant to give way before the full light of truth is in principle stereotyped, as suited for our day; and the testimony to the finished work of Christ and its results is denied, or at all events beclouded, when the renewal of the offering of the Lord's sacrifice in some shape or other is deliberately taught, and distance from, instead of nearness to, God in the holiest is insisted on as the right position of true Christian worshippers. That the law had a shadow of good things to come is true, but the scripture which tells us this adds, “it was not the very image of the things.” (Heb. 10:1.) Jewish rites and ceremonies were shadows of things to come, “but the body is of Christ,” wrote the apostle Paul to the Colossians (ii. 17). None certainly had been more zealous for Judaism than he; but when taught of the Holy Spirit, be made known that the ritual given to Israel could not even foreshadow all that would be found in Christ. “The body is of Christ.” He does not say, it is Christ, for there is more in Christ than the rites and ceremonies of the law could set forth. Yet the law had a shadow of these things. It did teach the offerer, as he stood by the altar of burnt-offering, that he wanted an altar and a sacrifice to deal with the question of his sins; and year by year, as the high priest entered within the veil, the people learned the need of propitiation by blood, of a sanctuary too, and of a High Priest. Thus it proclaimed loudly and clearly what man required, though it never could provide him with the real and abiding remedy. It was a shadow as it had a sanctuary, an altar, a sacrifice, and a priesthood. It was not the very image of the things, since, though it had features resembling those of Christianity, the contrasts between the two are found to be great, distinct, and unmistakable.

And first as to the high priest. The Jews could point to God's revelation as the warrant for Aaron and his successors, when duly consecrated, to discharge the duties of their office. (Ex. 28:1;

29:29, 30; Num. 18:7.) They did not seek the Office; God chose Aaron and restricted the priesthood to him and to his house. So they entered on it, not only with divine sanction, but by divine appointment. Christians in their turn could speak of the High Priest of their confession (Heb. 3:1), who, like Aaron was appointed by God to His office, but differing from Aaron was marked out for it beforehand in the word, and was made God's High Priest with an oath. Each then could speak of a High Priest selected by God, and inducted into the office by express divine authority. Yet how marked was the difference! The Aaronic priesthood was successional, for the individuals among them could not continue by reason of death. The Lord, because He continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Men which had infirmity were by the law constituted priests. By Jehovah's oath since the law a Son, perfected forever, is the High Priest whom God now owns. Aaron as a sinner had to offer up sacrifices for himself as well as for the people, needing atonement himself as much as they did. The Lord did this once for all, when He offered up Himself, His acts and His offering both proclaiming His spotless sinless nature. “He offered up Himself!” A unique, a perfect sacrifice. Differing then from Aaron, as having an unchangeable priesthood, and as having offered a sacrifice—Himself, such as neither Aaron nor his sons could have offered, He is proved to be superior to him in His person and by His position. Aaron was brother to Moses, who was a servant in God's house, over which house is Christ as Son. Greater He is than Moses, and far greater than Aaron, who was punished for speaking against his brother. But more than this. Where Aaron never was, and none of his seed ever will be, the Lord Jesus is at this present moment,—namely, seated on the right hand of the throne of the majesty in the heavens. Aaron and his sons had their place at God's altar, and in God's sanctuary. The Lord, who as High Priest has entered the true tabernacle, has His place at the right hand of God. Again, Aaron was of the tribe of Levi, the Lord was of the tribe of Judah, “of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.” Now this difference between them is one of immense importance, and we are called upon in the epistle to the Hebrews so to view it, not indeed because it settles the question of tribal precedence, though, when Judah rose into pre-eminence through David's exaltation to the throne, the priesthood, which had held the first place in the days of Eli, settled into a position politically considered second to that of the throne from which it never emerged. But the conclusion drawn from the priesthood of the Lord is this, “the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.” (Heb. 7:12.) A change radical in its nature has been thereby introduced.

With this scripture before us are we to turn to the Levitical ritual as the pattern, by which as a matter of course we should order the externals of Christian worship? Should not such a decided statement of the sacred writer arrest the attention of the reader, and lead him to search in the word for light on God's mind about worship in our day? “The priesthood being changed.” Then is it so certain that God now sanctions, what He established in Israel, a special class amongst His people to be looked at as a holy priesthood? If a Change in the law has been made, does that change affect the form and character of worship now? These are serious questions. But they inevitably arise out of this distinct enunciation of the Holy Ghost. And surely that man is not wise, who would regard such questions as of secondary importance, or refuse to examine them in the light of God's revelation. For, if one knows what the Lord as High Priest has done for His people, having found an eternal redemption (Heb. 9:12, Greek), the inability of the law to make anything perfect comes out in redoubled clearness. The recurrence of its ceremonies told of this; but the entrance of the Lord Jesus into the holy place once for all, not by the blood of bulls and of goats but by His own

blood, having found eternal redemption, by its contrast confirms it. Distance from God, both of the rest of the tribes of Israel, and of the Levites who ministered to Aaron and his sons, was their position under the Aaronic priesthood. (Num. 18:3, 4, 22.) We on the contrary come unto God by our High Priest. (Heb. 7:25.) Would a ritual then, instituted by God for those who were to be kept at a distance from Him, befit those who are allowed on the contrary to draw nigh to Him? Surely men have taken that for granted which needs, if it can, to be substantiated. “Christ suffered once the just for the unjust to bring us to God.” (1 Peter 3:18.) By the law all were reckoned strangers in the sanctuary but Aaron and his sons. (Num. 16:40.) Are Christians reckoned strangers in the sanctuary? Heb. 10:19 emphatically answers—No. Then let them see to it, that they act not as such by putting a class of people between themselves and God, to whom they have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ. A holy priesthood is the designation of all Christians. (1 Peter 2:5.) To draw nigh unto God, having access through Christ by one Spirit unto the Father, is our privilege now. (Heb. 4:16; 7:25; Eph. 2:18.) To enter into the holiest is a favor granted to us now. (Heb. 10:19.) What Israel as a nation never were, nor will be; what they never could do individually; and where they never will be, even in millennial times, as Ezek. 44:15; 46:1-9 distinctly states—all that is ours now who believe through the perfect work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our privilege, our position, our character differing thus widely from that of Israel, are we without divine warrant to assume, we may well ask, that Christian worship should be molded on a Jewish form? The teaching of scripture about the sanctuary will help us in determining this question. To that let us next turn.

Till the national redemption of Israel had been effected we never read of a sanctuary in connection with the worship of God. The patriarchs had their altars, the worshippers of idols had already their temples; but a sanctuary erected on earth for God was, till after the Exodus, a thing unknown and unthought of. Redemption accomplished, a sanctuary was to be provided. “I will prepare him an habitation,” sang Moses and Israel, when the bursting of the Egyptian fetters from off their hands was fresh in their minds. (Mod. xv. 2.) “Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them,” was God's gracious intimation some months later that He acquiesced in their desire. (Ex. 25:8.) Thus Israel were allowed to share in the work of erecting it, but the designs, measures, and pattern of it were all revealed by God. Moses was to make all things after the pattern, or type, shown to him in the mount (Ex. 25:40; 26:30), as David had revealed to him all directions about the house, which Solomon subsequently erected. (1 Chron. 28:11-19.) The Jews then could speak of a tabernacle ordered in all things according to the mind of God, which He had once graciously inhabited, and of a house very magnifical, of which in the most public manner the Lord Jehovah had taken possession. We can understand therefore how appeals might have been made to Christians in early days not to forsake that sanctuary which they had owned, and that rightly, as God's house. One can fancy an earnest conscientious Jew, like Saul of Tarsus, reminding the perverts (as he in his blindness would think them) of God's communication to Moses respecting the setting up of the tabernacle, and how such an one might plead with them not to turn their backs on that house in which Jehovah at the time of its first dedication had vouchsafed to dwell. Where else in the world, he might say, can you find a tabernacle or a temple erected by God's authority, and to which His people should turn? How clear too the matter might seem to him, that God had owned but one house and had enjoined the erection of but one tabernacle. Were they wiser than Moses? Were they better instructed than David or Solomon? With what confidence in the strength

of his position would he await their reply! How could they answer such an appeal? Had God no longer a sanctuary? Were His people now without one? By no means. And the Christian could turn the scriptures against his interrogator, by reminding him that God had another sanctuary of which Moses had a view in the mount. The earthly sanctuary was the antitype (Heb. 9:24), the heavenly one was the type, τ■πος (Heb. 8:5), the true tabernacle, not made with hands, Which the Lord pitched, and not man. Whatever then the Jew might think of the earthly sanctuary and however much the Gentile might admire the magnificence of the temple at Jerusalem, it was through a greater and more perfect tabernacle than Aaron ever traversed that the Lord Jesus Christ, as High Priest, has passed right up to the throne of God. (Heb. 4:14.) Would any remind the Christian of the antiquity of the house? It was but the shadow and antitype, he could reply of what Moses had seen before the tabernacle was in existence. Neither the place of its antiquity therefore, nor its erection by God's express commands, could unsettle in the slightest degree the Christian who had learned from scripture or apostolic teaching the ground on which he had through grace taken his stand. For attention to the Old Testament scriptures would remind him of the true tabernacle above, and the teaching of the New Testament would enable him to withstand all persuasion to conform to the rites and ceremonies of the one on earth.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 181

Ritualism and Christianity: Part 2

(Concluded from page 280,)

For into heaven itself has the Lord entered, now to appear in the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24), and the only sanctuary now recognized by God is that in which He is. What then should be the character of worship in the heavenly sanctuary is surely the question which men need to have settled before ritualism, as practiced amongst us, can make good its claim to be the true form of Christian worship. Actual sacrifices of animals does not, it will be granted, take place in heaven. We are not however left to our own conclusions on such a point, for in Rev. 5 we have described, both what calls worship forth, and how it is carried on. The presence and the action of the Lamb, which had been slain, awakens every voice among the company of the elders, and moves each one of them to bow down, who before that had been sitting each on his throne. Worship flowed forth, at once, when the Lamb moved towards Him that sat on the throne; but it consisted of praise and thanksgiving. Such is the character of heavenly worship wherever set forth in that book. Whatever class of beings in heaven it may be, who are represented as worshipping God or the Lamb, praise in the case of angels (5, 7.) praise, at times with thanksgiving, on the part of the redeemed (4, 5, 11: 17, 19: 4), is the channel by which it is expressed. Praise with the sound of melody may form part of the worship. of God's earthly people. This was the case in the tabernacle and temple service as arranged by David, but then it was in connection with a service constantly carried on at the altar. (1 Chron. 16:39-42; 23:30, 31; 2 Chron. 5:12, 13; 7:6; 29:27, 28.) Praise and thanksgiving on the other hand, without any concurrent service at the altar, is the true feature of heavenly worship. And are not the spiritual instincts of believers in accord with this? For what language is more suited even now for them, than that in which the elders address the Lamb? (Rev. 5) Who, that has learned what the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ has done for him before God, but must exclaim, “I wait not to sing the new song, till I shall be in person on high, the language of saints in heaven suits me whilst still upon earth?” The thoughts, the feelings, which animate the elders, and move them as one man to bow down before the Lamb, are just those which His people, who know what He has done for them, can enter into and understand. Praise in connection with the sacrificial service at the altar, characterized Jewish worship as finally arranged by David; praise without concurrent sacrificial service at the altar is characteristic of the worship suited for the company of the redeemed, who have entrance into the heavenly sanctuary, in which the Lord now ministers.

Do we thereby then slight the sacrificial service at the altar? To answer this let us next consider the question of sacrifice. Here again Judaism and Christianity are found to have something in common. Both confess the need of a sacrifice, and a sacrifice of God's providing. The constant remembrance however of its requirements, as a want unfulfilled, was an essential element of Judaism; the acknowledgment that it has been offered up once for all, and has been accepted, is the fundamental basis of Christianity. A service at the altar of burnt-offering the sons of Aaron constantly carried on, a sacrificial service, as it were at the altar, has the Lord Jesus Christ once for all engaged in. Bulls and goats Aaron and his sons from time to time offered up. The Lord on

the other hand offered up Himself, an offering differing both in character and measure from any before known, or any that can be ever again provided. For He lives, to die no more. No man brought Him to the altar, no one offered Him up. He brought Himself as the offering, προσ■νεγκε. He offered up Himself, ■ν■νεγκε (Heb. 9:14, 28,) on the cross. Thus, as the sacrifice which the Lord brought differed widely from those with which Aaron and his sons had to deal, so likewise do the consequences which result from it. By their sacrifices a remembrance was made of sins every year. (10: 3.) By His one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. (10:14.) He has indeed entered by blood into the holiest, and remains there, but not to offer Himself afresh, προσφ■ρη, as the high priest entered in every year with the blood of others, for then must He often have suffered since the foundation of the world. (Heb. 9:26.) We should mark the language. No fresh offering of Christ in any character is allowed by the sacred writer to be taught for a moment; for, though we may distinguish (for they are distinguishable) between the bringing an offering προσφ■ρειν, and the offering it up on the altar ■ναφ■ρειν, it follows, as we are taught, that, if He often offered Himself, He must likewise often have suffered. There would be no sense in the offering a lamb, without the action is completed by offering it up on the altar. Death must take place if an animal as a sin-offering is brought. Now Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, ■παξ πρεοσενεχθε■ς ε■ς τ■ πολλ■ ■νενεγκεπ■ν ■μαρτι■ς (Heb. 9:28), and by virtue of that one offering God forgives sins and iniquities. “But where remission of these is, there is no more offering [πρεοσφορ■] for sin.” Heb. 10:18.) No words can be plainer. Any doctrine, therefore, which maintains the continued offering of Christ as a sacrifice to God for sin, whether by Himself, or by others, clearly denies the abiding efficacy of His work, and manifests from whence it springs.

How precise is the language of scripture! No more offering for sin have we to look for, no more offering do we want, for by that one offering we, who are sanctified, are perfected for a continuance. An unbloody sacrifice of Christ for propitiation, to be offered day by day in the mass, is both senseless and unscriptural. “No more offering” shuts the door against all such thoughts. And, though men may draw the line in their teaching between the Lord offering His sacrifice continually, and His repeating the sacrifice by dying afresh, the term “offering” προσφορ■ excludes the thought of the one, as much as it shuts the door against the other. No more offering for sin does the Lord contemplate, for we learn, that He has sat down for a continuance, as having finished with that work. (Heb. 10:12.) Not that He has ceased to do with men upon earth, for He will appear to them that look for Him the second time without sin unto salvation, and now sits on high expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. The full results of His work have not yet been manifested, but its finished character, and our concern with it, are set before us in the word. Thus His present attitude and expectation announce to us His estimate of His own work. God's estimate of it, and what the consequences are which flow from it, are abundantly declared in the Word. And we, who believe it, are to prove our acceptance of the divine testimony about it, by entering with boldness within the veil by the blood of Jesus, and presenting to God the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Sacrifices we should bring to God, though no service at the altar of burnt-offering can now be carried on. The holiest is our place of worship, in which there never was, and there never will be, an altar on which to sacrifice. Any form of worship, therefore, which makes the altar its center piece is clearly not Christian in its character, however much the name and the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ may be on the lips of those who uphold it.

Have we then no altar, some may exclaim? “We have an altar” (Heb. 13:10) is the language of inspiration, so we need not be afraid, as some seem to be, of the bare mention of the word. We have an altar, this we should take care to maintain. It is a scriptural term, but must be used in the scriptural sense. “We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.” The Jews might taunt Christians as a people without a country, without a nationality, without an altar. Yet they had all these, and much more. Their country was the heavenly one, God's people they surely were, and an altar too was theirs, but of which no son of Aaron, as such, could reap the benefit. They indeed were partakers of the altar (1 Cor. 10:18), and we Christians eat of that which has been sacrificed thereon. But that on which we can feed, the sin-offering whose blood has been carried within the sanctuary, was just that which God withheld from them who served the tabernacle. An altar then is ours, to eat of that which was once brought to it, but not to sacrifice thereon. So that, if the word altar would suggest to any mind the propriety of a sacrificial service to be carried on, the advantage we derive from it as defined in the word, marks at once the immense difference between Christianity and Judaism. We are privileged to share in that of which no priest could ever partake.

How suggestive too is the language here! To eat, not to sacrifice. Surely those to whom the epistle was addressed must have well understood the significance of the term, “to eat.” For, before the priests could partake of the altar, the sacrifice must have been offered up thereon. The altar was first attended to, after that the priests, as directed, could eat of that which remained. But none could partake of the bodies of the animals offered in sacrifice for sin, till the ritual, given through Moses, had been duly complied with. Death must take place, the blood be duly dealt with, and the altar have its share, to be consumed by the sacred fire, the emblem of divine judgment, ere the priests could partake of that which God had reserved for them. So, when we learn on what it is we feed, even Him who suffered without the gate, we are reminded that He, the sacrifice, has been already offered up. Should any then think of offering the Lord Jesus Christ to God as a sacrifice for sin in any shape or form, their thought, their act, excludes them from this distinctive Christian privilege. For them the time to eat of the sacrifice has not arrived, and it never in that case can arrive. They have forsaken doctrinally Christian ground, and with it the privilege which, if believers on the Lord, is indeed theirs.

We have an altar, that on which, as the term implies, the sacrifice for sin was offered up. Is then the Lord's table correctly termed the altar, as so commonly is done in our day? A reference to the principles of the Mosaic ritual may here also be of use to us. The priests under the law partook of the altar, but they did not feast at the altar. They ate the bread of their God in a holy place, in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, but they did not eat it on the altar. On that they sacrificed, elsewhere they ate. And, if in Num. 18:10 the words “in the most holy place” are to be understood in their literal import, whilst they ate in person the portion reserved for them in a holy place in the court, they were regarded by God as in spirit partaking of it in the innermost sanctuary, into which through grace we have now liberty to enter by the blood of Jesus Christ. And in that of course there was no altar. At the Lord's table we sit to eat, but the place where the priests were to eat their portion is defined in Lev. 10:12, 13 as being, near the altar, and so quite distinct from it. To have turned the altar into their table would surely in their eyes, and in the eyes of all Israel, have been a monstrous thing.

But is not the altar, it may be replied, called in the Old Testament the table of the Lord? Malachi (i. 7,12) thus writes of the altar of burnt-offering, and Ezekiel (xli. 22, xliv. 16) of the altar of incense. And it is not difficult to understand this, since on both these altars the Lord's own portion was consumed by the fire, which came down from heaven; so what was burnt on the altar of burnt-offering was called “the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord.” (Lev. 3:11.) But, though the altar in the Old Testament could be called the table of the Lord, we never read in the New Testament of the table under the term altar. The altar was the Lord's table, because He there fed, as it were, on the sacrifice Which was burnt on it. It was His table, at which He alone fed. The Lord's table in the New Testament is that which the Lord set up, at which too He presided, but off which He did not eat. (Luke 22:19, 20.) He ate the passover with His disciples; but did not, could not, partake with them of the supper. We however have a place at the Lord's table, because we have an altar. We eat at the one, we glory in the other. Although then in the Old Testament the table of the Lord and the altar are the same, what is termed the Lord's table in the New is something very different from it. The altar of the Old Testament is strictly speaking the table of Jehovah, but the table of 1 Cor. 10:21 belongs to Him who by position, dignity, and title is the Lord.

On the altar the appointed parts of the sin-offering were consumed by fire, and the rest, when the blood had been taken within the sanctuary, was burned without the camp. So, to feed on Him whose blood has been sprinkled on the mercy seat, we must go outside the camp, for He suffered without the gate. How little could those have thought, when they caused the Lord to be led to Calvary, to what practical use the Spirit of God would turn that historical fact, supplying an argument and an illustration for real separation between Jews and Christians in their position on earth, their ways, and their worship. Without the camp tale blasphemer was to be stoned. (Num. 15:35, 36.) Beyond the walls of Jezreel Naboth was murdered. (1 Kings 21:13.) Outside Jerusalem Stephen was martyred. (Acts 7:58.) Outside the gate the Lord Jesus suffered. So those who confess Him were exhorted to go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. But in doing that they turned their backs on Judaism with all its hopes, its earthly position, and its ritual. To feed on Him who is the sin-offering we. too must follow whither He went, yet not to eat at the altar, a thing unknown even to the Jews, nor to join in any fresh sacrificial service carried on thereon; for that would imply that He often has suffered, which is false. (Heb. 7:27; 9:25, 26.) And even the ritual, ordained of God by Moses, should teach men the incongruity of such ideas, for the body of that which was offered in sacrifice for sin did not remain at the altar, but was taken elsewhere, either without the camp, or was fed on by the priests in a holy place in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation.

To conclude, the change in the law necessitated by the High Priesthood of the Lord Jesus Christ, the emphatic declaration too of that inspired word, “there remaineth no more offering for sin;” as well as the ritual of Moses, if rightly studied, should surely guide souls in the present day, so as to steer clear of ritualism, as it is called, whether contended for and practiced by some in our land, who repudiate all connection with Rome, or as set before the eye and the senses with all the attractiveness by which that church has ensnared and entranced so many souls. C. E. S.

Chapter 182

Ritualism and Christianity: Part 3

(Continued from page 286.)

They had, indeed, to break off all connection with the temple ritual and holy places on earth, but only to find the type of all that with which they had been familiar from their childhood far better than the anti-type, inasmuch as it had become to them, though not visible to mortal eyes, a substantial reality. They could surrender all share in the Worship carried on in the earthly house, and joyfully submit to excommunication by their countrymen, and perhaps an enforced separation from their home, their kindred, and their acquaintance. They needed no longer to wait for the high priest to come out of the holy of holies on the day of atonement to know of their acceptance by God, for they could enter themselves with boldness into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. None but the high priest could penetrate behind the veil in the sanctuary on earth. Through the rent veil, into the holiest, it was given to them to pass, and there to worship. The earthly order of things maintained a veil unrent, and the way into the holiest not made manifest. They knew that by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ all that had been changed, the veil had been rent, and through it they now passed into the presence-chamber of their God. What a change in their position was this! What advantages had they over the adherents of Judaism!

Could the character, then, of service appointed for those connected with the earthly tabernacle suit those who now worshipped in the heavenly? Would the language of one who knew not the veil was rent, nor that permission to enter the holiest had been accorded, be the same as that of the man who knew, and consciously enjoyed, the privilege of entrance through the rent veil? Impossible. The latter would be giving thanks for that for which the former would be waiting. Expectancy might characterize the one; acceptance would be known by the other. In Exodus and Leviticus we learn what befitted those who were never to enter the holiest. From the Lord's action at the institution of His supper, we are taught what is the language suited for Christians, and what should be the feelings of their heart, for He instituted a service wholly eucharistic, and unlike anything which had been known by His people on earth. For the character of Christian worship we first learn about from His conversation with the woman at the well, and the form of it He Himself has taught us, when, with the bread and wine before Him, He gave thanks. No prayer was wanted to consecrate the elements, no sound of trumpet or cymbal was heard to make that eucharistic service thus instituted more impressive; for the outflow of a thankful heart was what God would accept, and the melody of the human voice was the only music that was requisite.

What a change was this! From the days of Abel, till the Lord Jesus died, an altar of stone, of metal, or of earth, was an indispensable requisite for the acceptable worship of God's saints. Not only had the patriarchs their altars, but the returned remnant, before they were in a position to rebuild the house, felt that they could not get on without the altar. That was their first thought, and to the setting up of that attention was immediately directed. (Ezra 3:2, 3.) By-and-by, when God again takes up Israel as His earthly people, an altar, on which to sacrifice, will once more come into prominence. (Ezek. 13-18.) But if we search throughout the Acts and the Epistles (Heb. 13:10

excepted, of which more below), we have no mention of the term altar in connection with Christianity. And this is the more remarkable, because in the Revelation, when God begins to deal with Jews and Gentiles as such, after the removal of the church, to encourage His saints then on earth, He speaks in language they will understand, and makes frequent reference to essential features of the Mosaic ritual. (Rev. 6:9; 8:3, 5; 9:18; 11:1, 2; 16:7.) It is not, then, that the word altar has become obsolete. The Lord freely used it. John, in the Apocalypse, several times writes it, and at a future day both Jews and Gentiles will be well acquainted with it. Why, then, this silence about the altar when Christians are addressed in God's word? Because they worship in the holiest, entering therein through the rent veil.

To the mind of a Jew, and to one instructed in scripture, the language of Heb. 10:19 conveys a great deal. The holiest was where God dwelt in the bright cloud of glory between the cherubim over the mercy-seat. No altar was there—no candlestick was there—no table of show bread—nothing but the ark with the mercy-seat, the place of God's earthly throne. No sacrifice took place within the veil, nor any ritual service but that engaged in by the high priest alone, when he sprinkled the blood once upon the mercy-seat, and seven times before it. His entrance there followed on a sacrifice already offered up, the blood of which he carried in wherewith to make propitiation for the sins of the people; and while engaged in that work, no other sacrifices was being offered up on the altar in the court: all Sacrifices were suspended until he had reappeared to the people without. So, in truth, it is now with Israel, and will be till the Lord re-establishes direct relations with them.

Another thing, too, should be noted in connection with this. All sacrifice to make propitiation ceased from the day of atonement, as long as the atonement then made continued in force. Now these are cardinal truths in connection with the Mosaic ritual. All service at the altar ceased whilst the high priest was in the holiest, and all sacrifice to make propitiation ceased as long as the atonement then made remained in force. Now the Lord, as High Priest, still remains in the holiest—heaven itself—having found eternal redemption. The principles of the Jewish ritual, then, forbid the thought of sacrificial service at the altar, whilst the high priest continues concealed from view. And surely in the days of Aaron and Moses no idea of offering to God a propitiatory sacrifice for the sine of the people could have been entertained for a moment, whilst that which had been already accomplished remained unimpaired in its efficacy. What would have been thought if any priest had sacrificed at the altar whilst Aaron was engaged within the veil? What would have been said, if Eleazar or Ithamar had announced a renewal of the sacrifices prescribed for the day of atonement, between the tenth day of Tisri in one year, and the tenth day of that same month in the next? A priest officiating at the brazen altar, whilst Aaron was inside the veil, would surely have been deemed guilty, and justly so, of despising the work of God's high priest. A priest who should announce that he would engage in a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the people, in the interval between two days of atonement, would have shown both that be doubted the validity of the pontifical work, and also that he knew not the marked difference in status and duty between God's high priest and the rest of the males of the house of Aaron. Now of the abiding and everlasting validity of the propitiatory sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the word unhesitatingly informs us (Heb. 7:27; 9:12; 10:10, 14); so no sacrifice to effect it can ever again take place; nor does it befit any man to take on himself duties connected with the office of high priest, unless expressly called to it by God. (Heb. 5:4.)

But Ritualism, as it is called, appeals for support to the ecclesiastical arrangements made by God for His people Israel. The altar, the special priesthood of a class of Christians, and the separate place in God's house, to use the current language of Christendom, from which the laity are excluded, show plainly what is in the minds of those who uphold that system, which is really an attempt to join in affinity Judaism and Christianity, those two which can never be united. If it be true—and it is not doubted—that our high priest remains in heaven, the very principles of the Mosaic ritual condemn most clearly the cardinal feature of Ritualism, namely, the pre-eminence now given to the altar. And since by His one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified, the attempt to amalgamate the two only betrays ignorance of the special characteristics of them both.

Chapter 183

A Few Words on Romans 6

There are two grave points on which the word of God speaks to us: one is the objects before us; the the other is the state in which a person is as regards competency to enjoy those objects.

The Spirit of God brings before us, far more largely and blessedly than we are aware of, those objects; and, as to ourselves, what the condition and state in which we are able to enjoy these things—objective and subjective truth, as people say.

A good deal has been done as to bringing out the objects before us, but it will be knowledge that puffs up if we are not in a condition for it. The mere bringing out these objectively leaves something wanting as regards the condition of soul.

There being the nominal, profession of Christianity, the question arose with some, “Am I a real Christian? Christ has finished the work; now I must know if I have a part in it;” Of course these people did not get peace: it was really justification by experience they were looking for. Instead of simple faith in the efficacy of Christ's person and work, it was a conclusion drawn from the state the soul was in. This is not the Christian state: we all go through it in fact.

In natural things I see objects, and then I know that I see: but do I ever think of examining my eye to see if I see?

“Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith;” do not you know that Christ dwells in you? How came He there?

It is not a question whether I have accepted it, but whether God has. People say, “It is all yours if you accept it.” That is not the question. If you take the right value of the thing, none of us have learned it. If I have offended God, the question is “Is He satisfied?” Then I find the whole thing is settled, perfectly and righteously so. Then came in the danger of taking these objects with very little real plowing up of the subject, ourselves.

Scripture does both! Redemption is all done outside us, done completely and forever, for Christ cannot die over again. Hence the “worshippers once purged” have “no more conscience of sins.”

The moment I have got hold of the truth that this work was done by Christ all alone with God, then if, I look up to God, and know that Christ is appearing in the presence of God for me, I see that imputation is impossible. If God sees the blood, He must pass over, or He would slight the blood, the thought of which would be blasphemy. That is all perfectly settled; as to its value, nothing can ever affect it, weaken it, or alter it. My soul, if I am a believer, is looking at that, and God is looking at it, and my soul rests. It all springs from the blessed infinite love of God, and I am standing now in divine favor; there we are, as white as snow, resting in God's favor. Then, founded upon that work, and never till then, the counsels and purposes of God before the world was made were brought out to bring us into the same glory as His Son. God, having been perfectly glorified by man though more than man, of course, takes man up into His own glory. The Spirit is the earnest of the inheritance.

Where this is not seen, the soul is brought back in a certain sense into Jewish ground. When they see, they will believe: when Christ comes forth, it will be fully manifested that His work has been accepted. Such is not our case: the Holy Ghost has come out, and before Christ comes out, we know the work has been accepted. “For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren.” (Heb. 2:11.) I know my place in Christ. (John 14:20.) That is all founded on the truth that He is “God over all blessed forever,” but as to the place He had taken as man, it was on the cross. Before Christ comes out, the essence of the Christian's position is that the Holy Ghost has come out, and we know He 13 accepted. All this makes the Christian's position very simple. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” (Titus 3:5.) Judgment is according to our works, salvation is not. We are brought to the consciousness that we are guilty by our works, and lost because of what we are. The law tells me what a man, a child of Adam, ought to be; it does not tell me a word of what God is. The law of God takes what man ought to be as the measure of its dealing with me. Christ meets that; but there is another thing—the veil is rent and God is revealed. The very thing taught under the law is that man could have nothing to say to Him, we have “boldness to enter into the holiest.” “When the law was dealing with man, there were barriers about the Mount: now Christ has entered into the holiest, the veil is rent, and we are to walk in the light. The question for us is, not whether we have behaved as men ought to behave, but whether we are fit for God's presence. The law takes up the relationships of man, with God's stamp and sanction upon them, and curses him if they are broken. All fail: all are sinners and guilty, but there is a great deal more than this. If we are to be blessed, God is bringing us to His house; and the question is if I can be in the light as God is in the light. Worldly religion could not be, once you have to do with the holiest: it is then inside the veil, outside the camp. A religion adapted to man in the flesh in this world has nothing at all to do with Christianity. What Christendom pretends is that the truth came down and arranged itself for the earth; and when that is fully carried out, we get the head of the whole body on earth.

How are we to walk in the light as God is in the light?

If I look at my responsibility, Christ has borne my sins and made my peace; consequently (Rom. 5) I can glory in tribulations and glory in God.

All that connected itself with my responsibility as a man and dealt with my guilt: all the world has be come guilty before God. In all this there is nothing whatever of my state, nor is there entering within the veil.

You will never get the flesh one atom changed. When left without law, man became so bad that God had to bring in the flood; then Noah got drunk; the Israelites made the golden calf; the priests offered strange fire. I get lawlessness, law-breaking, and then full enmity against God Himself brought out. If we are born of God, then the flesh lusts against the Spirit; if taken to the third heaven, it is no better. Assuming that I am born of God, there is the flesh lusting against the Spirit. Consequently there is another thing, that, Christ having died, the death of Christ applies as much to the flesh as to the sins: my works and my conduct are all put away forever and ever. Now I have got another thing, not the fruit, but the tree.

There are two mistakes as to this. One is, that we are to go on as in Rom. 7, a kind of balance between the two, up and down, up and down. Another is that the flesh is not there at all. But I find

that the death of Christ applies to that just as much as it does to my sins. God has “condemned sin in the flesh.” Where? In Christ's sacrifice. “What the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin” (not sins, mind) “condemned sin in the flesh.” There I get sin in the flesh condemned in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ. When and how? When He was a sacrifice for sin in death. I get the death of Christ applied to my evil nature for faith just as I do to sins that are put away. “I, through the law, am dead to the law.” The law binds down sin on my conscience, because it curses it, and, more than that, it provokes it—no fault of the law, the law is holy, just and good. “When the commandment came, sin revived and I died.” I get the condemnation gone, condemnation for sin in the flesh; the very Christ that has died being my life, I say I have died in Christ (as to flesh: I am alive looked at as spirit). I do not merely get a new nature, but, as I have got the quickening and Christ as my life I get death with Him. Where only we get deliverance is that in the death of Christ God has dealt with my flesh, and for faith I am a dead man. We are never called on to die to sin: the new nature has not it. I do not want the new man to die: well, can you persuade the old man to die!? The “second Man” having died before He became my life, I have a right, I am bound, to say, that I have died.

Experience contradicts this, and it is more difficult to get distinctly at it than at the forgiveness of sins. I tell a man “Your debts are all paid,” and, if I am a trustworthy person, he believes me: but if I say,” You are dead to sin,” he would answer, “I am not dead to sin, I was in a passion this morning.” His conscience denies it. The moment I see that I died with Christ, the whole thing is settled. This is what I am baptized to; that the old man is a wholly judged thing, and that God will have nothing more to do with it, as to dealings and reasonings with it. Every present relationship of God with this world closed at the cross. This world, as such, is the world of the first Adam; Satan is its god and prince: the world to which we belong is the world of the second Adam.

In Rom. 5:12 the apostle leaves the whole question of guilt and enters on the question of state, Christ, having died, met all this responsibility; and I learn that sin in the flesh has been condemned, and that, as to my place, condition and standing, I have done with it. “Being then made free from sin ye became the servants of righteousness.” Rom. 6 “Free” has a double sense in English. People say, “that horse is free from vice,” that is, he has none at all. But suppose a man had been a slave and he is now free: we are “free from sin” in that sense, He does not say to an unconverted sinner, “Yield yourself to God,” but, “Yield yourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead.” You have died in Christ: as alive from the dead, what are you going to do with yourselves? Yield yourselves to God out and out. Are you going to do that—yield yourselves to God as set free? God comes in; grace cleanses us from guilt, then He says: “Now you are set free, and you have got the privilege and title of giving yourselves.”

There is where you are called to, your sins are entirely and forever put away. “By one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified:” there is no question as to that. But reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin: this is deliverance. In the death of the Lord Jesus Christ death has come to me, and I am alive to God with a perfect title of reckoning myself dead. “But now, being made free from sin and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness.” You do get fruit then: you had no fruit from all this sin, no real fruit. I get positive fruit now in walking in the path of obedience, I am walking with God, I know God better, I know Christ better, I get to know the unsearchable riches of Christ; my heart becomes capable of living in and understanding the things revealed to us, that are in our world. If I speak of treading the golden streets, is that all amaze? It is

not meant to be a maze. As regards glory it is unfolded, “But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.” Having yielded ourselves to God we have fruit. We have got a cataract taken off our eyes, and we have begun to be able to bear the light: we are made partakers of His holiness.

It is a path of obedience, of death to the flesh and all that is in it. “To him that hath shall more be given.”

That is where God has brought us in delivering us.

If we have offended, we are pardoned: if we were defiled, we are cleansed: if we were guilty, we are justified: but then we get deliverance. The flesh has no title to me.

Have you yielded yourselves to God?

It is real true deliverance, so that we grow up to Him who is the Head in all things. What & blessed thing it is that God makes us partakers of His holiness! Do your hearts believe in such a deliverance? God may have revealed to us the blessedness, and yet the flesh may not be practically subdued to the measure of what has been revealed. “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee but my Father which is in heaven.” “Get thee behind me, Satan.” The person who was then declared blessed had not the flesh broken down in the measure of the path which belonged to this truth.

What you are called on to do is to walk in the light as God is in the light. If the heart is right, if to will is present with you, remember there is power. Is Christ your only object? It is not that we have not distractions; that is a different thing: distractions are not objects.

The Lord give us to know what it is to walk by faith, not by sight.”

Chapter 184

Romans Compared With Other Epistles

Generally speaking Romans gives us entirely the responsibility of man: we get there no counsels of God before the world began. God did not begin with bringing out His counsels; He created the first man in responsibility, and He went on with that until the cross. Then we have the supplementary testimony of Stephen rejected, and then, the foundation having been laid in righteousness, the counsels of God before the world was came out. It is quite a distinct thing, these counsels of God and what He gives, from our responsibility. The history of the first man is the history of our responsibility as such. There is no reason why I should have the same glory as the Son of God; this has nothing to do with my responsibility. We get both through the cross; our responsibility met, and the foundation for the counsels of God laid. (2 Tim. 1:9; Titus 1:2.) A man's debts may be all paid, and yet he may have nothing. This is not the way in which God has dealt with us; our debts are paid, and God gives us “to be conformed to the image of his Son” too.

“The scriptures of the prophets,” in Rom. 16:26, does not mean the Old Testament prophetic scriptures, but those of the New Testament. In Colossians we get the two parts of Paul's service: he was the minister of the gospel to every creature, and also the minister of the church, to fulfill or complete the word of God; that is, the whole truth could come out then. When we speak of the mystery, it is not merely that individuals are predestinated to be saved. You always find that we are predestinated to something, “predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son,” to be “holy and without blame before him in love.”

In Ephesians Jews and Gentiles are looked at as one, the middle wall of partition having been broken down. In Colossians Paul preaches entirely to the Gentiles. That side of the “mystery” is not our place with Christ, but Christ being in us. In Colossians there is a hope laid up for us in heaven.

The cross met our responsibility; there the first man, whether Gentile or Jew, came to the last pitch of wickedness. This closed all the history of responsibility. Now, when my mind is open through grace to look at my responsibility, it is not a question whether I can stand in the day of judgment. The gospel starts with the declaration that I am lost. I have lots of debts, and not a penny to pay: it is all over with me on that ground; but Christ “came to seek and to save that which was lost.” “Lost” was never said till man had rejected Christ, though it was true before. When the glorified Christ was preached by the apostles, the history of responsibility was closed. In that work on the cross Christ met our responsibility, and laid the foundation for all the counsels of God.

This is summed up in Acts 7 “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.” They had broken the law, killed the prophets, crucified Christ, and resisted the Holy Ghost.

The Lord said on the cross, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.” Then came the testimony of a glorified Christ; it was rejected, and that closed it altogether—not responsibility, but the history of it.

Then in the cross Christ has perfectly glorified God Himself in the place of sin, where He was “made sin.” He goes into God's glory, which was the foundation for the counsels of God. Then the whole mystery of the church could come out.

The Epistle to the Romans never takes man out of the earth; you do not get Him risen with Christ. In Romans here am I, a man walking in this world, justified, and having the life of Christ.

In Ephesians we are actually sitting in heavenly places. You do not get man's responsibility at all there, because he is “created in Christ Jesus.” The way in which he is looked at is, not as alive in sins, but as dead in them. In Romans man is alive in sins. First the sins are dwelt on, then the evil nature, when death comes in, and the believer is to reckon himself dead. In Ephesians man is dead towards God (alive enough in sins surely), and he is a new creation altogether: God does not want to justify what He has created. The same power that set Christ at God's right hand took us up, and set us in Him.

In Romans we see a man in Christ down here in this world. In Colossians he is risen. When I come to Eph. 1 have done with all that question of responsibility: man is looked at as dead in his sins, and he is “created in Christ Jesus.” Therefore the exhortations differ. In Romans we are to present our bodies as living sacrifices; in Ephesians we come out from God, and show Christ's life in this world. In Colossians you do not get a word about the Holy Ghost (except that the apostle speaks of their “love in the Spirit"), but you get life. In Ephesians we have the power of the Holy Ghost, and the contrast of our place now with what we were, the thorough contrast of the old condition and the new.

In Philippians we get experimental life down here, but no doctrine: the latter is not in that category of epistles. It shows the practical power of the Christian; no sin or flesh is spoken of.

In Colossians we are risen with Christ. It is very precious to get the different parts, to know that I am alive. Christ is my life, and I have the Holy Ghost too, so there is power. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus halt made me free from the law of sin and death.” Those who believe are alive, but alive with the power of the Holy Ghost. “God, sending his own Son in the, likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” The old man is a condemned thing; where it was condemned, it died—not that Christ had it, but He was “made sin” for us, and I am to reckon myself dead.

Romans does not go beyond our responsibility, and it does not bring in the counsels of God, except in the one sentence, “For whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren” (ch. 8:29); and this as a link with the other epistles.

Where is the analogy between Ephesians and Colossians? In Ephesians we read, “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness;” and in Colossians, “And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” My mind is alive in Christ. The truth as it is in Jesus is the having put off the old man, and having put on the new. In Colossians it is not an abstract idea as in Ephesians, but a matter of fact. Eph. 4:22 is past, and verse 24 also; verse 23 is the present tense. There are two senses in which we use the word “new” in English: we speak of a “new fashion,” and of a “new coat.” “Renewed in knowledge” in Col. 3:10 is a perfectly

new thing, like a new fashion: “renewed in the spirit of your mind,” in Eph. 4:23, is like a new coat, constantly renewed by the grace and Spirit of God.

Men are judged according to their works: in the beginning of Romans that is fully gone through; in the second part of Romans he takes up the nature: therefore I am to reckon myself dead. We all know, if we know anything, the difference between past sins (or present) and the evil nature, the fruit and the tree.

A man is condemned for both—is he? I should say that he is “lost,” rather than condemned for one. You never get forgiveness of a nature; but where it was condemned, it died: so condemnation is past, and the flesh is gone under it for faith. “The life I live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God.” There I get another point—the object. “I through the law am dead to the law.:” if only the law, it would he condemnation as well as death, but “I am crucified with Christ.” Life in us most have an object. The life of Christ in Me looks out at Christ for me.

You see three steps, the truth in Col. 3, “Ye are dead;” next I get faith taking it up in Romans, “Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin:” then, when I come to 2 Cor. 4, we have, “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh.”

Realizing you may take as owning the truth in your own soul, or you may take it as carrying it out in practice. I have been crucified with Christ, but I have to bear “about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.”

It is a great thing to say honestly that we are dead: a dead man cares for nothing. I must begin by faith that I am dead. “Ye are dead,” “Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth.” (Col. 3:5.) It is never said in scripture that we have to die to sin. “Mortify, therefore” —there is power. Suppose that I hold my flesh always as dead, just as if hanging on the cross, then God comes and puts it to the test: “We which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake.” The Lord put Paul through these circumstances, delivered him to death.

Paul, in Ephesians, does not own any apostles except through the power of the Holy Ghost come down. He did not know Christ in connection with this world or the Jews; he started from glory.

Peter was the first person that ever confessed Jesus to be the Son of God, but he never preached Him as Son of God: Paul at once preached Him as Son of God. Eph. 3 speaks of his ministration of the mystery: chapter i. speaks of God's counsels. In Romans we get the double parts of our liberty. When I know my sins are all forgiven, then comes the question of being free from the law of sin and death.

I do not believe you ever get out of Rom. 7 till you get into it; Perfectionists say you can jump over it. The fact is, you cannot get into justification till you find there is no hope for you. There is no forgiveness for an evil nature: God condemned “sin in the flesh” on the cross.

If I have got to the real conviction that “in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing:” —(a man in my house may be a rogue, and perhaps I do not, distrust him, but if once I know he is a thorough rogue, I lock everything up) once I have got to know what my flesh is, the trusting it is over: I may be careless, but I am not under the power of it.

Conformity to Christ, as down here, is a simple and absolute impossibility, for He had no sin; and conformity to Christ is always conformity to Christ in glory. There is no conformity to Christ at all for the

Christian except in glory: he is called on to walk like Him. The only Christ a Christian is called on to be conformed to is Christ in glory. It sounds very nice to speak of conformity to Christ as He was, but it is frightful in many cases the way the standard is lowered by taking this up. J. N. D.

Chapter 185

Scripture Queries and Answer

Q. 1 Cor. 9; 1 Tim. 5 What is the light of scripture as to those who labor in the word, whether in preaching or in teaching and pastoral care? How far does Acts 20:33-35 control the passages first referred to? X. Y. Z.

A. There ought to be no doubt as to the principle. Those who labor in the word, whether among those without or among those within, are entitled to the care of the church of God. The saints are bound to see that they should be supported without anxiety on their own part. The law itself lays it down, and this, the apostle's twofold citation of Deut. 23:4 shows, as regards not merely the wandering evangelists, but the stationary elders who labor in the word and teaching. It is mischievous to make it a question of poverty. Divine love has its privileges, especially in honoring those who are its chief witnesses and workers. This no doubt is an appeal to the loving compassion of the saints; but no circumstances should hinder the privilege of loving respect and grateful care for those who give themselves up to serve in the word. Hence says the apostle (Gal. 6:6), “let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things.” There is such a thing as the activity of love, not the need of poverty only; and it would be a loss indeed and shame to the saints, if, because the teacher was not actually poor, there was to be no room for love in the taught. Were such ideas to supplant or enfeeble plain scripture, the saints would be demoralized.

On the other hand it is a blessed testimony where a man possessed of the best gift and full of the most self-denying labors, like the apostle, is not above working with his hands in order to minister to the wants not of himself only—but of others. In Paul's case it was not laying aside the Lord's work to acquire a respectable and lucrative profession, but the use of a trade he already knew to provide things honest and to help others in want. But, precious as this is, and not less in this day of clericalism than of old, the church has no just claim to plead such a scripture to excuse her own selfishness and neglect. It is a good word from one so working to his fellow-laborers small or great; but it is quite out of place when pleaded by the saints in order to repress the faith of a spiritual laborer, or to forget their own duty to such as are given up to the Lord's work. Would they have Him and His work put in a subordinate place? or the devotedness of the saints quenched? It is most of all serious, where one who has in his hand to the plow is exhorted to take up an occupation for the support of himself and his family, as if the Lord hed said not a word to the contrary both for the exercise of his own faith and of love on the part of the saints.

Scripture Queries and Answers

Q.-What is meant by the sentence in a tract, “God will not be a mere director?”

A.-As a general truth we may surely look for guidance, and to be filled with the knowledge of His will n all wisdom and spiritual understanding. What I said as to this was, not that God should not direct us, but that, as the general principle, it was not independent of spiritual understanding; that if I were directed right even in every act, as a Roman Catholic, by their confessor called their director, I should lose by it; it Would save me being in a spiritual state myself: though surely a more spiritual person because he was so might help me; that God did not mean our perception of His will to be independent of our spiritual state, though He can of course lead any at any given time. Psalm 32 speaks of this also. “If our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light.” But this is always true; He makes everything work together for good to them that love Him. He overrules as well as rules.

I will suppose for a moment you were not led of Him in going to England, which I do not the least say, as I know nothing of it or your motives, but suppose the case. He makes you know what the world's giving you up is; He overrules it. Supposing you had had a tide of blessing, you would not have felt this in the same way, you would have tided it over the shoals at flood. I remember saying to dear Captain W., that our giving up the world, and the world giving us up, were two very different things. It is the latter tries all the elements of self-importance, which lie much deeper rooted than we are aware. There may be some little sacrifice in giving it up; but we have a sufficient motive; but what motive for being despised? It is really our glory, for Christ was; but then He must be all, and this is saying a good deal. We are poor feeble creatures without a stable center: what would be so has to be broken, and Christ takes its place. I do not speak of failure, but of what we go through. He was the despised and rejected of men. Nor does He seek insensibility to it, but superiority over it, by His being all, and this is blessed, this only lasts. It is the production in us of what is eternal joy and capacity for it.

Q.-Might we not purpose (as Paul, in Acts 19:21), in his spirit (after prayer) to go here or there, and do this or that?

A.-First, I believe this casting on, or dependent seeking, His will spiritually, to be a privilege, though connected with the ruined state of the church. He cannot cease to guide us, or where should we be? But He may not, and does not, manifest His action with a fallen as with a fresh and nascent church, He never does so. “We see not our signs, we have no prophets any more.” “There is none to say, How long.” Yet Haggai says, “My Spirit remaineth among you, as when ye came out of Egypt.” I believe faithfulness in such a time special privilege. “Hast not denied my name” does not say much; but when this happens all around, it is a great deal, and great grace to be kept.

You cannot be expected, “according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that by them thou mightest war a good warfare.” You came out with a true heart to One who loved you, and

seek souls for Him: all right; and great grace given to us; but there was no “separate me Barnabas and Paul,” which, though present grace, must after all sustain, still was a source of strength “by them.” I do not believe it is any loss, but it is different; and he that has the secret of Christ, while he will not limit His power, yet will know the difference, and enter into it. “Thou hast a little strength,” and these were pillars when God built His temple. We find they were forbidden to go into Bithynia, they sought to go into Mysia, but the Spirit suffered them not; they were forbidden to preach the word in Asia, and then by a vision or a dream were led into Macedonia, Now I would not the least deny that God can by His Holy Spirit suggest to us a special place of service. I do not doubt He may; but it is not an open manifestation as that which we here read of.

I repeat, I believe it a privilege to be thus cast on the Lord's heart, if we only trust it; but it is a different thing, if we are cast on it, that there is imperfection in us, which affects this question: even an apostle had to learn this. A great door was opened at Troas, “but I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother.” He leaves it. “In Macedonia my flesh had no rest; without were fightings, within were fears.” He was sorry he had written even an inspired epistle which really wrought as such with power in producing its effect, as in blessing to this day; but here there was trust. It is quite the contrary to the English translation, “causeth us to triumph;” the word means, “leads us in triumph,” and the savor of Christ, for life or for death, spread by him, whether at Troas or Macedonia. He trusted in Him who led him where He pleased, and that by his anxieties, as by his spirit. He could not say he was right to leave Troas, and all was distress in Macedonia. It was love to the Corinthians; and God comforts them that are cast down: that is His way. And such is the picture I get of this great and noble heart, sent as he was openly by the Lord Himself and the Holy Ghost. He was a man, and must learn it, and that the power was of God; and so must dear—, perhaps as cast down, but, any way, as led about in triumph, for it is as true of you. God is as faithful about you as He was about Paul.

But there is another point; we are such little ignorant things that, though we may have the Spirit of power and love and a sound mind, not of bondage and fear, still, as I said, things have to be overruled as well as ourselves guided. In the case you suppose, I was led, after prayer, to purpose visiting a certain person or persons, and on the way came across an anxious soul, and was much perplexed whether to stay with that one, or go on with my purposed visit to the other. Again, if on going I find the person away, am I to think I was not guided? You do not find the man at home. This may have been just the right thing that you should have shown the purpose and desire, and yet not have seen him, nor he received the visit. It was not the ripe moment for that; it was for seeking him. I admit, were we perfect, this would not be so. Again, He might have sent you on that road on purpose to meet the person on the way, and another day, as good or better for the visit, perhaps he was not at home. I grant this shows imperfection, but not that there is no guidance. We should like to go always with a full favorable wind; but this does not make a good sailor. It does tell us of weakness and imperfection, but this is something to learn, and dependence too. We cannot make a visit right without His hand.

But now take an example of where power was. Paul, apostle as he was, cannot succeed in persuading the church at Antioch to leave the Gentiles free. Where was his apostolic power? What a defeat I what a failure! He must go to Jerusalem. Now suppose he had succeeded: humanly speaking, two churches were started—one at Antioch, free; the other at Jerusalem, Jewish, and circumcising Gentiles; but Jerusalem is forced by God to pronounce the Gentile free, and all goes

right for the time. No doubt it was connected with imperfection and wretched ignorance of heart, and prejudice; but it was divine grace and wisdom, God working in this imperfection and prejudice, and overruling it, and Paul must take his place under this like others. We are not aware what poor creatures we are, and the wonderful grace which watches over, deals with, and uses such; and we have the treasure in an earthen vessel, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (2 Cor. 4:7.)

Thus the service we have to perform becomes also a process in ourselves, by which we have to learn ourselves, and that all is of God, and our dependence on Him. This does not hinder our seeking to grow up into increased spiritual understanding, so as to be filled with the knowledge of His will; nor does it hinder the truth that the Spirit may guide us in details as to what we should do, and where we should go, only (while God is Sovereign) to do so in grace when He pleases. It does not separate this, as a general thing, from our spiritual state and singleness of eye, nor from a process in which we learn our own hearts, are weaned from self and the spirit of the world, and learn more complete dependence on God, and His gracious tender faithfulness; only, that after all we are men and feeble creatures, and He Sovereign, and the One who is to teach us. But surely, beloved brother, we may ever look to be guided by His eye, led by His spirit, suggesting the right thing to do and place to go to. Only our state has a great deal to do with our ascertaining it. “The spiritual man discerneth all things.” And God is full of grace, Paul, if he could not succeed at Antioch, had a revelation to go up to Jerusalem. I know not that at this moment I have more to say to you, only that Paul (Acts 19) was not, I believe, bound in the Spirit, but in spirit—his own. It was the overruling hand of God upon him, not the actual guidance of the Spirit of God. God so ordered it for His own divine purposes. Morally Paul was not going for testimony, but with collections for the saints.

J. N. D.

Chapter 187

The State of the Soul After Death

The state of the soul after death is a subject which deeply interests us all. The rejection of the coming again of Christ to receive the saints, and to judge the earth, before the end of the world, and the losing sight of the distinctive importance given to the resurrection in the New Testament, has given in the common evangelical faith, and that where sound in the main, an absolute character to the vague idea of going to heaven, exclusive of all other conception of happiness and glory. But scripture spoke too plainly of the Lord's coming and the resurrection of the saints, to allow the thought of going to heaven when we die to maintain the absorbing place it held in the minds of the pious. Strange to say, going to heaven is not spoken of in scripture, unless in the one case of the thief upon the cross going to be with Christ in paradise. Not that we do not go there; but the scriptural thought is always going to Christ. Since He is in heaven, of course we go there; but being with Christ, not being in heaven, is what scripture puts forward, and this is important as to the state of the spiritual affections. Christ is the object before the soul, according to the word, not simply being happy in heaven, though we shall be happy and in heaven. I speak of it only as characterizing our habits of thought. Poor human nature is apt to fall into Scylla to avoid Charybdis. It is apt, too, to follow its own thoughts, not simply to receive the word of God. There was a reaction, and the recovered truth of the Lord's coming and the first resurrection obtained an importance in some minds, which eclipsed the going to heaven when we die, too vague, and too little formally scriptural, to satisfy those awakened to search the word. It was stated that the soul sleeps, is unconscious, till the resurrection, even by some who, in the main, were sound in the faith; while with others this notion carried them on to deny not only, the immediate bliss of the departed, with Christ, but that we ever went to heaven, and what constitutes distinctive Christian hope. Alas! soon very many were led to deny the fundamental doctrines of the gospel.

My object now is not to enter into controversy with these last, who deny the immortality of the soul; it has been done, and done very effectually, by more than one; my object is to give a plain scriptural statement and proof from scripture, that there is immediate happiness with Christ for the departed Christian. It is an intermediate state, and so, as to His position as a man, is Christ's, though He be in glory. The departing Christian waits for the resurrection of the body—and then only will he be in his final state in glory. Men speak of glorified spirits, scripture never. The purpose of God as to its is, that we should be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren. “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.” “As we have borne the image of the earthy, “so also we shall bear the linage of the heavenly.” This was exhibited for a moment when Moses and Elias appeared in glory with Christ at the transfiguration. (See Rom. 8:29; 1 John 3:2 1Cor. 15:49; Luke 9:28-36.) This, and to be forever with the Lord, received to Himself in the, Father's house, is our eternal state of joy and glory. This, latter part is seen also in the account of the transfiguration, in Luke, where they enter (Moses and Elias) into the cloud whence the Father's voice proceeded. (See, also 1 Thess. 4:17.) But this is our eternal state, when Christ shall have come and received us to Himself, raised, or changed into His likeness, when our poor earthly body

shall have been fashioned like His glorious body. (Phil. 3:21.) God hats wrought us now already for this selfsame thing, and given to us the earnest of the Spirit. (2 Cor. 5:5.) To be with the Lord and like the Lord forever is our everlasting joy, and that the fruit of God's love, who has Made us His children, and will bring us into the Mansions prepared in our Father's house. Two things belong to us: first, to be like and with Christ Himself; and, secondly, to be blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Him. Redemption has made this ours; but we are not in possession. We have only the earnest of the Spirit, though God has wrought us for that selfsame thing.

The first point, being like Christ, we have already spoken of, though what has been cited there introduces us, with scriptural authority, to the second—so shall we ever be with the Lord. But I add here other proofs of the second point, namely, that our portion is in heavenly places. It is distinctive of believers who have believed and suffered with Him. God, we are told, will gather together in one, under Christ, all things, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth. (Eph. 1:10.) So we read all things were created by Christ and for Christ (Col. 1:16, 20); all things will be put under His feet as man (Heb. 2; 1 Cor. 15:27, 28; Eph. 1:22). But we read in Heb. 2 that ail things are not yet put under Him. He sits now on the Father's throne, not on His own. (Rev. 3:21.) God has said, Sit at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. He is (Heb. 10) expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. The time will come when not only all things in heaven and earth will be reconciled (Col. 1:20), but even things under the earth, infernal things, will be forced to recognize His power and authority. Every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ, the despised and rejected of men, is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. 2:10, 11.) For this we must wait. But in this gathering of all things in leaven and earth under one head, Christ, our part is in heavenly places, and as it is our portion now in spirit, so it will be our part in glory. Nor is there any real separation between these two. Of course we are not in glory now, there is no need to insist on that, but that is our calling now, that which we are redeemed to, and wrought for, and wait for. Now we have the treasure in earthly vessels, and groan, being burdened. When we are out of the body groaning is over, and we are with Christ in joy; when He comes we shall have a body suited to that heavenly place, we shall be in glory. Thus (Eph. 1:8), “He hath blessed its with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ;” 2 Cor. 5:1, “We know that if our earthly house or this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;” Phil. 3:20, “Our conversation (citizenship, our relationship in life as Christians) is in heaven;” and in the same chapter, verse 14, where you have 'high calling,' the true force of the word is calling above, as may be seen in a bible with a margin. We are called to be up above there. So, in Heb. 6:19, 20, we read that Christ is, entered within the veil, that is, heaven itself; ix. 24, and as our forerunner. So, Heb. 3, we are partakers of the heavenly calling. As united to Christ by the Holy Ghost, we are sitting in heavenly places in Christ—not with Him yet, but in Him, that is our place. So, when the Lord comes, He gathers, indeed, as Son of man, out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity. But the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Hence, hoses and Elias not only are manifested in glory on earth, to show the state of the saints in the kingdom, but they enter into the cloud, God's dwelling-place, whence the Father's voice came.

It is thus clear that as God will gather together in one all things, both which are in heaven and on the earth, our part is to be like Christ in glory, and with Him forever, and that in heaven itself, blessed with all spiritual blessings (as Israel with temporal ones) and in heavenly places (as they

in earthly). If we are joint-heirs with Him (Rom. 8:17), we have what is yet better, to dwell in the Father's house where he is gone. Hence it is clearly and distinctly expressed (Col. 1:5) that our hope is laid up for us in heaven, and Peter tells us (1 Peter 1:4) that an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, is reserved in heaven for us. All this clearly show s our blessings are where our hope enters, where our forerunner is gone; what our glory is, celestial, not terrestrial. We shall bear the image of the heavenly, and shall be forever with the Lord. He has gone to prepare a place for us in the Father's house, and will come again to receive us there to Himself. He has declared, “Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am.” One might expatiate on the blessedness of this, the wondrous place given to us, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus! but my object now is to give the scripture statement of our blessedness, and the proofs of it. What I have said gives our calling the same throughout, from the moment we are called, to the glory of eternity. There is no other, there is “one hope of our calling.” God has called us to His own kingdom and glory; we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Their Father's house is the home of His children. But this has not told us, in distinct statements, what the intermediate state is, though it has shown us, as a general principle, where all our blessing is, what redemption has obtained for us. The God of all grace has called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus; wondrous love! but an integral part of Christ's own glory, for what is a redeemer without His redeemed? And once I believe that the blessed Son of God has died for me as man on the cross, nothing that a creature, whose life He has become, can have is too great, as the effect of it.

The whole object of the Epistle to the Hebrews is to show that our portion is heavenly, in contrast with the Judaism which was, and, when Israel is restored, will be, earthly. They had a high priest on earth, because God sat between the cherubim down here. Such a High Priest became us; holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens: why? because our place and portion are with God there. Our place and calling are in the heavenlies. All had to be suited to this; the excellence of the sacrifice and the service of the priest. But how far does the word of God show us our intermediate state, between the time of our being in this tabernacle, in which we groan, and having it glorified, when Christ comes, and shall change our vile body, and fashion it like His glorious body? One we have understood the previous passage, and that our calling and portion are heavenly, all is simple and plain. Our citizenship now and always is in heaven. How far we enjoy it when we die is the only question—more than here, or less? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him (Luke 20:38), though dead for this world, they are for Him as alive as ever, and so for faith. But it is alleged they sleep: There is no ground for this whatever. Stephen fell asleep, that is, died. It was not his soul fell asleep after death; those which sleep in Jesus shall God bring with Him (1 Thess. 4:14), but these (ver. 18) are the dead in Christ. Some have fallen asleep, that is, had died (1 Cor. 15:6), the same word as sleep in Jesus, in 1 Thess. 4 This is contrasted with being alive, in Thessalonians, with remaining to this present, in Corinthians. It is just simply dying, and a beautiful expression to show they had not at all ceased to exist, but would wake up again in resurrection, as a man out of sleep. This is clearly determined in the case of Lazarus (John 11) The Lord says, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth, but I go that I may awake him out of sleep. They thought it was taking of rest in sleep; then said He plainly, Lazarus has died. That is, sleep. means plainly dying, and awaking is not awaking he soul, as if it slept apart, and so leaving it, but bringing back from the state of death by resurrection. A Christian's falling asleep is neither more nor less than dying; a soul's sleeping is a pure invention. People

living upon this earth fell asleep; that is, they died. That is what it means in plain speech, and nothing else, and we do learn clearly in scripture the state of those who die in the Lord. Paul knew that God had wrought him (arid he speaks of it as to all Christians, as their common faith) for glory, and did not wish to die (be unclothed) as if weary, but that mortality should be swallowed up of life.

Christians have Christ as their life, as they have Him as their righteousness, and, this being so, as to death itself (2 Cor. 5:6), they are always confident, knowing that whilst they are at home in the body they are absent from the Lord. Life, eternal life, in Christ they have, but here it lives absent from the Lord, in the earthen vessel; when it leaves the poor earthen vessel, which makes it groan, being burdened, it will be present with the Lord. Is that better or worse, and where is He? Is it, though it has already the Holy Ghost, as the power of life, the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, going to sleep, and knowing nothing? Is that the confidence he had, who saw such a power in this life in Christ, that he was not, as his object, looking to die, but mortality to be swallowed up by it; yet, when it lost the tabernacle which made it groan, it was not capable of anything but helpless sleep And remember Christ is our life; because He lives, we live. Have we lost our connection with Him when we die? Does He sleep in us? Again (Phil. 1) Paul was in a strait betwixt two, to depart and be with Christ, which was far better, dying-mark what he was speaking of—gain, though living with Christ. That is, he, having the blessed joy of knowing Christ was his life, and living entirely for Him, so that it was worth his while to stay, yet found it far better, gain, to go to sleep and know nothing of Christ or anything else not having a thought of Christ or possibility of serving Him, his desire, as to his own joy, was to go to sleep, and know nothing of Christ at all Is it not perfectly evident, that when he speaks of being with Christ, and of its being far better than serving Him here, though that was worth while, he speaks of the joy of being there? Who would think, if I spoke of the satisfaction and gain of going to somebody, and being with him, I meant I was going to be fast asleep, and not know I was there? But we have more: the Lord declares to the thief, who alone of all men, in that memorable hour, confessed Him, that he should be with Him that day in paradise. Was it not happiness He promised him, being with Christ and in paradise? Does that mean that he should be fast asleep, and know nothing? I ask if it be not supremely ridiculous, and flying in the face of the very point of Christ's words. The statement occurs in Luke, who, all through his Gospel, after the first two chapters, which are consecrated to the poor pious remnant who waited for Christ, and give a most lovely picture of them—God's hidden ones in the midst of rebellious and unbelieving Israel—after these chapters, I say, the Evangelist gives the testimony of divine grace in the Son of man, and the present state. He proceeds with the genealogy of Christ up to Adam, and then unfolds, all through his Gospel, the grace that in the Son of man blesses man, and blesses him now, and in a heavenly way.

It is not dispensational, like Matthew, but grace, and present grace, and heavenly grace, by the gospel, the present state of things. It answers, as far as it goes, to the testimony. of Paul and the Acts. Now the poor thief, while a most bright and eminent instance of the power of grace and faith, confessing Christ as Lord, when everything contradicted it, naturally did not go in knowledge beyond his countrymen. He was sure that He who bung upon the cross would come in (not into) His kingdom, and prayed that Christ might remember him then, in blessed confidence in Him. The Lord's answer was, according to the whole tenor of the gospel, You shall not wait for that. I bring salvation by grace; to-day, this selfsame day, you shall be with Me in paradise, the fit companion of Christ in blessedness. This, then, is the portion of the departed saint, to be with Christ in

blessedness, absent from the body, and present with the Lord. I am aware of. the miserable subterfuge, by which it is attempted to read it—verily, I say unto you this day, thou shalt be with Me in paradise. It not only destroys the whole characteristic point of the passage, according to the tenor of the Gospel it is found in, but it perverts the order of the passage, as it destroys its sense. “To-day” is at the beginning of the phrase, to give it emphasis in answer to when Thou comest. There is the solemn assertion, “Verily, I say unto thee.” To add to-day to this is simply puerile destroying withal the allusion to the request of the thief, who only hopes to be remembered when Christ should come in His kingdom. No, says the Lord, with the solemn “verily” which He used, you shall not wait till then, this day you shall be with me. What is the sense of “Verily I say unto thee This day?” It destroys the solemnity of the assertion, but “Verily I say unto thee, This day shalt thou be with me in paradise” more than fulfilled the hopes of the thief, and revealed to us other than earthly joys, when we leave this world to depart and to be with Christ. The wickedness of the Jews, as an instrument, fulfilled the promise in breaking his legs, as it did that in which the work of redemption was accomplished, which gave the poor thief a title to be there. Such, too, was the expectation of Stephen, when death arrested his course here. He saw Christ, and looked to Him to receive his spirit. Did He receive it? And was it only to put an end to his service and joy alike, and put him to sleep?

The intermediate state, then, is not glory (for that we must wait for the body. It is raised in glory, He shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like His glorious body); but it is blessedness, where no unholy evil is. It is being with Christ Himself, the source of joy ineffable. The hopes and “always confident” of Pan], of Stephen, were not disappointed, nor did the assurance given by the Lord to the thief fail of fulfillment. I ask if the bright hopes spoken of in 2 Cor. 5, Phil. 1, in Acts 7, and the Lord's words to the thief, for any honest mind, can mean going fast asleep, and knowing nothing? When the Lord described the state of the rich man and Lazarus, did it mean that either the wicked or the just were asleep, and knowing nothing? I shall be told it is a figurative description. I admit it fully; but it is not a false one, and it is not a figure of men going to sleep and knowing nothing. But, further, if 2 Cor. 5:6-8 means being happy with Christ, it means being happy with Him when we die. Death is the subject spoken of, for the apostle had despaired of life (2 Cor. 1), and absent from the body, and present with the Lord, is not resurrection, it means leaving the body, not taking it; departing and being with Christ is not His coming and raising or changing us to be in glory. The apostle is speaking there again of death, remaining here, or leaving, the world. It was dying which was gain (Phil. 1:21). Life and death are in distinct contrast in verse 20, and then ■ναλ■ω is used for dying (ver. 23), as is ■ν■λυσις (2 Tim. 4:6). The attempt to apply ■ναλ■ω or ■ν■λυσις to Christ's return, because it is used for breaking up from or leaving a festival, is a poor conceit, contradicting the express statements of the passage. The word means disuniting or destroying what is united, and so is used for death. Neither Phil. 1, nor 2 Tim. 4 leave a trace of doubt in the matter. The effort to pervert Luke 23:43 and Phil. 1:20-23 is only a proof that the force of the passage cannot be got over, and the character of the effort to set them aside betrays itself.

How a spirit enjoys Christ we cannot tell as to the manner of it, but there is no difficulty whatever. My spirit enjoys Christ now, in spite of the hindrance of the poor earthen vessel it is in, and though now we see Him not, yet rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is not my body which enjoys Him now, but my soul spiritually, with the hindrance of the earthen vessel, and absent from Him, them without the hindrance of the earthen vessel, and present with Him. The believer may

rest perfectly assured that, departing from the body, he will be present with the Lord, and if His presence is joy to him, that joy will be his. No one would be more anxious to press the Lord's coming, and our waiting for Him, and the importance of the resurrection. I would urge it, as I have urged it, on the saints, and indeed upon all, in its due place; but not to weaken that all live to God, even if they are spirits in prison, nor the excellent joy and blessedness of being with Christ when we depart, that to die is gain. It has justly cheered and shed heavenly light on many a dying bed, and yet will, if the Lord tarry; and the scripture is as plain as to the happiness of the saint on his departure, as to his being with Christ, far better, as to joy, than the most successful service here, as it is that Christ will come and take all His saints to be with Him forever in glory, like Himself, though the latter is the full and final state of eternal blessedness, when the marriage of the Lamb withal shall have come, and when we shall be forever with the Lord.

J. N. D.

Chapter 188

Some Lessons Taught at Sychar

Outside the boundary of Judaea, the Lord found Himself at home by the well of Sychar, in company with a woman, whose name is to us unknown, but whose life at that time He described in a very few words. We know about her from what He told her, and we learn about Him from what He taught her. That her name should be veiled in obscurity was only fitting, but that the previous conduct of the one with whom. He deigned to converse should be recorded, is in perfect harmony with His ways in grace. To have known her by the name she bore amongst men, would have been only to connect that name with a life of infamy and disgrace. To know her as the woman with whom the Lord talked at the well of Sychar, imperishably connects her memory with His dealings in faithfulness and love.

The mention of her name might have recalled her sin and shame, her history now reminds us of His grace. The name of the woman who anointed the Lord in the house of Simon the leper is embalmed in the word, as well as that of the earliest and the latest visitor at the empty tomb on the morning of His resurrection day. With Mary the sister of Martha and Lazarus, and Mary Magdalene, we are all familiar from reading the Gospel by John. To Martha who served, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, who ministered to the Lord of their substance, are we introduced by the sacred historian Luke. But the name of the woman who had outlived five husbands, and seemed willing to end her checkered life in sin, John the evangelist passes over in silence, as his brother historian had done, when recounting the service done to Christ by the woman in Simon the Pharisee's house, and relating the testimony borne to the Lord by the penitent thief on the cross. “Who cares to know their names, but who, that either wants or understands God's grace, would be without those histories, which tell of the attractive power of the Son of God? The character of those drawn to Christ is what we want to know, of the class of persons He would receive we need to be informed.

Their names, if set forth in the word, would add nothing to our knowledge of the Savior; nor could they make us better acquainted with that heart, which found delight in gathering convicted sinners and confiding souls around itself. “Whose those are that He will receive, the broken-hearted penitent wants to learn, with whom He would sit, and to whom the Lord could open out truth, the soul, that has been taught what it is by nature, delights to recall. To dilate on a sinful creature's transgressions is not the purpose for which their wicked ways are mentioned; and, though their evil deeds are noted without any attempt to palliate their guilt, the object for which they are recorded is, not to satisfy the morbid curiosity of creatures as sinful by nature as themselves, but to set “forth in the brightest, fullest way the grace of God, and the graciousness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But, besides that saving grace in which all share who believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's grace to those who have sinned is further manifested in making them vessels for His service, and thus multiplying the channels through which the testimony of His grace and love may flow out to other hearts, and water other souls. And the sequel to that conversation at the well of Sychar illustrates for our instruction, the. ground on which such service should be based, the spirit

in which it should be carried on, and the end which should be sought after; and all taught us, not in a dry didactic way, in the language of schools, or in theological formulas, but in a fresh and vivid way, by examples drawn from real life, even those who there figured in the scene.

And first as to the ground on which such service should be based. Of this the woman is the example. Brought consciously into the presence of One who knew her well, though they had never before met in person, she learned from His lips, that He was the very One whom she had been led to expect—the Messiah, or Christ. “I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things,” was the woman's remark to the Lord in answer to the instruction vouchsafed her about worship. “I that speak unto thee am he,” was the Lord's immediate rejoinder. The Teacher had come, and she had talked with Him. With her own ears she heard His words, of whose coming God's servants of old had kept alive the expectation in the hearts of both Jews and Samaritans. “He will tell us all things” was the estimate she had formed of the Messiah. The One, who there sat by the well, had told her of her present and past life. He had told her likewise of the falsity of the Samaritan worship. He had told her of what He could give. He had told her also about God, and of the worshippers for whom the Father was seeking, and had crowned it all by telling her that He was the Christ.

To each question He had returned an answer. To her expression of surprise at a Jew requesting the ministrations of a Samaritan, He replied by speaking of His willingness to act towards her in grace, and give her living water. To her query, whether He was greater than their father Jacob, He had answered by an announcement of the satisfying nature of the water He could give, a well of water within the recipient springing up into everlasting life. Jacob tapped a spring, He could give the believer a fountain within himself, for the water, which He would give, would become that in the heart of each one into whom it should flow. Asking to have that water, she received in answer a command, which paved the way for dealing with her conscience, by means of which her request would be granted. “Go call thy husband,” the Lord said:” “I have no husband,” was her immediate response. True were the words she spoke, but no attesting witness was needed to confirm them, for the One who bade her to summon her husband, whilst acknowledging the accuracy of her statement, let her see that He was fully acquainted with her ways. His answer made her think that He was a prophet, a messenger from God to deal with the heart when failure had come in. As such she now addressed Him, and interrogated Him on the question of worship, as debated by the Samaritan in opposition to the Jew. To this too He replied in language which she could not misunderstand, and communicated to her that day, that of which the scribes and the chief priests at Jerusalem were in ignorance, the character of true worshippers from henceforth, and their relationship to God whom they would worship. And now, with one more remark from her, and an answer from Him, the work was done in her soul. But what prompted the remark, “I know that Messias cometh which is called Christ; when he is come, he will tell us all things?” Was it unwillingness in her mind, to give up the prejudices of a lifetime on the mere dictum of one whom she deemed to be a prophet? Or was it the lurking expectation, afraid to express itself openly, that her teacher might be the Christ? Whatever it was that prompted her remark, the Lord's, quick rejoinder set her mind at rest, and the approach of His disciples terminated, her interview with the One who sat by the well.

She left Him, but to serve. She came to the well with an empty pitcher, she left it with a full heart. She had gone in her solitude to the spring with her waterpot, she would return with empty vessels

not a few, human hearts, which needed, what she had known, personal intercourse with Messias, the Christ. But what made her a worker in the cause? Was it from the pleasure simply of hearing something new? Was it the fascination of listening to a teacher of commanding ability? Was it the gratification of self, which likes the importance of being the bearer of startling tidings to its fellow creatures? Her tidings were indeed startling. Her communication was news, good news indeed. She had talked with the promised Teacher, the prophet like unto Moses. All this was true. But what made her a worker in the cause was this, her conscience had first been dealt with by the Lord. Heart work in her preceded lip service. And so in real service for Him it must ever be. And just because there was heart work in her, she could not rest contented without saying to the men of that city, “Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Christ?” What she had done, what she was, Christ had told her. A work had been affected in her through intercourse with a living Person. He had spoken to her conscience. He had reached her heart. But if the first worker for Christ in the town of Sychar was, judging after men's thoughts the last person to have been chosen, when we understand God's mind we must own she was the fittest instrument that He could find—a recipient, because needing it, of saving grace.

How simply she worked! She told what she knew, she testified of what she had found, but in connection with a person, “He told me,” thus pointing others to the One who had met with her at the well. But how effectually she did her work! The fields white to harvest, the crowds which went out to Christ were the fruit of His dealing with her conscience, and of her simple tale about it. To stand up and preach was not that woman's work! The twelve and the seventy were commissioned for that service, yet she worked rightly and well, and that without intruding into another's sphere, so that it may be said of her, as of another of her sex, “She hath done what she could.” But her desire and efforts to bring others to Christ, were based, it must be remembered, on the result of the Lord's personal dealing with her soul.

Let us next turn to see, as also exemplified in this history, the spirit in which true service should be performed.

The woman had left the well, the disciples having already rejoined the Lord with the food which they had purchased in the city. The draft of water from Jacob's well, which He had asked of the woman, we read not that Christ ever received. Now, to the food, which the disciples had bought in the city, He seemed indifferent. Yet refreshment and meat He had, as He talked with the woman at the well. “Master eat,” was the request of His disciples, who were now to be taught by Him, whom John tells us they addressed by the Jewish name of Rabbi. The woman had learned her lesson, namely, that Christ had come, and that He had talked with her; the disciples were now to learn theirs, namely, the spirit in which true service should be performed, as illustrated by the example of the Master Himself! For His answer, “I have meat to eat that ye know not of,” told of something which they had not brought, that ministered sustainment to Him. · Unable to comprehend His meaning, their thoughts, like those of the woman, being confined to temporal things, He graciously explained it, as He added; “My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work.” Thus He, the sent One of the Father, shows us what true service is, the simple but faithful performance of the work marked out for the servant by God. How apt are men to be influenced by the manifestation or otherwise of results! The Lord's meat as a Servant was to do the work appointed, whatever the results might be!

Was He insensible to results? Far otherwise. What true servant should be? For, as we here find Jehovah's Servant doing the work allotted to Him; so elsewhere we learn His feelings with reference to the results of His labors in that comparatively sterile field—the returned remnant of God's ancient people. “Then I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught and in vain, yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God.” (Is. 49:4.) Comparing these words of the Lord in Isaiah with those in John, one sees that, though not indifferent to the results of His ministry in Israel, it was not the success of His labors which provided meat for His soul.

Perfect Servant, as perfect is everything else, His meat was to do His will who sent Him and to finish His work. True, in doing it, He must have had joy, a joy we cannot conceive, as He saw one poor sinner's heart opened up by His teaching, like a flower expanding under the warming influence of the sun, and knew that the blessing, communicated to her, would be fruitful in blessing to many a soul in that city. But His meat was found elsewhere. What simplicity, and what faithfulness do these words bring before us, the Master's teaching for His disciples, and that Master Jehovah's Servant, and Jehovah Himself.

Whilst sitting by the well the Lord had ministered to that one poor woman's soul. But now it would seem, lifting up His eyes He saw, and drew the attention of His disciples to the sight, the people trooping out of the city to meet Him. “Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest.” God's blessing on the soil to produce an abundant harvest could not be enjoyed for four months yet, nevertheless there was a harvest to be reaped at once, the result of seed sown long before, which had germinated, and now was rapidly ripening under the presence of Him, who will by-and-by appear to Israel in their land, as the “Sun of righteousness.”

It was harvest time then at Sychar, a harvest time unknown even in the annals of that fertile district. A joyous time is that of harvest even in the natural world: of this the word bears witness (Isa. 9:3); but a joyous thing it also is, when there is a harvest of souls to be reaped. Of this the disciples were now to have experience, but in a way and place quite unexpected. That Judaea, so recently stirred by the preaching of John, should have yielded such results, would not have seemed surprising.” Or that Galilee, in which a welcome reception awaited the Lord (John 4:45), should be the field in which such an operation should first commence, would not have seemed unnatural. But that Sychar, where we read not that John preached, nor the Lord had labored, was to be the field in which the disciples should first have the joy of reaping, must have been most unexpected indeed. “What others have since known they were now to learn, how cheering it is to the heart of a faithful servant of God, when the reaping time arrives, and the laborer or laborers have only to enter on a work made ready to their hands. It is a blessed thing to see souls bowed down under the power of the word, and prepared to take their stand henceforth in God's strength as the servants and true followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The power at such times of those who wield aright the sword of the Spirit seems immense, but they are but men liable to be taken advantage of by the enemy, and so need, like the disciples, the Lord's gentle reminder that to reap is not everything, happy and inspiriting as that service is. Others, as in this Case at Sychar, may have sown the Seed, which at length produces such a bountiful crop. “Herein,” said the Lord, “is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor; other men labored, and ye are entered into

their labors.”

The disciples were but reapers, one set of the servants made use of in that portion of the field. Those who had labored in earlier times, who had there Sown the seed, had passed away; but the Lord does not overlook them, nor allow their labor of sowing to be forgotten in the bright genial days of harvesting. The names of some who Sowed the seed (in this case the hope of Messiah's appearance), the Old Testament may furnish. But who kept alive that expectation in the hearts of the Samaritans by teaching them what was Written in the Word, we cannot now tell, and probably the disciples in their day were almost as ignorant about it as we are; but, whoever they were to whom the Lord referred, He would have us to understand that, neither their names, nor their labors are overlooked by Him. How gracious is this of Him! How encouraging to those who toil during the sowing season, and depart this life without witnessing the joy of harvest, to remember the gracious announcement of the Lord of the harvest, that “he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.”

How apt are men to judge of the laborer's usefulness by the apparent results of his work! How apt too are they, in the time of harvest, to regard the reapers as the one and only class of laborers who have tilled the soil! Not so the Lord. He knows who have plowed up the ground, and sowed the seed during the sunless days of Autumn and Winter, or the blustering days of Spring; and when the harvest is reaped, and the grain gathered into the barn, He will remember them, and own what share they have had in the work carried on upon earth for Him. It is well, it is right, to rejoice when harvest time arrives in any locality; but the time for full joy about it cannot come till a perfect estimate can be made of the crop, and then the sower and the reaper shall rejoice together.

Are we called to sow? Let us work on undaunted, though we see not the fruit of our labors. Are we allowed to reap? Let us work diligently, remembering the responsibility which rests on us, but ever mindful, that others may have a share in a future day in the joy over that harvest we are permitted in the Lord's goodness to reap. What joy, doubtless, would it have been to those of earlier days, who had kept alive the expectation of the Christ, if they had lived here long enough to see Him.

Many prophets and righteous men had desired to see what the disciples saw, but never lived to their day. Will they be deprived of their joy? No. They shall see the day of Christ's glory, and the crop which has resulted from the seed sown by them in patience and under difficulties, known perhaps only to themselves and to God.

All who labor for God upon earth shall see the result of their work. “The sower and the reaper shall rejoice together.” The Lord will not dissociate them, and, though spoken of in a different matter and in a different connection, may we not say, what God hath joined together let not man put asunder? The Lord's word about the laborers are worth remembering, cheering to the sower, sobering to the reaper.

To sow, is to disseminate faithfully the testimony of the day, whatever it may be, which has been committed to God's servants. To reap, is to gather in souls by ministry as the fruit of the seed sown. But who are to reap, and when? This the Lord decides, and here allots to the disciples their portion of work in the field. “I sent you,” &c. Their commission was from Him, and He, who never makes a mistake, did not send them into the field before the crop was ready for their work.

Just come from Judaea where they had had no reaping, they find at Sychar the crop ready for the sickle; for, taught, to expect the Messiah, the Samaritans were willing, when they knew of Him, to receive Him. To have attempted to reap in Judaea would have been to labor to little profit. To have commenced sowing at Sychar would have indicated want of discernment about the condition of souls in that city. To have concluded from their success at Sychar that all Samaria was ready to receive the Lord, would have been manifestly erroneous, as the reception He met with from one of the cities of Samaria at a later period of His life clearly demonstrates. All this surely has a voice, for us, where sowing and reaping go on side by Side. The work in one place is no criterion of what the work in another should be, nor does it follow that the laborer highly blessed in one locality, has only to move to another to find that field also quite ready for his reaping hook.

And now with the Lord's example as teaching for us, and His words to His disciples having a voice for our days, let us look at the action of the woman, and the recorded statement of some of the Samaritans at Sychar, as showing us what should be the end of true service in dealing with souls.

Having learned for herself the value of personal intercourse with Christ, she desired the same for her fellow townsmen, so besought them to come and see the man, who had told her all things that ever she did. She could not rest satisfied with simply telling them of what she had heard, nor whom she had seen. She wanted others to meet Him for themselves. They did so, though first believing on Him for the saying of the woman. Short of that she could not have them rest; short of that they did not stop. True spiritual instinct thus prompted her to bring them to Christ, as that which would settle their souls in the truth about Him. And she received, from the words of those who believed on Him because of His own word, the fullest justification of the correctness of her desire for all her fellow-citizens. “Now we believe,” they said, “not because of thy word, for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.” For here, the words “the Christ” should be omitted. Her testimony was that He was the Christ, theirs that He was the Savior of the world. She had learned from Him who He was. They had learned from His two days' sojourn with them what He was, as meeting their need on the broad ground of grace. All questions of the superiority of Gerizim, over Moriah, were here set aside. All that they had contended for with reference to the Mosaic ritual must have appeared in a new light, for the Savior of the world had come, had sat with them; had taught them, and had convinced them of what He was. Thus their souls were settled on a firm basis, and they could testify of what they had found, as this title of the stranger was firmly fixed on their hearts— “the Savior of the world.” They felt the strength, the comfort, and the security of their position. The woman's witness to Him they knew of. It was correct, but what they had found from intercourse with Him, they could tell of, for they thus had learned what she had not declared. She had done her work in calling attention to Christ. They were established in truth about His person from hearing Him themselves.

The two days' sojourn in that city ended, a bright episode in the Lord's life, without one cloud to overshadow it in Sychar; but it brings into fuller and most painful relief the unbelief of the Jews, which hindered them from sharing in joy as deep, and as real, as that of these Samaritans.

The Christ had been at Jerusalem, but they had not discerned Him. The Savior of the world had moved in and out among them at the passover, but they had not discovered it. Just what is witnessed every day still, is it not? That when souls in different places are getting blessing, and learning for themselves what it is to have intercourse with Christ, others very near them, it may be,

are strangers to their joy, the eye still shut, and the heart still ignorant about Him. To open their eyes, and to lead such to Christ may be work graciously given them to do.

Let the woman, and the Lord, and the Samaritans be illustrations how to labor aright, and in dependence on divine strength and wisdom, successfully for Christ with souls. c. e. s.

Chapter 189

The Testimony of Our Lord

THERE is a difference, I judge, between what is called “the present testimony,” and “the testimony of our Lord;” and, further, between this and “the testimony of our Lord,” in its external and kingdom character, of which Paul writes to Timothy, when all in Asia had turned away from him.

Present testimony, for example, may be, and I suppose was, the subject on which the prophets of the Old Testament wrote to Israel, as meeting their then state, whether in the days of Isaiah, Haggai, or Male-chi, as distinguished from the testimony of Jehovah Himself, when He dwelt with the people of Israel in the wilderness, with Moses and Aaron; or in Canaan, with Joshua and Eliezer: or in the days and reign of king Solomon, when Jehovah filled the temple with His glory, and entered into that rest with the redeemed nation.

Whatever the character of “the present testimony” of the prophets was, as varying to suit the declension and final departure marked on the sliding-scale of Israel's apostasy; yet the original testimony to Jehovah Himself, and His purpose to lead and establish His people in unfailing blessing (as well as to judge and destroy all their enemies, from Pharaoh to Antichrist) was introduced, and shone out brightly here and there, to sustain the faith of the remnant, and guide their hopes to a yet future day.

Isaiah was called forth, to declare to Israel in his prophecy their state as a worshipping people, when tested by “the throne, high and lifted up, and the holy, holy, holy One” —for this was their relation to God in privilege, as their Jehovah. Long after this came Ezekiel, whose ministry was characterized by “the glory of the God of Israel,” and when this was also applied as a measuring-line, and cast over the nation and people morally, it ended in judgment and condemnation. The testimony both to “the throne of the Holy One,” and to “the glory” which followed them in the wilderness, and dwelt with them in the city of Jerusalem, was violated and forfeited. Like Isaiah in his day, so Ezekiel saw the glory depart, and became the witness of the sad consequences to the rebellious people—nevertheless, he prophesied of its return with the Messiah, and the nation's ultimate blessing, when the whole world shall be filled with the glory of God. Thus, in the ministry of the prophets, we get present testimony, and yet the original and future testimony of Jehovah to Himself connected therewith, in His unfailing power and goodness.

When we open the New Testament, we find the same distinction maintained in the ministry of Jesus and His disciples, as regards “the testimony of the kingdom of God,” which was then preached to the Jews, and presented in the person of Christ. He took the highest place in it on earth, when on the Mount of transfiguration with His disciples, He shone forth as the sun in majesty and glory—all was ready on His part. This testimony to the “Son of man coming in His kingdom” was changed, however, and became “present testimony,” by the parables of our Lord in Matt. 13, because it had to do also with the state and condition of the nation, in their then alienation of heart from Jehovah-Messiah.

Consequent on the rejection of Christ and the kingdom, and His exaltation at the right hand of God, as “Head over all things to the church, which is His body,” it is obvious that any and all subsequent testimony must suit itself to the glory of His person as sitting there; and if in full manifestation, as embracing both the heavens and the earth. The counsels of the Father's love (which had been hidden in God), and His outward government, henceforth take the double character of what was visible and invisible in their communication to men; or seen and not seen. The Second Man, accordingly, as the rejected King and Lord, crowned with glory and honor by God in heaven, became the subject of external and general testimony to the world, which had crucified Him; whether as making known the riches of God's grace, for life and salvation, through faith now, or as the coming King, whose claims and titles will be established by God in power and judgment; so that “every knee shall bow to him, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Besides this outward and general “testimony of our Lord” and His Lordship, there is (as has been expressed) the internal or hidden testimony to the church which is His body, and confined by the Holy Ghost to those who are, by grace and heavenly calling, the members of Christ in life; and brought into this unity one with another by the baptism of the Spirit. These two kinds of witness are plainly seen in the various epistles of Paul and others; that is, the external and internal testimony of our Lord. For in. stance, “that the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear,” as an outward testimony; and “the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began,” as the gathering testimony into the unity of the Spirit.

In applying these remarks to a given epistle (namely, the 2nd to Timothy), may it not be that Paul goes over with his “son in general faith” the constituent parts of this outward and general “testimony of our Lord, and of Paul his prisoner,” of which Timothy was not to be ashamed, &c. ? an external testimony, not only to every creature under heaven, but to professors then or now, and also suited to “the last times,” of which the epistle treats; beginning from “a promise of life in Christ Jesus,” and extending to His future coming as “the Judge of quick and dead, at his appearing and his kingdom.” The whole breadth, in short, of what makes up Christianity in external testimony, reserving the revelation of “the mystery” of the Head and the Body for other epistles, like the Colossians and Ephesians; and not even introducing it here, with “the great house, and its vessels to honor and dishonor.” Does not this epistle contain a public and important side of “the testimony of our Lord,” about which Paul exhorts his son in the faith? If it does, it is easy to see in what this testimony consists, in its various chapters, as an external witness to men of the displacement of the first Adam by the appearing of the Second; and then of His resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God to take the kingdom, till He returns as the Judge.

Reference has already been made to the opening': “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life; which is in Christ. Jesus.” Also, “God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love, and of a sound mind,” for its public declaration. And, “be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel, according to the power of God.” These verses declare another life in Christ Jesus, promised by God, which has by the incarnation long ago passed out of promise into accomplished fact, and of external public manifestation to the world. Life and incorruptibility have been brought to light by the appearing of Jesus Christ. God maintains by power and courage in

His servants what qualifies them to be the witnesses to Christ, and to this eternal life in Christ, which necessarily set aside the first man, not only as to the counsels of God, but now, in fact, as to his sin-life and nature. The pre-Adamite Man in divine philosophy is Christ. A second Man in Adam's world, walking through it as the life and the light of men in quickening power, cast down all the pretensions of mankind, and raised the persecutions and afflictions which came upon Paul, and in which he exhorted Timothy to be a partaker. God's “own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began,” and by which we “are saved, and called with an holy calling, not according to our works,” reduced the creature down to clay in the hands of the potter, and is the next part of this testimony of our Lord. To this is added what Christ did on the cross, as the ground of God's new action in grace towards us, for eternal salvation and effectual calling.

The appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ has made this “purpose of God” manifest in fact. This testimony of our Lord also affirms that He has “abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel;” of which Paul was appointed a teacher, and an apostle, and a teacher among the Gentiles, for the obedience of faith. The confidence and assurance of Paul are then stated. “I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded be is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day.” He also exhorts Timothy to hold fast the form of sound words, and to keep that good thing which was committed to him by the Holy Ghost.

We have thus the qualifications which God knew to be needed, and which He provided, that the testimony of our Lord in itself might be preserved uncorrupted through “faith and love which is in Christ Jesus,” and that the witnesses might not be ashamed or afraid in delivering it. Looked at in relation to God and to the Lord, it would, in effect, turn the world upside down, and finally turn Satan out of it; even as it had put aside man as self-sufficient, in all his pretensions of life, wisdom, or righteousness—because Christ, and the purpose of God in Him before the world was, have come in to take effect. God's new order in His new creation is this— “Christ is all, and in all.”

A double testimony, which thus makes nothing of man, except to save him, and which makes everything of the Second Man in the efficacy of His death, as coming into it, to abolish it and sin too; a testimony which affirms His titles and prerogatives as Judge and only Lord (now that “He is raised from the dead,” and gone back to the Father in glory) was too revolutionary and extreme to be entertained. Those even who had embraced this testimony (purposed by God in grace and wisdom before the world was, and now brought into it by sovereign power, through the appearing of Christ) had turned away from Paul. This record ends the first chapter, the refusal of the testimony is complete as regards those in Asia.

“Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” and remember Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, raised from the dead according to my gospel—are the subjects of the second chapter— “wherein,” as Paul says, “I suffer trouble as an evildoer, even unto bonds; but the word of God is not bound.” Jesus and the resurrection (as forming another part of this public testimony of our Lord), whether among the Jews at Thessalonica, or among the Athenians at Areopagus, was not only a new doctrine, but led to the accusation that the apostle was “a setter forth of strange gods” by preaching it. Jesus and His appearing, by which he brought life and incorruptibility to light, was the resource of those who were under the law of sin and death: and also was the avowal on the part of God to rescue man out of the fallen and sinful state he was in.

“Jesus and the resurrection” proved also the rejection by the world of the One who had come into it. Philosophy at Mars' hill was overthrown by this “strange god,” who had entered by incarnation, and departed out of the world by ascension. Corrupted Judaism was overturned as a religion on the earth, which had not kept these prophetic records of Jesus and the resurrection, as its divine deposits and treasures. That He had abolished death, and brought life and incorruptibility to light, were new doctrines, and strange things, even to the nation of Israel; and to the Gentile prisoners, who were groaning in their chains, fast bound in the snare of the devil, and led captive by him at his will. The whole world was turned against its Deliverer and Lord.

A new and heavenly association with Christ, through His own death, and our death made good in His resurrection, is the next part of the testimony— “therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory. It is a faithful saying, for if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with him,” &c. But now, as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, and the testimony of Jehovah's power, when the typical rod in Egypt wrought their deliverance from Pharaoh; so do Hymenaeus and Philetus, and men of corrupt minds, resist divine truth, and become reprobate concerning this faith and its glorious triumphs, presented to them by the appearing and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. Paul is himself in chains. The righteous judgment of God must finally accomplish by power this “testimony of our Lord” on behalf of those who wait for the salvation which is in Christ with eternal glory. Therefore Paul charges Timothy, “before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom,” to preach the word, and be instant in season and out of season. The outward and visible witness to the glory of Christ's person, and His rights, titles, and prerogatives made good in resurrection, will thus be established another day, and manifested in “his kingdom” of power and public rule, when all His enemies shall be trodden under foot. There is another King, one Jesus, to come in, “clothed with a vesture dipped in blood.”

Paul, the prisoner of the Lord in this world, will receive and wear “the crown of righteousness” in that which is to come at that day; and not to him only, but to all them also that love His appearing. Is not this the nature of Paul's preaching, in its external and kingdom character?

The roaring lion would have swallowed up this witness of “the testimony of our Lord,” brought in against the “liar and murderer from the beginning.” “Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me,” Paul says, “and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.”

In the confidence of “Jesus and the resurrection,” and the Lord's appearing to “judge the quick and the dead,” in the coming kingdom; Paul accepts the sentence of death below, “keeps the faith, fights the good fight,” knowing that there is laid up for him a crown of life and righteousness with the King of kings, and Lord of lords, in that day of unfailing and eternal glory. Thus the circle of external testimony is complete in its constituent parts respecting the Lord Himself, by His appearing—His rejection—His death—His resurrection—His reappearing as Judge of quick and dead, and as the rewarder (of a crown of righteousness) to those who enter with Him into His kingdom and glory. The kingdom, and its outward public manifestation, is a Subject of testimony in 2 Timothy, as well as of its fulfillment.

The church, the body of Christ, is the unseen bride of His own affections, to be displayed in the Father's kingdom, when the marriage of the Lamb shall come and the bride have made herself

ready. She has veiled herself from outward gaze in the meanwhile, and does not at present form part of the public testimony of her Lord, in the times of the great house, and of evil men and seducers! The elect, who are called to obtain the salvation of Christ with eternal glory, are in the secret of the mystery, and in the enjoyment of the Bridegroom's love; in the blessed hope of His voice from the mountain tops, and the shout that shall call them up to meet Him, and be like Him, and, be with Him. Till then “we are the epistle of Christ,” known and read of all men.

This may mark the difference between this external testimony of our Lord in 2 Timothy to the world, and the inward or gathering power of the epistles to Ephesus and Colosse; and between things seen and unseen. Yet their combination is essential, as constituting the entire testimony to our blessed Lord, whose glory fills the heavens above and the earth beneath, and in which He establishes finally both the church and the kingdom. J. E. B.

Chapter 190

The Unjust Steward

Q. Luke 16 What is the bearing of this opening parable? The unjust steward was commended: wherein lay the wisdom for the children of light to learn by?

A. Luke 15, in its three parables sets forth God's ways in grace with the sinner in character, activity, and effect. Chapter 16 shows the way of a disciple in grace, now that man (especially Israel or man in privilege and under covenant with God) is viewed as no longer God's steward, because of his unfaithfulness. Probation under law is closed. Prudence is the point singled out for our imitation in the otherwise censurable house-manager whose occupation was gone. It is no longer a question of rendering as a responsible man in flesh the fruits to God who demanded them as the One to whom all is due, but of sacrificing the present in view of the future. The steward, not now accredited by his lord, does not appropriate the money, however dishonest he may be; he cannot dig, for he has no longer even the lend to till; too proud of the place he had lost, he is ashamed to beg. The discarded and outcast Jew can only for the time to come betake himself to sharp and shrewd and clever overreaching. Has it not been verified to the letter?

But what is the profit to which the Lord turns his prudence? Man's title is null; but in fact earthly things are still in his hand. The disciple then, if prudent after a heavenly sort, will not seek to accumulate or retain the means many men call his own; he will profit by the rich grace of God who does not call to asceticism, while He delivers him from selfishness. For him as for Israel of the age to come it is no question of a state of things that shall not pass away; but on the contrary all judged and soon to give place to the kingdom which shall not be moved, with its “heavenly things” (John 3) for those who meanwhile are dead and risen with Christ. Hence what the steward did knavishly disciples are to do by grace. Knowing that the fashion of this world passes, the eye is on the everlasting dwellings; and instead of disposing of the world as their own (the true meaning of καταχρ■μενοι in 1 Cor. 7:31, not “abusing” but using for oneself even if there were no misuse whatever. See also 1 Cor. 9:18), and so either hoarding or selfishly enjoying, they give away right and left, thus making to themselves friends with the mammon of unrighteousness. Thus is one of the greatest snares (for the love of money is a root of all evil) turned into a Means of benefiting man, glorifying God, and proving that one's heart is not in the covetous present of fallen condemned man, but in the heavenly future of God. It is the character of those who get to heaven, not the means of being delivered from hell.

Chapter 191

Waiting and Working for Christ

(Matt. 25:1-29.)

In these two parables we see evidently the Lord dealing with the responsibility of those who have been called out for Him, some of them not only called but called upon to act, whether in thoughts, or feelings, or outward actions, in reference to His return to them.

The coming of the Lord is not merely some special doctrine, but is what ought to, and at first did, characterize the Christian, not merely the fact that He will come again (every person that calls himself a Christian believes that): the present expectation of the Lord characterizes the Christian. Here they went out to meet the bridegroom. Again the Apostle says of the Thessalonians that they were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven—they were converted to wait. So in Matt. 24, it was not that they denied His coming. “But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming:” it ceased to be a present expectation. So with the virgins, “they all slumbered and slept:” it was not given up as a truth (though in fact it has been given up in a great measure), but it ceased to be a present expectation. Therefore when the Lord is exhorting His disciples He says (Luke 12:35), “Let your loins be girded about, and your light burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord.” Then He adds, “Verily I say unto you that he shall gird himself and make them to sit down to meat and come forth and serve them.” He ministers to their blessedness. What I press then is, that the more you look at the scriptures, more you see that it was constantly as a first principle before the hearts of the saints.

The Thessalonians were not converted above a month. The apostle was only a few weeks with them; a persecution arose, and he was sent away, yet there he had fully brought it before them. There is no epistle so full of the Lord's coming as the two to the Thessalonians, the first as to the joy of the saints (the Lord taking them to Himself), the second the solemnity of His coming in judgment. They were quite recently converted to God, yet they had learned all this. It was the thing brought before their souls: “Ye turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.” Two things characterized them; they went out to meet the bridegroom, and they served Him meanwhile. They were like unto men that wait for their Lord. As we all know, even unconverted men know perfectly well, if saints were waiting for Christ their whole lives would be changed. There is not a man does not know it. Do you think people would be heaping up money, or dressing themselves in finery to meet the Lord? If this was acted upon, it would change everything in our lives; that is what the Lord gave it for. “Let your loins be girded about” —a figure for all the heart in order, the state you are always to be in—like a porter at the door, “that when he cometh and knocketh they may open unto him immediately.” That is what the Lord looks for in the saints.

This truth is everywhere strikingly presented all through 1 Thessalonians. This characterized them there. Their faith to God-ward was spread abroad: the world was saying, “What an extraordinary set of people! They have given up all their idols (and you can have idols without being heathen) and have got one true God, and expect His Son from heaven to take them up there. The world was

in one sense preaching the gospel, declaring what these things were. Because they were waiting for His Son from heaven, their, walk and ways in respect of that became a testimony that all the world talked about. They were persecuted for it, but that is another thing. In the second chapter he speaks of the coming in connection with joy in service, Ye are my crown and joy—I shall have it when the Lord comes, “for what is our hope or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?” In the third chapter it is connected with holiness, “To the end he may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.” He is looking for the practical effect in conduct. Then in the fourth chapter he explains how they will go up. “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.” As He was coming to execute judgment (I mean on the living) so when Christ comes to judge this world, we come with Him: a blessed part of it—our thorough association with Christ. He still speaks in the same way in the fifth chapter where it is more judgment and the day of the Lord, with some remarkable signs. “For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night, for when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them as travail upon a woman with child, and they shall not escape.” The elements of the thing are seen now, the full time is not yet come, but it is a solemn thing. It seems a contradiction. People are saying, Peace, peace; yet their hearts are failing them for fear and for looking after those things that are coming on the earth. It is just what is going on now. Progress, progress, everybody says, and yet all in confusion, and they do not know what is coming.

But my desire now is to look at it as to the saints. All the Epistles (except Galatians and Ephesians) take up this; and the Gospels. When the Lord was comforting His disciples, how does He begin? “Let not your heart be troubled.... I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again” —the thing He first of all holds up. My object is to show the way the word of God kept it before the hearts of the saints, that they might live in that expectation. When the Lord was ascending to heaven, the angels say, “Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner.” If the Lord was leaving comfort in the hearts of His disciples when going away, He says, “I will come again and receive you unto myself.” If angels are comforting them, they say, “He shall so come in like manner.” It is thus practically pressed on the disciples. The last word in scripture is, “Amen, even so come Lord Jesus.”

Accordingly the more you look into scripture, the more you will see not merely that it is a truth taught, but a truth held up before the hearts and minds of the disciples that they should habitually be looking for the Lord. It would change everything; it is no use saying it would not: every unconverted person knows it would. They would do their ordinary duties of course, and be the more diligent in them. This is the special blessing in Luke 12: “Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching.” He ministers to them heavenly blessing. Then when He goes on to service, “Who then is that faithful and wise servant whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” When I get the state of the heart, watching for Christ, it is heavenly blessedness with Him: when I get service, it is the kingdom.

Thus we see here or elsewhere in the word of God the coming of the Lord is kept as a present thing before the heart. If I take the unconverted person, there cannot be a more solemn thing than

to be kept in constant expectation—he cannot say the Lord will not be here to-night. The Lord alone knows when He is coming. They were to wait for Him. If the saints were waiting, there would be the testimony; and do you not think the unconverted would find it out? They might hate and persecute them: but they would know that the saints had something that they had not, something which characterized them in their walk and affections. Two things are needed for this. There are two characters in which the Lord comes: He takes them to be with Himself; and then comes the question of judgment. First then the judgment must have no kind of fear or terror for me; but on the other hand, to really expect Him, the coming One must be the object of my affections and my delight. If you told me some Prussian was coming, I would not care about that; but if it was my wife or my mother, how different! To have it really as our desire then, all questions as to judgment must be settled, and we must have our affections on the Lord. We get this by the first coming of the Lord. “We wait for His Son from heaven-even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come. There is wrath coming; but we know the Lord's coming is before the scene of judgment, and it is the coming of the One who has wrought salvation: we wait for the One who has delivered us. Judgment to me is not a subject of fear.

A word on this: what God has done in the coming of the Lord Jesus (I speak of His first coming) is this—all that would have to be dealt with in judgment at His second coming has been, for the believer, so dealt with on the cross: He who is to come as judge has come as the Savior. That is what I get in the gospel. He Who is to come as judge has come in an Entirely different way and character: He has come as a Savior. “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself;” “He hath made him to be sin for us Who knew no sin.” Suppose I believe the testimony that the Lord is coming and am not ready fat it, I fear judgment; then I turn to the first coming and see He has delivered me from the wrath to come. God has dealt with the world as to its sins in grace before He deals with it in judgment. He deals with them as sinners as responsible and lost, but not in judgment—He came “to seek and to save that which was lost.", Suppose my heart looks then at Christ, I ask, and this is important, How was it He came into the world? Your sins. But what was His motive in coming? What put it into God's heart to send Him? “Was it any asking of mine? Any wish I had for Him? None. When He did come, they rejected Him. Thus I am brought to the simple blessed truth “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son.” I get the knowledge of what was in God's heart has proved by His acts: He has thought of my state when I was a mere sinner and needed His love— “God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.” I have thus the heart of God as the spring and source of all this—that His own Son has become a man, and has put away the sin, that He would have to judge me for if He had not so put it away. I get Him as a Savior before He becomes a judge. Just see the place this sets Us in. I see God occupied with my sins already on the cross. When? Long ago. I learn this as a fact that He has been thus occupied with them: He knows all about me. I see Him there bearing my sins in His own body on the tree, and faith says, “The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all.” He bore my sins; He sweat great drops of blood at the thought of it, but He has done it, and was made a curse, in the same blessed love. He has bowed His head under the weight, this terrible weight, and goes through it. All was against Him. Satan's power was there—broken by it, but still there; and all that God is against sin. Thus He goes down to death and the grave, and is risen in glory now. Where are all the sins He bore? Does He bear them in glory?

I get this truth then, that the Savior has thus given Himself for me, and God has been occupied with my sins before Christ comes as judge. The Apostle speaks of it as the “terror of the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:10, 11.) But when the believer comes before the judgment-seat, he finds there the Person who has put away all his sins, and has the peaceful settled consciousness that his sins are all gone— “Having made peace through the blood of his cross.” God has attested the value of it by raising Him from the dead and setting Him at His own right hand: and has given you the peace that you might believe and know the love that God has to you. “When I see the blood, I Will pass over you.” He has set forth Christ a propitiation, and instead of fearing His coming I rejoice. I could not desire His coming if A stranger: but we see the way Christ has interested and brought back our hearts. “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.” Out and out Christ has given Himself for us, not only His life—His precious blood—but Himself. Then I find One who loved toe and purged my conscience. (Heb. 9:14.) And not only is my conscience perfectly purged, but my heart is free to be on Him, because I have learned the perfect love of Him who gave Himself for me.

Now I get the flow of blessed affections: the Lord Jesus is coming—now I care for it! The One whose visage was more marred than any man's, who loved us, and charged Himself to put away our sins, who drank the bitter cup and has taken away my terror—taken it away justly too. That is where the believer is. Then I say, Oh what I would give to see Him! the One who hung upon the cross for me, where Satan's power was and God's wrath, but a love stronger than death! Nothing stopped Him, the love with which He loved us, going through that which no heart can fathom—the bitterness of death and the cross. It is finished and done. And the One who thus loves me becomes the object of an affection which completely commands the heart. The heart longs and desires to see Him, and He gives the blessed assurance that we shall see Him, and, what is more, be like Him. “We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.”

The thing then that is set out before the Christian is, that Christ Himself will come. He is Waiting now, but He will come and receive us to Himself, that where He is, we may be also. And therefore the heart waits thus; Christ is waiting, expecting till His enemies be put under His footstool. He is not slack concerning His promise. As to the desires of our hearts, I am waiting to see Christ, to be like Christ, and I have the certainty of it because I have His word— “We know that when he shall appear,” &c.

These are the two things that make the heart ready, to be in a condition to wait. His first coming to salvation. “The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared,” and “looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and Our Savior Jesus Christ who gave himself for us.” The grace of God has brought salvation. We have the whole Christian life summed up; denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope—grace has appeared and brought salvation and we look for glory. The passage sums up the whole condition, only that besides the Holy Ghost is given us that He may be the earnest of the inheritance.” A Christian is a person who stands between the first coming of Christ (the Holy Ghost dwelling in him) and the second coming. He looks back at the perfectness of what Christ has done, and he looks forward to be with Him and like Him, while he is expecting just as a mother would expect her child from afar country: (she is constantly expecting because her heart is on the one that is coming). That is what forms the affections to be Waiting for

Christ to take us out of the world. The friendship of the world is enmity with God; our hearts with Him, we are waiting to be taken out of it. The Christian has to wait God's time, yet knowing the value of Christ's first coming as taught of God, and, the Holy Ghost dwelling in him, he has learned to love that One and is waiting for Him. Salvation is accomplished, and the hope certain because Christ has accomplished it. Thus we have seen the blessed ground Upon which the Christian has his hope, that is, the value of the first coming of Christ as a Savior. We get this so distinctly, that the whole object of His coming in judgment has been met for the believer by His coming in grace. Now His coming again is to us all joy and blessedness—He comes, and raises or changes us, and makes us like Himself in the glory: the first coming gives the ground.

Now when you come to apply it, just there is what we have in the parable of the virgins: there is the spiritual warning of the appearance of Christ. “While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.” I press this, that you will find—so careful is the Holy Ghost to keep this thought as a present expectation—that neither in this parable nor elsewhere does He present a circumstance which would force a person to put it beyond his own lifetime. Thus as to the form of the parable the virgins that went to sleep are the virgins that awoke. Similarly in that of the servant. The Holy Ghost will never give anything beforehand, so as to weaken the present expectation: it is a moral thing affecting the condition of the soul. The evil servant says, “My Lord delayeth his coming.” That is the judgment of the professing church.

But to apply Î the parable before us individually— “they went out to meet the bridegroom.” That was their business, what characterized them. All had their torches, their profession: the foolish had no oil. “The bridegroom tarried:” now I get the fact, not what ought to be, but what was, for all slept. How is it, it is asked, that men 1800 years ago saw nothing of it? They all slept, wise as well as foolish— “while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.” They slept together, they woke together. What would be the meaning of separating them while asleep? But the moment they woke at the cry, “Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him,” He calls them back to the place they were Originally in. “Then all those virgins arose and trimmed, their lamps” —immediately they had some work to accomplish. Now comes the separation: “And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil for our lamps are gone out.” After the awakening cry the Bridegroom delayed long enough to test the heart whether there was that real grace which kept the heart waiting for Him. Now it was the time of judgment, not of their getting oil; they were not fit to go in. Here it takes the character of warning: while they all went to sleep together, the moment they were awoke to the fact of not having grace, they could not stand. There could not be a more solemn warning.

“Blessed is that servant whom the Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.” “Watch therefore, for ye know not the day nor the hour.” Now let me ask, Is that so in your case? Are your affections enough upon Christ to be watching for Him, because you do not know the moment, still watching for Him (for “we shall not all sleep") so that if He came you could say, This is the Lord, we have been waiting for Him? Are your hearts actively waiting, set on His coming, bowing to God's ways as to the time, but still waiting as to your hearts' affections for Christ, your lamps burning, your loins girded, so that you could open to Him immediately if He was to come this moment? It is the state of the heart I look to, so that if Christ were to come this moment, it would be that which you were looking for. Then will all His saints be with Him, and all glorified.

Now the other thing is service. The chapter 12 of Luke gives us not only watching but serving. So here (Matt. 25:14-30), it is the servant. You get more of the sovereignty of God here than in the analogous parable in Luke, where it is more the responsibility of man. Here the Lord gives to every man according to his several ability; to one five talents, to another two, &c. Every one will be responsible for his wealth, but this is not a talent. The talents are what Christ gave when He was going away. He gave gifts—apostles, prophets, and so on. He did not give money! I quite admit the responsibility of it, but it is not the point here.

Thus then, when Christ went away, He called His own servants and gave them according to their ability. When He comes back, He reckons with them." He that had received five talents made them other five: he that had received two had also gained two. But their lord was dealing in grace and wisdom, and says to both alike, "Enter thou into the joy of thy lord." Then comes the third: what characterized him was want of trust in the character of his master. It was not a question of not having oil in his lamp, but he says "I knew thee that thou art an hard man," &c. He did not know the blessedness of the grace that is in Christ's heart. The others had the mind of Christ; they trusted His heart, and were therefore good and faithful servants. Thus I find the responsibility of service resting upon the knowledge of the heart of Christ. One said, "I was afraid and went and hid thy talent in the earth;" he judged by his own selfish heart; the others trusted the heart of their master and acted on it. He trusts us if it is only a cup of cold water, or the gift of an apostle; He trusts His servant and expects him to act. If you have five talents, trade with them; if a cup of cold water, trade with it. I get this blessed principle that, perfect grace having been exercised and you see how it is so, the heart in cheerful readiness trusts the grace—trusts the Lord Himself.

Now take the case of Peter, and you will see how it is connected with the conscience. Peter had to learn himself; he had confidence in himself and it all broke down; he little knew Christ. And now just see how the Lord deals with him. He says, "Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not," and it did not fail. He needed to be sifted: it was good for him, as it is often for us, to be sifted and humbled. If he had been left to himself, it would have been all over with him. But here was the Lord just going to be crucified, answering for Himself against His bitter enemies: but you never find Him in any place or circumstances where, if one wanted Him, His heart was not free to go out to the need. He looks at Peter, whose heart is broken down: he caught the Lord's eye just at the right moment, and weeps bitterly for his sin. Now, when He comes back to Peter, there is another lesson. He says, Well, Peter," lovest thou me more than these?" That is what he boasted of doing. He does not say, Why did you deny Me? but "Lovest thou Me?" &c. He tests Peter's heart to get it right with Him. "Thou knowest all things," says Peter, "Thou knowest what is at the bottom of my heart." And then, when thoroughly humbled in the dust about the sin, Peter is given to take care of the things dearest to Him. As soon as He had entirely broken Peter down, and taught him not to trust in himself, then He says, If you love Me, feed my sheep. In the exercise of perfect grace He trusts Peter, because He had taught Peter not to trust himself. Look now how Peter stands up and says to the Jews, "Ye have denied the Holy One and the Just." Did he blush? He can bring the very things he had done himself on their conscience. Why? Because his conscience is as white as snow. He had learned to trust His love. He can charge them with the sins he had done himself; his conscience is purged. He has been thoroughly probed, but he can through the work of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost stand up and speak of his own terrible sin. Just as I can say to a sinner, You are lost in your

sins; that is what I was myself.

It is this confidence in Christ that is the spring of all true service; that entire blessed confidence in the grace of Christ—His heart for us who are unworthy of anything. He has trusted us, and the heart trusts Him, and the servant goes on to serve Him and trade with His talents; with the consequent effect that we enter into the joy of our Lord, with Him and like Him, in the sense of His love because He is love. And there will not be a soul that it will not be my delight to see there. I am sure that after the glory of Christ Himself it is the next best thing to see the saints with Him and like Him. What is the great desire of the heart now but to see them as like Christ as possible? Then it will be perfectly. He comes and takes us there, and brings us into His joys— “enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”

If you want to go on well and brightly then, it is resting on the perfect work of Christ at His first coming (the Holy Ghost dwelling in us), and looking for that blessed hope with true liberty of service, and the confidence that, when He comes, it is to enter into that blessed place of joy with Him. It is His own joy that He gives. The joy of our hearts is to think that He is coming, and soon, to receive us to Himself The Lord give you to understand that the soul stands in the efficacy of His work at His first coming, so that with unclouded confidence you may look for His second coming, saying, “Even so come Lord Jesus.” The state of a soul in the church really hangs upon that: the simple constant blessed expecting of Christ to come for us.

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