BIBLE TREASURY VOLUME 8

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Bible Treasury Volume 8, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

279 Chapters

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Chapter 0

Bible Treasury Volume 8

Letter on 1 Corinthians 9:27

My dear friend and brother, I have no hesitation in saying that ■δ■κιμος (translated in the E. Bible “a castaway”) must be interpreted in each occurrence according to the nature and requirements of its context. It means disapproved on trial, which may be absolute or relative. This I freely grant. The question is, what is the necessary sense in 1 Cor. 9:27?

It seems to me very plain that the apostle means in the strictest and fullest way a disapproval of the person, emphatically so, and not a mere condemnation of his service but in contrast with it. He supposes that there might be the preaching to others without a single flaw or drawback specified (i. e., the work all right), but the person ■δ■κιμος. What has hindered many in ancient times, and yet more since the Arminian controversy, is the fear of weakening divine grace, and of compromising the security of the believer.

But this is a groundless fear; for it is no question of a believer, but of a preacher. It is supposed that the person preaches well enough, but there is no self-judgment, no keeping of the body under, no practical holiness-consequently, no faith or conscience before God, no jealousy for Christ, no fear to grieve the Holy Spirit. It is a man unrenewed, therefore, though possibly not a bad preacher, nor lacking in zealous work.

This was the snare laid for the Corinthians, In the eyes of some, gift and work were all, the will and grace and holiness of Christ practically of no account.

Why then does the apostle speak of himself hypothetically rather than of them directly? Because he was led of the Spirit with the finest sense of delicate consideration. He preferred out of love to put it in his own case. Not, as too many imagine, that he had the least doubt or fear as to himself; not that a single text raises the smallest anxiety about any one possessing life in Christ. Whoever throws off restraints, and lives contrary to Christ, may preach as well as you like, but will certainly be lost, were it Paul himself: as he says in chapter 4 of this Epistle, he has transferred the application to himself, if not to Apollos. But it is purely hypothesis, which in fact was as far as possible from Paul, but which he thus applied to himself, if he walked recklessly, for the warning of some of the Corinthians. It is hardly so strong as Heb. 12:14, 15, from which we must not be driven either by abuse or by ignorance: nor must we force it like those who would pervert the warnings given to professors of Christ into opiates for Christians.

Ever yours affectionately,

Chapter 2

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Chapter 3

Babylon

Babylon. On her forehead her name was written. A drunken world does not see it; but a saint ought not to mistake it. We should judge from the outside of it; and if we are in our place, in the Spirit, in the wilderness, we shall not mistake. But if we tamper with it, we have lost the sense of it: we have drunk some of the wine, if we do not discern it.

Chapter 4

Balaam Asking Counsel

Num. 20-24

The children of Israel have reached the promised land a second time. Thirty-eight years previously, they found themselves on its borders; but (dismayed at the report of the spies) their heart failed by the way, and as a consequence they had to turn and retrace their steps to the shores of the Red Sea. Now they have marched afresh towards Canaan. The camp is pitched (at the time the history given us in these chapters transpires) in the plains of Moab, on this side Jordan, by Jericho.

Before making a particular application of this history, it will be well, so as to complete it, to call to mind what scripture tells us further about Balaam. We see from Num. 31:16, that the occasion of the sin of the children of Israel, in the matter of Peor (which drew down the plague on the congregation of the Lord), was through his counsel. Verse 8 of the same chapter shows us the miserable end of one who had said, “Let me die the death of the righteous.” Israel, conquerors of Midian, slay him with the sword, along with the five kings, and all the males, of the vanquished people.

The New Testament mentions him only three times, yet this is done in such sort as to throw great light on the principles and character of the man. In the dark picture drawn by Peter of the unjust, reserved by the Lord unto the day of judgment to be punished, we find, among others, the following features-receiving the reward of unrighteousness; counting it pleasure to riot in the day time; spots and blemishes sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you; having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls; an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children, which have forsaken the right way, are gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness but was rebuked for his iniquity the dumb ass, speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with the tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved forever. (2 Peter 2)

Jude thus describes the triple character of the apostasy (the principles of which were already manifested, and working in the Church in his day): “Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.” Verse 11.

Lastly, in the epistles of the Lord Jesus to the seven churches of Asia, Rev. 2; 3 (regarded by students of prophecy, for the most part, as presenting a picture of the successive phases through which the Church would pass down here on the earth), He who has the sharp sword with two edges writes to the angel of the church at Pergamos “I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.”

Surely we have here declarations of the word enough, and more than sufficient, to show how odious was the character of Balaam.

At present, however, it is not our purpose to search into all that is taught us in this history; but only, as to the dominant trait in the character of the son of Bosor.

Balak sends messengers to Balaam of the elders of Moab and Midian (who take in their hands wherewith to hire the soothsayer), to invite him to come, curse the people of Israel. Balaam (notwithstanding that which is evidently evil in the demand) asks counsel of the Lord, who tells him, “Thou shalt not go with them; thou shalt not curse the people, for they are blessed.” On this Balaam tells the messengers of Balak “Get you into your land, for the Lord refuseth to give me leave to go with you.”

But Balak returns to the charge. He sends yet again princes, more and more honorable than the former, commissioned to bid him come, and he shall be plentifully rewarded. Balaam replies: “If Balak would give me his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord my God, to do less or more.” Yet he sends them not away but says to them, “Tarry ye here this night.” Anew he asks counsel of the Lord, to know what the Lord would say unto him more; and God replies, “If the men come to call thee, rise up, and go with them.”

Balaam goes with the princes of Moab. But God's anger is kindled because he goes; and an angel stands in the way for an adversary against him.

The ass of Balaam, seeing the angel (with a drawn sword in his hand), turns out of the way. Balaam smites the ass to turn her into the way. The angel of the Lord stands in a path of the vineyards, having a wall on the one side and a wall on the other, and when the ass sees the angel, she thrusts herself against the wall and crushes Balaam's foot. He smites her again. The angel goes forward, and stands in a narrow place, where there is no way to turn, either to the right hand or to the left, and when the ass sees the angel, she falls down under Balaam. Balaam's anger is kindled, and he smites the ass with a staff.

The Lord now causes the ass to speak, and she reproves Balaam. He also opens Balaam's eyes, and he sees the angel, who tells him “Behold, I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before Me.” Balaam says, “I have sinned; for I knew not that thou stoodest in the way against me; now, therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again.” The angel tells him: “Go with the men.” So Balaam goes with the princes of Moab.

Arrived in the presence of Balak, he is brought by him successively, to the high places of Baal, the top of Pisgah, and the top of Peor, in order that he may see the tents of Israel encamped in the plains, and curse them. He bids Balak build altars and offer burnt-sacrifices; asks counsel of the Lord who speaks to him; pronounces his pithy discourses-prophecies, and ceases not to bless Israel.

When Balaam asked of the Lord the first time “Shall I go?” God replied distinctly No; and as distinctly pointed out the ground of the refusal. It would seem He gave this answer, because either the soothsayer sought counsel of Him for the first time, or was not sure he should be doing wrong in acceding to the invitation of Balak. But the Lord having told him he must not go, and that Israel was blessed, the position of Balaam was no longer the same. He now knew the will of God.

Without the possibility of a doubt, it would be to do evil to go into Moab. Impossible, he could be longer in uncertainty as to this.

Nevertheless tempted afresh, he consults God afresh to know (as he says) what He has more to say to him; and God answers him that he may go.

But the sequel shows, how, from that moment, there was in Balaam growing blindness. In fact, he understands nothing, or next to nothing, of the efforts of the angel to withstand him. He is never restored; he returns not the right way; but, on the contrary, becomes, through his abominable counsel, a stumblingblock to Israel. His end is terrible.

Thus the Holy Ghost says, “Woe unto those, who, having forsaken the right way, have gone astray, following the way of Balaam.” From what has preceded we may clearly gather, that the principle which destroyed Balaam was manifested when he asked a second time of the Lord if he might go into Moab. That which happened to him afterward was but a consequence of this. When he asked of God the second time, already his way was perverse, already had he sold himself to the wages of iniquity, and the sequel of his lamentable history is nothing more than the development of a like state of soul. Thus it is immediately after this second inquiry, that the anger of the Lord is kindled against him. In the fact of the second inquiry, we discover the main and governing trait of the character of Balaam.

But it needs not long examination to discern that this distinctive trait is just in this, that Balsam, having cognizance of evil, asks counsel afresh, instead of forthwith fleeing it.

As Christians we know full well that God desires we should flee that which is evil, abstain from it, have no fellowship with it. We should be saints, set apart for Himself. His entire word leaves no room for a doubt; and he that sees not this, His will, in plainest evidence, in Jesus on the cross, and Jesus risen, has not, as yet, or but little, learned Christ.

Who is he dare say to a thrice holy God: “Allow me to be a liar, covetous man, fornicator, murderer, for a day?” or, “Allow me to participate to a certain extent in evil"-above all, when contemplating the terrible agonies of the Son of God in Gethsemane, and on the cross; or as having understood never so little of his portion in the glories consequent on those sufferings.

With recognition of evil there needs no further inquiry, no further putting of the question: What is to be done? This question is only legitimate when we find ourselves in presence of at least two resolutions, as to which we have to make up our mind; but, evil being recognized, there is only one fit resolution—to abstain from it. God says, “Cease to do evil;” “Abhor that which is evil;” “Abstain from all appearance of evil.”

There is no possible means of sanctifying evil, or participating in it. It is written, “Let him that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” The Holy Spirit tells us, Abstain forthwith. The spirit of Balaam still asks, What is to be done?

Further, let us not encourage ourselves in a wrong position, because whilst there we may still perhaps be getting light as to the word of God: when Balaam was with Balak, God ceased not to speak to him, even though His anger was kindled against him.

To seek counsel as to whether a thing be evil, and still to seek counsel when we know it is evil, are two acts altogether distinct. Not only may we ask of the Lord to give us discernment as to evil, but more, this is without contradiction a. duty it behooves us sedulously and with honesty to fulfill. Scripture tells us that this discernment is a distinctive characteristic of “those who are of full age.” (Heb. 5:14.)

Balaam would know what the Lord had to say to him more. Ah! is there need that the Lord, who has driven man out from paradise for one, and on the first transgression should add anything more? Whence comes it that we look for more? To wait for the Lord to employ some other means than that of His having discovered the evil to us is on the one hand to risk waiting in vain, and experiencing, like Balaam), a growing blindness; on the other, there is a procrastination which has for its end the quieting of ourselves in a perverse but self-pleasing way.

It may not be said that this was all very well in the times of Balaam and under the law, but that it is different under the gospel, under the law of grace and liberty. Jesus came to save sinners, that is very true; but it is to make Jesus the minister of sin to suppose that He saves in facilitating for us (let it be in what it may) evil, or participation in it. All this is extremely serious. If we act after the way of Balsam, we glorify not our God, and expose ourselves to the losing the sense of His grace, to be left for a time to our blindness, and to be brought back at last to a right way through correction and judgment. (2 Peter 1:9.) Doubtless the sheep of Jesus have no longer to fear the ruin of Balaam, but they should, so much the rather, avoid following in the footsteps of Balsam. It is the love of their Savior which attracts them. Ah! dear brethren, let us listen to His voice and not to the “wages of unrighteousness.”

The “wages of unrighteousness” —this, in reality, it is which dulls the soul's eye; here is the great warp to straightforwardness. And the wages of unrighteousness are not merely a thing of money, all that flatters self-love, all that has regard to the well-being of the flesh, in a word, all advantage whatsoever, of which we risk the deprival, or have the certainty or hope of procuring—these may be wages of iniquity. Very certainly he who hesitates, bargains, refuses to abstain, let him search well (if still able to do so), and he will find, that this comes of his being bound by some interest, which is not the interest of Jesus Christ. Is it a means of subsistence, or some friendship he wishes to preserve, or some acquired position be fears to lose, or a tranquility he dreads having troubled who can enumerate the ten thousand motives which at bottom resolve themselves into self-interest that binds us, blinds us, and urges us along in a perverse way?

God has not spared Himself to save us, and to redeem us from all iniquity. The Son of God has been sacrificed for us. He is the Lamb of God, He is the Savior. It is the love of God which constrains us—by His mercies we are besought. Yes, the believer is saved; but “show me thy faith by thy works.” The sheep of Jesus are in full security; it is the hand of Jesus which holds them, not they that hold in their hands Him who is their Redeemer forever. They are always sheep and never shepherds. Not under law, but under grace, we would not present to the Christian the fate of Balaam, and act upon him through terror: it is because of the love of God, it is because he forms part of His ransomed people, His holy nation, of the royal priesthood, that we remind him, that it is those who are led (not by the spirit of Balaam, but,) by the Spirit of God that are the sons of God.

Chapter 5

Barzillai: His Service and Reward

When the king is firmly settled on the throne, and no rebel rises up to dispute his right to fill it, it is easy enough to appear loyal, and to cry with the multitude, “God save the king!” But, where rebellion has made great progress amongst the masses, and the popular idol is no longer the king, but some aspirant to regal power and honor, then the sovereign, but lately perhaps welcomed wherever he went with acclamations, discovers who are his real friends, and discriminates between the flattering courtier and the loyal subject. The day of the king's rejection is the day for the subject to declare himself. Thus it was with the aged Barzillai and those who were with him at Mahanaim.

Fickle indeed are the masses of any nation. The idol of to-day may become the object of popular hatred on the morrow, and the benefactor of a people find himself a wanderer in the very country over which he has reigned. Such was David's experience when Absalom's rebellion broke out. “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,” had been the song of the women of Israel as they returned from the conflict with the Philistines. He had known what it was to be the man whom Israel delighted to honor. He had received the homage of the twelve tribes of Israel at Hebron, when they went there to anoint him king over all Israel. Now he was an outcast with a company who remained faithful, a fugitive too from the face of his own son Absalom. The warrior and benefactor of his country, who had raised her to a pitch of glory, prosperity, and influence never before enjoyed, was rejected for the king's son, remarkable for nothing but his personal appearance, unbridled will, and immense powers of dissimulation. Absalom had stolen the hearts of the men of Israel. It was true David had sinned grievously in the matter of Uriah's wife, and the cold-blooded murder of his faithful soldier. But of what could Absalom boast except the treacherous murder of his own elder brother Amnon? God was now punishing David for the sins by which he had given occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and at the same time was testing the loyalty and fidelity to His anointed of all the children of Israel: and with what result? The king had fled from Jerusalem, Shimei had manifested what he was as he cursed him, the people of Israel showed what they were as they clustered round Absalom, and David and his followers had at length crossed the Jordan, and so passed out of the true limits of the land of promise.

At this juncture, when the fortunes of David were at the lowest ebb, Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai declared themselves on his side, as they met him and his company at Mahanaim, and brought with them what they felt must be needed. David had not summoned them to entertain him: no superior force compelled them to yield up to the king what they possessed. They brought of their own accord such things as were suited for the occasion. David was at Mahanaim, but Machir belonged to Lo-debar, and Barzillai to Rogelim. What distance there was between these two places and the Levitical city, the scene of Jacob's meeting with the angels of God, has not been ascertained: but this at least is clear, these three men made advances to David, and Barzillai apparently surpassed them all as he “provided the king of sustenance whilst he lay at Mahanaim.” Very marked then was their attitude at this time, most acceptable to David, and we may surely

add, pleasing to the Spirit of God, who has seen fit so fully to notice it.

Shobi was an Ammonite, the son of Nahash, David's friend, but a former enemy of Israel, defeated at Jabesh-gilead by Saul. He was also Hanun's brother, whose capital, Rabbah, the armies of Israel had taken, and whose crown of gold had adorned David's brow. Machur had been the firm friend of the family of Saul when David ascended the throne, in whose house Mephibosheth had found shelter till his father's possessions were restored to him by the man his grandfather had persistently persecuted. Of Barzillai's earlier history we read nothing. These three however, who once probably had trodden different paths, were now united in succoring David and his men. The Ammonite, and the friend of Saul's house, agreed with Barzillai in this. But what made them thus unite? David deserved his punishment, that all men must have admitted. Was it simply the son of Jesse they saw? Was it not rather the Lord's anointed? As such they combined to show kindness to him.

Obliged by prudential motives to put the Jordan between himself and Absalom, backed by the masses of Israel, he meets in the midst of the general defection with substantial tokens of loyalty from these three men. They saw in him the Lord's anointed: so for them the popular idol had no attraction. What others might do they stopped not to think. They did not calculate the chances of success, nor wait to learn which side appearances favored. Had they looked at the matter in this light, would they have befriended David? Would not the hosts which followed Absalom have determined their place in Israel? With them, however, surely, the question was a most simple one, Should they side with the Lord's anointed or not? Such an alternative admitted then of but one answer. Can it admit of any other than one now? Worldly caution might have counseled delay before they committed themselves so irrecoverably as they did; but, had they delayed, all opportunity of manifesting their loyalty and devotion would have passed away. It was with them now or never, Reason might have suggested further consideration, and a conference with the leaders of Absalom's party, before they took this bold step and occupied so prominent a place. Should they not hear both sides before they took the part of the fugitive king? Had not Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, actually espoused Absalom's cause? and did not all Israel acknowledge that his counsel was as if a man had inquired at the oracle of God? Would they pit their wisdom against his? Besides, had not David dishonored the throne, and perverted the fountain of justice? That was true of the man David, but he was the Lord's anointed. So they ministered to his need, and thus openly sided with him before all. It was a noble act on their part, as all must acknowledge. It was also a right act, as it was in accordance with God's thoughts; and the Spirit of God surely delighted to dwell on the tokens of their faithfulness, as He has recounted the different items of refreshment thus furnished for the king, and those with him in the wilderness. They “brought beds, bacons, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse, and honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of trine, for David, and for the people that were with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty in the wilderness.” (2 Sam. 17:28-29.) Nothing that the people could want seems to have been forgotten; nothing that they brought, it would appear, has been overlooked in the account.

Events rolled on. Absalom crossed the Jordan with the hosts of Israel under his command. The issue of the battle is well known. David was to be chastised, but not deposed. He had been chastised, and now Absalom's turn came. That on which he had especially prided himself became

the means of his capture. Suspended by his hair between heaven and earth, the fratricide, and would-be parricide and regicide met with the due reward of his deeds. Thus ended the rebellion and David's temporary exile. Preparations were now made for his return. The tribes of Israel spoke of it, the tribe of Judah, at first cold-hearted towards him, stirred up by Zadok and Abiathar sent word, “Return thou, and all thy servants.” “And all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.”

Now again owned by all as king in Israel, David acted as such by disposing of the life and possessions of his subjects. He spared Shimei's life who had cursed him, he restored in some degree to Mephibosheth the possessions of his father, hastily bestowed on Ziba in the day of his flight, and offered to reward Barzillai. Life to Shimei, possessions in the land to Mephibosheth, but nearness to the king's person and feeding with him for Barzillai, were what he meted out to each. “Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me at Jerusalem.” Barzillai had served David when beyond Jordan, David would have Barzillai beside him ever after, beholding his royal state, blessed with the favor of the Lord's anointed. “With me” —nothing less than this—was what be desired for Barzillai: with himself, and that in Jerusalem. Most fitting was this reward. When outside the land of Canaan it was Barzillai's place and duty to own and serve the rejected king; again in power and in the land, it was David's place to reward his faithful adherent. And, as the words “with me” fall on the ear, do they not recall similar language used by David's Son in the presence of His disciples, when addressing His Father? “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am,” &c. Little did Barzillai think of the honor in store for him as a reward for his service, and of which he only heard after the time of such service was over, and the day for rewarding those faithful to David had arrived. But we know, whilst the Lord Jesus Christ is absent from the earth, rejected by His people Israel, and especially His own tribe Judah, what will be the future place of privilege and blessing of all, who side with Him during the time of His rejection by the world.

To this offer Barzillai interposes an objection. He had not worked with any view of reward, richly though he deserved it. He had thought of the king in his rejection, and had done what he could to succor him; he had come too to do honor to David now returning to his capital; but, to be at the court was unsuited to such an one, for his age forbad his enjoyment of the pleasures of the king's house. When David was in need in the wilderness, Barzillai's age was no hindrance to the bringing it in person. When the king was to recross the Jordan, he suffered not the infirmities of age to be a reason for his absence. He would testify his delight at the king's return, as he had proved his devotion to him whilst he lay at Mahanaim; but, to go to Jerusalem as a reward for his service was what he felt himself unequal to undertake. In how different a manner do men too generally act, putting forth an excuse to avoid the service, but grasping eagerly at the reward! Barzillai was not like this, he thought of the king and acted at once. Much as he, and all Israel, had enjoyed of comfort under the king's reign, he did not stay at home counting up the blessings he had shared in; for, self-interest or self-ease he knew nothing of, when the Lord's anointed was driven out of his land, and obliged to take refuge across the Jordan. As to the proffered reward, Chimham his son might accompany David; he desired to stay and die among his own kindred. Old age, with the prospect of death not far off, thus effectually opposed the fulfillment of the king's wishes. “Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward? Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city,

and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But, behold, thy servant Chimham: let him go over with my lord the king: and do to him what shall seem good unto thee."

Who could refuse such a touching request? The king answered, "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do unto him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee." "Do thou to him what shall seem good unto thee" had been Barzillai's prayer. "I will do unto him what shall seem good unto thee" was David's promise, reaching beyond the modest request of his servant. And more than this, he told him he had gained the king's ear. What a place was this to occupy! Honor, wealth, rank, are nothing compared with this. To be with the king was David's wish for him, to have the king's ear was that of which David now assured him. Thus they parted, but not before David had kissed him and blessed him, and that on the right side of Jordan. The river had been re-crossed; the king was again as sovereign in the land of Canaan, when he kissed him and blessed him. All Israel could see that day whom the king delighted to honor. The multitude were right in escorting back king David, but Barzillai had done what others had not. These were around the monarch in the day of his return, Barzillai had been with him when they had cast him out. Hence the difference between them and this devoted servant of Rogelim.

In time Barzillai died, and perhaps this scene and all connected with it was blotted out before long from the remembrance of many in Israel. There was, however, one heart from which the remembrance of Barzillai's service was never effaced; the king never forgot it, and Solomon his son was ever to remember it. Occupied after his return, as David was, with many important concerns, be with his latest breath yet spoke of this service at Mahanaim, and commended his sons to Solomon's special care. (1 Kings 2:7.) Before David and Solomon, types of the Lord on His throne, the sons of Barzillai had a place, not of distance but of distinguished nearness, for they ate bread at the king's table, and feasted in the king's presence. Never, then, whilst David lived, was this service forgotten, nor, whilst Solomon reigned, was it to sink into oblivion. David as king had portioned it out, Solomon, who ascended the throne without David's death intervening, was charged to continue it. To Rehoboam nothing, we read, was said about it, for he was not a type of the Lord on His throne, the Solomon character of whose reign will continue to, the end. Faithfulness to the Lord's anointed in a time of general defection was never to be forgotten, such devotion was never to be unrequited.

For how long did the remembrance of all this last, attested by the reward bestowed on Chimham the son? As long as the kingdom lasted in Judah, so long was there a witness of the king's approval of such conduct. For not only did David give Chimham a place before him, but he assigned him a portion in the city of the king's birth. In the city of his father's house Chimham owned a possession (Jer. 41:17). Barzillai was of the tribe of Gad, the eldest son of Zilpah, Leah's handmaid, but Chimham had henceforth a portion in Judah, the fourth son of the Drat wife Leah. And, till the kingdom of Judah was terminated by the Babylonish captivity, Chimham's portion by Bethlehem was an abiding witness of Barzillai's faithfulness, and of David's acknowledgment of it.

The application of all this history is plain, and we understand the reason that it has been preserved. Very evident are the points of resemblance, but marked too are the contrasts. David was hindered by Barzillai's age from acting as he would toward him, and his hasty action regarding Mephibosheth tells us we have only a man like ourselves before us. But nothing can hinder the Lord Jesus rewarding as He will all who have followed Him in His rejection, and none will suffer

injustice at that day. He will confess them before His Father, and before His angels, and the company of heavenly saints, who have served Him whilst absent, shall be with Him on high, as those of earth shall be before Him, when He reigns over the house of Jacob forever. (Luke 12:8; Rev. 3:5; 7:15; 14:1.) He will have been found to have been in their thoughts, they shall be before His face when He takes to Himself the power and reigns.

C. E. S.

Chapter 6

Bearing of the Failure of the Church on the Institution of Elders

It is a sophism, and a sophism having the most antinomian tendency possible, to say that, because the law that founds the institution or the dispensation cannot be other than it is, therefore the thing that is founded cannot be corrupted. Nothing can abrogate the authority of that which has been said on the part of God; but if man has entirely failed with regard to it, and if thus a thing which required the power of God to establish it fails in the hands of men (the kingly power among the Jews for example), the pretension to re-establish it is a false pretension, derogatory at the same time both to the judgment which removes the ruined thing, and to the authority of God which alone can establish it. Now I say in the most distinct manner, that the dispensation is not yet brought to an end, and that it will continue to the end of the period ordained by God, until Christ leaves His Father's throne.

The only question is this: if, on account of the iniquity of man" God has in truth set aside institutions which His authority alone had established or could, can man, without His authority and power, set them up anew, when it is a question of things which depend either on His authority or on His power? Is it meet for the church to disown the judgment of God, and without His authority to rebuild what has been destroyed, even though the dispensation still exist?

Thus the kingly power, the Urim and Thummim, and the visible presence of the glory, finally prophecy itself, were wanting to the Jews after their return from the captivity. Did the Jews pretend to be able to re-establish them? We well know that they did not. Nevertheless the dispensation was not definitively abolished.

And now it will be understood to what I apply the word "antinomianism." It is when, on account of the authority of a law or an institution, regarded as a rule established by God, one seeks to destroy the consequences of man's responsibility, when man has failed in the obedience due to the law, or corrupted an institution which was entrusted to him. The kingly power amongst the Jews, the Lord's Supper amongst Christians, are institutions of God. But they are things entrusted to man; both have been corrupted: the one has been abolished among the Jews; the other has not been abolished amongst Christians. He who would have pretended to set up again the kingly power among the Jews would have fought against God; he who purges the Supper from the corruptions which man has introduced uses it with blessing.

Now I say that the church has failed in faithfulness. Corruption has come in; many things have been lost; the church is responsible for it. There are things which it can still enjoy, and there are others which it cannot re-establish. It is admitted that tongues, miracles, inspired prophecy, apostles, gifts of healing, and many other things perhaps, are lost to the church. The institution of elders had been corrupted in the hands of men. Looking at it from our opponents' point of view, it had been transformed into the seat of the deepest corruption which has ever existed, and of the most awful tyranny of which the world has ever borne the yoke. By mixing ministry with it, it has become the clerical hierarchy. Now, not in order to establish the rule of the institution on paper, but in order to invest persons with the possession of this authority which should rest in the institution,

there must be some source for this authority, some persons who, according to the institution of God, according to the rule which subsists in the word, are authorized to establish them. For example, there were none at Geneva; they established some. Do I pretend that the law, the rule of the institution, no longer exists? Just the contrary. I take the rule of the institution, a rule given in the New Testament, and I find that, according to this rule there was a source of authority, on which the whole force of the institution depended. This source is wanting now. It is then said to me, The rule, the law, is there. I know full well that it is there; that is why I reject your so-called elders, because they are set up in open opposition to the rule given by the word.

I am told that we are agreed as to the fact that certain things have been lost among the Jews; and others in the Christian dispensation. Well: the existence of the law of an institution does not therefore imply the existence of the institution nor the possibility of its re-establishment.

Throughout the New Testament it is proved that there were apostles. The word proves that there were elders; but it also proves that the churches had not the power to make them, for the institution is expressly based on apostolic authority, and, instead of commanding the churches to appoint any, the apostle sent Titus to establish them; a clear evidence that he did not commit this task to the churches. Such is the immutable rule of the institution, the law which cannot be corrupted, which, thanks be to God, does not change, and which you have violated—you that pretend on your own authority to act the apostles and the deputies of the apostles, so as to invite Christians who hardly dared to do so to arrogate this right to themselves, in order to spare yourselves an act which, if directly done in your own names, would have rendered apparent your incapacity and want of power to do. Now, in order to strengthen us against the irrefragable proofs that the thing is positively contrary to the rule of the institution, we are told “It was therefore needful that the apostles should give institutions to the church, which might go on after them and without them. It appears to us that, had they not done this, they would have failed in their mission.” Happily you are not in God's place to judge them, although it would seem you think yourselves competent to do so.

Allow me to tell you that the church, which went on badly enough with them, has gone on very badly without them, and that the institutions which they gave to the church have not gone on without them, unless you call the horrors of papacy the progress of the apostolical institutions.

The endeavor is made to persuade us, in the face of the church's history, that the apostles necessarily gave institutions which should go on without them. Is it possible to imagine such arguments as these? Poor apostles!

Hence, therefore, the use of the word law is only a wretched sophism, because a man in whom an institution is realized is not a law; and not only is a law necessary to establish a man in that position with the authority of God, but also the authority for doing so must be vested somewhere: otherwise it is not with the authority of God, unless it be a divine mission which is legitimate itself by its own power, as that of the prophet; but there is no occasion for a nomination.

No; by wearying the patience of God with his sin, man cannot reduce Him to the incapacity of using His laws. The execution of the just judgment of God is not want of power. When I say “He can no longer make use of them,” it is only the expression of the feeling contained in the words “until there was no longer a remedy.” Sin has reached such a point that God can no longer bear

with it. Is this want of power? No, it is holiness. Such an argument is really not worthy of an answer. Can God use fallen Adam, such as he is, for the kingdom of His glory? Is it imputing to God a want of power to say that it is impossible? Does the apostle accuse God of powerlessness, when He says that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, and that God has introduced something better in the Second Adam?

Corruption is not a law of God. Man, under the law of innocence, was an institution of God: corruption has come in; the institution is marred, corrupted, ruined; it has not been immediately abolished by God, but it has not been re-established. God has introduced something better. Can there be anything plainer or more evident? Well, that is the law of man, one may say, of every creature placed under his responsibility, without being sustained by direct power from God. God was pleased to show this under every form, without law, under law, under promises, in the priesthood, in the kingly power, in the presentation of His Son to the husbandmen. The institutions were according to God; man has always failed in them, and, save that they are to be made good in Christ, the institutions, as ordained of God, have been set aside one after the other. The weakness of man, of the creature, has been proved. I do not believe that the elders of form any exception.

But to say that “the dispensations are not responsible for the whole of men's actings with regard to them” is to say, if the phrase has any meaning at all, that even when men have failed, to whatever degree it may be, with regard to the institutions under which God has placed them, their sin will be no reason for God to put an end to the dispensation which receives its form from those institutions. And I say that such a system is iniquitous, antinomian, and unscriptural.

There is another idea which I wish to take up. “The written word now designates them [the elders] by making known to the churches the brethren who are fit for these offices.” First, it was not to the churches that the apostle made them known, but to those who were employed by him to establish these brethren in the bosom of the churches which were not competent to do it. But this is not all.

If the word pointed them out then, there was no need of Timothy or Titus. And if it be the word that designates them, in this case all those who have these qualifications are designated by the word. Every man who is blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach, not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous, one that “ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;” all persons who have these qualities are designated; and, the word having designated them, there is no election, there is no nomination (that is to say, designation). The system of choosing of elders falls by this very fact. All those who are such are nominated with the same authority as if an apostle had set them apart. Now, if this be the case, the thing is done, and they who accept them without choosing them, are nearer the truth.

If the apostle had appointed elders, would it have been the church's place to choose them afterward, to nominate them, or do whatever it might be, except to obey? Clearly not. If the word designates or establishes them with the same authority that the apostles did, you have nothing to do, except that the apostles did something that the word does not do, and which you pretend to do with apostolic sagacity and authority. Paul, Barnabas, and Titus did something besides pointing out the desirable qualifications. They never designated the elders to the churches in an abstract manner by qualifications. Such a designation has never been addressed to a church.

I said that “the New Testament dispensation will, without any doubt, accomplish the period assigned to it.” We are agreed that the period is not accomplished. As a deduction, it is said “Consequently the New Testament and the institutions which concern the formation, government, and service of the churches exist in full force.” Why so? The period of the Jewish dispensation was not fulfilled before the coming of the Savior. Were all the institutions of God in full three? The kingly power, prophecy, trim and Thummim, the presence of God in the temple, the ark with the mercy-seat, on which was put the blood which maintained the relationship of God with Israel, was all that in full force? But I shall be told, The things were found in scripture. Granted; but what does that prove, except that your reasoning from beginning to end is only a miserable sophism, which seeks to destroy the responsibility of man, and the consequences which flow from the fact of his having failed as to it? These things of which I have just spoken were lost, lost on account of the sins of men, although the end of the dispensation had not yet come. Man could not set them up again. The fact that they were to be found in the scriptures was only the humiliating proof that the Jews had lost them through their sins.

This is not the place for discussing the extent of the new covenant, nor its relations to the Christian dispensation; but I do not believe that the new covenant is set aside, because the Jews will be brought in again by means of this covenant, when the church is in heaven. If the covenant were set aside, the dispensation founded on it would necessarily fall at the same time; but God, by taking up the church to heaven and by rejecting the order of things which has existed in connection with it on the earth, can deal with Israel on the ground of the covenant founded on the blood of Christ. The church, properly speaking, the body of Christ, is not a dispensation; it does not belong to the earth; but there is an order of things connected with it during its sojourning here below—an order of things whose existence is linked with the church's responsibility. The dispensation of the new covenant is, properly speaking, the millennium on the earth, as it is easy to be convinced of by reading the prophecy of Jeremiah who speaks of it. But, the blood of the covenant having been shed, Christians enjoy the practical and spiritual effect of what has been done (and this even in a more excellent way than that in which the Jews will enjoy it in the age to come), although the Jews as a nation have refused to avail themselves of it.

But if, according to the general language of the Christian world, we call the present order of things a dispensation or economy, it has not yet been rejected, as I have already very plainly said. It does not follow from this that Christians have not lost some things which they cannot again re-establish, nor that they are not guilty, and already, in the main, guilty of that which, in spite of the longsuffering of God, will bring down judgment and cause Christ to sew the whole system from His mouth.

Let us now see how the question is presented through the use of the word “law,” to the exclusion of “covenant and institutions.” It is said, “God punishes the sinner, but He does not abrogate His laws on account of sins.” And who imagines such a thing, if it is a question of abrogating the authority of the law? But God certainly has set the whole covenant of the law aside, and the whole system from beginning to end, viewed as being the principle of God's relationship with man on the earth. No one would dare deny it, not even an unbelieving Jew, who suffers the consequence of it. He expects something better—the corning of the Messiah. To pretend that the change has not taken place is folly; it is the denial of Christianity: to present the thing as if it meant that God abrogates His laws because man has sinned is a wretched quibble, worthy of the cause it is

employed to uphold.

Then it is said that, since I acknowledge that the New Testament dispensation is not yet at an end, and that the new covenant consequently still continues, “it is a strict duty of obedience for the churches, to return to what it teaches no doubt according to the measure of what is possible.” Certainly, as far as regards my walk in the position in which God has placed me; but the question is quite different here. This is it:—Am I placed by God in a position which authorizes me to establish elders? and where ought I to establish them? In every town? This is truly what Titus had to do. You are not therefore in the position to which these instructions are addressed. This is what I deny—your authority. Your teaching here is, however, very harmless. Obedience, according to the measure of what is possible, you say, is a duty; and you affirm that it is possible to fulfill it. There is only one thing you have forgotten here, namely, that the word possible is a relative word, and that it answers to the power of him who acts. It is your power that I question. One may have the pretension to appoint elders; this is certainly according to the measure of what is possible. But the question is this: When you have appointed them, can it be said, “The church of God,” “over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers?” If you cannot say this, what is your appointing worth? What I doubt is your power to do it.

You say you do not pretend to re-establish that which may have been lost through your fault; yet time was when you had no elders, but now you have some. But this is not all: there is the deplorable indifference to a loss which ought to awaken the conscience of every true Christian. You say, “But it is not a question of knowing whether God withdrew blessings from Israel on account of their sins; that which it is important to ascertain is, whether the Mosaic dispensation continued until the coming of Christ.” And, again, “No doubt God, in consequence of the idolatry and sin of Israel, withdrew His glory, as well as the ark, the Urim and Thummim.” Although He had withdrawn all these, you say, nevertheless, “If, therefore, the ordinances of the law were maintained after the captivity; if Israel were called to serve God by their means....” But is it possible to treat such a subject with such levity? No doubt, God bore with Israel; but He had from the time of Isaiah made the heart of this people fat. The glory with which all the ordinances were connected had been withdrawn; the ark, over which was the mercyseat, by means of which Israel as a people were reconciled; the Urim and Thummim, by which the high priest knew the will of God when he presented himself before Him—all these had been withdrawn. And you dare to say that it is not a question of that? Is it not a question of knowing whether the glory, that is to say, the presence of God, was gone from this people? This was perhaps neither an ordinance nor a law, but did it not change anything? Is it not important to ascertain whether the glory was there or not? But was not the act of putting the blood on the mercyseat an ordinance, the most important ordinance of all? Was that maintained? The temple was empty, deprived of the presence of God. If the pretension to maintain that ordinance had existed, it would, in fact, have been like the appointment of elders, for God was not there. But with my opponents it is not a question of that: what it is important to ascertain is that the dispensation is not at an end. And when the high priest inquired of God by Urim and Thummim, was not this an ordinance of the law? Was it maintained after the captivity? The word in Ezra and Nehemiah proves that these mysterious signs were wanting.

All that gave any value to the priesthood of Aaron, the presence of Jehovah to whom he drew near; the ark, which was the throne of God, and the sprinkling of the blood (on the great day of atonement) by which propitiation was made; the Urim and Thummim by which the high priest

received the answer of God for the people, and directed all their affairs—all this was gone. But it is not a question of these! the point is to know whether the priesthood of Aaron was abolished after the captivity.

The case is not the same; for if the priesthood no longer existed according to God's order, Israel could not have re-established one; and that is what you pretend to do with regard to elders. Moreover your remarks throw great light on your thoughts. If you can maintain the form and the official importance of your position without the presence of God, without any of those things which give it force, until the end of the dispensation, you will be satisfied. That the priesthood of Aaron be without the glory in the temple, without the true mercy-seat and without means of atonement, without Urim and Thummim, or the knowledge of God's thoughts, is all the same, according to you; it has its official place: this is what it is important to show. Remember, good sirs, that it was this which brought in the ruin of Israel. The tree was dry, the house was empty: what had God to do then? But you come off nearly as badly about the beginning of a dispensation as you do about its end.

You say, “The apostles did not institute a central power in the church.” This is perfectly true, and the reason of it is very simple: they were themselves that power. And when the twelve at Jerusalem ceased to be such, Paul was it. He established elders in every city, he sent Titus to act, because he was invested with central power in the church assembled from among the Gentiles, invested with this power by Christ Himself. Thus, after all, you are in the beaten path from which the Spirit of God is bringing out Christians. The thing becomes clear enough. There is nothing like searching into truth. You long for independent churches. This is the whole secret of the matter. You say, “They, on the contrary, constituted churches independent one of the other.” This is your whole affair. You cannot deny that the apostles and Paul, in the sphere which God assigned him, exercised a power over all the churches (that is to say, a central power); you cannot deny that the church was one, that the gifts were members of the one body, and were exercised in the unity of this body manifested on the earth. The churches, whilst exercising their discipline each in its own locality, exercised it in the name of the universal church, and there it was valid. Gifts were placed in the church, not in churches. The whole body was but one. But that which you uphold is shown to be only the fancy to have independent churches. He who has drunk old wine does not immediately desire new, “for he saith, the old is better.” The unity of the body is set aside.

You say, governmental authority resides in the scriptures: a singular seat of executive power! Laws are found there; but governmental authority is not a law, although it may act according to law.

Who replaces the apostles? According to you, all the faithful in each locality replace this central power, which certainly did exist, and to which those who were of God listened. But in vain do I seek for some proof that such authority was entrusted to all. You do not and cannot say now that Christian assemblies have the right to choose them, and that it is their duty to do so, but you do not quote any passage.

“They rightly believe that, in so acting, they do a work pleasing to the Lord.” This is all you have to say. And then you proclaim, “We have just seen that the churches have the necessary authority for designating their elders and their deacons.” But you must feel the ground slipping from under your feet, and that the whole building is ready to crumble. You wish to prop it up. You say, “The

apostles made use of the form of election, they chose Matthias." Is this a proof that we can choose apostles? You overthrow all your arguments by this example; for, were this example worth anything, it would rightly authorize you to choose apostles. But things did happen thus. The qualifications were plainly pointed out. It must be men who had followed the Lord from the baptism of John; then they set two before the Lord (■στησαν δ■ο) who answered, as one must believe, to those conditions. But they did not dare to choose between the two, and they drew lots. You have altered the sense of the word by saying, "They chose Matthias," and "This presentation was then confirmed." They say "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, show whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship." How dare any one thus alter the word? But all is well, so long as one can maintain one's position.

Deacons were elected: we have spoken of them elsewhere. It was a temporal matter, with which the apostles refused to burden themselves; just as Paul, in another case, wishing to remain free from all reproach, refused to take the brethren's money, unless some one from amongst themselves were chosen to take charge of it with him. But what has this to do with the overseers of the church, who are the servants of God? The deacons were servants of the church, as Phoebe, servant of the church at Cenchrea. They chose deputies at Antioch. You must be much at a loss for quotations, if you are obliged to quote this passage. These were occasional deputies in order to put a stop to a tumult in the church, and this has not the slightest connection with the permanent authorities established over the church, and there is not a word said of their nomination. They decided that Paul and Barnabas, who had argued in vain against the judaizing Christians, should go up, and others with them, to Jerusalem. How were they appointed? There is a perfect silence on this point. I think it very probable that they were chosen by general consent, since they were their deputies. There is not a word which says that they were appointed by lot.

Then you say that the end of 2 Cor. 8 "shows us also brethren, who labored for the glory of the Lord, and who were deputies of the church, being elected and chosen by them." This is a singular paraphrase. How embarrassing when one attempts to prove a thing which does not exist! They labored for the glory of the Lord. Now, I ask you, for what work were they chosen by the churches? You will tell me, We do not say. Well, neither does the word. And what then do you wish to teach by introducing it? The word is very simple, is it not? It is a pity that you are not so. Doubtless, this cannot be, with the system which you have adopted "rightly," as it appears, but without the word. The word says that one at least of these excellent brethren was chosen by the churches for the administration of the money sent to Jerusalem, the apostle having refused to take charge of it unless there was one with him, so as to avoid the possibility of a single reproach. And what has all this to do with the choice of the regular authorities of the church, with reference to whom we have passages which you have not quoted at all?

Why, without multiplying questions, did you not draw attention to Acts 14? There it is spoken of the nomination of elders, and this is not the case in any of the passages which you have quoted. Why not mention the passage in the Epistle to Titus, where the apostle clearly speaks of this? Would it not have been more natural, when it is a question of elders, to quote passages which speak of them, than to multiply quotations from passages which do not speak of them? You dared not do it. These passages say exactly the contrary of what you wish to persuade us. There were churches in Asia Minor: the apostles chose for them. There were churches in Crete: Paul sent Titus to establish some in them.

You tell us that ecclesiastical history leaves no doubt on this point. I do not allow that ecclesiastical history is any authority; but whatever the value of its testimony may be, it very plainly contradicts what you say.

Here are the words of Clement, or rather of the whole church at Rome in whose name he writes. There were divisions at Corinth on the subject of elders. The church had set aside certain elders, as claiming the right to do so according to the principles which I contest. In his epistle, 1 Cor. 4:2, “The apostles evangelized us on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ, Jesus the Christ did so on behalf of God. The Christ was sent on behalf of God, and the apostles on behalf of Christ. The two things occurred regularly therefore according to the will of God. Having therefore preached through divers places, in the country, and in the towns, they established their first-fruits to be overseers and deacons among those who should believe, having, by the Holy Spirit, found them worthy. And there is nothing new in this.” Then he quotes the choice of Aaron by the direct testimony of God in what happened to his rod. “And our apostles knew, by our Lord Jesus Christ, that there would be disputations with regard to the name of the episcopacy. Therefore, having received a perfect foreknowledge of this, they established those of whom we have previously spoken and then gave a legal order of succession, how that, when they fell asleep, other approved persons might receive their ministry. Those therefore who were established by them, or afterward by other eminent (renowned) men, the whole church approving them these we esteem wrongfully deprived of their ministry.” Here we have the question expressly treated by one who was a companion of the apostle, who acted in the matter, who was a successor of the apostle as far as any one could be such, and one who is in every way the highest possible authority on such a subject. What he says to be the history of the matter is confirmed by the whole church of Rome, and he declares that the apostle had foreseen the difficulty, and that, when the Corinthians were pretending to exercise the very authority claimed by the Evangelical church at Geneva. He declares that the apostle had established elders and a form of succession; then that other men of repute had established them, the whole church being satisfied with it. It is impossible to have anything clearer or more positive, in ecclesiastical history, to contradict the assertion of my opponents.

I examine Mosheim. He tells me that it is scarcely to be doubted, if one considers the prudence and moderation shown by the apostles in appointing an apostle and then the seven, that the elders of the primitive church at Jerusalem were elected by suffrages of the faithful. Then he says that, when an elder was needed, the body of elders recommended one or two persons to the assembly; and in a note he says that Titus 1:5 proves nothing against it: Titus might have consulted, and doubtless did in reality consult, the wishes of the people. This may be so. It is however quite another thing from a history which, as you wish to persuade us, leaves no doubt that they acted by way of election. And Mosheim is so far from thinking of an election, that he makes use of what he believes to have occurred in order to justify what he calls the right of presentation, as not being repugnant to the practice of the primitive church, adding that a similar right was always acknowledged as belonging to the bishops and the collective body of elders, and he alleges it to the end that he may show that popular election is thoroughly bad. He says, nevertheless, that the people might refuse those presented.

Neander says that one may conclude, from the choice of deacons and deputies, that the church chose other functionaries also, but that, where the apostles had not confidence in the churches, they gave the important office of elders to those who were fitted for it. Then he quotes Clement, to

show that it might be the custom for the elders to present a successor in case of death. Where the consent of the church was not a mere form, this might be very useful. The fact is, if one takes history, the only thing which cannot be doubted is that one must be an episcopalian. The reader who is desirous of studying this subject may consult Cyprian's letter 67 or 68, where he seeks to attach the utmost importance to the part which the people took in the election of a bishop, in order to make use of it against the authority of the Pope, against whose acts he was striving. As to the priests, it appears from letter 40, that he ordained them himself alone, and that he then informed the people of it, but this was in a time of persecution. In other letters he excuses himself for so doing on account of that, saying that the testimony of the people was no longer necessary when God had given His, inasmuch as he when he had ordained had confessed the Lord at the peril of his life, but that, when he had entered on his episcopate, he had imposed upon himself as a rule never to do anything without the consent of the clergy and people. So that what you say of history is entirely contradicted by the data with which the old authors furnish us. At any rate, as regards authority, this has only ecclesiastical authority.

It is a question of commencing the existence of a body of elders. The word and history positively declare that it was the apostles who appointed these, and subsequently eminent men. Clement of Alexandria says that when John returned from Ephesus, he, being invited, went through the neighborhood inhabited by Gentiles, establishing bishops (say elders), constituting churches, and placing among the clergy every one of those who were indicated by the Holy Spirit (Eusebius iii. 23, quoting Clement of Alexandria, “Who is the rich man that shall be saved?”) That elders were elected by the faithful is certainly what ecclesiastical history does not state. The idea of presentation (the testimony of the people being received, or, at least, the thing being done in their presence) is what is best established.

Consequently Cyprian makes all the faithful responsible as to this, and tells them that they ought to separate from a bad bishop little by little; this was the cause of a struggle between the two. For a time the people chose them, at least in Italy; blood was shed, and one may say, that there was a civil war. And mark this, it was on the subject of bishops. I know of no testimony which states the election of elders. Certain is it that we have some who relate their appointment differently. The earliest authorities attribute it to the apostles (Clement of Alexandria), or to the apostles and eminent men, all the people consenting to it (Clement of Rome). In the fourth century the people often chose their own bishops, and candidates often canvassed for the office; there were conflicts between the bishops and the people, as in the case of Martin of Tours; or there were factions, as at Rome, in the case of Symmachus. Between these two epochs the forms differed according to circumstances, but episcopacy was established.

Chapter 7

Centralization

“One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.”

Things which once existed in their own abstract significations between God and man, and which maintained their distinctiveness, revolving so to speak round their own centers, have been marvelously brought together in Christ, and inseparably connected by His work on the cross, with the counsels of God before the world was, and our blessing. Take as an example the great fact, that “mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” It is not that truth has ceased to be truth, or merged itself into mercy, so that the native character of each is destroyed, any more than the possibility that righteousness could change itself into peace; but, on the contrary, a new foundation has been formed between God and His creatures in and through the cross by which “grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”

So with the attributes of God, such as His holiness and justice; or rather what He is as light and love. How could they cease to be what they are in themselves? Nor can they admit of any changes in their exercise towards mankind, else they would fail to be perfect as displaying the character of God. Each is in its nature what each was, but each finds in the blood of atonement what each needs for its vindication, in the fullest exercise towards us. Moreover, each is further bound up with the Lord's own perfectness henceforth.

But that new action of God towards Him in raising Him up from out of the dead! All that God is, as well as all that we were in our sins, have not only been concentrated in Him-in His life and death-but by means of death and judgment He has separated the evil from the good forever, by putting away sin through the sacrifice of Himself. Thus He has left nothing but the good and what God is in unspotted holiness, with the blood of His Son our Lord and Savior before Him, and sprinkled upon us as His rule. So as regards life and death, death and redemption, redemption and resurrection between God and ourselves. Not only has each got another and a new meaning in Christ to what they had in themselves, as viewed in the light of promise or by Levitical type, but they are brought together in the person and work of Christ; so that the distance which naturally existed between them is done away.

For example, at the cross and sepulcher, three days serve to measure the distance between death and life, death to the old man and life in the new. And these same three days now close the once vast space of His incarnation, when it stood in promise and type between our redemption and His resurrection. Forty days serve to mark the period of time when the last Adam was born out of death, and the hour when He was carried up into heaven in a cloud as the ascended Lord—the glorified man—head over all things to the church which is His body.

Again, if days and years are brought away from their ordinary computation by time, and put in connection with the Lord and His coming, or with the day of God and the final dissolution of the heavens and the earth, faith's reckonings become like His and we readily believe that “One day is

with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." It is this new method of calculation which enables us to declare as to this apparently long interval which measures His absence, "the Lord is not slack concerning his promise as men count slackness, but is longsuffering to usward." The difference between these standards (which are either divine or human) makes the difference which we are contemplating.

Indeed everything between God and ourselves is thus brought into new and close connection through Christ the Second Man, both as to facts and times: and, when learned in their existing order and meaning, by acquaintance with His person and work, gives another character to the ways of God with men, and their thoughts of Him. The cross and the sepulcher here, and the Son of man at the right hand of the throne above, are now become the only established centers of God's everlasting operations in grace towards us, and in righteousness to Christ, and for His glory. These same centers are the resting places of our faith as regards sin put away and righteousness brought in, and sustain the soul in a known peace with God that passeth all understanding, keeping the heart and mind through Christ Jesus. These centers are also the birthplace of our brightest hopes and expectations, for Christ is the alone object between God and ourselves. He will accept no other rule of action toward us, in redemption or resurrection for Himself, and we disown every other as the ground of our confidence and hope before Him. It is by Christ—this Christ—that we believe in God who raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory, that our faith and hope might be in God. J. E. B.

Chapter 8

Christ on the Throne of God

Heb. 1:3; 8:1, 2; 10:12; 12:2

There is no point perhaps which the Spirit of God takes more pains to press in writing to the Hebrew Christians than the connection of the throne of God with the Lord Jesus. And the immense weight of such a relationship must be evident on the least reflection to one who knows what God is and what man is. There are two things that the Jew as a Jew never acknowledges. It was their great difficulty when unbelief began to overspread the nation, and it is the great lie of Judaism up to the present day.

The one is that God came down to man—God really and truly came down to man and not that He merely made a revelation of Himself. This they could easily believe. All their old polity was founded upon a manifestation of the divine presence; but a real personal presence of God upon earth, to have God becoming a man, truly a man, is foreign to Judaism as such. The system of its Rabbis cannot abide it, utterly refuses it, and perishes in its war against it.

But there is another grand truth also to which Judaism is equally opposed: not that God came down merely, but that man was to go up and be with God. Judaism as such finds all its place upon the earth. It is essentially for the world; and even in its best shape it is earthly, not heavenly. According to God's intentions about it and the glorious counsels that He has yet in store for Israel, it is the blessing of Israel upon the earth, though I do not deny that after all the dealings with the earth are over, they, as all other believers, will have their portion according to a changed condition in the new heavens and earth. But still, speaking of the course of dispensations on the earth, Judaism finds its place not in the heavens but here below. Therefore there was an immense barrier in their minds against the thought of a man being in heaven. Accordingly, in writing to the Hebrews, the Holy Ghost sets Himself to give the strongest possible expression to these truths, and that, too, founded on the ancient divine records which the Jews possessed. Psalm 110 has a very important connection with the whole doctrine of the Epistle to the Hebrews, as it was used on a most critical occasion by our Lord with the Jews in Matt. 22.

The Lord Jesus is viewed in various lights as seated on the throne of God. In chapter 1 it is connected with the glory of His person. The Messiah was divine. It was not merely that He was raised there, that God exalted Him above His fellows, though this was true; but He was God. He who was a man was God; He who was God deigned to become man. And now that He is gone up to heaven, He is not gone up as God only, but as man. In Him God therefore had come down and man had gone up. He had not ceased to be God; He could not cease to be what He is, but He had carried humanity on high, now bound up with His own person forever, humanity itself in His person being on the throne of God. It is this too which is shown here to be bound up with the work that He has done. For it is evident that the value of the work in the sight of God depends on the glory of the person that did it. It is so even among men. The man who supposes that an action depends merely on itself, and not also on the person who does it, knows nothing as he ought to know. The same words from persons of a totally different character, and of different measures of dignity,

would have and ought to have altogether another effect. Now this shows what an immense source of strength and blessing, for the Christian, is the holding fast the eternal glory of the person of Jesus. So it is said here, He is the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His subsistence.

Observe by the way, it is not the express image of His “person,” because each person was Himself; the Father was Himself, the Son Himself, and the Holy Ghost Himself. Christ is never said to be the express image of the person of Father; He is the image of the invisible God. The word that we have here is given nowhere else. It is “subsistence.”

“And upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins.” Creature could not mix in it; that divine and glorious person undertook the whole work alone, and He would not take His seat otherwise than as having perfectly accomplished it. He would only sit down there “when he had by himself purged our sins.” Then and not before—not till sin had been perfectly put away—did He sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Thus our sins are gone according to the perfectness of the place of glory in which He is now seated. The Lord Jesus has not merely taken His seat on the throne of God as a divine person. He was and is evermore a divine person; and had He not been so, He could not have taken His seat there as He did; but He is glorified on that throne because He had, and when He had, by Himself purged our sins. What a perfect witness to the absolute putting away of sins for the believer! Thus it is that God graciously, but with perfect wisdom, binds together our faith in His personal glory, our perception of His present place as man, and the joy of the perfect abolition of our sins before God. You cannot separate them. If one of these truths is shut out, there is weakness about all the rest. If one lets go the glory of Christ, how can he henceforth realize the efficacy of His redemption in the remission of sins? If you hold fast His personal glory, you are entitled to know forgiveness according to the glory of His seat on the throne. If He was glorified on that throne after He had taken your sins on Himself; it must have been because they were all absolutely borne away.

But the throne is used in quite another way in chapter 8. We were once enslaved by sin and we have still to deal with it, though entitled by Christ's death and resurrection to count ourselves dead to it. For believing in the Lord Jesus, and in the forgive ness of our sins by Him, we are in living relationship with God, our sins blotted out and our sin judged in the cross. Consequently sin is regarded as foreign to us, because in the nature in which we are in relationship with God, there is no sin, and the other nature is a constant encumbrance which we learn to look upon with hatred. But as we have the old nature still as a matter of fact, though delivered from it by faith, so we are liable to Satan's using the world to act on our flesh. Consequently we need a priest, and we have a priest—the best priest that God can give, the only priest that ought to be confided in. “We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.” There we find the glory of our Priest; the very same glory is bound up with His priesthood as with His atonement and His person. And we find that as a priest He could not be on a less place than the throne of God. God has seated Him there. Such is the witness to the glory of Him who intercedes for us and is engaged to bring us through the wilderness.

But in chapter 10 we have the combination of the sacrifice with the priesthood. “This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God.” It was not a temporary seat, because the sacrifice was absolute in its consequences, and in virtue of this He

takes His seat permanently, or in continuity, on the right hand of God, to prove that there was nothing else that needed to be done as far as the blotting out of our sins was concerned. No doubt He will descend from heaven to receive His bride to Himself, as also to judge the world. But as to the question of purging our sins, He will never rise from that throne. His being there is the pledge of sin being put away. As I look up at the throne and know that the Son of God is seated there, I ought not to have one question about my sins being gone. There are those who think that this would diminish our present abhorrence of sin; but it is an objection of unbelief; not of holiness. It may have an appearance of jealousy for what is good; but it really flows from ignorance of God and unbelief of the power of the sacrifice of Christ. For the believer the ground of hatred of sin and of guarding against it lies not merely in our having a nature to which sin is an aversion, but in the certainty that the victory is won before we start in our course as Christians. Therefore our business is to walk consistently with the truth that our sins are gone. If we trifle with sin after that, we lose sight of the deliverance which Christ has wrought for us; we are showing human nature far from God, and so far walking in unbelief of the blessed place into which Christ has brought us by His blood.

But there is a fourth place in which the throne is introduced. In chapter 12:2 Jesus is set down at the right hand of the throne as the witness that God is against the world and for Him whom the world cast out, the Captain of faith; not merely the sacrifice or the Priest, but the perfect pattern of faith as a man here below. Now as such He was a sufferer. The more faith, the greater the suffering. The Lord Jesus was not only the object of faith for others, but He deigned to become a man (and a man of faith) Himself; and, as a man, He had all the suffering as well as the joy of faith, as it is said here, “Who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” It was not what He was going to receive, but His own grace that brought the Lord here. He had all things and needed nothing that could be given Him. Nor is it even true of the Christian that reward is the motive before him. The Christian does not start upon his career on earth, because of the glory he is going to have in heaven. It is always the effect of divine grace made known to the heart, and this alone which separates from the world and delivers a man from himself. It is the absolute work of redemption. He knows he is starting with God's favor, and he has the encouragement of the glory at the end of the course. It was the fullness of love that brought the Lord down. But when here in the midst of sinners and of rejection and failure all around, this was what sustained Him in His errand of love; “for the joy that was set before him (he) endured the cross, despising the shame.” And here we have the answer to it on God's part: He “is set down at the right hand of the throne of God,” and this just when everything appeared to be ruined; for the very last thing the world saw of Jesus was His cross. Apparently as far as man could discern, a total victory was gained over the Son of God. God's purposes appeared to collapse in the cross of Jesus. He was the only righteous man, the only righteous judge, the appointed governor of the world; yet He had not the throne but the cross. He was the Messiah of Israel, yet the despised and rejected of men. He was the object of faith to the disciples, yet they all forsook Him and fled. All appeared to be one mass of ruin and failure. But faith looks not to the earth, nor to man, but to God: and it sees that the man who was rejected and crucified by the world is set down on the throne of the glory of God. And when the moment comes for God to display Him in glory, how He will reverse every thought of man, and prove that faith alone was always right! And faith is only right because it is the answer in man's heart to the revelation of God.

The Lord grant that, rejoicing in such a Savior and in such a portion as we shall have now in hope if not in present possession, and actually glorified with Him by and by, we may look through all present shame and sorrow with joy to that throne whence He will come to receive us to Himself in the Father's house.

Chapter 9

Christ the End of the Law

Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. The two righteousnesses are then contrasted. Moses describes the one, saying, “The man that doeth these things shall live by them.” The law was man's righteousness; it was God's perfect rule for a creature. It required man to give a righteousness to God; if he did, he lived by it.

The righteousness of faith, on the other hand, brings a righteousness to man. A man has not to ascend up to heaven, to bring Christ down from above; He has come down even to death. A man has not to go down into the deep, to bring Christ up from the dead; He has risen: God has raised Him. A dead and risen Christ are set forth as the display of God's righteousness, in direct contrast to human righteousness, which would be keeping the law. We have seen what the righteousness of faith does not say; now let us see what it does say: “The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith, which we preach, That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” With the heart man believes unto righteousness; with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, as scripture says.

Man confounds human and divine righteousness together; God distinctly divides them. We have seen man's righteousness is, “The man that doeth these things shall live by them.” Christ, as man, fulfilled it; but that is not the righteousness of God. The righteousness of God, or the justice of God (for it is the same word), is His own character as such, displayed in His own acts, viz,, the death and resurrection of Christ (see also Psa. 71:19, 20), and handed over in Christ to the sinner who lays hold of it by faith, and is justified by it. Truly, O God, thy righteousness is very high; as high as heaven: no one can reach it! But God Himself has come down to settle His own claim: Christ has been delivered for our offenses, and God has Himself judged sin itself, in the person of His Son, on the cross. He has shown Him great and sore troubles on account of man's sin. I look at sin; I look at the dread darkness; I hear the bitter cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” I see the blood gush forth; I ask, Why is this? The only answer is, sin is the cause. God there judged sin in the flesh on the sinless One. I say, That is righteousness! It is the Judge passing judgment. God's righteousness against sin is displayed. I look again: I hear a great earth. quake; the stone is rolled away from the sepulcher; the guards become as dead men: I see a holy, spotless One—holy and spotless as ever He was—rising from the dead. I ask, Why is this? I hear the answer, Righteousness requires that that man who has glorified God in every way, whether in life or death, should be given the first place in the glory. Who is that man? It is Christ, the Second Adam, the Lord from heaven. He of God is made unto us righteousness. God and man are linked together in one person, even in the person of the Christ. They were ever together from the incarnation, but in one man. There is no such place for us except in resurrection. (John 12:23.) On the cross I see the sinner's substitute—marvel of marvels—forsaken of God. The veil is rent, and access is given to every sinner who believes in Jesus, into the very holiest. The believer's position is now Christ before God. Thus God is for us, as revealed in His own acts in Christ. Faith appropriates it all, and gets Christ's position before God. Is Christ dead? the believer is dead. Is

Christ risen? the believer is risen. Is Christ the righteousness of God? the believer is made the righteousness of God in Him. With his heart he believes unto righteousness; with his mouth confession is made unto salvation. He believes, he is not ashamed; he calls on the name of the Lord, he is saved.

Chapter 10

Christ the Link Between the Old Testament and the New

The Christ, the Messiah, or, which is but the same word translated, the Anointed, was to come and present Himself to Israel, according to the revelation and the counsels of God.

But this character of Messiah, although the expectation of the Jews scarcely went beyond it (and they looked even at that in their own way, merely as the exaltation of their own nation, having no sense of their sins or of the consequences of their sins),—this character of Messiah was not all that the prophetic word, which declared the counsels of God, had announced with respect to the One whom even the world was expecting.

He was to be the Son of man—a title which the Lord Jesus loves to give Himself—a title of great importance to us. It appears to me that the Son of man is, according to the word, the Heir of all that the counsels of God destined for man as his portion in glory, all that God would bestow on man according to those counsels. (See Dan. 7:13, 14; Psa. 8:5, 6.) But in order to be the Heir of all that God destined for man, He must be a man. The Son of man was truly of the race of man—precious and comforting truth!—born of a woman, really and truly a man, and, partaking of flesh and blood, made like unto His brethren.

In this character He was to suffer and be rejected; that He might inherit all things, He was to die and to rise again, the inheritance being defiled, and man being in rebellion—the co-heirs as guilty as the rest.

He was, then, to be the Servant, the Son of David, and the Son of man, and therefore truly a man on the earth, born under the law, born of a woman, of the seed of David, heir to the rights of David's family, heir to the destinies of man, according to the purpose and the counsels of God.

But who was to be all this? Was it only an official glory which the Old Testament had said a man was to inherit? The condition of men, manifested under the law, and without law, proved the impossibility of making them partakers of the blessing of God as they were. The rejection of Christ was the crowning proof of this condition. And, in fact, man needed above all to be himself reconciled to God, apart from all dispensation and special government of an earthly people. Man had sinned, and redemption was necessary for the glory of God and the salvation of men. Who could accomplish it? Man needed it himself. An angel had to keep and fill his own place, and could do no more; he could not be a savior. And who among men could be the heir of all things, and have all the works of God put under his dominion, according to the word? It was the Son of God who should inherit them; it was their Creator who should possess them. He, then, who was to be the Servant, the Son of David, the Son of man, the Redeemer, was the Son of God, God the Creator.

The Gospels, in general, develop these characters of Christ, not in a dogmatic manner (that of John alone having to a certain degree that form), but by so relating the history of the Lord, as to present Him in these different characters, in a much more living way than if it were only set before us in doctrine. The Lord speaks according to such or such a character; He acts in the one or in the

other; so that we see Him Himself accomplishing that which belonged to the different positions that we know to be His according to scripture.

Thus, not only is the character much better known in its moral details, according to its true scriptural import, as well as the meaning and purpose of God therein revealed, but Christ Himself becomes in these characters more personally the object of faith and of the heart's affections. It is a person whom we know, and not merely a doctrine. By this precious means which God has deigned to use, truths with respect to Jesus are much more connected with all that went before, with the Old Testament history. The change in God's dealings is linked with the glory of the person of Christ, in connection with which this transition from God's relations with Israel and the world to the heavenly and Christian order took place. This heavenly system, while possessing a character more entirely distinct from Judaism than would have been the case if the Lord had not come, is not a doctrine that nullifies, by contradicting, that which preceded it. When Christ came, He presented Himself to the Jews as, on the one hand, subject to the law, and, on the other, as the Seed in whom the promises were to be fulfilled. He was rejected; so that this people forfeited all right to the promises. God could then bring in the fullness of His grace. At the same time, the types, the figures, had their accomplishment; the curse of the law was executed; the prophecies that related to the humiliation of Christ were fulfilled; and the relations of all souls with God—always necessarily attached to His person, when once He had appeared—were connected with the position taken by the Redeemer in heaven. Thence the door was opened to the Gentiles, and the purpose of God with respect to a Church, the body of the ascended Christ, fully revealed. Son of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from among the dead, He was minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy. He was the firstborn from the dead, the head of His body the church, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence.

The glory of the new order of things was so much the more excellent, so much the more exalted above all the earthly order that had preceded it, as it was attached to the person of the Lord Himself, and to Him glorified in the presence of God His Father. And at the same time that which took place put its seal upon all that had preceded it, as having had its true place, and having been ordained of God; for the Lord presented Himself on earth in connection with the system that existed before He came.

Chapter 11

How Men Oppose Christianity and Why

The love of objections is one of the worst moral features possible. It is quite right to weigh them, and see that one is well founded in what the soul builds on. But there is moral proof in the power of an object to produce (where the soul is capable of feeling) affections which are the moral reflex, in a rightly-constituted mind, of the object itself, and which are thus the proof of power, because the fruit of power. Now where this is the case, the love of objections is only the proof of insensibility to the power which attracts and fixes the soul. It is moral incapacity to estimate what is excellent. The qualities displayed in the object do not convince and silence cavil. Why? Because the heart is incapable of estimating, by its own sentiments, these qualities; perhaps it does not like their superiority. This is infidelity.

There is another thing—that when the object is known and valued, the moral aim of the infidel is judged. “Their device is only to pull him down whom thou wouldest exalt.” The sagacity, and here the spiritual sagacity, of affection easily detects this. “Give God the praise!” The modern compliment of infidels also, “As for this man, we know that be is a sinner,” will not bide it. There is a kind of reasoning which flows from being the subject of power, which infidel Pharisees cannot reach. Theirs only creates astonishment, by its evident nonsense, to the simple mind who knows the power. “Why herein is a wonderful thing, that ye know not who he is, yet he hath opened my eyes.” There is no mistake then.

The skeptic may ask, “What has this to do with scripture, or an historical document?” He is found there. No doubt the skeptic has not found Him there; he does not know Him. He says, indeed, to the evangelical—imitating language he has heard—that he has tried both; he has a double experience—the believer's and the infidel's. But this poor imitation (of what converted persons, who have come to the knowledge of Christ, have said) is too miserably transparent to be anything but the shame of him who uses it. What did he experience at the first? The effect, on his own showing, of believing a lie—of supposing true what had no existence in truth. “A deceived heart hath turned him aside: he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?” Let not the language seem hard. The skeptic declares it is a lie; and that Jesus is not the Messiah. What was his first experience? “To any ‘evangelical' I have a right to say, that while he has a single, I have a double experience.” Now how can he tell what the effects, “the spiritual fruits,” of a living knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ are, since he does not believe there is such a person at all? His only past experience was, as he avows, a wholly false one: I ever hope it may not have been. “Spiritual fruits,” in his case, are not those of the true knowledge in power of the Lord Jesus. He never had such; for if he really knew Jesus to be the Son of God, it was and must have been because He was so—if He was so, He is so. Now the skeptic declares it is, and hence was, all a delusion. His “spiritual fruits” were the fruits of a delusion, of belief in an imposture. Think of a person coolly speaking of this in his own case! To what a state of moral reasoning, of moral susceptibilities, must he be reduced!

Chapter 12

Christianity Objective, Not Subjective Only

The Lord says, that the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which should come, should take the things that were His, and show them to them; and all that the Father has is His. All the infinitude of the unseen heavenly, and, I may say, divine world, was to be revealed, and that in the intimacy of the relationship of the Father and the Son, so that we should have fellowship with them. And no man had gone up there, but He who descended thence. He could speak what He knew, and testify what He had seen—declare the Father as in His bosom. He and He only had seen the Father; but this is truth given by the Spirit (all of it, even what Christ said). All is lost; instead, we are to have the spirit or conscience assume the throne intended for Him in the soul, and draw from the storehouse of youthful experience, and legislate upon the future without appeal, except to himself; a law which is not imposed upon us by another power, but our own enlightened will. All that God can give of the heavenly blessedness of the Son, now a glorified man, is lost, forever lost; and man is only to seek the development of what is within man.

And this rejection of objective religion is as unphilosophical as it is unchristian; for all creatures must be formed by objects. God alone is self-sufficient. He can create objects in the display of His love; but He needs none outside Himself, a creature does. Man has no intrinsic resources within himself, whether fallen or unfallen; nor even angels. Take away God, what are they? Nothing or devils. So man; if money is his object, he is avaricious or covetous, at any rate; if power, ambitious; if pleasure, a man of pleasure; and all other objects are judged of by the ruling one. In every case of a creature, what is objective is the source of the subjective state.

In Christianity this is connected with a new nature, because the old will not have the divine object which characterizes, and is the foundation of faith; but the principle remains unchanged. “We all, with open [unveiled] face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.” See what a magnificent picture we have in Stephen of this: in a remarkable way, no doubt; but still exhibitory of it morally, as well as by a vision. The whole question between Christianity and rationalism is brought to an issue. The progress of human nature, with the very elements spoken of, and the contrasted result, is stated. “Ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.” There is the relationship between man and the Spirit. Next, “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which have shewed before of the coming of the Just One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.” These were their ways with those who unfolded the law in a more spiritual manner, and with the great living witness of perfection Himself. Such was man—flesh in contrast with the law. Such was his state: he always resisted the Holy Ghost. Now note the contrast of the objective spiritual man. “Stephen, full of the Holy Ghost, looked steadfastly up into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.” And what was the effect, the subjective effect, in one full of the Holy Ghost, of his objective perception of heavenly objects? In the midst of rage and violence, and while being actually stoned, in all calmness he not merely bears, but kneels down and says “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” So Jesus: “Father, forgive

them; for they know not what they do.” Then he said, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,” as Jesus had said, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” He beheld, with unveiled face, the glory of the Lord, and was changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. But how full and complete a picture—man always a resister of the Holy Ghost, under law, not keeping it, with prophets, persecuting; with the Just One, a murderer; with the witness of the Holy Ghost gnashing his teeth and slaying in rage! Christianity in contrast—a man full of the Holy Ghost, seeing Jesus the Son of man in heaven, changed into his image, and killed by man, falls asleep, Jesus receiving his spirit!

The rationalist goes over this ground, rejects Christianity as an external revelation (that must be a law), takes up exactly the same elements as Stephen, and declares that man is progressively educated by them to do without that which Stephen enjoyed. Which am I to believe? Yet I have but coldly sketched the elements of thought; I must leave you to meditate over it and appreciate the beauty and spiritual importance of it. It is a most enchanting picture, and the deepest moral principles are contained in it. But scripture is a wonderful book. This was a vision, no doubt; but what Stephen saw is revealed, and written for my faith to act on.

The rejection of Christ in the world made evidently a turning-point in the world's history, as to the proof of what it really was; and the history of Stephen shows man resisting the testimony to Christ's heavenly glory, as they had killed Him when He was the witness of perfection and of God on earth.

There is a silent witness to the divinity of Jesus, and while truly and really a man, a contrast between Him and all other men, which has profoundly interested me. When man is blessed, morally blessed, elevated, he must have an elevated, and, indeed (to be taken out of self) a divine object before him. Jesus was the object even of heaven, instead of having one. When Stephen is before us, heaven is opened to him as it was to Jesus; but he sees the Son of man in the heaven, and this fixes his view, and lights up his regard with the glory he saw. Heaven is opened upon Jesus, and the angels are His servants; He sees it opened, and the Holy Ghost descends—witness that He is Son of God; but He is changed into no other image by it; He has no object to which to look up, but heaven looks down on Him, and the Father's voice declares, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

We enjoy these revelations of His person; but the declaration that the Word was God, and many such like, is a declaration which has authority over my soul. I make God a liar, as John speaks, if I do not believe it; and so I can use it with others. God has declared it. He that believes not has made God a liar, because he has not believed the record which God has given concerning His Son. He that believes has the witness in himself. And all these traits which clothe, or rather reveal, the beloved person of Him who was humbled for us, are ineffably sweet; but the positive declaration is of all importance too.

In a passage alluded to, note two other ways in which Jesus is presented, besides the actual declaration that He was God and the Word made flesh. (1) He gathers round Himself. If He were not God, this would be frightful, a subversion of all truth, a destructive impossibility: He would turn away from God. He accepts this place. All that is attracted by what is good flows around Him and finds there its perfect and all-satisfying center. That is God. No one else could or ever did do this, except in sin or violence. The Church can say, Come and drink, I have the living water; so she has,

but not come to me. This marks the spirit of apostacy. The stream (blessed be God!) flows there, but she is no fountain to which to go. This must be divine, or it is false. But, mark, this is a new gathering by a divine revealed center, not the educational progress of the race; it is the opposite, though blessed instruction for the whole race. (2) The other way Jesus is revealed is in the words, “Follow me” —the same perfection; but now, as man, there is a path through this world of evil. It is one, only one—following Christ. There can be no way but a new divine one, yet necessarily a human one; there is no way for man, as man, in the world at all. When Adam was in paradise, he did not want a way. He had only, in blessed and unfeigned thankfulness, ignorant of evil, to enjoy good and worship. When man has been cast out, and the world is grown up away from God—away in nature and will, there can be no way in a rebellious world, in a sinful corrupt system, how to walk aright, as in and of the world, when its whole state is wrong. But if what is divine comes into it as man—what has motives not of it, nor of human nature, though truly man—if it gives a path in which the divine nature is displayed in grace and holiness in these circumstances, yet always itself manifesting what it is in them, now I have a way. I follow Him, truly, in everything, a man; but a man displaying divine qualities in the ordinary circumstances of human life. He says, “Follow me,” but when He has said, “Ye are not of the world, as I am not of the world,” He goes into glory, sanctifies Himself even externally, in His ascension, from the human race, that we may be sanctified by the truth.

But it is the beauty of Christianity, that being objective, being truth, “the truth shall set you free,” and a person, “the Son shall set you free.” It works effectually in those who receive Christ, and requires no intellectual development to receive its power. Christ is received into the heart, and, dwelling there by faith, produces the effect in us. Yet it takes us out of ourselves, because it is objective, and we, filled with delight in an object which is perfect, are like Him.

It is divine wisdom. Man would produce virtue by the love of virtue in himself; but then he thinks of himself, and all his virtue is rottenness. God gives us a human but divine object, and our affections are divine, because we love what is so, and we are morally what we love; but we love it in another, and are delivered from self. I would just add, that I believe that this adaptation of the character of walk to our entirely new position in Christ is what is meant by “created again in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God has afore prepared that we should walk in them.” Hence, we are the epistle of Christ, engraved in the fleshy tablets of the heart by the Spirit of the living God.

The very starting point is opposite. Christianity treats man as a fallen being, not merely as imperfect but as departed from God, and needing a new nature and redemption. Christ meets Nicodemus at once on this ground.

The rationalist or infidel system takes in Christianity by the by, as it does Greece and Rome; but man, as he is, is to be educated.

Chapter 13

Church Establishment and Church Endowment: Part 1

SEE 1 Corinthians.

The attention of the Lord's people has been largely directed of late to the Epistle to the Romans, with a view of showing the summary it contains of the responsibilities of Jew and Gentile before God, and yet the common level upon which they both stood. “They are all under sin.” Besides this, there is a further judgment pronounced by the righteous God upon the great fact of man's enmity, as expressed by the cross and the betrayment of Christ, by which “every mouth is stopped and the whole world brought in guilty before God.” Moreover, when tested by the standard of what was due from the creature to the Creator, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”

Nothing but the grace of God could take advantage of a crisis like this, and make it the opportunity of introducing righteousness in its new association with Christ in grace, “whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood,” to declare at this time His righteousness, “that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.”

God Himself is here seen in the new circle of His own delights, saving the lost, pardoning the sinner, justifying the guilty, because of the work of Christ on the cross, and His having been “declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.” With what delight do the redeemed listen to the voice of the Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty, as He challenges the whole universe around Him: “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?” “It is God that justifieth,” silences every fear. “It is Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us,” is the ground of our largest confidence and the guarantee for our boldest hopes! We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be firstborn among many brethren.

The God who suits us for Himself and for His Son in the eternal glory also fashions us for a correspondingly suited place while we are in this world: and this is the second part of the Epistle to the Romans. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God which is your reasonable service, and be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” A Christian must in this way be modeled both for the heavens and for the earth, both for time and for eternity. He is called out by grace to take no other place than with Christ above and with a rejected Lord below; but how far short of this vocation in its twofold character the Christians of to-day have fallen, each heart alas! knows for itself.

The immediate purpose of this paper is not however with the Romans but with the Corinthians: only it was necessary to preface the subject with these remarks, since Paul throws open the church doors at Corinth to the beloved of God and the called saints of Rome. A comparison of the opening verses of these epistles will show the difference now pointed at, and in application we shall discover that it requires a first-rate Roman Christian to make a really good Corinthian churchman. To the first Paul writes, not as a gathered body, but “to all that be in Rome,” &c.;

whereas, to the last he writes “unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” These are recognized as worshippers, and their first act of Christian faith is, as gathered round the person of the living and risen Lord, the Head of the church, to call upon His name, &c. The Romans were instructed in their epistle how they were called and made saints and sanctified in Christ Jesus, so that they were prepared individually to be gathered on the very threshold of 1 Corinthians for church employment upon proper church ground, “with all in every place who call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” This platform is wide enough to embrace all the sanctified in Christ Jesus, and yet exclusive enough to shut out all who are not redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

In pursuing our examination of this 1 Corinthians, we shall find that the first eleven chapters are occupied with the important subject of true church Establishment, and the remaining part with the engrossing question of real church Endowment; but closing all up by the glorious chapter xv. of resurrection as the only and proper hope of the church of God on earth. How important a matter this is, in all its parts, at a time like this, and for Christendom generally, need not be insisted on.

Let us now follow this 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, as the successive chapters lead us; and first of all notice, yea, and associate ourselves with, that new source and measure of church blessing and benediction, “grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ,” as the only proper standing of called saints, and of the sanctified in Christ Jesus. Should there be a doubt on the heart of any worshipper, as to his title to take this place before God, let every such misgiving be reproved, as he reads in this same chapter, “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” What a new object has the Father's grace found for us in this Son of His own love, and our Savior Jesus Christ! may we not fail in our part, to “glory in the Lord,” by an unreserved acknowledgment of all that God has made Him to be by resurrection from the dead. But connected with this encouraging exhortation there is likewise a stern prohibition, “that no flesh should glory in his presence;” and may the Holy Ghost, who dwells in us, keep us as mindful of one as the other, in our new church relations, which are thus opening out to us In chapter 2 we are instructed respecting “a wisdom of this world, and of the princes of this world, that come to naught,” and “the wisdom of God which he ordained before the world unto our glory, which none of the princes of this world knew,” &c. Let us connect these important facts together. In the first chapter “man in the flesh” is cast out of God's presence, and the Second man, the Lord, is the only object of glory. Here we get as a consequence of this, the wisdom of the world, and its powers set aside; and another wisdom connected with Christ introduced, “which God ordained before the world to our glory.” This wisdom (which was once a mystery) is now revealed by the Spirit of God, that Spirit which searcheth the deep things of God; and this Spirit we (the redeemed) have received, “that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth,” &c. Had the princes of this world known the ordained wisdom of God, and Jesus the Lord, in whom this mystery was embodied, and developed, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. Here we are taught the distinction between the Church of God, and the world; and what it is which really constitutes and measures the distance between the two in time and eternally, a solemn fact in the government of God and for the consciences of His

saints.

Everybody admits the interest which attaches to laying a foundation stone and the ceremonials which are attendant thereon. Be it so: our chapter iii. calls us to witness such a thing, but infinitely more grand since God lays it; and the apostles and the master builders are gathered round this new foundation, “the pillar and ground of the truth.” As we approach we hear it said, “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” And see inscribed upon Him, “a sure stone, a tried stone, a precious stone, and the chief corner stone,” and the top stone to be brought out with shoutings in that day when He fills all earth and heaven with His praise. In the meanwhile we add, “this is the Lord's doing, and marvelous in our eyes.” Let us further examine this church architecture, and the designs, and hear from the lips of Paul “according to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” And again, “if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: 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.” What a solemn and searching word, for a day when church extension is on everybody's lips, and commended on all sides! What must that church be which is no longer the city set upon a hill which cannot be hid? and where is that church of which the Lord says, “because thou art neither cold nor hot I will spue thee out of my mouth?” Over the entablature of the true church at Corinth was written, “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” Sharp cuttings and inscriptions follow, “Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise.” And again, “The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, he taketh the wise in their own craftiness.” We will only take a glance at our church bequests and then pass on to chapter iv. “Therefore let no man glory in men. For all things are your's; whether Paul, or Apollos, Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are your's; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.” These are our church benefactions.

We are now led to the offices in the church and to church dignitaries, but only to receive our new lessons as to these also. “Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful.” Astonishing as it is to see men brought into this nearness to God, put into the church as the new vessel of witness and testimony on the earth, yet how plainly does the world shew itself to be the self-same world as regards this church and its ministers, as it was before, when its princes crucified the Lord of glory! “For I think,” Paul says, “that God hath set forth us the apostles last, as it were appointed to death: for we are made a spectacle to the world, and to angels, and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake; we are made as the filth of the earth and are the offscouring of all things unto this day.” There is not only a church and a world in this epistle, but each is true to itself and the distinction as obvious as between Christ and Belial. These ministers could say, “Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat.”

In the next chapter we are taught what church discipline is, and why it is to be exercised and how. “Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened.” The Lord will not suffer us to be inconsistent even with ourselves as “unleavened;” and this is very wonderful, though all such acts get the authority

and sanction of His name. Here let me observe that, as on our entrance upon church standing and true Christian worship we were seen “calling on the name of Jesus Christ and our Lord,” so here, when in the church and exercised in church discipline, it is “when ye are gathered together,” and “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,” the only but all-sufficient source of blessing and of power. From these our responsibilities in the church of God flow. “Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.” After this, will any plead for the allowance, much less the admission, of “a little leaven,” whether in corrupt doctrine or in loose practice?

Chapter 6 instructs us in our new behavior as regards the exaction of our natural rights. “Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?” It is important to observe the contrast between the Holy Ghost's teaching in the church and the teaching of Moses under the law. If an injured man puts himself in connection with the last named, he will be justified in exacting “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;” but if he puts himself at the feet of Christ, he will be taught another lesson. “But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil;” or, as we have it in our chapter, “Now, therefore, there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?” Our separation unto “the kingdom of God” is likewise intended here, and our connection with it is made the motive for actions which correspond therewith “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived. neither thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” The liberty is equal to the subjection. “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.” The bondage of self and the body, with the thousand claims it makes, are set aside, and true Christian liberty affirmed in our new allegiance to Christ in life. “The body is for the Lord and the Lord for the body. Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? and he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” If any inquire by what methods such an emancipation has been effected, our chapter supplies the answer. “Such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.” Again, if self is no longer to be the object, nor the body our rule, to whom do we belong, and whose are we? “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body [and in your spirit, which are God's].” Such are “the members of Christ,” and these new “temples of the Holy Ghost” on the earth, both engaged and possessed!

Chapter vii. treats mainly of the states and condition of life in which a man or woman may be living when called of God to the knowledge of His Christ and our Lord. For example, “The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband else were your children unclean; but now are they holy;” as also, “He that is called in the Lord being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: and he that is called, being free, is the Lord's servant.” So as regards marriage, if any step out of the place in which he was called, and marry, “he hath not sinned,” nor she: only let them marry in the Lord.

In chapter 8 we are taught how to conduct ourselves in reference to the knowledge that puffs up, and the charity that edifies, as applied to meats and drinks, and days and seasons, and things offered to idols. The governing and absorbing fact for Christianity is, “To us there is but one God,

the Father, by whom are all things, and we in him, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him." So that charity may pass into its own region, and delight itself in seeking an object upon which to spend itself for its good and edification. Mere knowledge on diversities, such as are in question, puffs up. "If any man love God, the same is known of him."

Chapter 9 gives the proofs of Paul's apostleship, not by succession nor by human appointment; but as be says, "Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord." As to reward, "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel, should live of the gospel." And again, "What is my reward then? Verily, that when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I may not abuse my power in the gospel, and this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you." His service and labor are disconnected from all human and secondary considerations: "For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel." He puts himself under responsibility to the Lord by a deeper self-judgment than ever, "that he might be temperate in all things, even when striving for the mastery." Moreover, this responsibility becomes now a prominent feature of this epistle, and is extended to these Corinthians by the verse, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtain." Personally he closes with the solemn warning, "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection; lest by any means that when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away."

Let us recapitulate a few of the important points which have passed before us in these nine chapters. We saw first, as regards man himself, that he was put aside as in the flesh, with all his pretensions, "that no flesh should glory in His presence;" secondly, that the wisdom of the world and its princes were set at naught; and thirdly, that the world itself was a worthless world, because it had lost the one chief treasure which God in grace had sent into it, and was given over to its prince. Consequent upon this rejection of Christ (but in fulfillment of the purposes of God) this Second man, the Son of God, has been exalted to the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens, and has become the center around whom the "called saints and the sanctified in Christ Jesus" gather together as one body, and on whose name they call, as the true worshippers, who worship God in the Spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. The church of God below has properly begun its life and history from the glorified Head above, an entirely new standing before the Father, through redemption by the blood of the Lamb, and called by the God of our Lord Jesus Christ to a portion with Him, and that we are quickened, raised, and seated in the heavenly places in our Lord and Head, to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air when He comes with a shout.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 14

Church Establishment and Church Endowment: Part 2

But to return. Chapter 10 introduces us to church ordinances and a responsible people who take that ground before God as Israel did. “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed under the sea, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea,” &c. Professing Christendom has found at this point an entrance of ordinances and sacramentalism, the only points within the reach of man in the flesh and the craft of Satan, for who could touch Christ in the glory, or the real church of God, as one with Him there? But baptism and the Lord's table and the supper, with all their varied and significant meaning in truth, by the Holy Ghost, could be corrupted and turned round to suit mere human ideas of self-importance, and the subtlety of the enemy, who always revives and works by that which God has judged and set aside in Christ at the cross.

Who knew better than Satan that death had closed up all the relations between God and the creature, and by man's own act too, by which he had been not only the betrayer, but the murderer of Christ? Baptism was the great outward expression of this solemn fact, the end of man in the flesh. “Know ye not that as many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized unto his death?” The enemy would not suffer such a testimony as this to proclaim to the conscience of Christendom the fact of death, and soon turned it round to suit his own ends, and by ways and means with which all are familiar declared baptism to express life, and thus affirmed that the baptized were regenerate by that ordinance, children of God, members of Christ, and heirs of the kingdom. Could there have been such a Christendom as this nineteenth century presents, if the scriptural meaning of baptism, and the Lord's table, and the supper had been kept before the heart in testimony as representing death, the death we had deserved, but judicially borne by the Lord Jesus Christ, who suffered in our stead, the Just One for the unjust? How significant are the warnings of this chapter x. to people who still “sit down to eat and drink, but rise up to play.” With many of them God was not well pleased, but they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our figures or types. “Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them tempted and were destroyed of serpents.”

There is a difference, at least so I judge, between chapters 10 and 11, though both are alike sacrificial. Nevertheless, I take chapter 10 to be characteristically “the table of the Lord,” and therefore separative in its claims (as representing His title) from everything antagonistic to the Lord in the world around us; “Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and the table of devils.” What little weight has Paul's challenge-” do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?"-upon the professing Christians of our day! Further, the table of the Lord is not only separating but uniting as respects the believers. “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one loaf.” We are many members, but only one body, of which the one bread which we break is the symbol. So the “cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?” The body and blood of Christ are the only basis of assurance before God, and our communion one with another is on the common ground of the shedding of His blood.

The claims of the Lord upon us, founded on His rights and titles, extend from the table, as a new center, known by us in redemption, to “the whole earth and the fullness thereof.” All this is the Lord's, not asserted in creative title (though that be true too) but like Boaz who not merely had his Ruth but purchased the inheritance besides. We, believers, own the Lord's title to it all by resurrection, a title to be made good in divine power, when He comes a second time. Man in a state of nature, since Adam was driven out from Eden, is a trespasser, or at least an intruder in this creation, and is only in it by sufferance of God; but we are redeemed creatures, and owning the right and title of our risen Lord to the inheritance by redemption purchase, ask leave of no one to walk through the length and breadth of it, though we have not in fact so much as to set our foot upon. Whatsoever therefore “is sold in the shambles, that eat, asking no question for conscience sake: for the earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof.” our privileges as redeemed are new, so are our responsibilities; for this same Lord does not suffer us to do any longer the commonest things in an ordinary way, but says, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” What an elevation, and what a motive is this! So also as to the style of our behavior in the Lord's inheritance, “Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved.” God had put aside man in the flesh, judicially in Christ on the cross; but now we see the redeemed putting self aside in the power of resurrection life, and in the Holy Ghost, so that we anticipate the day of our perfect blessing, and begin while on earth to sacrifice self for the profit of others, and for the glory of God.

This redemption of the inheritance, and the Lord's title and claims, introduce us to chapter 11, where we get the new creation order, when all will be manifestly established in blessing according to God. The old creation order was God and the man and the woman; and this standing upon creature responsibility failed; but only failed to make room for the reserve of God and the introduction of Christ into a new creation-order; “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.” In this new order of headship, where the head of man is Christ, there is an end of all fear, for the head of Christ is God.

The supper follows this, and puts us into our places to feed upon the broken body and shed blood of Christ; or rather to be in that scene of judgment where in the understanding of our souls, in perfect peace with God, we are set to judge ourselves for the allowance or existence of anything in us, which Christ died to deliver us from, and which the judgment of God has condemned and put to death. It is a wonderful place to be set in, and to be told to judge ourselves, and that “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged” of the Lord; and that even “when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.” But besides, and beyond these matters of self-judgment, we are gathered round the Christ Himself who died for us, and to remember Him in His death-not the living, risen, and ascended One-the object of our worship, and on whose name we called in the opening chapter of this epistle-but the night of His betrayment, when He took bread, and broke it, and said, This is my body broken for you-likewise the cup—only now given out to us from the Lord in heaven by our apostle. It is necessarily with this addition, “For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.” The church fulfillments of the death of Christ will be in our rapture into the heavens, and our being changed into His likeness, and our being presented in the presence of the Father's glory

faultless and with exceeding joy.

Having considered in these eleven chapters the scriptural nature of the church's establishment, we now come to chapter xii. to the remaining subject of the church's endowment. Such a church as this epistle describes where (Christ is everything from the foundation stone, to the top stone; and where the truth of the person, and work, and death of Christ is taught doctrinally under the anointing of the Holy One, and sacramentally set forth by baptism, and the table, and the supper) could only be endowed by the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Therefore we read, “Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant;” and then follows the surprising catalog, or enrollment of what divine love could bestow on this new vessel of testimony on earth-the body of Christ. “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; there are differences of ministries, but the same Lord; there are diversities of operations but the same God, which worketh all in all.” What must the gifts be that spring forth from sources such as these, and how entirely independent and separate from any power under heaven, is this “church of the living God!”

Besides these diversities, which are necessary to the existence of a divine unity-there is the person of the Holy Ghost, which is beyond all His operations and gifts; “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” We are all conversant with the diversities that make up and constitute the unity of the human body; and this is taken as a figure of the church in verse 12, “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.” Scripture only recognizes one body, the body of Christ, not a congregational or a nonconformist body of Christians-much less an evangelical alliance-or a baptist, or a methodist body, but “ye being many are one.”

As we saw just now, there are not many suppers but only one Lord's supper, and not many tables but only one table of the Lord. “For we being many are one bread and one body;” nor are there many churches such as Popish, Greek, or Anglican; but we are all one in Christ Jesus. “Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels.... and not bolding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, maketh increase with the increase of God.”

As regards gifts, God has set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; after that, miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. Such are some of the church's endowments. The purpose of this bestowment next follows in chapters xiii., xiv., which contain yet further direction as to their use for “the edification of the body.” In brief, it may be said that the gifts enumerated in chapter 12 need be baptized in the element of love, or the charity of chapter 13, in order to be rightly exercised for the edification and growth of the body, as described in chapter 14. The presence of a plurality of gifts in the assembly is recognized, and consequently directions are given for their exercise, affirming that “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets,” and that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints, adding, “Let all things be done decently and in order.” How generally an ordained minister and his flock or congregation has been substituted for God's order in the church, it is not here my purpose to expose. Nor do I think, where human rules have introduced such a flagrant contradiction as is generally admitted in what is called “the faith and order” of established and dissenting communities, anything is wanted but an exercised conscience

before God to find the sure way of relief, and an “open door, which no man can shut.”

We come now to the magnificent chapter 15 or “the resurrection” chapter, the proper close to such an epistle, because the church's translation into the heavens to meet her Lord is her present and blessed hope. Satan knew this right well, and turned this chapter round into a burial service, and rung over it the funeral knell of the departed, changing a resurrection out of death into a burial service unto death and the grave and corruption. Let us examine one or two leading objects; and in the first place, what was in question at Corinth? Not whether any died, but if there was any resurrection. “How say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” The chapter is to prove a resurrection out of corruption, out of the grave, and out of death, and not a burial into them, which no one ever doubted. “Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming” are the key notes of this new chapter of our Christianity, which brings life and incorruptibility to light. Can it be called a burial service which introduces that great fact, “But now is Christ risen from the dead,” and affirms, “if Christ be not risen, your faith is vain, and ye are yet in your sins?” The enemy, who so successfully changed the meaning of baptism from death to “regeneration,” was equally skilful in turning this great revelation of Christ, and our resurrection into the heavens, into a funeral service and a requiem over the dead.

Further, this rising from among the dead on the part of the Second man by the glory of the Father—this rainbow which spans the horizon of our faith—puts the Lord by ascension into connection with His kingdom, in which He is yet to reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” The grand and distinguishing part of Christianity is the risen Son of man, the guarantee of the church's resurrection or translation to meet her Lord; the assurance too “that God has appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.” How necessary it was for Satan that he should blind the minds of people to this twofold character of the resurrection is obvious to any exercised soul. An ascended Lord is the pledge to a believer that he can never come into judgment; whereas a risen Christ is the proof to an unbeliever that he cannot escape it. It is resurrection from the dead which has put the Son of man in his proper place of supremacy and headship of a new creation. It is by the future reign of the ascended One, as Christ and Lord that the kingdom shall hereafter be given up to God, even the Father, “that God may be all in all.” Henceforth let this chapter be owned as the record of our victories, for such in truth it is, since we can say, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” And again, “Then shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory.” What becomes us to do, as we quit this triumphant arena of our conquered enemies, but to bow our heads and say, “Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ?” If things were with a saint according to the old law of nature, he might and would still prepare for death, and pay this debt, as some say; but with the sanctified in Christ Jesus all debts and liabilities have been canceled long ago at the cross, and we are brought by Paul into connection with the blessed hope of the Lord's coming. “Behold, I shew you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” Henceforth, there can be nothing common in the pathway of a saint. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” Is there anything common in the pathway of our Lord? “As Christ is, so are we in this world.”

Our epistle closes with church commendations upon a new footing, so that “if Timotheus come, see that he be with you without fear: for he worketh the work of the Lord, as I also do.” Likewise with proper church salutations, “The churches of Asia salute you. Aquila and Priscilla salute you much in the Lord, with the church that is in their house.” Finally, “If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.”

The Lord encourage His beloved people to step out of every system that will not bear the light and test of this epistle, and to accept the word which says, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58.) J. E. B.

Chapter 15

Church Membership and Gifts

In reading the Epistle to the Ephesians it is of the greatest consequence, doubtless, to notice the various subjects of which the Holy Ghost is treating, seeing it is God Himself, and “the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory,” whom it reveals, as come forth in the fullness of all blessing to the Son of His own love, and to those who are His.

It is however only one of these subjects which I desire to follow in this paper, and in the simplest way; so that I shall almost confine myself to the manner in which it is unfolded in each successive chapter by the apostle Paul. Let us then consider what this scripture teaches respecting the Church—the Church's Head and its members—the source of gifts for its edification and growth—and the Lord's care over it till He comes “to present it to himself a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing.”

Chapter 1:19-23 treats of the Head and the body, and speak only of Christ, as raised up into His place of Headship, by “the working of the mighty power of God, which be wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” It is of great moment, in these last days of establishing or disestablishing the national churches (so-called) of Christendom, to see that this Head of the Church which is His body can never be touched or tarnished by the wisdom or wickedness of men. Moreover, this scripture tells us that God “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.” The Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, of whom alone these wondrous actings of God are true, is therefore the Head of the Church, which is His body, and there can be consequently no joint or second head. The acknowledgment of this fact will be found to clear the minds of the simple of all difficulty and doubt as to the true and only Head of the assembly (or Church) of the living God.

Chapter 2 as plainly teaches how the body and its members are formed. “God who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, hath quickened us together with Christ (by grace are ye saved) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” The members of this Christ, as Head, and therefore the members of the Church which is His body, are quickened persons, who were once “dead in trespasses and sins, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others;” but they have been born again, born of the Spirit, born of God, have life in the Second man, and are raised and seated in Him as the Head in the heavenlies. When the Lord comes, the members will be manifestly with Christ the Head, and be glorified together with Him. The mighty power, which wrought in Christ and raised Him from the dead, has been also put forth “to us-ward who believe,” and has quickened us out of the death in trespasses and sins where we once lay, and will be displayed a second time in raising or changing us into the image and likeness of the heavenly man presently.

These persons are members of Christ, the mystic man, members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. None else are members, nor is there any other membership; and to own or sustain any other is therefore to be false to the truth. There are not two memberships, nor two bodies, any

more than two heads. What a deliverance would the Lord's people get if they were simple enough to give up every membership but this one which God alone can give, for it is He who has quickened us together with Christ as our Head, one as much as another!

Chapter 4 declares to us that the source of all gifts to the Church is in the Lord Himself as Head of the body, and flows from His love, which passeth knowledge. As regards the members of Christ "unto every one of us is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ," and as regards the gifts to the body, "he gave some apostles, 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, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." The Lord is thus the only source of gift, in the heavenlies, though the Holy Ghost on earth, and especially in the Church, acts according to the Head, in carrying out these purposes, and in agreement with His own love. Besides this, it is "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

A fact of great moment may come in here, though the record of it is found at the close of chapter 2 which is, that the Church on earth is "the habitation of God through the Spirit," nor is there any other. Thus we learn from the scriptures, that the source of life and power and gift to the members of Christ is in the Lord, and that no one can make a pastor or a teacher, any more than an apostle; and that the members of the body in every locality are responsible for disowning any and all pretensions or assumptions from whatever quarter they may come. Nor is it enough to disown the false thing; but our privilege is to be maintained by owning the right, this one body, and one Spirit, as well as the sufficiency of the Lord's loving care to give all gifts that are needed, in order that the Church which is His body, may not fail in one particular on which He has expressed His mind and purpose. If the Lord's people saw how they were thwarting the action of the Holy Ghost in the Church by human arrangements and systems, and by parochial divisions of the sheep and the shepherds, through authoritative appointments of clergy, or the commoner forms of congregational elections, and ordinations; they would waken up to the discovery of the sad and general departure of the saints in the present day from every true idea of what the Church of God really is.

Chapter 5 declares the unchanging love of the Lord to the Church, for which He gave Himself "that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." This is what the Church is to the Lord, and He is the Savior of the body. He is coming to fetch His Bride away—His Eve—in the day when "the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready." Were the Lord's people looking for such a presentation, and such a marriage, or such a Bride, or the coming forth of the Lamb who is to "present her to himself a glorious church," how many a stirring thought would spring up in the mind, and how many searchings of heart would there be among them, as to whether each could not, by association with such a scene, get more into correspondence with the Lord's wishes respecting His Bride! He says, "behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me." "I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." Would not a consciousness of His own deep love lead us on our part to reply, "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come?" And if He yet adds "he which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly," may it only find this answer from the longing affections of our souls "even so, come Lord Jesus!" "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be

with you all. Amen.”

J. E. B.

Chapter 16

Church Ministry or the Epistle of Christ

See 2 Corinthians.

The object of the paper inserted in your recent number upon “Church Establishment and Church Endowment” was to bring forward from the First Epistle to the Corinthians the teaching by the Holy Ghost on those two important subjects, and to present them to the hearts and consciences of “the sanctified in Christ Jesus,” as a word in season for the perplexed, and to show the Lord's claim on their obedience. It yet remains to examine what the purposes were, on account of which “the church of the living God” was thus established and endowed; and these I desire now to trace, from the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

Let me observe at the outset that the professing church has long separated in practice the necessary connection of these two epistles: necessary I mean if the Church was to be “the Epistle of Christ,” known and read of all men.

Gifts, and ministries, and endowments by the Holy Ghost, such as miracles and tongues, distinguished the Church as the vessel of display in the earth, and was the new proof how God could accredit and enrich this mystic Eve, the body and the bride of Christ.

Jehovah had bestowed much upon the beloved nation of Israel, and upon her prophets, priests, and kings; but it is to “the great salvation,” which began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him; that God Himself bears witness, “both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to the Holy Ghost, according to his own will.” Never was there such an opportunity for Satan to turn all these endowments against God as now, for God had never before put such things into the hands of man as His servants. As a consequence we are told by Paul in this epistle, “such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ; and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light,” &c. To the beloved Corinthians Paul said, “Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us, and I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.” Gifts, moreover, and ministries, were the proofs from the risen and ascended Lord of His love to the Church, for He gave them; and they were “enriched by him in all utterance and in all knowledge.... so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

But besides the ascension and the coming of the Lord, there is the great, but forgotten, fact of a rejected Christ and the Christian's present association with his Lord and Master in that rejection by the world. This identification with Christ in suffering is what the apostle brings out in this second epistle and puts in the foreground. A mere glance at Christendom will show any thoughtful mind how its churches have contended for establishments and endowments, and gifts and ministries, though never reaching them according to the divine order of 1 Corinthians, and have entirely abandoned the idea of present participation with a rejected Lord, by their avowed union with the state and the world, which cast Him out and crucified Him.

With these introductory remarks let us now proceed with the Epistle itself; and observe how differently it is cast in all respects from the previous one. God Himself is presented as “the Father” of our Lord Jesus Christ, and “the Father” of mercies, and the “God of all comfort,” who comforteth us in all our tribulation, &c. Let it be observed too that this form of presentation is peculiar to this epistle and is necessary for the objects proposed, “that we might be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” The purpose of the Holy Ghost therefore is to skew the church of God at Corinth that they were called out into association with Christ their Lord on the earth as well as in the heavens. They were not only “to come behind in no gift” from the ascended One, but to come behind in nothing that faithful allegiance would bring them into with the rejected One, knowing “that as the sufferings of Christ abound, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ.” Human nature could thrive, and vaunt itself, and even make a gift of the Holy Ghost the pedestal for self-exaltation in the first epistle; but human nature can never connect itself with the pathway of our Lord, in the descending steps which brought Him down to the obedience of death.

Paul could say here of these Corinthians, “Our hope of you is steadfast, knowing that as ye are partakers of the sufferings, so shall ye be also of the consolation.” Such a path can have no attraction except for a new creature in Christ, as led by the Spirit into real discipleship with our Lord. It is only as our steps follow on in the footprints He made for Himself and left for us that we descend into the region where He once was, and lived, and glorified God. Let us ever remember that the consequences of our obedience are not our care, but the consideration of Him whose will we follow. It is at this point that the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort meets us; and it is here too that, as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation aboundeth by Christ. Paul could say, as to the trouble which came on them in Asia, “We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life; but we had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.” The two positions are remarkable into which the Spirit leads these believers. Here they are united in life and obedience with the humbled, rejected, and suffering Christ as their example; whereas in the first epistle they were gathered upon the confession of their standing, as the sanctified in Christ Jesus, calling upon the name of the living, risen, and ascended Lord, as worshippers with all in every place—both theirs and ours.

The enemy knows if he can separate these two parts of a whole Christ in the life of a believer (as he has done, by separating these two epistles in the history and ways of the Church on earth), he has spoiled all testimony for the Lord below; and consequently we look in vain for anything collective, anywhere, that stands unmistakably, as “the Epistle of Christ” known and read of all men.

The former paper treated mainly of Church Establishment, as connected with 1 Corinthians; but there is a very full and precious scripture in this, which speaks of Christ establishment and is its counterpart: “for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now 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.” This is the circle of our present and eternal blessing, where God and Christ and the Holy Ghost are alike interested and occupied with us, till all things “shall be to the glory of God by us.” The brightness of this eternal blessedness opens itself out to the faith of all, and links itself peculiarly with the sufferings of Christ and with the

sentence of death in ourselves.

Another grand subject of this epistle is “the ministration of the Spirit,” which is taught in the central chapters, from 3 to 7 and is properly introduced by the verses just quoted, as to our anointing and sealing. Before passing on it may be well to observe that this same scripture, which finishes with “the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts,” should be taken as a companion picture to that with which the first epistle opens, “of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who from God is made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption,” that he who glorieth, “should glory in the Lord.” In this last instance, it is what God has made Christ to be unto us, that we might glory in the Lord; whereas in the other it is what we are as established by that same God in Christ, and of which the Holy Ghost is the witness to us and seal and earnest. The soul will readily feel how necessary these two descriptions of our blessing are if we would understand who the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is; and how He has suited us to Himself by the work of Christ for us, and by the work of the Spirit in us, for His own present joy and the delight of His Son, and “that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.”

Here comes very fairly the question, What ministry has God in reserve for this new race of people” the sanctified in Christ Jesus?” and in whom is it to be opened out to them? and in what power can it be wrought out and ministered as the faith of God's elect? The chapters which now lie in order before us, supply the answers to these important queries. Historically there have been two ministries, with their respective ministers, and their ministrations; the first was introduced upon the earth, at Mount Sinai, by Moses, by bringing in the law, under which the nation of Israel bound itself by a covenant of works, “all that the Lord hath commanded us, we will do.” Whatever the outward glory was, with which this giving of the law was accompanied (so that even the mountain and Moses quaked) it was a ministry which claimed righteousness from man and was formally written and engraven in stones. In effect the law brought in the knowledge of sin. “I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet;” and consequently it became “a ministration of condemnation” to all who were under it, and had thus accepted its conditions on the footing of their own responsibility. Rewards and promises to the obedient were out of the question, and in fact forfeited by the transgressors of the law of Moses; and its threatenings and curses were earned instead, so that this ministry became further (as stated in our chapter) a “ministration of death.” The law and its demands upon the people, expressed by the words “thou shalt,” and “thou shalt not,” and accepted by them upon the old covenant of works “do this, and thou shalt live, or do this, and thou shalt die,” has brought out the great fact that, if there “had been a law which could have given life, then verily righteousness should have come by the law.” The ministry engraven in stones consequently brought the knowledge of sin and condemnation and death; and equally proved that unless “the Spirit, and the water, and the blood,” found their way in by the grace of God, all were cursed, and under the curse.

The present ministry is from the heavens, and is founded upon the finished work of Christ upon the cross below, where He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. God has raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, by the blood of the everlasting covenant, and has crowned Him with glory and honor. Moreover, He has founded a new ministry, upon the worthiness of this Christ and Lord, “not of the letter which killeth, but of the Spirit which giveth life.” It is this ministry which Paul contrasts here, with the former, and which he characterizes as a ministration of the Spirit, a ministration moreover of life and righteousness and glory, from the living and exalted Son of man, at the right

hand of God, by which we are brought into liberty, and are changed from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord. This ministry by the Holy Ghost, from the heavens now—or when applied prophetically to the nation, and the Gentiles, and to the ends of the earth in the millennium—is based upon the blood of Christ—the blood of the New Testament; but this may, and does open itself out, as to the kind of blessing, to the heavenly and earthly people, according to the manifold counsels of God, and the place in which Christ is; whether as now hidden with God, or as by and by displayed in power and glory in the midst of the sons of men.

Promises, covenants, and types, and also prophecies had announced the Lord as the seed of Abraham, and indeed as the Son of David, and heir of all that God had bestowed upon his progenitors, to be substantiated when the Messiah comes again, and his people made willing, in the day of His power. In the meanwhile Jesus has been rejected, and all this earthly order is therefore in abeyance. Moreover, the veil is upon the heart of that people, until they shall turn to the Lord, and then shall the veil be taken away.

What can God connect, during this interval, with Him who has been declared worthy to receive all honor, and blessing, and glory, and power? It is here that Paul says, in our chapter: “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves: but our sufficiency is of God; who hath made us competent ministers of the new covenant.” Paul was himself arrested by this glorified Son of man, “to be a minister and a witness both of those things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear to thee.” In the wisdom of God there were purposes and counsels which lay hidden, as Moses testified, “the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” It is these secret things, Paul says, which, “according to the revelation of the mystery, were kept silent since the world began, but now are made manifest and by the scriptures,” &c.

God had given away the earth, and had lighted up the path, which He was taking with His people through it, with types and promises connected with “the seed” and founded on the blood of the New Testament, which by and by will be ordained in the hands of the true Mediator, when the people of Israel shall be established under its blessings in Immanuel's land. God had nevertheless the heavens in reserve, and to give away to another and an entirely new race of people, when their Lord and Head had first taken His own place in them on the right hand of the throne of God. The Lord Jesus is thus to fill the earth and the heavens with His praise, and to lead not only His brethren after the flesh, and put them (as the true antitypical Joseph) into the land of Goshen; but likewise to carry the people of another standing and calling, into the Father's house which He is gone to prepare for them! God has made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself, “that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated,” &c.

Though our chapters in 2 Corinthians do not stretch out to such a circle as the Ephesians, yet they open to us the fact that, under this present ministry of the New Testament, we have a ministration from life, in the risen and ascended Christ, to life in us by the Spirit—as well as a ministration of righteousness from the Lord where and as He now is, who is our righteousness, and by which we are made the righteousness of God in Him. This ministry is personal, and essential to us as individual believers, that we may know how suited we are by our new creation for all that is

prepared for us, as our portion with the Lord, according to the Father's purposes and counsels, in the eternal glory for which we wait, and of which the Spirit is the seal.

In the meanwhile this personal ministration of life is to produce by the Spirit of the living God, in the fleshy tables of the heart, “an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men” —moreover, an epistle (as Paul says to these Corinthians) written in our hearts. Here we may pause and put a question to our souls: Is this the ministry I recognize—a ministration of life, righteousness, and glory, from the risen and ascended Lord in heaven, and written not with ink, nor on a table of stone, but with the Spirit of the living God on the very heart itself? Or am I still entangled with the former ministry of Moses and the voice of words on Sinai and the claims of a law which rightly demanded righteousness and said, This do and thou shalt live? How different are these two ministries, and how lamentable to see thousands of the Lord's people wandering back into the old house of Moses, instead of accepting with joy this present ministration of life and righteousness as the only existing ministry between God and His beloved people! When will they take their proper places in the Church of the living God, and in the conscious liberty whereby Christ has made His members free, by redemption through His blood?

What other ministration can there be for those who understand what the assembly of God is on the earth, and what else could the craft of the enemy do than blind people to it, and get them back into the house of bondage, to lean upon ritualistic observances, of which, when at their best, God said, “I have no pleasure?”

Never let it be forgotten that the First Epistle to the Corinthians gives the present pattern of true church establishment and church endowment, and that this Second issues the only true church epistle, known and read of all men, and the only ministry that can produce it; that is, a ministration of life and righteousness by the Spirit of God, written on the fleshy table of the heart! May God emancipate His own people and bring them out from responsibilities and disappointments as under the law, to stand in the privileges of His own grace and calling and the accomplished work of Christ, by which they are put in a complete acceptance with the Father!

But to return. There is every now and then to be found in the epistles (especially when some new or extraordinary subject is introduced, like “this ministry of life” of which we are now speaking) a further revelation of God and of Christ, suited to the occasion, and which becomes the testimony of the Holy Ghost. If God acts in grace towards men in their sins, and to plant them in His own righteousness, it must be from Himself.

In this chapter 2, for instance, there is consequent upon this ministry such a change as carries us beyond the mere natural relations of God and man, for another person, the Word made flesh, has come in, “the daysman who has laid his hand upon both.” The preaching of what He did in redemption upon the cross, ascends up before God as a sweet savor.

Paul, as the apostle and witness to this gospel of the glory of Christ, “thanks God who led him about as in triumph, and made manifest the savor of his knowledge in every place.” Moreover, he and his fellow-workers “were unto God a sweet savor of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish.” The relations and responsibilities of men spring out of this new ground likewise; for “to the one we are the savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life.” This is what the acceptance or rejection of this ministry of “the gospel of the glory” involved. Adam, and

the fall of man, are no longer the exclusive subjects, but the grace of God, through Christ, brought to such an one as Saul, “the very chief of sinners,” and presented to any like him!

But if God in grace, through Christ, is thus active in love towards sinners in their sins, “the god of this world” can also use this ministry of the new covenant for his own objects against mankind. “If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not.” No power would be equal to such a scene of ruin and wretchedness as the wickedness of Satan has produced, unless the Creator God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness upon creation's chaotic confusion, had done a far greater thing and given by almighty power “the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,” to shine unto sinners dead in trespasses and sins.

Adam was created in the image of God in the Genesis of human life; but by this first man came sin, and death, and the long catalog of mortal woes. The last Adam has since come in, and by His atoning sufferings and death, has laid a new foundation for the operations of God in grace and righteousness. Redemption is become the new ground upon which God is displayed, and the second man in the heavens has taken His place as “the image of God” in them. It is from thence that Paul says, “God hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.”

How little is this gospel of the grace founded on the blood of Christ on the cross, below—or this gospel of the glory, from the right hand of God above, presented to the acceptance of the lost and the undone!

Man is either left to struggle with himself and his own corruptions in a state of nature; or banded up to Moses and the law, instead of to the cross where the old man has been crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed. In such a case there is no ground left for a believer to take as a standing before God than redemption, and none but the Second Man to whom he can be conformed now or hereafter. Besides “the epistle of Christ” which the Corinthians were, and this “gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God,” there is yet the fashioning power of this life upon us, whilst in the mortal body, and this I would desire to trace a little. In chapter iv., this life, ministered from the ascended Christ, put the ministers into the same place as the only true Servant took, when amongst His disciples on earth: “for we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.” How entirely the place of the minister in our times varies from, and indeed, contradicts the character of our Lord's service, and that of the apostle's is plain, if we remember the way in which the Master quelled the strife that arose among His disciples, which of them should be accounted the greatest. It is the Lord Himself that gives the true glory to Christian service. Was He ever so great as when “the hour was come, that he should depart out of this world to the Father,” and He rose from supper and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded Himself, and poured water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet? How great was He in the eyes of all in heaven throughout the three and thirty years of His humiliation; when He emptied Himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross! We are not living in the power of this life, and enough in the company of Him in whom it was seen to perfection, to be charmed by its grandeur in the midst of a world, whose “Kings exercise lordship.” The first thing for “a new creature in Christ” is to understand how this fact has necessarily changed his relation and standing to the heavens and the earth, and that his relatively

new position to each is precisely what Christ's is. We must be truly one with Him, where He now is, in conscious exaltation as heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, in order to get into our true place of service in the Church, where to be great is to be little, “less than the least of all saints.” Next in importance to our getting into position upon earth, into the place now that corresponds with the mind of God (like the Master found in His day) is the conscious dependence upon God, with which this ministration of life connects us: “we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

Again, outward circumstances in a world like this only call out this life from the risen Christ in greater brilliancy where it dwells. “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” What a divine life and what a ministry “the Spirit of the living God” is working in the new creature, “for we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake!” The resources and confidence of this ministration of life are not only outside ourselves, but outside the world, and are found in the history and ways of the Christ who is our life, “knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise, up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.” Again, as to afflictions, do they stumble the man in Christ, or clog the divine life, or make it shine the brighter as it stretches itself away to its own height for relief? “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we look not at the things which are seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” The real strength of a soul will be in what it is consciously connected with. If it be far more with things unseen than with things seen, the things seen will become tributary to this life in Christ. When the spies compared themselves with the giants, they were grasshoppers in their own sight; but when faith in Caleb contrasted the giants with the God of Israel, then these giants were the grasshoppers. Life from the ascended Christ and Lord connects us by the Spirit with what He is, and our affections are set on the things at God's right hand. But, further, this ministry provides for every emergency, so that “we know if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven if so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked.”

We have thus been guided to consider this ministry of life in the members of Christ, putting them into an entirely new relation with all things, whether present or future, temporal or eternal, seen or unseen; and as regards all the circumstances of the way, only laying these under tribute, so that they work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. This life, moreover, worketh down into death all in us that else would live, and, living, would be the link by which the flesh and Satan work, so as to connect us with this present world, out of which by the death of Christ we have been redeemed. We must be either false to the objects of our redemption, or else in the power of that life which we have with a risen Christ insist upon death with ourselves, and with the world, which by its own act, and by the judgment of God at the cross, is left under that death. “Now he that hath wrought us for the self same thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.” This ministry of the new covenant, in connection with the ascended Son of man, gives these triumphs to us as the consequences and fruits of His work, that in us (who are not but have life) “mortality might be swallowed up of life.” The Church at Corinth and elsewhere was to be “the

epistle of Christ, known and read of all men" upon every point in which its conformity by life and righteousness, and by the work of the Spirit of the living God, could make it manifest. Another and a totally different race of people, "new creatures in Christ" were to be seen in this old creation—men no longer living to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again—men who were bearing about in their body the dying of the Lord Jesus, in the presence of the very world that had put Him to death and cast Him out. Properly, this life in us takes up the fact of this judgment by God, and puts us in the place of death, and bears about the dying of the Lord Jesus. What else could this life in the power of the Holy Ghost produce in a new creature?

It requires a world such as this is in which to go down to nothingness, weakness, and death, just as it requires another in which to rise and pass up into its own height of glory, like Christ who is the life. It is dependent on nothing under the heavens nor obstructed by anything, but finds and forces its way in the pressure of resurrection power, drawing into fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, that in the measure in which the afflictions abound, so "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort" may administer the consolations. It draws its sweetest motives from nothing lower than Christ. "The love of Christ constraineth us" and conforms its progress by the example of Him "who died for us and rose again," knowing too "that we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Lastly, this life coming from the glorified One makes Him as He is the test and standard of its judgment. "Wherefore, henceforth know we no man after the flesh, yea though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.... 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." May God give us to know this ministration of life, righteousness, and glory, as the ministry under which we are placed, and to understand the Spirit of the living God as the power, which is adequate for all the purposes which are to be wrought out in us, so as to keep up the truth of death working by life below; and the other truth of life working beyond the reach and range of death, above, according to "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God!"

"The ministry of reconciliation," to wit, that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them," is the suited adjunct to this ministry of the new covenant. "The ambassadors for Christ" to His betrayers and murderers open their credentials by presenting God as beseeching men to be reconciled to God upon this new footing, "that he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." What "the sheet let down from heaven," wherein were all manner of four-footed beasts and creeping things, was to Peter as the warrant from God to him to open the door to Cornelius and the Gentiles, this ministry of reconciliation was to Paul now, seeing its aspect was to the whole world. Therefore he could say," This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the chief." The Jesus whom Paul was persecuting when stoning Stephen, the Son of God in glory, Christ the Lord, and this blasphemer, the very chief of sinners, give the two extremes of "this ministry of reconciliation," and they meet and are together.

Chapter 6 speaks of the ministers themselves, and what care should be taken that the ministry be not blamed, giving no offense in anything, but in all things approving ourselves in afflictions, in distresses, in stripes, by pureness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned; as unknown, and yet

well known; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things. This part of the epistle closes with a solemn appeal to the Corinthians as to things which had interfered with the exercise of this life, “and straitened them in their own bowels.”

Their enlargement depended for manifestation, on their being “not unequally yoked together with unbelievers;” and it is important to observe that the Spirit of God delivers a soul, not by discussing with it that particular point by which it has been caught by the enemy; but by bringing the conscience up to the sources of life, and the springs of real Christian conduct. “What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness, and what communion hath light with darkness?” and again, “what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” These are the challenges which brace up the soul and free it from the spider's web; for the craft of Satan is to drop in the intermediate shadings between two extreme colors, such as light and darkness, and produce a Christendom in the place of Christ, and to confuse things, so that there is neither the Church nor the world to be seen in these last days of delusion. Men, and alas! Christians may call this kind of progress enlargement and liberality, but Paul has another word for modern advancement “straitened.” Many an exercised conscience groans under the bondage, and perhaps little thinks how near the door of escape is, if there were but simplicity of faith to pass through it. “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.” Here is the secret of all real strength and enlargement of soul, found alone in this association with the living God, and in an entire separation from the evil, which straitens the new man.

How well does Paul add “having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God!” Here it is, if we may so say, that the Apostle of the Gentiles leads these Corinthians to the brazen laver, that they may wash themselves, and pass into the inner courts on their priestly service, bidding them remember that in our dispensation, “they are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” To them and to him and to us, all else summed itself up into infidelity, or idolatry, respecting which, in all its varieties, we are asked, “What agreement hath the temple of God with idols?” and go outside the camp of the day to Jesus, bearing His reproach. Here, this ministration of life, by the Spirit, has described its own circle; having commenced by writing on the fleshy table of the heart, and finished by cleansing the feet of the saints, and separating them from the Belial of that day, and this upon the authority and blessedness of the promise, “I will receive you,” a word of sufficient encouragement for every exercised heart, whether at Corinth, or in England, or elsewhere.

A few remarks on the remaining chapters may close this paper, my object being mainly to show from this Second Epistle, what church ministry really is, and in what it consists, just as in the First Epistle I attempted to show what true church establishment, and church endowments were, and what the assembly of God is which is to receive this ministry and its ministers, and to be the epistle of Christ, as altogether distinct from the world, “known and read of all men.”

The example of Christ Himself is introduced in chapters 9 and 10, and the grace in which He commended Himself to our souls is held out when a corresponding virtue is required from the life of Christ in us. For example, when Paul says, “As ye abound in everything, in faith, in knowledge,

and utterance see that ye abound in this grace also [of liberality]," he adds, Ye know "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich." It is the real secret of power to be thus associated with Christ, not only in life as we have seen, but in the known intelligence of life, which appreciates and loves according to God, what was manifested in perfection in our Lord. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" is irresistible as a moral motive, and as a new power in us, which binds the heart to Himself in a similar expression of grace, however different in measure, as all surely must be, though not in character.

So again in chapter 10 when Paul encourages them to another grace, he does so by reminding them of "the meekness and gentleness of Christ," and that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down reasonings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Thus the things which straitened these Corinthians, were not only exposed in a former chapter, as resulting in an unequal yoke—false concords, mixed communions, and corrupt agreements—but are here hunted down to their strong holds, and their hiding places discovered to be in the flesh, and looking on things "after the outward appearance." Nothing less than the knowledge of God for our faith, and the obedience of Christ for abiding fellowship in the truth, can be the upper and the nether springs for the inner man; and the saint who is watchful may often find an opportunity of bringing a stray thought into captivity, instead of being led into captivity, or being straitened in himself, by its escape. What had they reduced their standard to, when they said, "his letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible?" How tenderly yet effectually does he recover them from the point of their degradation, of "comparing themselves among themselves," by saying, for "we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves. . . For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

Alas! though the temple of Solomon, with its porches, and beams, and posts, and walls, was overlaid with pure gold; and though the house was garnished with precious stones for beauty, and the gold was the gold of Parvaim; yet declension began with its own king, and the glory which overcame the spirit of the Queen of Sheba was soon tarnished; and the Ichabod of Eli's days became the prophetic word to Solomon! The Egyptian king came up against Jerusalem, and took away the treasures of the house of the Lord, and carried away the shields of gold which Solomon had made, "instead of which the king Rehoboam made shields of brass," &c.

The same enemy was at work in the church at Corinth, and the watchful apostle writes in chapter 11, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through His subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."

False apostles and false doctrines are in the dark catalog of this chapter; the brass shields are substituted for the golden ones, which the great Egyptian has carried away, "Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works." What an opportunity does this day of departure afford to an exercised conscience (and thank God there are many) to refuse these ministers, though they bear with them the imitation shields of brass. The fine gold of Parvaim—the gold of the house of the Lord— "the

word which ye have heard from the beginning" remains, and Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. Are they ministers of Christ? asks our apostle. "(I speak as a fool) I am more; in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft.... If I must needs glory, I will glory in my infirmities. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is blessed for evermore, knoweth that I lie not."

Here we may say how truly is Paul a competent minister of this life, which first in the Lord Jesus Himself reached death in the obedience which could alone bring Him there, "that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us" —a life which could neither be worn down by the enmity of foes nor by the desertion of friends—a life which could not be worn out by the patient endurance of what was appointed Him, but a life which spent itself in doing the will of the Father that sent Him and found its own sustainment whilst doing it! So Paul, like a lesser light, is carried about in triumph wherever the Spirit leads him, whether beaten with rods or stoned, in shipwreck and in the deep, or in journeyings, in perils of robbers or in perils among false brethren, let down by the window at the walls of Damascus or caught up to the third heaven (as in chap. 12.), every step was but the pathway of this life, from the man in glory and now this man in Christ—a life which lived as truly upon death and by means of dying daily in this world as this same divine life will rejoice in the eternal glory, when surrounded by circumstances that are (not more suited perhaps, but) more proper to it, where God is and where evil cannot come! "He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

One thing more remains to notice in the last two chapters, that this ministry of life from the exalted Head, by the Spirit in us, which keeps its pressure of death upon the flesh, so that its own activities should not be straitened, is made perfect by weakness, in the absolutism of its own nothingness, and therefore of entire dependence upon the Lord. The persecuting power of Satan, let loose upon him at Philippi (so that he spoke in the beginning of the epistle of the trouble that came upon them in Asia, even to the despairing of life), was accepted by him as "the sentence of death, that they should not trust in themselves." The God who raises the dead was all the nearer and far more present.

Every adversity was turned to account, even to Satan himself. So that at the close of this epistle, when Paul is at the other extreme of the afflictions of Christ and, "coming to visions and revelations of the Lord," says, "whether in the body or out the body, I cannot tell; God knoweth." Such an one was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. "Lest I should be exalted above measure, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messengers of Satan to buffet me."

Here likewise Satan is turned to profit for Paul, in the history of this life, in "a man in Christ;" not in Philippian persecutions, but in the abundance of the revelations in the third heavens! "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me, and be said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness."

The Father of mercies and the God of all comfort opened the abounding consolations at the beginning, and now at the close we see the Lord Himself perfecting His own strength in the felt weakness of this chosen vessel unto Christ. What a use the Lord can make of us for Himself before we quit these earthly places, if we will only go to nothing, that Christ may be magnified in our body, whether by life or by death. "Most gladly therefore, he adds, will I rather glory in my

infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” Old things are passed away, and all things are become new, and all things are of God; and the things that were gain to me I count loss for Christ. Reproaches and afflictions, with persecutions, are the Lord's bequest to us in this world: they are not misfortunes when met in the path of life and obedience, but they are (as Caleb said of the giants) bread for us.

We need difficulties and trials to prove that this life in Christ and in us will pass in its own title of suffering or endurance through the last and greatest of them. God wants them to bring in His mercies and comforts in the tribulation, and the Lord needs them to prove the sufficiency of His grace and that His strength is made perfect. Moreover, Paul adds, “Therefore I take pleasure [what a triumph!] in infirmities, in reproaches, in distresses for Christ's sake, for when I am weak then am strong.” In the unweariedness of this life, seeking objects upon which to express itself, he assures these Corinthians, “I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved.” What a new rule for charity is this, or rather what another charity is introduced into the Church of God! In chapter 13 and last Paul again insists on weakness, even as Christ who, though he was crucified through weakness, now liveth the power of God. “We also are weak with him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you.” If they sought a proof of Christ speaking in him in any other way, let them “examine themselves, whether they be in the faith, let them prove their own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in them, except ye be reprobates.” How could they doubt his ministry of life and believe that through his ministration of the new covenant Jesus Christ had been received and was in them? Finally, he prays to God for them, that they do no evil, and is glad when he is weak and they are strong, and wishes their perfection, at the same time adding, “I write these things, being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification and not to destruction. “Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.”

This ministry here finds its culminating point, in making perfect and producing comfort in this state, where the God of love and peace may be known and can dwell—an enclosure of His own, in spite of the world, and the flesh, and the devil—a habitation of God through the Spirit! A benediction rests upon this temple of the Lord, this household of God: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.” J. E. B.

Chapter 17

The Coming of the Lord

Notes of G.V.W.'S Address at Cheltenham

We may turn a little to the first epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians; well suited, the various parts of it, to give forth thoughts—blessed thoughts—about the coming of the Lord Jesus, and the rightful proper effect of the hope of that coming upon ourselves in these last hours.

“For from you sounded out the word of the Lord.” In a remarkable way the hand of the artificer is often found upon his work. It was remarkable how in the labors of the apostle not only the very hope he had was communicated by him to these Thessalonians—must have been so, being part of the gospel he received, but it had the very effect upon them it had upon him, and all the country round about took notice of it.

“So that we need not to speak anything, for they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you.” The sort of trouble the presence of Paul gave in the world, among men through whom he passed, was enlarged by the way these Thessalonians exhibited the power of the hope, and Paul could refer to what men saw in them as containing the very sum and substance of what his own doctrine was. There was where the power was of his own presenting truth.

“Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Verse 3.) He could say this to them, `I know with regard to truth, to service, to hope, your hearts are naked in the sight of God and our Father, and that you have fellowship with the Christ of God as those that have not forgotten their first love ‘Ye turned from idols to God, to serve the living and true God,' to serve Him! How often this is forgotten Not to be busy, to do a great deal in His presence, but to accomplish what He desired to have accomplished, “the living and true God.” Thus they waited for His Son from heaven.

“Jesus,” even that one “who delivereth from the wrath to come.” It was the hope of God's Son: that is heart and mind calculating on the ground of the word of God, that His Son, this God's Son, was to come from heaven: and this peculiar truth connected with Him, that He is the one who saves us from the wrath to come.

But then, beloved, as to play of the affections, as to movement of the thoughts with regard to this hope, how much will turn upon what Christ has been—is known to be—to us individually! He is coming! He is coming! The world has got its plans—shutting out all thoughts of the needs-be of His coming.

Religion has very often a sort of spiritual millennium: it does not require the coming of the Lord. The child of God reads the book; he finds that the next grand step that God takes is the sending forth His Son, and this Son, coming from heaven, is the one who saves us from the wrath to come, the one described in the last verse of 2 Cor. 5 as He whom God made sin for us, He who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

This One, by means of whom that which is the characteristic title of this epistle had come out to light (` church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ')—He is coming back again.

He who died, the just one for the unjust, that He might bring us to God; He who knowing no sin took the place of bearing the wrath of God due to our sins; He is coming! He has not only interposed as to that work, but has brought the knowledge of that work to bear upon us individually.

Having loved us, having washed us from our sins in His own blood, He is coming to receive us to Himself.

Some who turn to Him in their trials, their difficulties, their temptations, their sorrows, their joys—one quite understands how the coming of the Son from heaven does not move their hearts.

Oh! the power that gives the individual believer the freshness of that hope just flows from knowledge of the person of the Lord Jesus. Christ, the one living in heaven who knows us, whom we know, and who is coming back to give us the blessed taste of being forever with Himself in the Father's house.

In chapter 1 it is Himself waited for, but the heart, if it is to be lively in hope, if it is to have joy and power in hope, must know Himself, must know the work He has done for God, but done for us individually as sons of God, so that He is the one who is the strength and joy of our portion, the one in connection with whom all our hopes glow forth.

Chapter 2 bringing out some exquisite beauties connected with that Lord gives the counterpart of the wilderness in the presence of the Lord. It will not do for us to forget that whatever the wilderness may have for us, there is the counterpart too, in the presence of the Lord.

All the need down here—the groans that go up to God—all are precious to Him, and the counterpart of them will be found in that day when we come to the glory. Paul and the Thessalonians were brought to their very wits' end. See how his whole heart goes out to them. “Cost what it may, you must stand true to the mark. Cost what it might, I as the servant of God would have come to you.” But why? “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?”

He had suffered great things to reach them. That was the one side of the page. Turn over to the other. ‘I shall stand there, and there will be joy to one in the presence of the Lord because of you. I see that in the flow of His grace into you through me down here, there is the witness of His own glory.' I see in that the beauty of the Lord.'

Many a heart Christ has dealt with, many a soul He has comforted and strengthened, will almost selfishly say, ‘I long to be out of this scene, I long to be where all sorrow will be over.' Nay, I long for the hour to come—I shall behold Himself in His glory in that day.

Many are startled at these verses as though it were a wrong thing to say there is this large heart in Christ. He has His eye upon His people, and a part of His plan is that Paul should be there in glory with the Thessalonians, and they part of his crown of rejoicing in that day.

If Christ was his hope, the meeting then and there of those Thessalonians, of many whom he had labored with was a joy; and the largeness of heart of the blessed Lord Jesus prepared it, and revealed the truth of it to the heart of His servant, that he might have his strength formed by the counterpart of the glory when the glory came.

It is one of the touches that make the scene a home scene to my heart—to think I can stand there and recognize not only the Lord, but His servant in his joy—all that power of the blessed Lord that first flowed from Himself finding vent through such a man as Paul, and those Thessalonians standing round him there!

“Are ye not our hope, our joy, our crown of rejoicing?” He repeats it, showing the deliberation of the saying, “For ye are our glory and joy.” Oh but Himself! That is the first thought!

What has He been to you? this Christ, this Son of God, this Savior? Do you know Him individually? Have you no character to give Him? Have you no thoughts you could express from that which you have known about Him? What do you know about Him? He is no dead Christ—He that brings a poor sinner off the wild common of nature into the flock of God: what do you know of Him? Have you no cause to cleave to Him? Have you no want of Him? Have you no good thought about the love He bears to you, about that heart of His? Have you no calculations upon Him that, as He has delivered, so He will? Have you no thoughts about that gracious preparation of all and each of His people by Himself for that day?

Would you like your work to turn up there and find the counterpart of it in His presence at His coming? Each of us has works as individuals. What is the other side of the medal? Will it shine when Christ comes? Can you connect gladly His coming with it, and your being there in glory with Him? You will find the counterpart of that glory in works down here.

I pass on to chapter iii. There we find the intense love of the apostle to these Thessalonians and that which proves it. He expressed a desire to have come to them himself. He would have himself come once and again to them. He could not. He sent Timothy. Observe the words with which the chapter ends: “The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another” —there is the addressing them—the mind thrown forward— “to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.”

I connect those remarkable verses 12, 13 in chapter 3 with verses 19, 20 in chapter 2. They would appear as the counterpart of the labors and the sorrows of the apostle in the glory. Hence his intense desire that before God, even our Father, when the Lord comes with all His saints, not only the fruit of his labors should appear inside the Lord's presence, but that the character of God being practically on them, at the coming of the Lord they might be found unblameable in holiness. Oh, how little human hearts can take in thoughts of the love of that Christ Jesus!

What I desire to show is that the truth given to Paul was the part Christ had given to Him, with the people He had taken up, at God's hand from before the creation of the world, to bring us to glory. “The glory which thou gavest me I have given unto them, that they may be one, even as we are one.” Hence John speaks, “Already are we the sons of God.” Though not yet made manifest, we shall be like Him when He appears. They were to purify themselves. Not only that. In Rev. 1 it is a separate thought in the heart of John. It was not only the love of Christ that took notice of their

misery and applied His life's blood that there should be no spot or stain, but He made them kings and priests unto God and His Father; Himself sharing that royal priesthood of His people and making them know it then and there, and here bringing them forth in the glory in that day when He comes with His saints.

I spoke, beloved, of how the hope in the heart of an individual believer would be bright or not bright according as they had the first love fresh in the heart, and saw in the person of the Christ the One whose love poured forth to them when they were dead in trespasses and sins, and who proved Himself in all truth the One who knew all about them and knew how to meet them.

Now in chapter 4 another thing is brought out. I desire to rest in detail upon it because it gives in a remarkable way the place of a parenthesis in which the Lord comes, with the plans of God in connection with His appearing; then secondly in that parenthesis he unfolds certain glories very much passed over by the saints of God, and a glory calculated to endear the coming of the Lord to their hearts, a glory that connects itself to the simple mind with the state of man blessed by God.

From verses 15 to 18 is a parenthesis. That left out the passage would read thus, “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” “But of the times and the seasons brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.” (Read 1 Thess. 5:1-8.) There he evidently passes to the appearing of the Lord and to the state of the earth. Men of the earth do not look for Him, and they will be saying in that day, ‘peace and safety,' just when sudden destruction is breaking upon them. Then the Lord will come upon them; and they find, as we know from the second epistle, how though they deny God in government, He will have the place of government on earth in connection with Jerusalem, and the Lord with the breath of His mouth will put aside all evil.

Then in the parenthesis we find the Lord introducing what He comes for. There are things connected with His coming, beautiful and touching things. Some in ignorance were mourning as though dead Thessalonian Christians had lost the chance of being taken up: surprised, so to speak, about it. He seems to me to be guarding the words He uses. “For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.” “Jesus” is the name of the man. So those “that sleep in Jesus.” But when He speaks, not of death, nor of disappointment produced by the want of intelligence, but of the power to be put forth, he says “The dead in Christ shall rise first,” not “them that sleep in Jesus.”

Jesus died. Therefore it could be no strange thing to any believer to find himself in the power of resurrection, called to pass over that bit of road which Christ trod, “The light of His love the guide through the gloom.” Here it is not a question of mourning over departed friends, or any ignorance. He says, “The dead in Christ,” the anointed man, “shall rise first.” Now look at These five verses, this parenthesis. First of all in verse 15 there is this distinct statement, “This we say unto you by the word of the Lord.” Everything the apostle wrote had the full perfect sanction of God's authority. Here there appears to have been something brought to his mind, and much more fully in detail, in connection with that coming and that person of the Lord. “For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not anticipate them that are asleep.” There had some fallen asleep—Stephen; many others; and some here at Thessalonica. The word was realized to them, “absent from the body, present with the Lord.” They

had been waiting down here, they had gone up to heaven to wait there. He has been waiting; and, although there are with Him no bodies and no dust, they are waiting with Him still.

This ought not to be passed by in connection with “absent from the body, present with the Lord,” that it shows in the most striking way not only the provisions of divine love, but the power of divine life. “Spirit, soul, and body” constitute a man. Yet when any one of God's saints dies, He remains the God of the living, for all live unto Him. Abraham lived before God. The apostle said that if to live was Christ to him, to die was gain.... he would get into His own presence. If I stay here, Christ gains. If I am called to leave the body, I gain. But who is it that has power in that way to throw light on the intermediate state as it is called? Why the blessed Lord Himself. “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.”

Well now, a particular thing that follows after in the two verses is just this. The person of the Lord gets uncovered and brought out to light; but also He finds Himself in that day in a scene in which the great peculiarity of what He is for us comes out to light. He is the resurrection and the life. And why the resurrection? Life has been displayed by Him without question. Resurrection power was displayed by Him in raising Lazarus, and in a much more glorious way when He rose Himself from the dead. The graves were opened. The graves gave up the bodies. “Many bodies of the saints that slept arose and came out of the graves after his resurrection and went into the holy city and appeared unto many.” What power wrought there? But oh what a little scene is that compared with the scene brought out here, when all the dead in Christ shall rise! Just remark how it is brought out: the scene in which this double glory is brought to light. Himself, the Lord, shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God. He shall descend from heaven. Even when thoughts of the glory cross my mind, I look as it were to see where is the Lord. Till I get the thoughts of the Lord's place in it, the very thought of salvation would not be without trouble to me. Clouds part hither and thither, and the Lord, who loved us, and who took us up before the foundation of the world—the Lord, who laid down His life at Calvary for us—the Lord, whose love is stronger that death, who took His life again—the Lord, who sent the message of peace and blessing through Mary to His disciples (“Go tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and. your Father, my God and your God”)—the Lord, who has waited these 1800 years and more from the time He arose, because, looking forward in the stream of time,, He saw us in the stream, whom He had to pick up and make partakers of the blessing—the Lord, that living person who first had to do with us, who has to do with us every day and all day long—the Lord, who has gone to prepare a place for us—the Lord, the eternal lover of our souls—that Lord is the first object in that scene, in that glory, in that day! And He comes with a regulating voice, not merely a shout. It is not a question of life; it is not limited to the question of resurrection; but how many other things will fall under the word when He utters it! His voice was heard here in sorrow. His voice was heard in agony on the cross. His voice will be heard again in scenes about to be prepared for.

In the transfiguration we have these words to Peter, “This is my beloved Son, hear him:” yes, in that to which this scene leads, there is no voice can regulate everything save the voice of the beloved Son of God coming the second time from off the throne of God to receive His people and to take them home with Himself.

None other ever could be in the sense in which He was, because He could say, He did say, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father also.” “In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead

bodily.” God Himself presented in a man down here, and the whole mind of God connected with Him sent about to be interpreted by the death of Christ upon the cross and the resurrection after! He knows the word and speaks it as having the mind of heaven. There is a difference between the mind of God or the mind of heaven, and an utterance given by an angel. An elder could put in “He is worthy:” “for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to thyself.” (Rev. 5) An angel does not speak of redemption. Strength to do God's will is connected with that order in creation. Then comes the trump of God. He gives the signal in the trump “himself.” Then mark what immediately follows—the virtue and glory of Him that is the resurrection and the life. He searches the dust of the earth, and all those who sleep through Him in the earth (buried no matter where or in what time; no matter what puny spite had shown itself in the deaths to which they are subjected), the dead rise first, blessed without question. Blessed for Stephen; blessed for Paul; blessed for Peter and others. But oh what will the heart find of blessing in thinking of those names we are among, the worthies of the New Testament, compared with the blessedness of that One man, who, coming forth from God, will sweep with His power through the grave and bring up all that sleep through Jesus, and in resurrection bodies—like the Lord!

Remember that the finishing touch, so to speak, to His redemption-work for the individual is connected not only with the body as we have it shown us in Philippians. It is applied to the principle of His people's walk down here. Paul was subjected to death daily. It was strength made perfect in weakness. The whole course of the apostle was a conformity to this same Christ. Whence? According to His virtue as the risen One.

“Caught up.” I feel there is something there connected with the Lord Himself. That is, He is coming forth habited in the glory of resurrection and just in the way most fitted to display His own power. The bodies dead in the grave are all gleaned up in a moment: expression of the virtue He applies. There is no power in us to mount up. We are caught up in a moment, to meet the Lord in the air. He fills us up with life.

Suppose I pass by a field early in the spring and note its soil prepared and the seed cast in. Then if I find on my way back the corn ready for cutting, I should ask, ‘What mighty power was it that laid bold of the wheat to make it develop so rapidly?' There are His saints who are waiting for Him, who have said, No, I will cut off that thing, for it will not shine when Christ comes. And that other thing which looks so ugly to nature, I will wear it.'

Divine power might lay hold of the germs of life in an acorn and draw it forth an oak tree. All the life in us is developed, and we are filled up with life, perfectly fit for the Lord Himself and for His own presence. He is coming in a moment—in the twinkling of an eye, and He is coming to people in that state. That lights up His appearing—bodies slumbering, saints waiting, the world not knowing them. He puts forth His mighty power, and we are “caught up together with them in the clouds.” “Together.” That is an expression of the Lord's delight in fellowship. No separation then. And those who are waiting for Him, the living ones who remain unto the coming of the Lord are caught up with those that slept, together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. And he adds, “therefore comfort one another with these words,” referring to the sorrow in the hearts of some who had not their hearts centered in that heart of Christ.

Let me appeal to your souls individually. What do you think of Christ? What is that day to you? What is the Lord to you? I believe in pressing the responsibility of the divine nature one upon

another, the only way to do it really is to show the certain power in connection with the life given to us and the certain truth revealed, so that the responsibility may be met by those who know how to lay hold of the grace set before them in Christ. No earnest person by reading in the letter could get that which the knowledge of the Lord Himself will give. It was just that with the Apostle Paul. He knew Christ, the eternal lover of his soul. He knew what his first love was, and he had no idea of dropping a curtain on that first interview of Christ with himself, and getting occupied with a house and home down here or with outward circumstances and service.

Oh what a tale will steal out in that day when we see what the Lord's love has been to us! I know His distinct love to me—I know His determination that nothing but His blood shall be known as the atonement for my sin. His determination that no false prop shall suit me. I know His arm as an arm that may be leaned upon. And well He knows now in the days of His solitude, His service, His sorrow down here, His Father's love was enough for Him; and He knows how His own individual love for the child of God is enough for the path, were it multiplied with sorrows ten thousand times more.

There is such a thing as being raised; and if others have not known His love, if others have not known these waters of divine life flowing to His poor feeblest ones down here, have not our hearts tasted it and known it, and known it well? And have you not known this among other tokens of His love, that when He comes to display Himself in connection with that glory of resurrection, He will have you knowing it beforehand, as a scene so dear to His own heart?

The last chapter brings in the exhortation in the latter part of it. Here we find how in a dark world until the Lord appears there is to be complete practical separation to Himself. “Abstain from all appearance of evil. And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and may your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” It was Christ's love (2 Cor. 5) that led Him not only to die for all, but that they which live should not henceforth live to themselves but to Him who died for them and rose again. It was the consciousness of that love that made the Apostle Paul speak in that self-same chapter of how the love of Christ constrained him. He could leave the right hand and go to the left, he could take up one thing and lay aside another, because the love of Christ constrained him.

Now allow me, beloved, to make a remark here. You are quite free to judge and say it is a mistake: but my conviction is the children of God have a great deal too much looked at outward service and not at the life they have. There were Paul and Peter, chosen vessels. There are evangelists and teachers, meant by God to be continued for the building up of His saints, but what is the comparative number of such compared with the number of God's children? There are a certain number of faces before me. Blessed be God by far the greater part bear the token that they are the Lord's. How many would the Lord recognize as teachers and evangelists of His own making, persons He sends out for any special work? We know that the speaking of the gospel requires no proof of gift in every one who does it; they that were scattered abroad upon the persecution of Stephen went everywhere evangelizing the word. But I believe the greater part of the lives of the saints are hidden lives, spent in domestic service, in the care of children, in duties of the house, beside sick-beds. But they all, having the life of Christ, connect themselves with the service of Christ in this our day, and if they remember His love they will get an interest in all His interests, and a share in the labors of those whom He is putting forward in work. Have you no share in their

labors if you have been praying for them? Let me ask you, do you never feel any ambition to have a share in their labors? I have known when I could do nothing but in prayer—particularly praying as to the service in a particular place, going on praying for that servant in that place, that visit, and the assurance the Lord gave as to it. So that when that person wrote ‘I found there was the dark cloud on my mind, not on my path,' I could say, ‘I knew it. I knew He had given you a happy and a blessed path.' It is blessed when the saints can thus identify themselves with a work. One poor woman said to me, ‘I don't know who you are, but I have a share in your labors, I have been upholding your testimony here while you have been here.' What was the effect upon the heart? ‘What! you have been praying about me, praying about my work here! It is your work and my work when you have been praying for me.'

There is not a servant or a child in any house; but, knowing the Lord that servant or that child might be a sworn witness for the Lord in the house, and even in going through the menial duties of the house might have the life of God marked and owned in his ways and doings—perhaps very little opportunity of speaking. I remember a very touching instance of that kind in a Chinese boy who was in service in the house of one of the C—'s in Demerara. He had hold of the New Testament, and read it carefully. He was very apt to bring the Testament down, in a gracious way, to bear on the people of the house. One day his mistress said, ‘Oh what a poor thing I am.' ‘Ma'am! I thought you were one of Christ's people. I thought you were a member of Christ.' It searched her heart whether she were not too much on ‘my leanness, my leanness,' instead of in the scene of triumph in Him.

I believe there are marks of how the Lord has given. There are differences. But saying nothing, being nobody in the house, there is the freshness of Christ's life, and just the showing out of the motive working there. It was the great peculiarity of the Apostle Paul, the power of the life in him. He never forgot his first love, nor what he had discovered in Christ. It was in the power of that faith of the Son of God he lived. Will you complain of the jealousy of the Lord's love? Would any one like to be like Lot? It was not worth God's while to keep any calendar of that man's doings. It was no use keeping that man straight. He would just pick him up out of Sodom at the last. His works must all be burnt. What a difference in Abraham! “The God of Abraham.” “Abraham, the friend of God.” What a blessed thing with Abraham God saying, I have loved you, I have brought you forth, and there is a certain path you are to walk in before me and be perfect.'. And has the Lord Jesus washed us from our sins in His blood? Has He really blessed us so? Is that Lord jealous of our walk, jealous that the life He has put in us should be abounding? Are we saying, No, I have nothing to seek for myself; I have only to gather that which Christ gathered. Yes, beloved, He is jealous, and be sure He desires a present practical Nazariteship about us. “Like master, like servant.” Doing God's will because He has left us here to carry on His service, everything else to be laid aside. And can we not say, and say it heartily, May our “whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ?” Faithful is He that called you, who also will do it.

It is a very small part of the subject, beloved friends, I have been able to look at this evening. The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians takes the other side, the display of God in a world of wickedness; but the happy side has been before us—thoughts of heaven. The First-born among many brethren, whose lips have so often spoken our names there on high, whose hand has so often been stretched forth to help us in the hour of need and trial—He is the One who is coming for

us from the throne, to receive us home to Himself.

Chapter 18

Communion and Worship

Gen. 17

There are different experiences of a soul that walks with God. They are much more simple with one who walks with God than with one who does not.

Redemption is the ground of all before, but more openly since, the death of Christ.

There were two things previous to accomplished redemption which we now stand in, law, and promises. Promise could never make the conscience perfect, the blood of Christ can and does. You have not kept the law; what are you to do? The ground we stand on is this—accomplished redemption. In the case of Abraham, there was a manifestation of the Lord to him which lays hold of his affection, and this orders his life. So with us, Christ has laid hold of us for eternal life; He has said “follow me.” This characterizes the walk of the believer.

Abraham gets into the land, but he has nothing but a tent and an altar; he is a stranger and a pilgrim in Canaan. We have left everything, because Christ is everything. We have fellowship with God in a strange land. Take Jacob's life, and what do we see? Not one who has his altar in the land, but out of the land, wandering about. There is no communion for the soul away from God: one has not lost righteousness and eternal life; but communion. Jacob comes back again, goes to Succoth and buys land, and there is a new state of things; he builds an altar there, but he has not got back to Bethel yet, but he calls it El-elohe-Israel.

Chapter 32. There is a poor picture of Jacob when afraid of Esau himself, to send his wife and children first. Though at Mahanaim, he could not trust God, but God would not let him go; then there wrestled a man with him. We never find God wrestling with Abraham. Abraham pleaded with God. Here Jacob had to go through new experiences, and the hollow of his thigh shrinks. God gives Jacob a blessing—breaks him down and gives him strength to get the blessing, because He would bless him; but God could not reveal Himself to Jacob then, and be goes halt on his thigh all his days, without the revelation of God to him. A sorrowful thing this! he has his own blessing, but he has not got to the house of God yet. He cannot call it Bethel. He then goes to Shechem, and after that he gets back to the place where he had first met with God and said, “If God will be with me,” &c. (Chap. 28:20.) Now, the instant he gets back here into the presence of God, and God says to him, “Arise go to Bethel and make an altar unto God;” it must be said, “put away your idols. He knew very well he had had the idols all the time. How many idols are you keeping in your hearts? There cannot be communion with God, if you are keeping your idols. Now God can reveal Himself: “I am the Almighty God.”

There is nothing of all this varied and complicated experience with Abraham. Confidence in God makes him disinterested. If I have got Christ, I can be generous to other people. When a man is hungry, he wants something; but when I have Christ, I have what I want, I can enjoy freely, and afford to give.

The Spirit is called the earnest of the inheritance, never the earnest of God's love.

Abraham says," What wilt thou give me?" when the word of Jehovah came to him in a vision, and said, "I am thy shield," &c. What a poor answer of Abraham! he does not get beyond himself in his request, and what was on earth. When we are looking to God as the answer to our soul's need, He meets all our wants; but still these wants are the measure of our intercourse with God. But if this is all, it is, though most blessed, short of what it should be.

See Abraham in chapter 27. It is not now God saying to him "I am thy shield," &c.; but more, "I am the Almighty God." Then Abraham falls down and worships. This is what we want for worship, communion. It is the revelation of God, and our place is in the revelation of Him, our talking with Him, and He talking with us. Abraham fell on his face, he is annihilated; but he may enjoy God, he has no fear, no halting. God has made Himself known to him, and the result of this is communion. Abraham gets no strength from the revelation, he is on his face, but he has the blessed familiarity of relationship. God takes the soul into communion and worship by the revelation of Himself. Does He now ask Abraham what he wants? No! He gives him a sign of death and resurrection in circumcision. Then in the next chapter do we find him talking about himself? No! he is pleading for others. He has got into the tone of God's heart, not struggling with God for a blessing for himself as Jacob did, but in the sense of what he has got he is able to intercede.

We may have to get back after failure; but then we have Christ to intercede for us, we have not to get back of ourselves. Look at Peter; grace was active for Peter, and brought him back. Christ is gone to God for us. The ground of all our blessing is the perfectness of redemption.

Chapter 19

Correspondence

To The Editor of The Bible Treasury

SIR,—You “appeal” to me whether my course, in using quotations from Mr. Darby in a letter to the Christian World, has been consistent with “uprightness.” I presume that in making this “appeal” to me directly, you are willing to print an answer, and that answer is as follows. In noticing my letter to the Christian World you have omitted to quote the very words which decisively prove the absence of any intention on my part to misrepresent Mr. Darby. I have no desire to retort the charge of dishonesty on you in this suppression. Probably your friends would as little believe it respecting you as mine will believe it respecting me. It suffices me to say that in the warmth of zeal against a doctrine which you think “frightful in its consequences,” you have allowed yourself to commit an injustice unworthy of your well-earned character as a honest scholar and a sincere servant of Christ.

The words to which I refer are these, and they immediately followed the quotations from Mr. Darby. “Now these statements of Mr. Darby, though strangely contradicted by others, contain the essence of the doctrine of life in Christ only, whether he intended it or not.” The words in italics supply a full and direct reply to your allegations. I was well aware that Mr. Darby's declaration, that “the doctrine of the immortality of the soul has no source in the gospel,” had been often cited by others, and to his great discontent, because unaccompanied by any reference to the notorious fact that he holds and has always held that doctrine, and professes it explicitly even in the very same page which contains the quoted sentence. I was therefore resolved that at least this complaint should not be made against me, and therefore added the words which intimate that Mr. Darby's “statements” so quoted were strangely contradicted by other statements, obviously intending the very sentences which follow, and which you cite as evidence of my dishonesty. The word “strangely” was introduced for the very purpose of showing that the seeming “contradiction” supplied by the passages not quoted by me was very remarkable, he holding firmly the truth of the doctrine of the soul's immortality, yet affirming that it had “no source in the gospel.” Moreover, the “contradiction” was admitted to be so striking as to leave it open to question whether Mr. Darby could have really “intended” his words to be taken in the absolute sense which they seem to suggest.

But this is not all. You wholly misrepresent the object of my quotations from Mr. Darby. That object, most evidently, was not to show that he did not hold the doctrine of the soul's immortality, but to show that he did not hold it on the ground of scripture authority; in his own words, that it “has no source in the gospel,” an expression than which none can be stronger. I was not called on then, with this object alone in view, to enlarge upon the fact that Mr. Darby held the doctrine for reasons extracted from his own head. My point was in his confession that it was “not in the gospel,” and my practical inference was that tenderness should be shown to those who thence conclude that it is not a doctrine with divine authority.

The object of the citation of the note on Matt. 25:46 was, in the same way, not to show that Mr. Darby ever agreed with me on the general doctrine (a folly and a misrepresentation of which I feel wholly incapable); but to show that the word “eternal,” as occurring in the phrase, “everlasting punishment,” was even in that crucial passage explained. by Mr. Darby to “mean only” final, a criticism sometimes made by persons who agree with me, but severely denounced whenever it is offered to your religious associates.

To conclude, Mr. Darby himself has felt that his language was remarkably liable to be quoted against him, for he, as you tell us, has now altered the clause chiefly in question to this—that “the idea of the immortality of the soul is recognized in Luke 12:5; 24:38.” You call this a “modification” of the former expression (“has no source in the gospel”). I call it an express retractation; and gentlemen who have placed themselves under the necessity of so materially altering their words should be somewhat slower in charging respectable opponents with direct “dishonesty” in quoting them. For Mr. Darby, notwithstanding many differences of judgment, I cannot but feel on several accounts a true admiration; and the last thing which I should wish to do would be to misrepresent him, or to act as if truth could be advanced by dishonor.

I am, sir, Yours faithfully, EDWARD WHITE.

[The simplest course in answer to any question of fair dealing toward Mr. W. is to insert his letter. He and our readers will judge for themselves. Otherwise a mere abstract would have been given of his reply, as before of the complaints made against his use of “Hopes of the Church.”

Let him be assured that there was not the slightest wish to suppress a word which might plead in his favor or in explanation; and that the motive for not citing more from his letter was simply to avoid further discussion, though even as it stands the substance of what he thinks of importance has been already given and answered, though not inserted as a quotation. I trust that it will be satisfactory to Mr. W. and to those who complained to know that, though quite mistaken in his notion of Mr. D.'s meaning, he has in my opinion shown himself guiltless on the question of fair dealing or the want of it. I will now try to convince him of the misapprehension which lay at the bottom of his wrong use of Mr. D.'s words and of the insinuation of a shift or change in the thoughts of the latter. If Mr. V.'s point and object are thus mistaken, his inferences must of course fall to the ground.

Mr. W. considers that there is a strange contradiction between the two statements, “that the idea of the immortality of the soul has no source in the gospel,” and “that we do not doubt the immortality of the soul.” If Mr. D. had denied the soul's immortality to be a truth of the scriptures, there would be just ground for the charge of so strangely contradicting himself. But it is not so. I have no doubt that its frequent citation is due to the fact that most people, like Mr. W., unconsciously confound “the gospel” with the word of God, and think Mr. D did not hold the soul's immortality on the ground of scripture authority because he denied it to have its source in the gospel. It is well known that the primary basis of that truth is not the gospel but Gen. 2:7, where Adam is said to become a living soul (not, as other animals did, without but) by the inbreathing of Jehovah Elohim. Not a natural fact like this, however important in itself, but resurrection is a truth of the gospel. Hence this was no question among orthodox Jews, who held, save the materialist Sadducees, the immortality of the soul. But the resurrection of the body, exemplified in Christ risen from the dead, is the fundamental truth of the gospel, which got completely displaced by the Platonizing of the early

Fathers. This is the true meaning and intent of Mr. D.'s words, which Mr. W. entirely mistook, as is plain from his present letter. For he supposes even now Mr. D., by denying “the gospel” to be the source of the doctrine of the soul's immortality, to mean that it had no source in scripture and that he himself held it for reasons extracted from his own head. The fact is that Mr. D.'s language was precise, Mr. W.'s construction is loose and erroneous. To prove a doctrine by reason is the last thought that would occur to Mr. D. He will now understand also that there is no change whatever in the author's thoughts, but only a modification of phrase in order to hinder the misunderstanding of others. There is not nor ever was the least ground for the charge of contradiction. The truth is that Mr. W. gravely misinterpreted the main sentence quoted, though I give him credit for believing that he meant no wrong to Mr. D. The “express retractation,” as Mr. W. calls it, falls with the rest. Lastly, I can assure Mr. W. that Mr. D. by the expression “final” did not mean to impair the force of “eternal” in Matt. 25, whatever may be the idea of others who employ that term for a different purpose.—En. B. T.]

Correspondence

To an Inquiring Hindu.

My Dear Sir,

I too have to apologize for leaving your letter, though of the greatest interest to me, so long unanswered. Suffice it to say, that I had much to wind up before quitting home, and that much fresh occupation has hindered since I came to this busy city. You are right in not allowing your mind to get dragged into discussions, and I trust that I shall in no way tempt you to a path so unpromising, especially in the things of God.

But you speak of the doctrine of the Trinity early in your letter. Now that entirely depends on the revelation of God, and indeed almost entirely on the Christian revelation or Greek scriptures; for though the Hebrew scriptures fall in with it when revealed, they can of themselves be scarcely said to reveal it. So, too, the points of salvation and faith turn on the same larger and prior question of their divine revelation, as distinct from the external testimony of creation or the internal testimony of the human conscience.

But, surely, my dear sir, if you have seriously read the books commonly called the Old and New Testament, you can hardly have failed to see their essential difference, not in measure only but in kind, from the sacred books of India, China, Arabia, and any other people or age. They differ quite as much from the Talmud of the Jews and from the commentaries of the early Christian writers, which bear the unmistakable signs of being merely human and consequently fallible and in fact erroneous.

The Old and New Testaments, besides their superior moral character, differ in two respects. They have an historical substratum, peculiar each to each, supported if their testimony be true by miraculous vouchers; and they are prophetic. Now none but God could clothe man with miraculous power for some worthy moral end, and this too where the ways of the men so invested preclude suspicion of trickery and collusion. Still less if possible could any but God give distinct prophecies of the most unlikely events hundreds of years before the fact. These qualities are found only in the Bible, the wonder of which is increased by the circumstance that its writers extend over a space of about 1600 years from Moses till the Apostle John.

These things are only explicable by the truth of the claim of scripture to be God's word. If the Bible then be His word, faith comes by bearing that word. Reasoning is good in its own sphere and for its own proper ends; but faith is subjection to and reception of God's word because it is His. If God has made such a revelation, it binds the conscience of all who hear it. But in such a world as this one need not wonder that men disbelieve it. For on the face of it men generally are far from God and opposed to His will. That God should leave man, so, dark and wretched as he is, without a revelation, would be strange indeed: not so, spite of such a revelation, that many should reject it, and many should be unfaithful to it. Least of all is this a difficulty to one who believes the Bible; for the Old Testament predicted the sin and unbelief of the Jews, as the New Testament predicts the sin and unbelief of the Christian professing body. As the revelation comes from God to man and acts as a moral test, so does Christ. If I love what is good and holy and true, I shall love the Bible, and the Lord Jesus; if I like my own will and way, and the world, I shall despise both the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ. If I begin to learn my unfitness for God's presence, I shall begin to abhor myself and to look to God, who will surely lead me on to welcome the good news of redemption through Jesus Christ.

Either Jesus was a divine person or He was the worst of deceivers. This last you do not think: how then can you fairly escape from owning the glory of His person? Seven hundred and fifty years before His birth, Isaiah (7.) declared to king Ahaz that the virgin should conceive and bear a son to be called Immanuel, GOD WITH US, further calling Him the mighty God (9.), the Father of eternity (or the age to come), &c. In due time the Virgin Mary does bear such a son, even Jesus, who raises the dead, rises Himself from the dead, and goes up to heaven in the face of His disciples.

Again, even the greatest difficulties which unbelief finds are all necessarily elements of the history and of the doctrine. Thus, if Jesus had not been a man, man had derived no such benefit as the gospel proclaims. If He had not been God, the benefit could only have been human, earthly, and temporal. To give such a boon as Christianity offers, He must be both God and man in the same person. Again, if He had not died as man, there could have been no Christian redemption by blood. If He who died had not been divine, the value of blood-shedding had been only that of a creature and limited. To be infinite, not in person only, but in His sacrifice for us, He must be, as scripture declares He was, both God and man.

Take a proof of this from the Hebrew scriptures: It was written by Zechariah 500 years before the crucifixion. “They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.” This is still as a whole to be fulfilled for the Jews as a nation. It has only been verified by individuals as yet. The prophet speaks of a future time of trouble, when the Gentiles will gather round Jerusalem and God will appear on their behalf when at the last extremity and they will then recognize in their deliverer God the One whom they pierced. The “I” of the passage (Zech. 12:10) is certainly God, Jehovah of Israel; yet He must have taken a body and come in humiliation, if He had been once “pierced” by them. In whom can all this meet but in Jesus of Nazareth the Lord God of Israel?

The very notion of Christianity is above human thought till God revealed it. Others have conceived God's appearing in human form to steal, to kill, to indulge lust or other evil. Such were the ideas of Greeks and Romans. Scripture alone reveals God assuming human nature without sin to be a sacrifice for sinners, to make them saints, to glorify Himself in and by them. With this too the Trinity harmonizes perfectly; for, instead of its being mere ideas or, various functions and displays, the

Father in His love gives the Son, who in equal love comes to die, in order righteously to put away sin and to rise in witness of the victory for the believer, and the Holy Spirit deigns to work in the conscience and heart of him who believes, both to convince him of his need and then to fill him with divine streams of enjoyment and power to magnify Him who died and rose for him.

You will see from what is already said that I in no wise despise the value of reason. Thus it is irrational and immoral to suppose that a Being good and holy, omniscient and omnipotent, made this world and man as they are now. But reason, unaided, cannot account for it. Revelation declares that God made all good, but suspended its continuance on the obedience of its head—that the head failed, and that the race and the world fell thereby. My reason bows to this as the only true and righteous and sufficient explanation.

But how can I rise out of this state of ruin? My reason fails to find a remedy. Divine revelation shows me God undertaking, God giving, God fulfilling the mighty task; and this in the nature which failed, yet to the glory of Himself. This my soul accepts as the only solution of all my difficulties. It is worthy of God to save the lost, but it is only worthy of Him to save holily and righteously at all cost to Himself, at infinite cost, yet to save freely, of grace and therefore by faith of His testimony that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. In every other scheme love is lost, or righteousness is compromised, or guilty man is flattered. The cross of Christ alone satisfies and harmonizes all truth, meeting every want of man and every attribute of God.

Before the scriptures were written at all, as in the days of Moses, and before they were finished, as in the days of Jesus and the apostles, miracles were vouchsafed by God to arrest attention to the divine power put forth in a less or a greater degree, as seemed fit to Him.

But when all was written, miracles were not continued, for then the truth revealed was complete, and the testimony such as only inattention or self-will can dispute, the fulfillment of prophecy being the most powerful continuous testimony after miracles were no longer wrought.

Accepting then these revelations as proved truly divine, I hear Jesus saying (John 8), “Before Abraham was, I am.” Did He speak the truth? If not, the morality of the gospel in its Chief is detestable, not divine. Lofty precepts condemn, if there be not holy practice. If Jesus was holy and true, He was God, according to the import of His own words. None but a divine person could say, “Before Abraham was, I am,” πρ■ν ■βρα■μ γεν■σθαι, ■γ■ ε■μι.. If you know Greek tolerably, you will see, when it is pointed out, the amazing force of this statement. In speaking of Abraham, a mere creature, the Lord uses the verb γ■νομαι, which means to become, or come into being. In speaking of Himself, He employs the substantive verb, which alone is proper to express, where required, absolute uncaused being. He does not merely say, “Before Abraham was, I was,” no matter how high you carry the point and term of His existence, even if it were the first of created beings, as the Arians say. If so, Jesus would have said, ■γεν■μην. But no! He, the lowliest of men, could not deny His deity. He is God, the “I am,” and so He declared Himself, which provoked the unbelieving Jews to take up stones. But the time suffer was not yet come; and so He passed through and went on His way. Again in John 10 Jesus declares that He has ■ξουσ■αν, right and title as well as power, to lay down His life as well as to take it again: who could have such authority but a divine person?

This then was no mere Athanasian dogma. It is the distinct teaching of John 1, Phil. 2, Heb. 1, and very many other passages in the apostolic writings. It is the keystone of Christianity. Without it not only its salvation is a myth but its morality is a cheat. For all is built on the capital truth that God in divine love humbled Himself to become man and die for sinners, that He might save and bless the believer to the uttermost not by Christ only but with Him.

But be assured, my dear sir, as great as is the free and boundless blessing of the gospel, so equally is the sin and danger of neglecting it—mark, not of opposing only but of neglecting it. For, if it be true that God really gave His Son thus to live and die, the guilt of neglecting so great salvation, once it is brought before us, is proportionate to the dignity of His person and the efficacy of the work wrought at a cost so incalculable. May the gracious God and Father of the Lord Jesus bless you, giving you to read honestly the scriptures with prayer for divine light and guidance!

Believe me ever faithfully yours, W. K.

Correspondence

Dear Brother in Christ,

A few remarks with illustrations from scripture of the use of ■■■■■■ may set the question (page 336) in a clear light.

The primary meaning of ■■■■■■ is to cover. Hence when used in Piel which gives intensity to the idea, it will mean to cover effectually, so to forgive, pardon, make atonement.

The verb is used without or with prepositions; without where the thing to be covered is the prominent thought, e.g., sin (Dan. 9:24; Psa. 65:3 (4); 78:38), the land (Deut. 32:43), the altar (Ezek. 43:20); but with prepositions where the place in which atonement was to be made, the manner of it, the officiator, or the guilty persons, are in view.

We meet with the verb followed by ■■■ in Lev. 6:30 (23); 16:17, which tell of the place in Lev. 7:7;

1 Sam. 3:14 Sam. 21:3; Num. 5:8; which speak of the means. Where the person by whom it is made is prominent, we find it in connection with ■■■■■■ to tell us on whose behalf he is acting, e. g., Lev. 9:7; 16:6, 11, 17, 24; Ex. 32:30; Ezek. 14:17, and 2 Chron. 30:18, where Hezekiah looks to the Lord to effect it.

Where things inanimate, involved in man's guilt but guiltless themselves, are spoken of, the verb can be followed by ■■■ (Lev. 16:20, 33; Ezek. 43:26; 14:20); and where persons are before the writer's mind, guiltless themselves of the actual transgression, we meet with the preposition ■, e.g., Deut. 21:8; Isa. 22:14; Ezek. 16:63, for the consequence of the sin was not to extend to them.

But when the guilt itself is the prominent thought, we have ■■■ used, pointing out on whom, or on what, the sin rested which needed covering, whether (1) the individual, (2) the place of standing, (3) the victim to which the sin was transferred; e.g., (1) Lev. 4:20, 26, 31, 35; 12:7; 14:18 - 20; 19:22; Num. 15:25, 28, &c.; (2) Ex. 30:10; Lev. 16:16; (3) Lev. 16:10; the passage to which your correspondent refers. Keeping the primary thought of the verb in view, we can understand its use in the different places referred to, and the force of Heb. 10:4 and Rom. 3:25, is felt. The sins of God's people in old days were covered by the blood (and so God passed over them), though not

really put away, till the blood of the Lord Jesus had been shed, which alone could avail for this. In Lev. 16:10 the thought seems to be that the sins of the people, transferred to the scapegoat were covered on it; that is, the goat bore them away from the people, never to be seen again as against them; but yet, as on the goat, they were not looked at in God's sight as put away.

At times we meet with the fuller form of expression (a) ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■■■■, and (b) ■■■■■■ ■■■ ■; (a) Lev. 5:6; 14:19; 15:30; 16:16, 34; (b) Lev. 5:16; Num. 5:8, the former marking from what, and the latter by what the sin was covered; but always, where the guilt is viewed as resting, we meet with ■■■ of the person or thing on whom it rests. See Lev. 16:33 where we have ■■ ■■■■■■ of the sanctuary and vessels, and ■■■ ■■■ of the people.

C. E. S.

Where the numeration of verses in Hebrew differs from the Authorized Version, the former is put in brackets.

Chapter 20

Correspondence: Children Following the Lord

My Dear Brother, as long as a child is of the household actually in relationship with their parents, the duty of obedience remains. If a man is married, he begins a new house, and is the head of it, leaves his father and mother. But as long as he or she is of the house, obedience is the duty, as the relationship remains. “In the Lord” is the limit and character of the obedience. If I had a Jewish or heathen parent who commanded me to deny Christ, I could not do it. It is not “in the Lord.” So if I was desired anything which practically denied Christ, I could not do it “in the Lord.” if the parent be merely unjust in ways, and no duty be compromised, I believe the part of children to be patience and casting themselves on the Lord. I can suppose a child engaged in a positive duty, which the parents in such case would have no right to cause the child to break through. “In the Lord” has nothing to do with the character of the parents, but the conduct of the child; otherwise it would absolve from all obedience the child of heathen or Jewish parents. The obedience is “in the Lord.”

Your affectionate brother in Christ, J. N. D.

Dear Mr. Editor,

I shall be much obliged by any of your readers who knows Hebrew better than myself, or has studied the point, to tell me what is the force of åéÈìÈò êÅÌôÇëÀì in Lev. 16:10. It will require attention to the force of ìÇò with ãÅôÄë which I suspect is not always justly given in the English translation.

Chapter 21

Correspondence: the Bearing of Romans 5:12-21

The Bearing of Rom. 5:12-21. In Answer to Specific Questions.

My Dear Brother,

The division in the doctrinal teaching of the Epistle in Rom. 5 at the beginning of verse 12, the verse you point out, has been already noticed in tracts which are in print. The former part deals with what we have done, as God's question to Cain; the second with what and where we are, as God's question to Adam, the state of Adam being confirmed and made plain by the judgment pronounced on him. He drove out the man. Rom. 1:19 to 7 deals with what we have done and Christ's propitiation as the remedy, adding His resurrection as the great seal of it. From verse 12 it deals with what we are. He speaks of state, not guilt, though of course guilt is there.

The “wherefore” (δι■ το■το), of which you first ask, is a gathering up of the whole teaching of the previous part of the epistle, which taught, not Judaism and a called people, but wrath from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of them who hold the truth in unrighteousness, Jew and Gentile. All were under sin, under different circumstances, but alike come short of the glory of God; and every mouth stopped, those that had law, as well as reckless Gentiles sunk in evident depravity. It was the condition of the whole race of man, as man, before a revealed God, holy in His nature. There is however an additional special ground of the “wherefore,” which will not be fully apprehended till that is introduced: a living Christ securing blessing where a man is justified from the old sins, and reconciled, having been an enemy; Christ's death would secure him through, and save him from wrath. This so far brought in, not only the clearing the guilty by the work Christ had wrought, but a new standing in life. By the righteousness of one the free gift came to all for justification of life. This was a new position of man, not indeed yet the glory or resurrection with Christ and union with Him, but a new position and standing; not merely the clearing away the sins a man was guilty of, in connection with his old standing, but a new standing in life, a justification of life.

This clearly brought in a new state, not mere justification from the evil he was guilty of, but a condition into which he was brought; hence too, though recognizing it, it reached out beyond the whole nature of Judaism. This the apostle sums up in chapter 5:12-21 with the connecting word “wherefore,” taking the whole scope of thought which precedes, and resuming it in his own mind, as is his custom, as a causative point of departure in his reasoning, as he often does too with the word “for” (γ■ρ). The sense of what had been said led to this, “as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.” This brings us to ■φ ■.

■π■ with a dative is primarily “upon,” as ■π■ π■νακι, “on a dish;” hence is used for “besides,” something added, ■π■ π■σι, in addition to all this, or above. Hence also as ■π■ τ■ προβατικ■, ■π■ θ■ραις, but with the idea of actually touching. It is then used morally for a ground, motive, object, what characterizes an act. We use “upon” so, but with express words: I did it upon this ground, upon this condition. Greek uses it by itself, something which is, not the cause, but is

supposed; without which the thing would not so be as we say it is. We are called not ■π■ ■καθαρσ■■ under a supposition of being unclean persons when so called. ■π■ τρις■ μ■ρτυσιν, three witnesses were the condition of carrying out the judgment. Any necessary or true condition: “man shall not live by bread ■π’■ρτ■.” It was not the cause of life, but his life was involved in it, so ■π■ παντ■ ■■ματι. We say “to live upon.” This use of ■π■ is very common;.■π’■λπ■οι ■ροτρι■ν. It was no cause of plowing, still the plowing was not to be without it. ■π■ τ■ ■ν■μαατ■ μου, the reception of the child is characterized by that as a motive. In English we must translate it variously, but it is easy to understand in Greek something supposed and viewed as involved in a thing happening, without which it would not be what it is, but not its cause.

Thus here the origin of death amongst men, or cause of its entrance into man's world, was Adam's sin; but if we could suppose (what could not be save by this acting of God as in the miraculous birth of Christ) a man born without sin, he would not be brought under death. Hence each person's sinning is supposed in its passing upon all: it is vorausgesetzt; death comes moyennant. It is ■φ’■, “inasmuch as,” or “for that” as in Authorized Version, not “because.” A man was condemned because of his sin, or an elder judged; but it was ■π■ τρις■ μ■ρτυσιν that was a regular condition of his being condemned. The sinning exists as a fact connected with the dying: they do not die without it. The origin of death in the world was Adam's sin. It is not a condition set out ■ priori, as if it was uncertain whether they would, but a fact which comes in for those involved in death.

I do not think children enter into the question here—no more than when the apostle says, “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” They really begin to sin as soon as they begin to live: though it be undeveloped, their will works. I do not doubt they go to heaven: Matt. 18, I think, shows it, and the ground; but the apostle is looking at man manifested as man, that is, what he is and does. Children are saved, not by innocence, though practically an expression of it, but because Christ came to save what was lost. This question then I dismiss; I refer to it merely as an objection which might be made.

I do not think ■φ’■ has the sense whereunto: if it were the object in its extent, it would be, I conceive, the accusative, if so used at all. What follows, to the end of verse 17, is a parenthesis, bringing in the question of law's place and bearing, and insisting that grace which met sin could not be narrowed up to law, though it met transgressions under it. And first it is asserted that sin was in the world when the law was not. True, a sin could not be reckoned as so much to an account; but death proved its reign over those who were not in the case of Hos. 6:7. Israel, like Adam, had transgressed a positive covenant; but sin was reigning in death over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression. And Adam was a figure of the second Adam come in grace. Now though transgressions or offenses, as verse 16, had to be met, yet the condition and state was the great point here, the many connected with him had been constituted sinners by Adam's disobedience; so the many connected with Christ were constituted righteous by Christ's obedience; but this was state and standing, not properly guilt as to things done. Sin was in the world before the law came.

As to ■λλογε■ται, it is not ■λογ■ζετο, “accounted” (as righteous). The word is only used elsewhere in Philemon. It is not a person accounted righteous on whatever account, but a particular act or debt owing, put into an account. When there was no specific prohibition, there was

no specific transgression. Sin was there, but there was no transgression. This requires a law to transgress. But the evil tree bears its fruits and proves what the tree is, and men are judged according to their works. But there was not as under the law positive transgression which the government of God could deal with as so much to be reckoned to a man in that government. When God judges the secrets of men's hearts, their works will come out in the books, a witness of what the state of their hearts was, and all will see the light. The apostle speaks here as of the present condition of the world: you could not say you have transgressed here, broken the law there, but the reign of death proved that sin was there. But Adam was the figure of Him to come. Shall the bearing of man's offense be greater than that of God's gift? Death was reigning outside the law; but by the offense of one many were dead: should not the grace of God much more abound to the many who labor under it, and not to be confined to the Jews who claimed it? The state was universal through Adam, the grace must be as wide in its address.

Again, as by one's sinning came the charge or guilt leading to condemnation, should not the free gift be thus too? yea, more, the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift, with many offenses now to meet, to justification. The first phrase is by one having sinned, but the second “by one” is abstract, ■ζ ■ν■ς, of one [thing or person]: of one, that is its general character; then the free gift is ■κ πολλ■ν, had that as its character. The first statement in verse 15 declares that as to the objects the sphere must extend to the many, since by the offense of one the many died. Grace must go out as far and brings in the man Christ Jesus, the last Adam, of whom the first was a figure, the thought necessarily involving it. The comparison to prove the extent in verse 16 is between the acts, as 15 between the objects. The guilt which led to condemnation was ■ζ ■ν■ς, a unity; the free gift being of God was of many offenses. So as to the effect by the offense of one, death reigned by one; much more the grace would triumph on the other hand, and they that received it would reign in life. In these three aspects grace in God triumphed over sin in man and that by one man, not by every man for himself, the principle of law and individual judgment. As far as offenses went, they had been multiplied, and grace could meet them.

Verse 18 resumes the general principle from verse 12, and is as abstract as possible. As by one offense towards all for condemnation, the direction and tentency of the one offense, so by one righteousness or righteous act accomplished towards all for justification of life; for it was in the risen Jesus they got it, from having been under death, and now justified if they had Him in life. For as by the disobedience of one the many connected with him were constituted sinners, put into that place; so by the obedience of one the many connected with him were constituted righteous. The ■πακο■ is looked at as the whole principle of Christ's life, including as to its character, and proved by, obedience unto death. There was a disobedient man proved in eating the forbidden fruit: he disobeyed God's will. There was an obedient man: He obeyed God's will. The character and measure of the obedience all through, as proved by it, was obedience unto death, the death of the cross. This had nothing to do with law.

There are, as the whole passage teaches and has for its object to teach, two heads of races, natural and spiritual: two persons, one in whom sin, the other in whom grace, came. And further, that the law was a “moreover” (πλ■ν), which came in by the bye, παρεις■λθεν: but that you could not shut the grace up to that, but must go to the two heads of sin and grace. The law merely came in that the offense might abound, but it was not only when offense, but when sin, abounded that grace abounded over it. Had righteousness replaced the reign of sin, judgment and condemnation

only could have been the effect. But grace reigned, but through righteousness, on the principle of divine righteousness, fully established, and that to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord: a complete summary of the whole ways of God. Death is looked at as death here reigning by sin; condemnation was out beyond that.

I turn to look at some of the words you speak of. Παρ■βασις is positive transgression of a law which exists.

Παρ■πτωμα, though applicable to transgressions, is a more general word and with a different sense.

Παρ■βασις goes beyond and transgresses an actual law or barrier set up by God. Hence there must be a law.

Παπ■πωμα fails or falls from the right condition in which we should hold ourselves. Transgressions do this, but every fault and failure does. This can be without a law. A concordance will easily show this. I am not aware of any case where παρ■βασις is used without direct reference to law (or tradition), unless the verb in Acts 1:25, Judas παρ■βη, and a case where another reading is preferred.

Δ■ρημα, χ■ρισμα, δωρε■ require a keener, finer sense of shades of meaning to distinguish.

Δ■ρημα is the gift, χ■ρισμα the fruit of grace in the person giving. So far there is a shade in the way the same thing is given. I say such a thing was a gift, a free gift. I did not earn it. How came you to have it? It was pure grace (a χ■ρισμα) in the person who gave it me. One leads me to think of it as freely given, not earned, and given without condition or price, the others to what moved the person to give. The gift of righteousness is not by working or labor, or acquired fitness or anything on my part. It is a free gift, δωρε■, but the δωρε■ is ■ν χ■ριτι. God's divine favor and grace were the origin of this gift; so in verse 16 his mind goes up to God as a source; it is therefore χ■ρισμα in the beginning of the verse. And it is a gift—the fact simply; but is it not to be as large as the evil? It is a χ■ρισμα of God; this cannot but be. Whereas in verse 15 he is contrasting abstractedly man's fall and offense with God's giving: hence it is χ■ρισμα.

As to the difference of (δ■ρημα and δωρε■, the former word is used but twice, here and in James 1:17, where the mind rests in the thing given, in δωρε■ in its quality. In English we use “gift” for both. “What did you give for that?” “Nothing; it is a gift. I have it as a δωρε■.” “What is your gift?” “It is a beautiful Bible, a δ■ρημα.” So we use “hope” for the thing hoped for and the quality. That δωρε■ is the quality we see when adverbially used, δωρε■ν ■λ■βετε, δωρε■ν δ■τε. Δωρε■ then is the general word which characterizes what I get. You may remark that all the words in verse 16 have this form; that is, are objectively looked at as a complete subsisting thing: δ■ρημα, κρ■μα, κατ■κριμα, χ■ρισμα. In James 1:17 we have δ■σις and δ■ρημα.

As to these forms, and so in δ■καιος, many of your readers may be, but perhaps all are not, aware that the ordinary rule is that words derived from the perfect passive have their force according to the person: the first person the objective thing or act, the second the doing, the third the doer, μα, σις, της: as κρ■μα the judgment pronounced, the thing itself imputed, κρ■σις judging as an act, κριτ■ς the judge. So δ■σις is properly giving, δ■της a giver. I add here κατ■ compounded with a word gives intenseness to it, as ■χω to have, κατ■χω, to hold, hold fast, take

and keep fast, χρ■ω, καταχρ■ω, to use as a possession what belongs to me. These become modified in use. Κρ■μα is the thing of which I am accused and for which I am judged. Christ's κρ■μα was put on the cross, what He was condemned for; it is the thing imputed to me. κατ■κριμα is actual condemnation; δικα■ωμα the objective sum total, which being accomplished gives me righteousness as far as that sum total goes: hence an ordinance or such a fulfillment of required righteousness as makes my righteousness complete as to that. If it is before God, it must be according to God and absolute. Hence we have the δικαι■ματα of the saints. Zacharias kept the δικαι■ματα of the law blameless. It is the sum total of what is required. Δικαιοσ■νη is the abstract idea or the quality, the thing righteousness. κ■καιος is what any one is; δικαιοσ■νη is that thing which having he is δ■καιος. Christ is made unto us δικαιοσ■νη. I have this character before God, but the δικα■ωμα of the law is to be fulfilled in us, the full requirement of the law. So verse 16 speaks “of many offenses” to δικα■ωμα, to the full requirement of what must be for me to be δ■καιος before God. It is not to justify me (however true before God), but the full sum of that needed for my being accounted just. Justification of life is δικα■ωσις, the net of justifying, but being in the new place or state beyond death, it is in life as Christ is risen. In verse 17 I have the gift of δικαιοσ■νης, that is, the state God sees me in or has given to me in Christ. But the one δικα■ωμα is the full required total, the act which met the whole requirement.

I believe I have answered, I hope rightly, all the questions you have put to me. The English mind is little used to the niceties of Greek language; still they are often of value to one that studies, and result in greater general clearness of statement. Some of the verses of this passage are as badly translated as any in the New Testament or worse, as especially verse 18. Those in the parenthesis (15, 16, 17) are all much clearer, I think, if put as a question.

Chapter 22

David and His Friends

2 Sam. 17:27-29

What solemn changes in all within and around does sin work, what new relationships to places and persons it forces us to take!

This is sorrowfully experienced by David. Nathan, the prophet, had in earlier days been sent to David with words of approval and encouragement and all was in honor between them. But when David had sinned, the same Nathan is sent to him with words of terrible rebuke and conviction. (2 Sam. 7; 12)

So again, in other days David listens to the reproaches of a profane one of the house of Saul, but he could answer such reproaches with holy boldness. But after his sin, he is scorned and insulted again by the profane of the house of Saul, but the spirit of holy boldness has departed from him. He cannot reply to Shimei as he had replied to Michal. (2 Sam. 6; 16)

Another illustration of this is seen in David's connection with the house of Machir of Lo-debar. In the day of his integrity David sends to Machir for Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, who had been long and graciously entertained there. With noble heart David then brings the son of his bosom-friend home to him to Jerusalem, and makes him to eat continually at his own table. But afterward, in the time when his sin had found him out, Machir supplies David with the commonest necessaries. (2 Sam. 9; 17)

What bitter changes for the heart were all these! The more vain and proud the nature is, the more would all this be felt; in some cases the trial would be all but intolerable. It would be then “the sorrow of the world which worketh death.” With David however it was otherwise. It became “godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.” David did not feel the sorrow as the “sorrow of the world,” sinking under it, as in the sight of men. But he bowed his head under the punishment of sin as in the fear of God, and then, as “godly sorrow,” nothing less than “salvation” was the end of it.

How beautiful, how precious with God when in circumstances like this the “sorrow of the world” is prevailed over in the soul by “godly sorrow;” when all this is taken up in reference to the Lord, and not to man! That is the difference. But how difficult!

Moral mischief however not only worked all this change in David's own relationships to the scene around him, but it tested others also. This is exhibited in the history. There are three distinguished personages who stand this testing and have their grace and virtues variously but sweetly exercised: Shobi the Ammonite, Machir of Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim. Shobi was the younger brother of Haman the king of the Ammonites, who had treated David's courtesy at the time of the death of his father with such slight and insult. And, I doubt not, that on this occasion Shobi had deprecated his elder brother's way, and been attracted by the grace and nobleness of David; so that, in the subsequent day of David's guilt and degradation, Shobi has a

right mind still, though in changed circumstances. He joins other worthy ones in comforting the poor exiled king of Israel. (See 2 Sam. 10; 17)

Machir was the Son of Ammiel of Lo-debar, a man, we may presume, of note and station, in the half tribe of Manasseh beyond Jordan. In earlier days he had received into his house the lame child of that worthy son of Israel, Jonathan the son of king Saul, and had been a comfort to him in the day of the national trouble when the house of Saul and Jonathan his father was sinking. And so, when David is sinking, and he is suffering the grievous visitation of his terrible iniquity, the same right mind appears again in this true man of God, and he likewise joins in comforting David. David was as in prison, and he visits him. (See 2 Sam. 9; 17)

Barzillai was a great man, a man of note and substance in the land of Gilead, beyond the Jordan. But he never appears in the history till David is distressed; and he is willing to disappear as soon as that distress is over. He was the friend in need. But though unknown before, his mind had been that of a man of God, in secret, like many in every day of Israel's or the church's history; for he takes the path of the Spirit in a moment when nature in even some of its refined and moral judgments would have gone astray. He treats David's sorrow as a sacred thing, and adds not to the grief of him whom God in holy gracious discipline is wounding. He heartily joins Machir and Shobi in sending to David in his hunger and thirst and nakedness. (See 2 Sam. 17; 19)

We may say, in the review of all this, what a chapter in 2 Samuel is chapter 11! How the whole book morally turns on that, the complexion of David's history thus awfully changing with his conduct!

Chapter 23

Death

DEATH.—Death for the utter setting aside of man (as well as atonement in Christ) has a far more important character than we are apt to think. It judges of course the flesh as hopelessly bad, but it ends it. As Christ's death it declares that no link could be formed with the first man. Divine infinite love came down, and, while divine, suited itself to every want and sorrow of man, to his whole condition. “Because the children were in flesh and blood, he partook of the same,” but remained alone till death. Thus His death was the solemn declaration that there could be no link between grace and flesh. Hence as His disciples we must hate our father, mother, wife, life, all that is a link here, to follow Him, forsaking all we have—it may be outwardly but always as regards the new life. It is not in the old relationships, though it respects them as formed of God and all His ordinances; but in it we reckon ourselves dead, crucified with Christ. Our life is only a life which is of Him as risen, He as risen is our life. Then if we are dead with Him, we have not the nature as in Him, which has to do with sin, the world, the law. I am not alive in it at all; I am in Christ, alive by Him as a quickening Spirit. I eat His flesh and drink His blood. I realize His death, and so abide in Him, living δ■ α■τ■ν as He lived δι■ τ■ν πατ■ρα.

How completely this sets aside the whole thing! I am dead and gone as to flesh, and all to which it had to say, and yet because of Him I am alive; and this only is Christianity. I have to seek its realization, and may at first see only forgiveness by it. But except I eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, I have no life in me; if I do, I am alive in and by reason of and for Him. But it is death to all connected with nature because of nature. No doubt it will contend against us; but we are not in it now at all. How immense and total a change is Christ's death to us! Then we have to seek, always bearing the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal body.

PSALMS 50, 51—Remark the difference and connection. Psa. 1 is God's judgment of the earth. It takes up those who have made a covenant with sacrifice. God is judge Himself, and judges His people in order to shine out of Zion and call all the heathen thither. But while He gathers His saints by sacrifice, in judging Israel He owns nothing of theirs. He rejects all ceremonial service and requires real righteousness, setting before them what they have done.

In Psa. 51 is the people's (the remnant's) confession after all this. Here we find sin in the heart fully judged. The Psalmist owns indeed the sins, and then, when reconciled, will teach others. Bloodguiltiness in respect of Christ is owned. No outward legal sacrifices are here offered (they would have been if acceptable), but a broken heart. That is, though Israel be guilty of Christ's death, they are taken in God's judgment on their own ground. They are judged for ungodliness, practical ungodliness, in their pretended boasting in law. In the saints' confession inward sin is owned, and inward divine teaching and grace looked for, and Christ's death confessed—indeed all the blood shed, but especially Christ's death. God's mind is understood.

In the former psalm plain conscience is looked for in a people pretending to be religious; previous legal relationship only in moral reality in Psa. 1, and heart-felt need of God and of Christ's death, in

the divinely touched remnant, in Psa. 51 What God does not require, the divinely taught mind does not offer. What must be in true relationship with God it looks for from grace. The ungodly offer what God does not want, and do not heed facts in what conscience ought to know, and as to Christ's death, they are never aware of their guilt under it, through hardness of heart. The contrast is very distinct.

Chapter 24

Defilement for the Dead

Num. 19

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

First, there was the sacrifice; and here the blood that was sprinkled before God, as the foundation of all the rest, was a complete thing never renewed. It was sprinkled seven times before the tabernacle. Whatever might be the circumstances, the sprinkling was never renewed. To have supposed such a thing would be to endanger the foundation. It is true that God never raises a question about the perfect efficacy of the blood of Christ. Scripture never yields such a thought as the renewal of the blood of Christ; for this is the very point in which the sacrifice of Christ stands contrasted with the sacrifices of the law over and over again in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Wherever there is the thought of fresh sprinkling of the blood, a man is on Jewish and not on Christian ground. It is not merely that His sacrifice has been made once, but we are perfected forever through that one offering. It is a thing done once for all. This is the first thing to notice. “Eleazar the priest shall take of her blood with his finger, and sprinkle of her blood directly before the tabernacle of the congregation seven times.”

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

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

It will be observed, again, that God marks in a peculiar way the defiling effects of death, because it set forth in a special manner the slips and failures of the children of God, while passing through the wilderness. And hence it is only given in Numbers, because it is a provision for the wilderness. If one had anything to do with the heifer, the person became unclean. The priest and he that burnt it were unclean. And if a person that was clean had to gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place, he too was rendered unclean. All this was to mark the nicety of God, this deep feeling about anything that had to do with our defilement. In Christ, where this is found, there is of course the absence and opposite of uncleanness. Christ was the only one that could touch the leper without being defiled. The intention was to skew the delicate feeling that God would have in His people about any defilement. “He that toucheth the dead body of any man shall be unclean seven days.”

There was no haste in a soul's restoration from impurity. “He shall purify himself with it on the third day, and on the seventh day he shall be clean.” If a man tampered with sin, God at least would not make light of his sin. He would give the soul the profit of being exercised about it. It was in vain for such an one to say, I am sprinkled with the blood—I am clean: why should I trouble more about the sin? Such thoughts do not come from the Holy Ghost. Instead of our being sprinkled with Christ's blood being a reason for taking comfort in the presence of sin, it is the strongest motive for shame and humiliation. What a stain on His name, and what a pain to our hearts that, after God had attracted us by His mercy to hear His word, and had given us Christ's blood to purge our sins, here again we were indulging in that which required the suffering of the Son of God! The blood is not the appointed way for meeting sin afterward. The flesh uses that to make light of sin. It is not the blood that was here used to purify, but the ashes of the heifer. What did they represent? The full proof of judgment. There might have been the blood without the intense suffering that the reducing of the heifer to ashes produced. It is what Christ suffered that is brought to my remembrance by the Holy Ghost. The ashes were mingled with living water. The power of the Holy Ghost—His present action in using the remembrance of the sufferings of Christ. It is not the truth of sacrifice that is used, but of His sufferings on the cross—His going through the judgment of the sin before God. My soul is brought back to this, not merely as a redeemed person, but as one who thinks of what it cost the Lord Jesus Himself.

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

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

The difference of the days I understand to be this. The third day represents that there must be the feeling of his condition as an unclean man. If it was a question of anything evil, the principle of the law was that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established. Two was the absolute number that was necessary in order to prove anything: but three was more than sufficient. On the third day the unclean was to purify himself with these ashes of the heifer. On the seventh day the thing was repeated—the uncleanness is again brought before the soul by the Spirit of God, and then the person resumes his place among the people of God.

But to take a New Testament instance, let us look at Peter. See how he broke down in spite of the Lord's warning. It is not that Peter had less affection for Christ than the other disciples; the reason was because Peter had great confidence in his love for Christ and therefore rushed into circumstances where none but the Lord could stand, and from which the other disciples held back. And therefore coming more into the light, into the place where Christ was, he only proved the flesh more clearly than the others did. The others had not come into the same circumstances of temptation. But how does the Lord restore Peter? First of all, when He turned and looked upon him, Peter goes out and weeps bitterly. That will illustrate what is meant by the third day's purifying. The whole work might be done in a short time; but it must be really done. It is the grave, deliberate self-judgment, the power of weighing the thing in all its hatefulness before God. Peter, when the Lord looks upon him, remembers the word that Jesus had spoken unto him. That is the way the Holy Ghost works. It is not merely a feeling, but the word of the Lord brought back to Peter's mind. Now it seems to me that the word thus brought home to him exactly answers to the ashes of the heifer applied to the man that was unclean on the third day. There was the sprinkling for the first time.

But the process was not yet complete, though it was going on. For when a man is in an actively evil state, he would not, as Peter did, desire to see the Lord again; He would have kept away from the sepulcher. If the Holy Ghost had not been working in Peter's soul, he would have avoided, instead of desiring to be near the Lord. But he showed living faith because he wanted to see and hear the Lord. The Lord, however, waits. The work was not done at once, and it was not till some time after that Peter is with the Lord in John 21. The beautiful interview between them recorded in that chapter illustrates the second purifying—when the Lord so seriously and withal so affectionately asked him, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” There was not one word said about his denying the Lord. But if Peter did not understand at first, the Lord would not let him go,

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

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

Chapter 25

Divine Truth, Not Double Senses, in Scripture: Part 1

I affirm that the principle that scripture must be interpreted, when we come to the matter contained in it, by the plain use of words as other books, is a false and absurd notion. I interpret men's words so, because men's ideas have formed them, and therefore they can express those ideas which gave them birth. But if there be a revelation, however much God may condescend to men and speak through men amongst them, and even in His Son as a man, the ideas of men not having given rise to the words and thoughts, but God, it is impossible that language formed by man's ideas can be an adequate expression of God's, if we take that language, as the rationalist would, in its simple use according to men's ideas. Upon the showing of the case, by the strictest scientific principles, the whole statement is wrong.

Every one who has the least inquired into the subject, or even thought of it, knows that language is formed by, and expresses, the thoughts, habits, and mental objects of a people. It is their picture. It forms itself on their habits. But if this be so, a revelation from God cannot find its adequate expression in the language taken according to its human force, because according to its human force it expresses human ideas, not divine. But then this difficulty arises: we must have an inadequate revelation.

Inadequate, if we seek what is infinite in its completeness all at once. “We know in part and prophesy in part,” says the apostle. Intuitive knowledge of all at once is not come. But there are analogies of relationship, and the Lord Himself lays down expressly that the thought (the λ■γος) must be known before the speech (the ■■μα) is. This is not the way with man's language. I explain the terms, and use them then to learn all relating to them, and unfold the relationships in which the things stand to one another. In divine things, we must know the thing to understand the word. To take a familiar example, “We must be born again:” if I take this in the “simple universal meaning” of being born, I shall stumble with Nicodemus on nonsense. Take the word Son applied to Godhead: has it the simple universal sense it has elsewhere? “The Word was with God, and was God.” What does Word, or λ■γος mean? I affirm that in everything important referring to God, or even spiritual subjects, the words must have a meaning only to be known by those who have the divine key to it whatever that is; because as human words they only express human ideas, and they are now used to express what is not the fruit of human thought but of divine. If I say, “Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin"-” ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,” can I take the simple meaning of the words as they apply to the human order of thought by which they have been formed? It is absurd, and contradicts itself.

It is not that the language is not ordinary human language; it is because it is ordinary human language (though modified, as is ever the case with new ideas), and to be construed so, that interpreting it when used for divine things, as if the ordinary human meaning were the limit of the thought (and this is what the rationalist wants), is unintelligent, yea, the grossest absurdity. And indeed the rationalist cannot and does not deny it.

Now with this depth in the mind of Christ or even the prophets, what may be called (though unjustly) many meanings becomes perfectly intelligible, and the necessary result. I do not take up Cocceius' notion, though I understand it, I think, that the scripture had all the meanings it could have. It was merely awkwardly expressing in human feeling this-that the divine mind was so large that human expressions of it partially had no end. If I draw water from the well, I do not say at each bucket, This is different water. I say, No, there is a continually springing well. It is all water of the well, but my bucket can only bring a small part of it at a time. It is, as the rationalist says, hard in doing this, “not to add or mar the simplicity. The interpreter needs nothing short of fashioning in himself the image of the mind of Christ; he has to be born again into a new spiritual or intellectual world, from which the thoughts of this world are shut out.” Now this is excellent, but the proof (not that the words of scripture are not simple, but) that, from the natural mind being formed in another train of thought, it cannot enter into what is divine. It says what scripture says: The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit.” But it denies at once the theory that scripture can be interpreted as having the meaning it had to the hearers or readers who first received it. Scripture, divine truth, never is really received but in the measure in which the mind is formed into the spiritual state capable of apprehending it. Not that the words are not simple, or that the statements are not-they are; but that the mind is not morally open to them: they are foolishness to it. So of the use of a passage of scripture. As my water from the well, I may use it to drink and quench my thirst, to wash, to quench the fire, to make the plants of my garden grow. It is not changing anything in the water: God so formed it as to be properly applicable to all these things.

And so His divine word. Man's limited nature makes limited things (we spoil the instrument in applying it to something else) and limited words. God's infinite and creative nature has, in His revelation, given what is according to His nature, though suited to man's. The source is infinite; the application is to what is finite. Hence what is simple in itself is various in application. Hence, even in the language which expresses it, we have a finite instrument used to express an infinite mind. This must be different from a finite instrument used to express a finite mind. Even in the last case it is imperfect, as the comparison of the different languages shows; but, in respect of God's thoughts, though He who uses it is God (and hence it is perfectly used for thoughts not learned but only to be expressed), that which is used must have a fullness and elasticity and power, which it had not with man. He who would reduce the force of language used for inspired communications, as the rationalists, to the measure of the mind of the speaker or hearer, denies the inspired communication altogether. Hence, too, the language of scripture is eminently figurative. It uses physical facts and terms to express moral ideas; but the consequence is, we must have the moral ideas themselves to understand the words.

But then the force of the words is measured by the ideas I have, not by the simple theory expressed by the words at all. All language is figurative when any moral subject is spoken of. I talk of a lovely picture of virtue, and so on. Our life is spent in such figures the moment I leave materialism. But man cannot speak of divine things truly, because he does not know them; his language cannot in itself be formed directly on them, save in falsehood. When God speaks of them (and this is revelation), He does for our sakes condescend to use human language, but fills it with that which is divine. And the intelligence of the language is in the measure of the intelligence of the truth conveyed. He who would reduce the meaning to the meaning of the words denies the thing altogether, makes nonsense of it besides, by making divine things human in their conception. He

is simply an infidel in fact that denies the communication of the divine mind. That God should communicate His thoughts to man, to sinful, corrupt, narrow-minded man, and all be understood according to the human limit of human expressions, is an absurdity upon the face of it.

Man's mind runs wild without scripture, and it runs wild with scripture if it trusts itself. And the mightier the instrument, the more the wildness appears. If I run about with a perambulator, I may perpetrate some mischievous folly; but if with a steam-engine, I may jeopard a multitude of lives. But that is the fault of the person who does so. That this danger should not exist, we must give up materially and morally all that has power. And it is God's will that man should be thus tested.

The humble mind learns according to the power of God's truth. The self-conceited wields a weapon to his own, perhaps to others' hurt; but he has not, morally speaking, scripture as God's word, but as so many thoughts, and, when wielded by man's mind, always false, because man cannot wield God. He is subject to Him, and the power He gives is subject to the moral guidance of the Spirit working in man. This is what the apostle means by “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.” God may use man as an instrument, but be must first be emptied of self. Hence the humble soul prospers, has God's own word, feeds in these green pastures, and, as the expression of what is become himself, may become a blessing to others. The self-confident mind has never approached God in His word at all; for, had he, he would have ceased to be self-confident. Whenever I see a man confident in himself (and we are all of course liable to it, at any rate in detail), I have no confidence in him. The truth is, all divine things are a riddle, because (man having departed from God) the introduction of God again is necessarily the destruction, the setting aside, of man, viewed in his present state, but thereupon it is the filling the man who receives it with grace, and so with divine confidence, and a delight in holiness that he would never have had otherwise. And he is strong in virtue of being nothing, and in the measure in which he is; as Paul says, “When I am weak, then am I strong.” But this is in principle the total putting down of man as he is, and this man will not bear, and will meddle to his hurt with what is given to the new man. And God will deal morally; He will not give His power (unless as some particular exceptional exhibition to show it is Himself) otherwise than morally, certainly not at all the knowledge of Himself, and it is of this we are speaking now.

And it is right it should be so: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself.” And is it not right that God should thus deal morally with man? Is He to give intelligence of His mind to mere human will and self-sufficiency? He presents it in the word as adapted to man, to every one. But the understanding of its contents does depend on moral condition of soul; and ought, though it may work by grace, to produce that condition. But this the rationalist denies as well as the other.

I affirm then that rationalism is intellectually a contradiction and an absurdity; because it supposes a revelation of divine thoughts of which language confessedly formed on other thoughts is the expression, and says it is to be understood according to the simple apprehension of the hearers. It is immoral, because it supposes the moral condition of men to exercise no influence in the intelligence of divine things.

But yet the Lord surely made things plain, or rather presented things plainly to men.

If He had not, it would not have tested man; being plain, it condemns him, by showing that his will and moral condition are in question-are the real hindrance. Light was surely in the world: nothing so simple as light. But men loved darkness rather than light. The Lord therefore came not to judge, but in judgment-not only is light, but gives eyes to one born blind; that they which see not might see, and they which see might be made blind. And so it is now. “How can ye believe who receive honor one of another?” He sowed the seed in the heart. Often it was by the wayside, hard as the nether millstone—the highway of this world's folly and self-will; part was choked by cares, riches, and lusts; part lost by self-deception.

Hence, too, we have what stupid, most stupid, rationalists would call contradiction. He spoke to them in parables as they were able to bear it. Yet He spoke to them in parables, that hearing they might hear and not perceive. It was perfectly suited to them in grace, but to a nation which would not the truth so communicated, that, where the prejudice of will was, all should be dark. Those who had judged themselves, who had repented, believed and glorified Him. The Pharisees rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of John.

I will now cite the positive testimony of the Lord to this principle of having the divine thought in order to understand the divine words. “Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word.” So in Proverbs: “It is all simple to them that understand, and plain to them that keep knowledge.” How the Lord shows in John 4 that conscience is the inlet to intelligence in divine things! and thus the heart becomes engaged. Rejected and driven out from Judaea, He sat weary on the well of Sychar. A woman, lonely (it was not the hour when women go forth to draw water) and weary with sin, evidently a strong and ardent nature that had sought happiness with eager pursuit, and sunk through it into sin, and not found rest to her spirit (how many such are there in the world!) dragged on a life of toil, and, in the midst of it, thought sometimes on Gerizim and Jerusalem, and knew there was a Messiah to come. There might be happiness and rest somewhere; she had none. Toil and weariness she had, and the last evidently in spirit as well as body. Jesus had toil and weariness too, but through love, not through sin, save the sin of others, and this could not weary love, and He knew where rest was-He was it. The Son of God, the Judge of all, had, humanly speaking, put Himself in a position where He was debtor to this woman for a drink of cold water. But He soon draws her out; He speaks of the gift of God, of a well of water springing up unto everlasting life. All was dark in the Samaritan woman's mind. She moved in the circle of her own weariness; this she felt, the fruit of her sin and toil after happiness. And (with all the movings within that predominated and filled her mind, for, in fact, what had she else?) what does the Lord do? “Go, call thy husband, and come hither.” “I have no husband.” “Thou hast well said,” replied the Lord, “I have no husband: thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that speakest thou truly.”

Now a ray of light breaks in. “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.” The word of God by the Lord has divine authority in her heart, because it has reached her conscience. She has found a man who has told her all that ever she did. Who knew that? The prophet's word has divine authority. Yet she does not yet get to wells of water. The divine communications made to her were quite unintelligible; but much was done. He who knew all her life, all her sin, had been sitting in grace by her, willing to be helped by her. Grace was there as well as truth. She had found the Christ, and leaves her water-pot and her care with it, and becomes a messenger of that which is good news for all. Gerizim and Jerusalem are all alike, and alike nothing. The Father is seeking worshippers in

spirit and in truth.

Now here we find a picture of the opening of a soul to understanding and the reception of divine things. The presenting of divine things of the highest character in grace does not do it. The natural heart remains closed. Even when there are moral wants and cravings, divine things are not understood at all. God makes His way through the conscience. Then the word is received. At the moment the heart does not get farther than its present capacity. Still what has been spoken of has been spoken of for it; and grace makes all its own. Jesus in grace has been with it. Oh, what a difference—man's speculations, and God seeing the field white for harvest! The Lord refreshing His spirit when rejected by the pride of man, not with the water of the well, but with love finding its bliss in hearts filled with wretchedness, drinking of the one refreshing well-spring that has visited this world! He had meat to eat His disciples knew not of. What a place for this poor Samaritan, what a place for us; to refresh, stupid creatures that we are, the heart of Jesus, because He is love! Nothing brighter, nothing more genuine, than the effect of her new-found joy, which makes this poor woman the messenger of God's visiting this world to the self-satisfied inhabitants of Sychar. She was just the one that suited the Lord.

But remark another thing here, showing how absurd it is to speak of just the simple meaning to the hearer—that is, man's measure according to the words used: we have here the full power of eternal life as in one who drinks of the water Christ gives; the whole of His person in humiliation; “who it is that saith to thee, Give me drink;” His relationship to sinners; how the divine word reaches the conscience; the passing of grace out of ceremonial Judaism, where it was according to promise, to bring mercy to the vilest; the place Jesus takes thus as rejected; His human estate as weary with us, not having where to lay His head, yet giving as God; the substitution of worship in spirit and truth for Jerusalem and Gerizim, yet salvation of the Jews; the revelation of the Father acting in grace seeking to have such worshippers; the total change in the soul, when once it is taken possession of by Christ, however ignorant. These, which I recall only from memory, are all directly before the soul in this short but touching interview. How much more, who can say?

The mere literal facts, read as any other history, cannot bring the mind at all into the apprehension of what is here spoken of. If I take the commonest words—as Son, the Son of God, the Son of the Father-a mere literal apprehension affords me nothing, or error; or the Word made flesh. I shall be told these are mysteries; but the language is simple, and what I am showing is that, with the simplest language, there must be divine apprehensions in the soul to understand scripture; and that understanding it as Thucydides or Sophocles is just simple nonsense. They have human ideas, and are understood humanly. If there are divine ideas, they must be understood divinely. Yet I have only human language, and hence my way of understanding it must be different; and I must add, the way of writing it, because the way of thinking it must be different. Whether it be by inspiration is the question we have to come to: only I say here that to give divine ideas with certainty, or to be the truth, they must have a divine source, a divine author. Man's ideas about God were utterly false and degraded without it. His power of thought, as such, cannot be adequate to form the idea, or clothe it in language so as to be a communication of truth, an authentic revelation of God's mind.

I conclude that, as to the general principle of interpretation proposed by the rationalist, he contradicts himself in the first place, and happily so; next, the system is intellectually an absurdity;

thirdly, it is contradictory to the facts of the case; and fourthly, the Lord Himself assures us, as do His apostles, that it is not true. The ideas and subjects of scripture being divine, and language human, formed by human ideas, to understand it simply as it is expressed by a human interpretation of the words, is a manifest contradiction and absurdity. Let us get the best text to have what is to be interpreted, and be relieved from traditional glosses; let us have the most accurate knowledge of Hebrew and Greek at our command: all this is every way to be desired. But, when you have all, in the nature of things the text cannot be interpreted as the words would strike the hearer who stood as a natural man with human thoughts, I may boldly say, in any case whatever. For what is wrong in principle is wrong always. When God is in the world, His ways and actions have, and must have, a meaning which a mere man's cannot have, because He is God. If a Jew had ridden into Jerusalem on an ass, what would it have been? Nothing. If the Lord did, in one sense the history of the world turned on it as a last public testimony. It was a moment which made the Lord weep, and God perfect praise out of the mouths of babes and sucklings to still the enemy and the avenger. Had these held their peace, the stones would have immediately cried out.

I cannot conceive anything more absurd than the thought that the works or the words of the Lord in the earth are to be taken just as another's words, and so understood. They cannot, for He says things none else could say, and does what none else could do; but were they the same, the bearing would be quite different.

It is a folly, a horror, a senselessness no term can reach, to compare the movings and speakings of a God walking in love in this world, with the writings and actings of other men. If they were such, He was not that at all; and I thoroughly agree with you, that no human language, taken in its ordinary terms as expressing ordinary things, can express that. The statement contradicts itself. It is still a question Is there a revelation? Has God revealed Himself or not? Let the language be made grammatically clear, of course: it is the vehicle God has been pleased to use, and as a vehicle I employ it. But when you come to the meaning, the interpretation, we enter on a divine order of thought, and must be in it ourselves to understand. Here we are dependent on God as in everything else.

And hence it is that-though they may be bad commentators, of course, as to the text-the poor and unlearned, who are really exercised in conscience and in divine truth, understand the truth better, as to the substance of it, than the learned man “who leans to his own understanding;” because they have personally learned where the connection between an exercised soul and God is formed-they have learned it by their spiritual wants; and Christ is that connection, and the mind of Christ is in the scripture, and thus they have the key to it. If they pretend to interpret texts, they may very likely go astray; but as to the doctrine of scripture, their faith is clear and sure. No exercise of human understanding can give this; no chemist, even if his analysis be right, knows what water is, like to a man who is ready to die of thirst.

I conclude therefore, as to the general principle of the rationalist (and especially as to the first part), that be is fundamentally wrong. “The true glory and note of divinity in these latter,” he says [Jewish and Christian scriptures], “being, not that they have hidden, mysterious, or double meanings, but a simple and universal one.” Now I look for neither mysticism nor logic; I reject them, as such, both. When the rationalist speaks of double meanings, if he means that two distinct meanings of the words are to be taken-” good meanings,” as theologians used to say—it is at once

to be rejected; but if he confines the meaning of the scriptures to the narrowness of human wording and thought, his principle is false. In the communication of divine thoughts in human language, the bearing of the sentences, from the richness of the truths in them, is various. If I say, “God is a Spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him,” I may justly take up the contrast with Jerusalem and Gerizim, and the whole question of God's dispensations; or I may justly take up God's being a Spirit, which in the nature of things requires a spiritual worship-it must be such. I may also press the difference between God in His nature requiring such, and the Father (as a name of grace and relationship) seeking such; and how now, in this double name, He gave His character to all approach to Him: as the Lord said, “I go to my Father and your Father and my God and your God;” and in the Ephesians, “The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”

I add, as the rationalist complains of connecting passages by some hidden connection, that when I find, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, mall the Lord Almighty,” I may insist on the need of separation from an ungodly world and evil, in order to be in relationship with God; or I may note that there are three scriptural relationships with God (two expressly noted and distinguished in the Old Testament—Almighty, and Lord or Jehovah; the first to Abraham, the second to Israel and Moses), and that He who bore them both takes here that of the Father. Now all these are not double senses, but divine truths coming from an everlasting source, and being the expression of it, and of Him who, in infinite richness of being and character, must be in relationship with all things—above all, through all, and in all believers—the statement of these truths must carry all that God is as spoken of in the statement, or displayed in the acts contained in the passage. Of course, all passages are not alike full. It is not logical conclusions which are not in the passage, which I find or seek; nor mystic inventions which are not there either; but the mind of God found in it, that I look for.

To say that this is not mysterious is, as to many passages, absurd. A religion which depends on the Word being made flesh, and the Son of man sitting at the right hand of God, and sending down the Holy Ghost to make our bodies temples; which tells us that we are members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones; which shows God become a man, and obedient as such, and dying as such, and other truths I need not enlarge upon, must be mysterious in the true sense of the word, and, indeed, in every sense. What angels desire to look into can well be supposed to be so. Christ made sin; our dwelling in God and God in us; our being, in this world, as Christ is, so as to have boldness in the day of judgment; the miraculous birth of Christ; all speak with one voice. He who excludes mysteries from the word excludes sense from it, instead of making it intelligible. I do not mean by mysterious that it cannot be understood. The scripture meaning of mystery is that known only by revelation, not by human knowledge. The initiated know mysteries, the uninitiated not—that is the meaning of the word; but the true initiated are those taught of God. If God reveals, there must be mysteries; and, from the nature of what He reveals, true initiation must exist to understand it. Its expression cannot be at the level of human ideas.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 26

Divine Truth, Not Double Senses, in Scripture: Part 2

(Concluded from page 176.)

All the deepest expressions of good and evil are brought together. God and sin meet in the cross. Christ is God, and is forsaken of God. Christ is the power and Prince of Life, and He dies, but through this destroys the power of death. You cannot have such things brought together in the same act without mysterious truth. When all that is perfectly good in God and evil in man meet, and are centered indeed in one person, or the condition he takes, the human mind must be taught of God to know it; and God alone, who knows all things perfectly, can reveal it simply, because He does know perfectly; but He reveals all in man, all in Himself, and all in Christ in it. I know a person may rest on the surface, and seek to destroy all depth in them, and bend them to the standard of the human mind and scope of human thought. But I do not see any great sense in this that such a fact as God becoming a man should not suppose immense depths of thought, purpose, and moral truth, and reveal them. If a man denies all this, there is just simple infidelity: I know what I have to deal with. If not, I have a Christianity in which the depth of my moral nature old and new, and in the exercises and conflicts of both, meet God where He and sin have met, and Christ in the consummation of ages is come to put it away. And perfect love and divine righteousness find their manifestations and ground.

The simplest expressions of scripture awake profound depths in our moral nature. What does putting away sin mean? What, Christ the Son of God appearing to do it? What does the Lamb of God mean? It is easy for philosophers to avoid all these expressions, and make a Christianity of their own. Only it is in no part the Christianity that is revealed or known in the word. But interpreting the Christianity that was revealed in scripture and has possessed men's minds for ages, by saying that the true divine in it is not having mysteries, is false in fact, and absurd in idea.

I would add a few words on the contrast between double meanings of prophecy in general, and the application of the simple meaning of the words as a hearer would understand them with one meaning. The idea is entirely false. The rationalist admits, “They must speak as from One with whom a thousand years is as one day, and one day as a thousand years; but,” he says, “not so as to connect distinct and distant objects.” Now I think this also unphilosophical, contradicted by the facts and statements of scripture, and untrue. If the prophecies are to be interpreted as the words of One with whom “a thousand years are as one day,” it is impossible not to see that the bearing of these words must be something of larger wider import than the circumstances of the moment, and must reach on to epochs where the thoughts and words of such an One will be fulfilled. In this day of a thousand years all in man's hand changes, shifts, is subverted; new things are set up, new interests created. If the word of one divine day can reach over to the end of it, it must be occupied with a plan that runs through it all, through all these human changes which are but the risings and fallings of a tumultuous sea, where the equal tide below the surface pursues its constant course. There is a divine plan above and beyond all the local circumstances.

As Peter says, “No prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation” —does not solve itself in the individual circumstances which occasion it, but enters into the great plan of God. Yet, in the love of God, we may say they must connect themselves with those to whom they are addressed. I doubt not therefore that the prophecies were often occasioned by present circumstances, and comfort given to saints at the time by them; but to say they did not look out to a future of blessing to Israel, of the final setting aside of the power of evil, of the coming in of a great promised Deliverer, is to fail in recognizing the most obvious fact in all prophecy.

Take Joel: there it is not to be doubted that a famine through locusts and insect ravages is the occasion referred to. But do you or I believe, or any reasonable person (to say no more), that He whose words are to be interpreted as the words of One with whom a thousand years are as one day has written a book for all ages to determine the result at that time of an inroad of caterpillars, the effect of whose ravages, however trying, would disappear in a few years? Could any one read the book and not see that God's present judgments and mercies are made the occasion of drawing the attention of Israel to their state, and leading the awakened conscience to God's judgment of evil, and full deliverance for those who repented and called upon the name of the Lord, when the people should never be ashamed, the Spirit poured out on all flesh, and Judah dwell forever, and every temporal blessing be theirs; and, finally, the harvest and vintage of the whole earth be reaped and trodden—God dwelling then in Zion? The famine connected the present circumstances with this promise of plenty and blessing, but no one can but see that the prophet is rapt into future times.

Now if this be what is meant by a double meaning, it is true: that is, that the Lord does give what is a present comfort, yet clothes it in language which leads on to His ultimate plans, so as to keep the godly hope of His people up, and often passes entirely into that with which the present is not linked at all. The point of transition may be sometimes obscure. But the general principle is undeniable, and such a character of prophecy worthy of God, and indeed alone worthy of Him. In Jeremiah and in Isaiah it is in vain to deny that, with encouragement suited to the occasion, the prophets refer to the coming of Messiah, and to a time of unparalleled and continued blessing. It is incredible to suppose that God had not His own plans in view, and the great result of His government of the world when man had been fully tried on the ground of responsibility.

I must say I think principle and fact concur to prove this. I mean that God held out the hope of a great coming deliverance and blessing, whatever momentary encouragement He might give; and that this time in which His plans would be accomplished must be mainly in view, though present circumstances would draw the prophet's attention, and give rise to exhortation and warning. And we must not forget that in fact Israel was waiting for this time, and that in all the East, as Tacitus tells us, the expectation prevailed.

Nor is this all. Almost the earliest prophecy (Balaam's, which reaches to the Star of Jacob, was earlier) declares that the order of the world was all arranged in respect of Israel (Deut. 32:8); and, further, that Israel would be given up into the hands of their enemies, and afterward restored, and the Gentiles associated with them, through overwhelming judgments, when “God shall arise to judgment, and to help all the meek of the earth.”

Isaiah (6.) shows us Israel given up too, and for a long period, and yet preserved in a remnant; and the rejection of Him (chap. 1.) who found none to answer when He came and called, as the cause

of their being laid aside, yet this followed by the fullest promise of restoration and glory.

Again, Hosea declares that they shall remain many days desolate, without true God or false, but seek Jehovah their God and David their king at the end.

Micah also declares they will insult and reject the Judge of Israel born at Bethlehem, and therefore be given up; but that this same man will be their peace. And again, the largest and fullest blessing is promised to a remnant through Him, while judgment will be executed on the nations, who yet will be blessed as by the dew from heaven which tarries not for men.

Now my object is not of course to explain here all prophecy, but to note that there was a reference to a great scheme or plan, such as must be in God's mind, though He may encourage and comfort at the time; and not only so, but that there was something more specific—a giving up Israel, the beloved people, for a time (during which God would be found of them that sought Him not), and that it, whatever other sins they had, was caused by their rejection of Jehovah coming as a man in mercy; that this caused their divorce from Him; and that then a long undefined interval would elapse, and blessing afterward arrive but introduced by judgments—the Lord pleading with all flesh. This gives a uniform plan declared in statements verified before our eyes in the state of the Jews consequent on Christ's coming. This necessarily threw the application of scripture prophecy on to the end, when alone the plans of God would have their decided and full result, evil be set aside, and the earth blessed under Messiah. This principle the New Testament confirms. (Matt. 23:39; Rom. 9:25, 26; and other passages.)

We find the Old Testament testifying, in one entire passage, of One coming in grace and gentleness, and then judgment. The New quotes what relates to the grace, and stops short of the judgment (thus Luke 4:19, from Isa. 61:1, and Matt. 21:5, from Zech. 9:9). The New Testament leads us itself to the same point. Thus Matt. 10: “Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of man be come.” Now He was there; but there was a presenting of Him to human responsibility, and bringing Him in power. So the Lord personally tells them they should not see Him till they said, Blessed be He that cometh. Till then their house should be desolate. I refer to these to show that scripture constantly refers to a divine accomplishment of a plan to be fulfilled, which seemed at first to fail—a failure which was the occasion of bringing in the Church on quite different principles, the mystery hidden from ages and generations (Israel being set aside). Even the epistles follow the same order. The quotation of Psa. 68 in Eph. 4 goes only so far as it does not apply distinctly to Israel.

Finally, I take up Daniel, and I find a declaration of a period appointed to Jerusalem for God to bring in righteousness and blessing—the famous period of seventy weeks; but when this is entered on in detail, we have seven weeks of trial to build the city, next sixty-two weeks to Messiah the Prince, who is cut off and takes nothing (for that is the true sense of the words; not, “and not for Himself”); then comes a long undated period of war and desolation. And when is the promise of the preceding verses supposed by the prophecy to be fulfilled? It must come after the end of the war: till then there are desolations, the city and sanctuary being destroyed already. It is put off for an unknown length of time, and the unfinished period of seventy weeks gets its conclusion at the end. This is the unequivocal structure of the prophecy. (Daniel never goes into the blessing beyond the times of the Gentiles.) That is, the prophets suppose a rejection of Israel for a long period, the cutting off of Messiah, and afterward the bringing in of full blessing through Him. I am

not now saying they are real prophecies to be fulfilled; nor, as to this point, does it alter the case (absurd as the theory is) if Daniel wrote in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes.

My assertion is, that the prophets have a scheme of this kind—all appearing of grace, as Christianity expresses it, teaching us to wait for the appearing of the glory—a putting off to a remote period of earthly blessing (introduced by Messiah and judgments) the accomplishment of these prophecies, and of the blessing of Israel; Messiah being rejected meanwhile by Israel, and Israel therefore given up. But, whatever particular warnings and consolations there may have been, this shows that (while addressed to these generations, and often occasioned by their circumstances) prophecy always looked out farther in its true scope.

I am speaking of its plan, not of its accomplishment. He who would interpret it with that kind of simplicity which would leave this out leaves all the clearly demonstrable intention of its author out, and this is a bad way of interpreting.

But I turn to another point of the prophetic revelation of God before we leave this part of our inquiry. We have accepted interpreting prophecy as the words of One with whom a thousand years are as one day. But, if this be so, then there is one Author really of the whole, though divers instruments; and, though surely adapting His words in grace by those instruments to various circumstances that arise (as grace would do), yet I must find one mind as to the substance and purpose of the whole. And, though interpreting each part simply and just as I find it as to the direct meaning of the passages (which I think very important myself)—taking what a prophecy says as it says it, yet the one mind from which all flows and which runs through all I shall surely find and do find; and consequently (not a similarity or a copying, but) a fitting of each part into the whole, and into its own place in the whole, each part being suited for that very reason to its own object and part in that whole; and thus secondly a connection, not immediate but through the whole, of each with every other part; as the members of the body, different entirely in service, yet serve the whole and serve each other.

I get Jews, Gentiles, Israel, Messiah, their history developed in multifarious ways: but all treated by one mind to whom all belong, history bringing out the thoughts of that one mind by each one in the sphere they belong to, and by a revealed bearing one upon another—law, the opening up of wider thoughts by prophets, obedient royalty, punishment of evil, absolute Gentile dominion, Messiah, sacrifice—endless principles brought out in germ, death, resurrection, promises, and all running into one another in one great scheme. For it is a remarkable fact that Judaism has given rise (whatever people think of it) to a more enlarged unfolding of every question as to good and evil, and man's relationship with God—has more touched all the springs of human nature, than anything that ever claimed the attention of the heart of man. A being separate from good (that is, from God) yet capable (by grace) of it; one who had a will of his own, but was responsible; who had acquired the knowledge of good and evil, conscience, yet was under the power of evil; who had been made in the likeness of God, but had set up to be independent and do without Him—such a being must be exercised in this way to know himself and be restored to God.

I reject entirely the mystifying of the Old Testament. There are great spiritual principles and truths which are found, and must be found, in all that divinely unfolds God's relationships with men: God's faithfulness, His mercy, His patient goodness; man's trust and integrity of heart, his humbleness, the fear of God. But when I seek the meaning of a passage, I seek simply what God

meant, where it is His testimony; or in what light He seeks to put man's conduct, if it is a history of this, or what is His purpose, as a whole, in the narration. I have already spoken of the difference of encouragement or warning afforded at the time, and its passing on to give the subject its place in the general purpose of God to be accomplished in a future day. What I object to is the unintelligent and, if you please, unphilosophical irrational way of looking for the plain meaning. “The office of the interpreter is not to add another (interpretation), but to recover the original one.” Now here we are entirely agreed, but then, it is added, “The meaning, that is, of the words as they struck on the ears, or flashed before the eyes of those who first heard and read them.” I affirm this to be in every case false, if the fine language means anything. I have already referred to the soberer expression, “the meaning which it had to the mind of the prophets or to the hearer or reader.” Now, if I am reading or hearing a statement, I do not in any way look to the effect on the hearers. This may be a casual help, but no more. If I seek the meaning, I must seek, not the effect on others, but the intention of the speaker or writer—this as simply as you please and nothing else. I have nothing to do with the impressions produced on hearers. There may have been none, or a false one, according to previous prejudices, or an imperfect impression; or even a right one as regards themselves, yet not taking in the full scope of what was said. If I am to believe scripture, the prophets themselves, so far from receiving a first impression and abiding by it, inquired into the sense of their own prophecies, and were taught of God that they referred, in the great topics connected with the purpose of God and deliverance, to after times. (See 1 Peter 1:11, 12.)

But it is surely useless to reason in proof that if I am interpreting a writing or words, I must seek simply the purpose and meaning of the speaker and nothing else. Now this only one right thing the rationalist leaves wholly out; it never occurs to him to think of it. I say, therefore, that his whole system is irrational and false. He is so full of the borrowed idea that they were temporary themes, referring in oriental language simply to the national hearers of the day, that he takes this as the measure of the meaning, and thus lays down a principle which is as false as can be. But that is all borrowed. This is the German rationalist; but the other rationalist, I trust the true one, tells us we are to listen to them as the words of One with whom a thousand years are as one day; One of abiding unfailing counsels, which everything tends to bring about, who is not slack concerning His promise.

The effect of the great fact that it is God who speaks, I have already spoken of. Let me add another example from Ezekiel. He refers to the last days in the most explicit manner, and with developed details. Yet, in the final scene he declares that the mighty one Gog who comes up had been often spoken of. (Ezek. 38:17.) Hence, if I take the prophets as they present themselves, and as Ezekiel speaking in God's name declares, they were certainly (under the name of a then existing power) speaking of a mighty one at the end of the world's course when Jehovah would make Himself known in His government.

It is remarkable, that, when the prophecy goes out of the geographical name by which it is identified, it uses language intelligible at the time, as far as showing it was beyond the limits of their geographical designation (Isaiah a land beyond the rivers of Cush (that is, the Euphrates and Nile). The prophet connects it with Israelitish ideas, but goes far away beyond, as he must, to fill up the picture of the last days. But I should go too much into detail if I pursued this farther.

Only remark that the prophets were impostors if they were not inspired, for they give their burdens as oracles, i.e. directly the words of God: “thus saith Jehovah;” or “the word of Jehovah came to me,” or a vision was given. If then the rationalist rejects the prophets as inspired, he must hold them for impostors. If not, then there is direct inspiration, a communication of the mind of God through a man, as he was, moved by the Holy Ghost, in words which entitled the prophet to say, Thus saith the Lord; and the apostles certainly did not hold them for impostors, but refer to them as true prophets who had prophesied about Jesus.

Chapter 27

The Dying and the Life of Jesus

2 Cor. 4

Two things are remarkable in this chapter: first how entirely it is a new power by which we are enabled to glorify God, although we are so apt to mix up with it human energy and strength, and so bring in weakness: secondly, the deep consciousness the apostle had of the value of the saints to the Lord. Therefore he could say “all things are for their sakes,” and that is how he looks at himself, and offers himself a sacrifice— “ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. He could say “troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken,” &c. “Always bearing about in my body,” &c. “For we which live are always delivered unto death.” “So then death worketh in us, but life in you.” He gives himself up to them and says, I am content to be all this and to suffer all this, yea, to lose my life for your sake. It is all right. I ought to be a sacrifice for you; it is God's object I should be for you, for He who was entitled to glory was content to lose the whole, and to give up Himself, even His Messiahship. Christ gives up Himself for us, and therefore Paul could say “All things are for your sakes.” It is encouraging and cheering of heart to know that all things are for our sakes, that the abundant grace, &c. Then the vessels in which the Lord may choose His grace to work are counted as sheep for the slaughter; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Death works in us, but life in you. Just so far as death works in ourselves, life can work by us in blessing to others. And I would just say here, it is a remarkable way in which the apostle took Christ's place: of course it was Christ's grace in him. By bearing about in the body the dying—not mine, but the death of Christ, that has put an end to him, that another power might work by him. The glory is not veiled as was Moses; it is with an opened face that we behold the unveiled glory of Christ when received. If our gospel be veiled, it is to them that are lost. The word of God has come out of us as bright as it came in God has not put anything to dim it: the entire fault is in their eyes. If I light a candle, it is to shine. God lit up this in Paul to shine, and, if not seen then, it is their blindness. As far as my energy is concerned, it is death, always bearing about the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. Not Paul's life, but the life of Jesus; “knowing that he who raised up the Lord Jesus shall raise up us also.” He is counting on the same power that raised up Jesus raising him. Just as Christ took the resurrection, as the answer to natural death, so the apostle, that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound to the glory of God.

What a comfort to be able to say everything is for yourselves! But how far can we say “death worketh in us,” so that the life of Christ should shine—be made manifest in our mortal body? If it is to shine out of our hearts, it must be as bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and then, come what will, we can say that the full portion of Christ is ours.

Errata

Page 108, col. 1, line 9, for “one” read “the;” col. 2, line 22, for “words” read “word;” line 43, for “Jesus” read “John.” Page 109, col. 2, line 8, delete “of entree;” line 42, delete “of.” Page 110, col. 1, line 43, for “as” read “so.” Page Ill, col. 2, line 35, for “actively” read “actively evil.”

Chapter 29

Evil Only Judged Fully in the Light

The Lord's purpose in trials is often to get at the root of evil. When the fruit from that evil root is seen, the saint himself is shocked and mourns over it very sincerely. But then fresh fruit springs and will spring from it as long as the root remains untouched; but coming to the light, it is discovered and judged. A Christian may be doing a great deal out of the presence of God. Look at Job, and hear all his words; but at last the pressure brings him into the very presence of God. Then his words of repining and complaint are stopped. “I have heard of thee,” says he, “by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee: wherefore I abhor myself,” &c. nearness to God never lessens responsibility. When in the light, every speck will be seen; to the saint when caught up to meet the Lord; to the world, when judged before the throne.

Light must make manifest. It could not hinder our joy because of our standing in such fullness of grace, and the grace too that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Peter never judged the self-confidence of his heart, that which had led to his fall, till the searching question of the Lord which brought out his reply, “Thou knowest all things.” Sadly as he had failed, yet at the bottom of his heart, the Lord's searching eye could see that he loved the Lord. Notwithstanding his going out and weeping bitterly, or the love for his Master manifested by his visit to the sepulcher, and his casting his coat about him, and going through the sea to Him, Peter was not restored till the searching of the Lord brought from him, at the third inquiry, “Thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee.”

But is there not a time when the counsels of every heart will be made manifest? Yes, when this comes, every one will have praise of God. The counsels of each will have praise of God; for every saint's heart, however he may fail, is to glorify the Lord. We may make many mistakes, and be drawn aside; but after all the counsel of his heart, his inmost desire, is to glorify God.

Peter could no longer appeal to his purposes (his acts of course not), but simply cast himself on the Lord's all-searching power. “Thou knowest all things.”

Then, whereas Peter had formerly in the energy of nature professed to be ready to suffer even to death, the Lord, now that He had searched him, shows that he should serve in the breaking down of his own will, even unto the very death be, from true love to his Master, desired to suffer. Then, and not till then, Jesus says, after this full revelation of what is involved, “Follow me.” Had there been any very deep work wrought in Peter's heart by the Lord's look that melted him to tears, he would not have been the first to say, “I go a fishing.”

Chapter 30

Faith's Place in a Time of Apostasy: Part 1

It is unquestionably true that, in lands which have been civilized by Christianity, there is an immense religious movement going on. The surface of Christendom is in a ferment.

Rome is at this moment, amidst the threatened loss of all political power, making fresh efforts upon the credulity of man, and drawing victim after victim into her net, and this with a boldness and barefacedness which, if possible, would deceive the very elect. Her language is, “I sit a queen and am no widow.” One may have heard it said, That going over to Rome is going from nothing to nothing. This may be true in a very modified sense, for if Christ was not in the heart before, He will not be found in this new place; but we dare not treat her as nothing, but rather as an active devilish system, comprehended within that which is prophesied of in the New Testament as the “mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,” which God will judge. (Rev. 17)

Our object, however, is not to write against popery except incidentally, but to make the inquiry, How is it that so many Protestants, especially English ones, are drawn over to her?

It may be assumed that in order to convince reasonable and religious men, Rome must have, or pretend to possess, some truths which Protestants have lost, and which they get by joining her communion. Bossuet rendered her valuable assistance when, in the seventeenth century, he wrote his work “Upon the Variations of Protestants,” as opposed to the unity and order of Rome; and may we not say, in thus beginning our subject, that Protestants from the first have given too little attention to the truth of the unity of the church, in their horror at the false pretenses raised by their antagonist?

There is no weapon which Satan is more skillful in the use of than a neglected scripture truth. Some may remember the havoc which the Mormons made by applying “the stick of Joseph” (Ezek. 37:16, 17, 19) to Joseph Smith, the head of the Mormons in America, where was to be found the New Jerusalem, the city of the saints. Thousands of illiterate but not irreligious people fell under the delusion. This never could have been the case had the truth of the Lord's coming been taught them, and the proper application made of the return of the ten as well as of the two tribes to the land of Israel under the hand and headship of the Lord Jesus. The same kind of deception may reach us. If we do not understand the character of the church as found in the word of God, and do not, in our measure, seek to walk in the truth of it, we are in danger of being taken up by what is false.

I would preface the observations which follow by observing that it is not a question of the condition of a man's individual soul, although this be the first of all questions, nor of the godly walk of a company of believers in any denomination, instructed, peradventure, by a godly teacher. Scores of clergymen have been instructing such companies, according to their light, and yet have found themselves by a strange moral compulsion obliged to depart for Rome. Surely our readers will exclaim, They had much better have remained where they were! We reply, undoubtedly; but when in the midst of their ministrations the subject of “the church” comes up, its unity, its order, its head,

&c., and they find that in the system which they have been accustomed to venerate as the church, there exists no certainty of truth, still less unity of opinion—when, too, they find courts of appeal of to-day reversed by courts of appeal to-morrow, and that their spiritual heads, the bishops, may be divided in their opinions, resolving themselves indifferently with the High Church, or Low Church, or Broad Church—when we say this comes to pass, as it has so often done lately, what is left but to return to that focus of unity, Rome, from whence they had as a church once departed!

Viewed from another point we may see in all this a direct work of Satan upon often unconscious agents to bring about that grand climax of evil which as a “mystery” has been working since the days of Paul. The doctrine of the unity of the church under the headship of Peter and his successors is the dogma with which Rome successfully maintains her ground against the whole array of Protestantism. This could never have occurred in the sixteenth century. Men's minds were then filled with hatred of the inquisition, with holy zeal against the system of indulgences, and with earnestness about soul salvation. Now we are a money-getting, pleasure-loving, and, as to the things of God, a cowardly race, expediency being the order of the day; and Rome seizes the moment to make good her claim as the mother and mistress of churches.

Inasmuch as there have been from the first century Christians at Rome, and that Europe did at one time universally follow her ritual and allow her supremacy, we must concede to her, as far as antiquity is concerned, a claim superior to all others to be called the church.

It would be easy to disprove a host of errors held and imposed by her. Considered simply from the point of view now to be looked at, we might instance the adoption of Peter instead of Paul for the chief apostle as a very prominent one (although one little noticed hitherto either by historians or controversialists), because it shows that, whenever this happened, there must already have been a confusion in men's minds between the church and the kingdom. (Matt. 16:16-19.) For Peter, whilst he had the keys of the kingdom, never once uses the title “Son of God” in his epistles; which title is used alone by Paul and John, being the title on which the church is built: “Upon this rock I will build my church.” Another has well observed, “People do not build with keys.” You open with keys, and so Peter opened the doors of the kingdom of heaven to Cornelius; but it was Paul who brought out in his writings, and exemplified in his ways, the precious truth of the church, the body of Christ on earth, with a glorified Head.

Popery is nothing else that corrupt Christianity; but I am doubtful in these days if, in exposing her errors singly, I should gain over many converts. Such errors have over and over been dealt with by abler pens, and yet Popery goes on increasing. Why is this? Simply because by the attack upon and refutation of isolated points in her system, we do not meet the real difficulty in the mind of her votaries. With them the thought of the church is indigenous. The reply to these attacks is something like the following: God has but one church, founded upon Peter, and against which He has said, “The gates of hell shall not prevail.” Let me find out this people and get amongst them. Their supposed false doctrines do not trouble me; and where else do I find the overwhelming concurrence and evidence of all antiquity but in Rome? As to all Protestants, their divergence of interests and clashing of opinions go right against them. But suppose I were to succeed in convincing a Romanist of the untenableness of the doctrines of Popery, one by one, what might be his reply? Either that the church, as having the presence of God, cannot err, or else that if it does, reform can go on within it, but not in an outside place, to which place no promise is attached. I

must avow that I consider it difficult to answer a Romanist upon church ground (though it is easy, comparatively speaking, to overthrow him on the question of personal salvation, if one's own self, by infinite mercy, possesses it), unless, first, one understands what scripture has revealed about the church. That is, does it give any countenance to a unity of believers, so as to allow the pretensions of Rome, caricature though they be of the truth? 2ndly, In allowing Rome to be the center, so to speak, of Christianity, is an apostacy predicted? 3dly, Does scripture, supposing a proved departure, indicate any path for a believer who feels himself to be in this ruin?

In considering the scriptural church, one may view it as endowed of God or as seen by men. In the former sense, as it appears in the writings of the Apostle Paul, it is a body on earth (Eph. 4:12) connected with a heavenly and ascended Head (Eph. 4:15, 16), indwelt by the Holy Spirit (John 14:17 Cor. 6:16; 2 Cor. 6:16), who is its power of unity (Eph. 4:3, 4). It has, in the mind of God, the same symmetry and identification of purpose as the human body has to its head. Indeed Christ above, the Head, is not in this view apart from Christ the body. (1 Cor. 12:12.) It was formed on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) by the descent of the Holy Ghost, who has never left it. (John 14:16.) All its endowments are in the way of permanent spiritual gifts. (Eph. 4:11-14; 1 Cor. 12 - 14.) It is highly important to recognize the positive administration of the Holy Ghost in her. As Eliezer, the servant, in bringing home Rebecca to Isaac (Gen. 24), had all his master's goods under his hand, and distributed the precious things as he would within Rebecca's household, so the Holy Ghost, on the behalf of Christ, is the absolute distributor of everything in the way of gifts, as well as the power of using them. In nothing is the true discerned from the false more than in this. In Col. 2:19 the Head is that “from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.” In few words, the church is the body of Christ united to a heavenly Head, formed and filled by the Holy Spirit.

As seen by men, we notice that in 1 Cor. 1 believers are besought all to “speak the same thing,” to have “no divisions among them; but to be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.”

Again, there never was more than one church in one city. Thus a letter is addressed, “To the church of God which is at Corinth.” Again, so completely does the idea prevail of saints in each city being one, that when Paul left Titus in Crete, it was that he might ordain elders in every city (observe, not in every church); yet when Paul, in Acts 20, sends from Miletus to Ephesus, he calls “the elders of the church;” that is, the elders of the church were the elders in the city, or vice versa, the elders in the city were the elders of the church. There was but one in every city. The elders were to take heed to themselves, “and to all the flock” (ver. 28). They were to “feed the church of God.”

Again, in Eph. 4 we are told to endeavor “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Seven unities are mentioned. A divided body, which receives its life and strength from one head, is absurd. These passages sufficiently show that scripture does set forth a unity flowing from one Head, the power and administration being by the Spirit, whether doctrinally or practically.

Now, certainly, Protestants, although correct upon foundation truths, ever indeed the most important, and never for a moment to be lost sight of, which carry a soul to heaven and enlighten its path on earth, have never reflected the truth of one body, the witness being the number of sects in every city, each one with a clashing interest. The Reformers do not appear to have made any

attempt to penetrate into God's thoughts about things corporate. They attacked with a zealous care all the horrible superstitions of the papacy; and, not content with denying the false, asserted the true, as far as pardon of sins went, and were the instruments of saving thousands of souls, for men were then honest and real; but they seem not to have understood the place which the Holy Ghost occupied, and to have supposed that the safety of the soul was the only thought of God. It was just this lack that popery has taken advantage of.

(To be continued)

Chapter 31

Faith's Place in a Time of Apostasy: Concluded

(Concluded.)

As to the second branch of our inquiry, supposing we allow Rome the special place she arrogates, does scripture predict an apostacy of profession? Because, if it does, it cuts away from. Rome her claim to infallibility as well as to reform in the sense of renewing anything or setting it up again. Well, it is most certain that a terrible and universal apostacy is revealed in the word of God. And a singular phenomenon it is, that the very apostle (used, I might almost say, as the depositary of the love of God, and of the place which the church holds as His body and the bride of His affections) should be the very one who predicted its failure.

Let us come to proofs. Before doing so, it is well to glance at Rom. 11, in which chapter the apostle, from verse 11, gives a history of the Gentiles as acted upon by gospel grace, and which more than hints at their failure. They came into the place of Israel, who has been cut off nationally. They partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree; but there is a threat that, if they did not continue to stand by faith, they would be cut off as the Jews were. “For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee. Behold, therefore, the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness; otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” We are not then to be surprised at a defection. It is but a repetition of the history of Israel. That which is entrusted into man's hand fails, although God is always faithful to His promises. With this introduction we can pursue the course of the apostle's writings.

In Acts 20, in his address to the elders at Ephesus, he informs them that after his decease grievous wolves should “enter in, not sparing the flock;” also that of their “own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them;” that is, he speaks of men who were to arise from the body of elders, of ■πισκ■πους. There were to be evils of two kinds, those from without and those from within. It is of no avail to say that this was to be a partial betrayal of the interests of Christ at Ephesus, which need not spread farther! Two points are to be noted: first, “no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation” (2 Peter 1:20); secondly, of all the seven churches mentioned in Revelation, after the death of Paul, Ephesus seems to have been the best. How then could the decay have been partial, when it had taken place in others before her? There is no idea of recovery by any extraneous help to be brought in from elsewhere, as by reference to other apostles or to a successional order. Nothing remained in Acts 20 but to commit them to God and to the word of His grace, that they might be built up and given an inheritance.

In 2 Thess. 2 he declares that there was a mystery of iniquity already at work which, instead of being eradicated, was to spread and culminate in a head—the man of sin or lawlessness, whom the Lord Himself is to consume with the spirit of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The weight of judgment is to fall upon those who believe not the truth: most certainly therefore they have been within hearing of it.

In 1 Tim. 4 he says, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith [■ποστ■σονται, apostatize], giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils,” &c. It looks somewhat like popery.

In 2 Tim. 3 we have something beyond “latter times,” even “last days,” in which “perilous times shall come.” Already his co-laborers in Asia had turned away from him, as we know from 2 Tim. 1:15. Some too, were “subverting” and others “overthrowing” the faith (chap. ii. 14-18); but eventually there was to be a return to the heathen vices of Rom. 1; 2; but with “a form of godliness,” an astounding picture of the defection of professing men.

A few words must suffice as to the witness which Peter bears. His second epistle runs much in the same line, and even same language, as Jude. My reader by consulting chapters ii., iii. will find these words: “There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that brought them and many shall follow their pernicious ways, by reason of which the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.” &c. (Compare 3:4, 5.) He does not speak of any rectification, except by the coming of the day of the Lord. Meanwhile we are to account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation. (Ver. 10, 12, 15.)

We now pass to Jude and the Epistles of John. Jude seems to have had the desire to write about “the common salvation,” but was deterred by the sense: of the incoming corruption, and, instead, proceeded to exhort them earnestly to “contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.” He goes on to show, from verse 6 onwards, the condition into which the Church was falling and would fall, to be met only by the Lord coming to judge it. But he points also to the path of the true-hearted ones: “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.”

In the first Epistle of John the defection is looked at from another standpoint. The fellowship of saints being with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ, this fellowship is destroyed by the denial of the true incarnation and person of Christ. “Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same not the Father.” Why so? Because it was the Father who sent the Son; but if we are in error upon the true Son as born into this world, as a consequence we must be ignorant of the Father who sent Him.

In the addresses to the seven churches in the Revelation we have abundance of evidence of declension without recovery. Ephesus begins, on losing her first love, with a warning lest her candlestick should be taken away, and Laodicea ends with the threat of being spewed out of Christ's mouth. It is true that at the worst there are a few, but only a few, found faithful—the overcomers; their communion with Christ endures, and to them the promises belong.

It is of moment to remember that scripture never supposes a recovery; at all events, it never contemplates a restoration to primitive order and power. There is always a resource for the faithful ones, as is abundantly shown by the promises to those that have ears to hear in the epistles to the churches. Christ never fails His own in the very darkest day, but He does not set up the thing that has failed in its ancient place, any more than He restored the Shekinah of His presence on the

return of some of the Jews from Babylon under Nehemiah and Ezra. Those who see the ruin (whilst they own, as Daniel did, their share in it) labor according to the existing condition of things, and so much the less disappointment do they suffer. In the general, instead of recovery, our hope is the coming of the Lord.

Nothing now remains but to point out in very few words our condition, and the path of the saint in these days. One principal point is that we are living in the last times—in the condition of things of which 2 Tim. 2 Peter, Jude, the Epistles of John, and those to the seven churches give us, as it were, the program. Another paramount fact is to know that the question of the day is, What is the Church? A third is that Satan with all deceivableness of unrighteousness is pointing to Rome as the goal of every distressed soul. The defect of the reformers, eminent as they were, was in failing to discern the real condition of things and the mind of God in this condition. Instead of realizing the situation, and looking to God who in unfailing faithfulness never deserts His own, they began the work of building up again. By this they left a place for the insertion of the thin edge of the wedge; and hence the present confusion.

But still it may be argued that all this talk about ruin is negative. Let us come then to something positive. It is certainly true that the beginning of the declension was the loss of the truth of the Holy Ghost. We do not mean a deliberate or theoretical denial of His Godhead, although any one acquainted with the history of Arianism well knows that denial or uncertainty about Christ produced the same effects as to the Holy Ghost. There was a loss, from the moment church history opens in the writings of the Fathers, of the administration of the Holy Ghost on behalf of Christ or of God in His church. Church history begins with a well-defined hierarchy, and the Apostle Paul seems to have been forgotten as soon as he was dead. Are you then still looking for, or claiming to have produced a restoration? By no means; nay, the very contrary. But we are bound, in acknowledging the failure, to own the entire written word. We are bound to believe Eph. 4 as much as 2 Timothy, and to give both their place. It behooves us to know how to use 1 Timothy and Titus without allowing them to jar against 1 Cor. 12; 14

I would illustrate this. If I go to a good Protestant, who is individually sound in faith and practice, and put a leading question to him about the church, his reply will be, There are good people in every sect. Of course we should agree with him. If I put a second question, he will answer, For my own part, I prefer an Episcopal, or, as the case might be, a Presbyterian form of government; but I do not think scripture presents any of these matters with certainty. Now, certain or uncertain, it is just by being able to present his so-called church in a definite and tangible way that the popish priest has drawn away so many to Rome.

“OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST.

“Canon 1. If any man say that the religion of Christ does not exist, and is not expressed in any particular association instituted by Christ himself, but that it may be properly observed and exercised by individuals separately without relation to any society which may be the true Church of Christ, let him be anathema.

“2. If any man say that the Church has not received from the Lord Jesus Christ any certain and immutable form of constitution, but that, like other human associations, it has been subject, and may be subject, according to the changes of times, to vicissitudes and variations, let him be

anathema.

“3. If any man say that the Church of the Divine promises is not an external and visible society, but is entirely internal and invisible, let him be anathema.

“4. If any man say that the true Church is not a body one in itself, but that it is composed of various and dispersed societies bearing the Christian title, and that it is common to them all, or that various societies differing from each other in profession of faith and holding separate communion, constitute, as members and portions, a Church of Christ, one and universal, let him be anathema.

“5. If any man say that the Church of Christ is not a society absolutely necessary for eternal salvation, or that men may be saved by the adoption of any other religion whatsoever, let him be anathema.

“6. If any man say that this intolerance, whereby the Catholic Church proscribes and condemns all religious sects which are separate from her communion, is not prescribed by the Divine law, or that with respect to the truth of religion it is possible to have opinions only, but not certainty, and that, consequently all religious sects should be tolerated by the Church, let him be anathema.

“7. If any man say that the same Church of Christ may be obscured by darkness, or infected with evils, in consequence of which it may depart from the wholesome truth of the faith and manners, deviate from its original institution, or terminate only in becoming corrupt and depraved, let him be anathema.

“8. If any man say that the present Church of Christ is not the last and supreme institution for obtaining salvation, but that another is to be looked for from a new and fuller outpouring of the Holy Spirit, let him be anathema.

“9. If any man say that the infallibility of the Church is restricted solely to things which are contained in Divine revelation, and that it does not also extend to other truths which are necessary in order that the great gift of revelation may be preserved in its integrity, let him be anathema.

“10. If any man say that the Church is not a perfect society, but a corporation (collegium), or that as such in respect of civil society or the State it is subject to secular domination, let him be anathema.

“11. If any man say that the Church, divinely instituted, is like to a society of equals; that the Bishops have indeed an office and a ministry, but not a power of governing proper to themselves, which is bestowed upon them by Divine ordination, and which they ought to exercise freely, let him be anathema.

“12. If any man hold that Christ our Lord and Sovereign has only conferred upon his Church a directing power by means of its counsels and persuasions, but not of ordering by its laws, or of constraining and compelling by antecedent judgments and salutary penalties those who wander and those who are contumacious, let him be anathema.

“13. If any man say that the true Church of Christ, out of which no one can he saved, is any other than the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic Church, let him be anathema.

“14. If any man say that the Apostle St. Peter has not been instituted by our Lord Christ as Prince of all the Apostles, and visible head of the Church Militant, or that he received only the pre-eminence of honor, had not the primacy of true and sole jurisdiction, let him be anathema.

“15. If any man say that it does not follow from the institution of our Lord Christ himself that Peter has perpetual successors in his primacy over the Universal Church, or that the Roman Pontiff is not by Divine right the successor of Peter in that same primacy, let him be anathema.

“16. If any man say that the Roman Pontiff has only a function of inspection and of direction, but not a full and supreme power of jurisdiction over the Universal Church, or that this power is not ordinary and immediate over the whole Church, taken as a whole or separately, let him be anathema.

“17. If any man say that the independent ecclesiastical power respecting which the Church teaches that it has been conferred upon it by Christ, and the supreme civil power cannot co-exist so that the rights of each may be observed, let him be anathema.

“18. If any man say that the power which is necessary for the government of civil society does not emanate from God, or that no obedience is due to it by virtue even of the law of God, or that such power is repugnant to the natural liberty of man, let him be anathema.

“19. If any man say that all rights existing among men are derived from the political State, or that there is no authority besides that which is communicated by such State, let him be anathema.

“20. If any man say that in the law of the political State or in the public opinion of men has been deposited the supreme rule of conscience for public and social actions, or that the judgments by which the Church pronounces upon what is lawful and what is unlawful, do not extend to such actions, or that by the forces of civil law an act which by virtue of Divine or ecclesiastical law is unlawful, can become lawful, let him be anathema.

“21. If any man say that the laws of the Church have no binding force until they have been confirmed by the sanction of the civil power, or that it belongs to the said civil power to judge and to decree in matters of religion by virtue of its supreme authority, let him be anathema.”

Thus the truth as to the church lies between, but apart from, the old successional bodies on the one hand, and the voluntary dissenting societies on the other. The former may in sound own the “one body,” but deny its character and ignore its nature, having no faith in the efficacy of redemption nor in the presence and sovereign action of the Holy Ghost in the Christian assembly. The latter have lost even the sound of the “one body” for practice on earth through the same fertile root of unbelief. Still the firm foundation of God stands with its twofold seal of divine purpose and creature responsibility.—Ed. B. T.]

Whosoever labors for Christ must do so as realizing the confusion and ruin of everything. If then attacked by an emissary from Rome, on the only ground they do attack, viz., the church, his ready reply would be, Scripture has predicted long ago the condition of which you are the living example. If he should ask, Where, then, is your church? at once one would fall back on Eph. 4:3: “There is one body and one Spirit.” If he asked, Where is your ministry? the reply would be, There is a permanent ministry for the use of that; body—in fact, belonging to it. “He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers for the work of the ministry

for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come," &c.

If he said that Rome has all these, we should reply that, if not apostate, she has not them exclusively, but that if she arrogates to herself the title of the church, we have seen that the professing body is spewed out of Christ's mouth. (Rev. 3:16.) Otherwise gifts are to be found in every part of Christendom, whether in or out of communion with Rome. But to all, whether in or out, one would say, are they in exercise according to 1 Cor. 12; 14? This is the fellowship from "the gifts" point of view made for us. We do not make it: it is made for us. We should assert, to this emissary of Rome and to all others, the indwelling and administration of the Holy Ghost in Christ's own house. (Eph. 2:22.)

Now, as sure as we really take this ground, it may be things are so weak that it comes only to "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (Matt. 18) To console us however there is the promise of His presence, which makes up for everything. Such a position does not suppose that we seek to build up or restore anything. It is only holding to the truth of God. But it is an answer to all the pretensions of Rome; and in truth, upon the question of the church, there is none other. It occupies God's ground, but in intelligence of the apostacy. We have as our end, too, the sweet hope of the coming of the Lord. If that was the promise to the overcomers in Thyatira and Philadelphia, it may well be ours. "Surely I come quickly. Even so, Come Lord Jesus."

Chapter 32

Family Character and Family Religion: Family Character—1

Family Character

Gen. 11:28.

There was, as we know, a day of visitation of the house of Torah. The family of Shem had become very corrupt, and in the days of Torah, the sixth or seventh from Shem, they were serving false gods. But the power of the Spirit and the call of the God of glory, visited the ear and the heart of Abram, the son of Terah, and separated him from that corruption.

We also know, that a godly influence extended itself from this in the family. Terah the father, Sarah the wife, and Lot the nephew, join Abram in this, and they all leave the land of Mesopotamia together.

Nahor, however, another of Terah's sons, did not come within this influence. He was comfortably settled at home with his wife, and at home they remained, when Torah, Abram, Sarah, and Lot, took their departure from the land of their fathers. (Chap. 11.)

This is to be much observed, for the like of it we may witness every day. One of the family becomes the first subject of divine power, and then family religion, or the knowledge of the Lord Jesus in the household, spreads itself, but some remain uninfluenced.

Of course we know that each quickened soul must be equally the object of the hidden effectual drawings and teachings of the Father. (See John 6:44, 45). But I speak of the history or manifested character of the scene. And, as we have seen in the history of this household, Nahor remains unmoved in this day of the visitation. He and his wife continue in Mesopotamia, and they thrive there. Children are born to them; goods and property increase. They pursue an easy and respectable journey across the world; but they do not grow in the knowledge of God, and bear no testimony, or at least small and indistinct testimony to His name.

The character of Nahor's family was thus formed. They were not in gross darkness, like the people of Canaan, descendants of Ham, among whom Abram had now gone to sojourn. They had a measure of light, derived from their connection with Terah and Abram, and as descendants from Shem; but all that was sadly dimmed by the cherished principles of the world from which they had refused to separate themselves. And a family character and standing were thus formed.

This is serious—and all the principle of this is of daily occurrence among us, and of constant application to our consciences.

We lose sight of this family for a time altogether, for of course they are not the direct object of the Spirit's notice; but being connected with Abram, may naturally come within view; and accordingly, in process of time, tidings about them do reach Abram in the distant place of his pilgrimage. (Chap. 22.)

Bethuel was the son of Nahor—one of his many sons rather, and the one most brought into view. He had flourished in the world, and though perhaps a man of little energy, or character himself, had a son named Laban, who most evidently knew how to manage his affairs exceedingly well, and to advance himself and all who belonged to him very advantageously in life. He seems, as we say, to have known the value of money; for the sight of gold could open his mouth with a very hearty and religious welcome even to a stranger. (Chap. 24.) Here, however, we reach a period in the history of this family, which is chiefly to be considered.

A fresh energy of the Spirit is about to visit it. As I have already observed, this family is not in the gross darkness of the Canaanites, nor in the simple idolatrous condition of Terah's house (see Josh. 24), we may assume, when the God of glory called Abram. They had been brought into a certain measure of light, and within a certain standing by profession as Abram's act and word seem to allow. (Chap. 24:4.) But this being so, this being a professing household in some sense, apart from the dark state of the men of the world, it becomes serious to notice the nature of that visitation which the Spirit makes to it. For it will be found to be a separating power or visitation. As the call of the God of glory had before disturbed the state of things in Torah's house, so now the mission of Eliezer disturbed the state of things in Bethuel's house: Abram had then been separated from home and kindred, and so is Rebecca now to be, all this leaving behind it this serious impression, that a respectable professing family may need to be visited by the very same energy of the Spirit as a more worldly or idolatrous family.

This a serious thought. It is a disturbing or separating power of God which now comes into this family, and not simply a comforting or edifying power. This has meaning, I believe. The ministry of Eliezer, God's servant as well as Abram's, came to Bethuel's house to draw Rebecca out of it, and to lead on that very journey which, two generations before, the call of the God of glory had borne Abram. I do indeed judge that there is a lesson in this which is much to be pondered. A professing decent family have to be aroused, and a fresh act of separation produced in the midst of it.

But there is another lesson in the history still.

Rebecca, we know, comes forth at this call. But her character has been already formed, as it is with us all, more or less, before we are converted. The moment of quickening arrives. The separating call and power of the Lord is answered. But it finds us of a certain character, a certain shape and complexion of mind. It finds us, it may be Cretians (Titus 1), or brothers and sisters of Laban, or the like, and “the Cretians are always liars.” Character and mind derived from nature, from education, or from family habits, we shall take with us, after we have been born of the Spirit, and carry it in us across the desert from Mesopotamia to the house of Abram.

This too is serious. It is serious, as I observed before, that a respectable professing family is visited by a separating, and not merely by an edifying, energy of the Spirit; and it is serious, as I now have been tracing, that with the quickening or converting power of the Spirit, nature, or the force of early habits and education, or of family character, will cling still. And these serious lessons the story of Rebecca reads to us.

For I need only briefly speak of what her way was in the further stages of it. It is a well-known story among us, and well known too as very sadly betraying what we may call the family character. Laban her brother, with whom she had grown up, and who was evidently the active stirring one in

his father's house, was a subtle, knowing, worldly man. And the only great action in which Rebecca was called to take part gives occasion to her exercising the same principles. In the procuring of the blessing for her son Jacob we see this Laban-leaven working mightily. The family character sadly breaks out then. The readiness of nature to act and take its way shows itself very busily. A mind she had, too little accustomed to repose in the sufficiency of God, and too much addicted to calculate and to lean its hopes on its own inventions.

What have we to do, then, but to watch against the peculiar tendency and habit of our own mind—to rebuke nature sharply, that we may be sound or morally healthful in the faith (Titus 1:3); not to excuse it, because it is nature, but rather the more to suspect it therefore, and to mortify it for His sake who has given us another nature?

These lessons we get from the story of this distinguished woman. Beyond this her way is not much tracked by the Spirit. Was it that He was grieved with her and leaves her unnoticed? At any rate, she reaps nothing but disappointment from the seed she had sown. No good comes of her schemes and contrivances, but the reverse. She loses her favorite, Jacob, and never sees him after the long exile to which her own schemes and contrivances had ended in sending him.

But there is this further to tell. Jacob got his mind formed by the same earliest influence. He was all his days a slow-hearted calculating man. His plan in getting the birthright first, and then the blessing; his confidence in his own arrangements, rather than in the Lord's promise, when he met his brother Esau; and his lingering at Shechem, and settling there, instead of pursuing a pilgrim's life through the land like his fathers: all this betrays nature and the working of the old family character.

What need have we to watch the early seed sown in the heart—yea, and to watch the early or late seed which we are helping to sow in others' hearts! For the fuller details of this history warns us of such things still.

The birth of Esau and Jacob is given us at the close of chapter 25., and as they grow up to be boys, occasion arises to let us look in at the family scene; but it is, as we shall find, truly humbling.

This was one of the families of God, then on the earth. Nay, by far the most distinguished; where lay the hopes of all blessing to the whole earth, and where the Lord, eminently above all, had recorded His name.

But what do we see? Isaac the father had dropped into the stream of human desires: he loved his son Esau because he ate of his venison! We need not stop to consider Esau himself: as a child of the family, he was entitled to the care and provision of the house—that is most true; and Isaac and Rebecca should surely have given him all that, together with their parental love and diligence. But for Isaac to make him his favorite because he ate of his venison, this was sad and evil indeed. Even in this, however, do we not see some further illustration of our subject.

Isaac had been reared tenderly. He had never been away from the side of his mother, the child of whose old age he was. But his education perhaps had relaxed him too much, and he appears before us as a soft and self-indulgent man.

But, O what sad mischief, what grievous defilement opens here to our view, in all this family scene! Are we saying too much, that one parent was helping to comfort one of the children, and the other

the other? Indeed there is something like it here, and ground for fears so terrible. Isaac's love of venison may have encouraged Esau in the chase, as Rebecca's cleverness, got and brought from her brother's house in Paran, seems to have formed the mind and character of her favorite Jacob.

O what sorrow and cause of humiliation is here! Is this a household of faith? Is this a God-fearing family? Yes. Children of promise and heirs of His kingdom are these, Isaac, Rebecca, and Jacob. Looked at in other actions, they would delight and edify you. See Isaac in the greater part of chapter 26, and his conduct is beautiful, altogether worthy of a heavenly stranger on the earth: suffering, he threatens not, but commits himself to Him who judges righteously. He suffers, and takes it patiently; and his altar and his tent witness his holy unearthly character. So see Rebecca in chapter 24. In faith she consents to cross the desert alone with a stranger, because her heart was set upon the heir of the promises, leaving home and kindred, forgetting her father and her father's house. But here looked at (in chap. 27.), what shame fills the scene, and how should we blush and be confounded that heirs of promise, and children of God, could so carry themselves!

But shall we go on to expose this even more? I feel that I could; for the heart is not only base and corrupt, but it is daring also, to take its naughtiness even into the sanctuary, as the close of this story shows me.

The word to Aaron, long after this, was, “do not drink wine, nor strong drink, thou nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation.” (Lev. 10) For nature was not to be animated in order to wait on the service of God, nature was not to be raised, or set in action, by its own proper food, for the fulfilling of the duties of the sanctuary: strong drink might exhilarate and give ebullition to animal spirits, but this was not the qualification of a priest.

But even into such a mischief as this, Isaac seems to have been betrayed. “Take, I pray thee,” said he to Esau, “thy weapons, thy quiver, and thy bow, and go to the field, and take me some venison, and make me savory meat such as I love, and bring it to me that I may eat, that my soul may bless thee before I die.” He was going to do the last religious act of a patriarchal priest, and he calls as for wine and strong drink, the food of mere nature, to animate and fill him for the service of the temple! Terrible abomination! “whose god is their belly,” it might be almost said, thus to deliberate on the venison. We may all be conscious how much of nature soils our holy things, how much of the excitement of the flesh may be mistaken for the easy and strong current of the Spirit. We may be aware of this in the places of communion. But this is to be our sorrow; we confess it as evil, and weakness, and watch against it. But to prepare for this, thus carefully to mix the wine and the strong drink, thus advisedly to take a hearty draft, after this manner—surely this is sad abomination We all know full well the guile that Rebecca and Jacob practiced in this scene. I need not rehearse it. As I have said before, it is a well-known story. But the holiness of the Lord consumes every bit of all this. Nothing comes of this subtlety and fleshliness. The holiness of the Lord lays it all in ashes. Isaac loses his Esau, Rebecca never sees Jacob again, for her promised few days were an exile of twenty years, and the calculating supplanter himself finds himself in the midst of toils, and an alien, for that long and dreary season, from his father's house. Nothing comes of all this, whether we look at the carnal policy of the one party, or the fleshly favoritism of the other: all is disappointment, and rebuked by the holiness of the Lord.

Serious, but still most precious lesson! Precious surely it is, to see the Lord thus resenting the uncleanness of even His dearest choicest servants.

But it remains for us to see grace assuming its high triumphant place and attitude. Its holiness is established, by the Lord thus, with great decision, setting aside all advantages which sin had promised itself, and then grace reigns.

In the great mystery of redemption, grace takes its triumphant place in the promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head: but there is also, the full execution of all the decrees of holiness against the sin—for death came in as was threatened, and penalties fell on the man, and on the woman, and a curse upon the serpent. So here; Isaac loses his purpose touching Esau, Rebecca has to part with Jacob, and Jacob himself, instead of getting in his own way the birthright and the blessing, has to go forth a penniless exile from the place of his inheritance, and the scene of all his promised enjoyments. For the only wages of sin is death. But then grace takes its high place and bearing. Way is made for it by all this burning holiness to ascend its throne, and there it shines, delighting in the splendor of its own glory. (Chap. 38.)

And it is glorious. Even the misery to which his sin had reduced the object of all this grace only sets off its glory. When even the servant of the house had of old gone forth on a like errand (chap. 24.) he had his camels and attendants, and all entertainment to make his journey across this very desert, honorable and pleasant. But now the son and heir, the promised bridegroom himself, for whom the honor of the house, and the joys of the marriage, were preparing, has to lie down alone, unfriended, uncared-for, unsheltered, the stones of the place his only pillow. But grace, which turns the shadow of death into the morning, is preparing a glorious rest for him; he listens to the voice of wondrous love, and he is shown worlds of light in this place of solitude and darkness. He dreams, and sees the high heavens linked with that very dark and barren spot on which he then lay, and with unwearied feet the heavenly people keeping up the happy intercourse; and he hears the Lord of heaven Himself, at the top of this mystic scene, speaking to him in words of promise, and of promise only. He sees himself thus associated with an all-pervading glory, and heirs of his own present mercies, and consolations though so erring, so poor, and so vile, till all this glory were ready to appear. The holiness of grace still leaves him a wanderer; but the riches of grace will tell him of present consolation and of future and sure glories.

And this is surely so. But it has borne me a little beyond my immediate subject.

There is then such a thing as family character; and the recollection of this, when we are dealing with ourselves, should make us watchful and jealous over all our peculiar habits and tendencies; and, when we are dealing with others, should make us considerate, and of an interceding spirit, disposing us to plead this fact, that there is family character, or force of early habit, and education, working more or less in all of us.

The remembrance of this may in these ways be healthful. But I would not forget to add, that if we are more than likely to gather a certain character from the family, or the habits with which birth and character have already connected us, so are we debtors to exhibit that character with which our birth and education in the heavenly family have since connected us.

In John 8, the Lord reasons upon this ground that our sonship or birth, or family connections, is to be determined by our character or doings. “If ye were the children of Abraham, ye would do the works of Abraham.” This He says, and more of the same kind. And thus we see the necessity of our bearing the family character.

But we are exhorted also to the same thing—to take after our Father, as we might say. In the cultivation of all charities, and unselfish unrequited kindness, the Lord says, “be ye perfect;” and the apostle takes up the same thought in pressing the duty of love and forgiveness, “be ye imitators of God as dear children.”

O then that we may be set on the cultivation of family character! let the old man go down in us, and the new man rise and assert his place in us let the character, be it what it may, which we have gathered from natural ties or natural habits, be watched against; and the character of our heavenly birth be cherished and expressed to His praise, who has begotten us again as alive to and with Himself, from the death in which we lay.

Chapter 33

Family Character and Family Religion: Family Religion—2

Family Religion

Gen. 11

This is a history which will be found, I believe, to suggest much occasion for the searching of the heart. I desire grace to handle it wisely and to profit!

Shem, among the sons of Noah, was the sacred branch. Religion was connected with him rather than with his brothers, and from him came the separated people.

In the progress of a few generations, however, this religious family became corrupt; for in less than three hundred years, and we know not how much earlier, we find them serving other gods. (Josh. 24:2.)

This is a common history even to this day. Families as well as churches are seen in a sadly degenerate and corrupt condition, though once they were known for their zeal and service.

The Spirit of God, however, in the sovereignty of grace, visits a son of Terah who was removed eight generations from Shem. The call of the God of glory came to Abram and separated him from those corruptions, and from country and from kindred and from father's house, to fashion him as a new piece of workmanship for the Lord. (Acts 7:2.)

Abram, it appears, made this call known to his family, and (as is often seen to this day among ourselves) this communication has a certain influence among them. Family religion springs from this. The power of the gospel is known at first by one member, and from thence it spreads. And the Lord would have it so. It is a bad symptom (as we may see presently) where this does not take place.

So here. Terah the father gets ready. Nahor, one of his sons, from the whole narrative, we may presume, was not much under this influence; for he, his wife, and children, all abide where they were. But Abram and Abram's wife, and Lot, the son of Terah's deceased son Haran, set out on the divinely appointed journey, and Terah the father apparently takes the lead. (Chap. 11.)

But ere I go farther with the narrative, I would ask, was all this entirely right on Abram's part? The call had been to him. On him the energy of the Spirit had come. Within the range of that energy or influence, the family, it is true, may be brought; but still, did it not belong to Abram to fill that place which this energy had manifestly assigned him? Was there not some conferring with flesh and blood on Abram's part, ere Terah could have been allowed to take the lead in this great movement under the Spirit of God? There may have been. And I rather judge that there was, and that this has to account for the delay at Haran and for the death of Terah there, and for the putting forth of a second energy from the Lord in calling Abram from Haran. (Chap. 11:31 - 12:1.)

This is all admonitory to us. Family religion is beautiful; but family order or human claims, are not to assume the rights of the Spirit. Beautiful to see Cornelius, or any other in like circumstances,

bringing his friends and kindred within that influence which was visiting his house; but if flesh and blood, or human relationship disturb the sovereign progress of the Spirit, we may expect a halt at Haran or at the half-way house again, and the need of a second call (in some sense a second) to set the soul in the path of God afresh.

We may mark and distinguish these things for profit and admonition. However, under this renewed energy of the Spirit, Abram renews his journey, and Sarah his wife and Lot his orphan nephew accompany him. It is a scene of family religion still. And in Lot we see one who was within the verge of the general or family influence. We read of no distinct call on him, or of any sacrifice from him. Not that he represents a mere professor, or one who attaches himself for some end to the people of God. No: he was a righteous man and had a living soul that could be and was vexed with the wickedness of the wicked. (2 Peter 2) But his entrance into the household of faith expresses no energy. It was effected in a family way, as I have been observing—as a thousand cases in our own day. And good such things are. Happy when Sarah the wife, or Terah the father, or Lot the nephew, of these latter days, will go along with our Abrams. This would not be, we know, without the drawing and teaching of the Father. And Lot was as surely an elect one as Abram. But the energy of the call of God is not manifested in him as in Abram—distinctions which we cannot fail to mark continually. It was a personal thing characteristically with Abram; it was a family thing characteristically with Lot. And according to all this, in the very first scene in which Lot was called to act in an independent way we see his weakness.

Abram gives him the choice of the land. And he makes a choice. Now it is not merely in his choosing the goodliest that our hearts condemn him, but in his making a choice at all. In every respect Abram had title to have the first choice, as we speak. He was the elder both in years and relationship. He was principal in all that action which had drawn them to this distant land, and Lot was but, as it were, attached to him. He was noble and generous in surrendering his right to his younger. But Lot was insensible to all this. And he undertakes to make the choice, and then (naturally in the course of such a beginning) he chooses on an entirely worldly principle. He takes the well-watered plain for his flocks and his herds, though that took himself near the defiled city. (Chap. 13.)

This first trial of Lot is thus a painful witness against him. It argues the weakness in which faith or the kingdom of God had been brought forth in his soul. Abram's way was very different, for the voice of the God of glory had been powerfully heard by him, detaching him from that world to which Lot was still adhering. And all this has language in our ears.

It is soon discovered what a disappointing world Lot was choosing. The well-watered plain soon becomes a field of battle; and had it not been for Abram or Abram's God, Lot would have lost his liberty and all his possessions there.

But it is still more sad to have to tell it, that this first disappointment does not free his heart from its unholy attachment. He takes up Sodom a second time, till he is forced to remove by the hand of God Himself. If when the watered plain became a field of slaughter, Lot refused to learn its character and to leave it, he shall learn it by its becoming burning heaps in the day of the Lord.

Melancholy catastrophe shameful end of an earthly-minded believer! What a voice for us all this has! Here was a saving so as by fire, a running out of a house in flames, an inglorious departure

from the world! We may lay the admonition to heart, and watch against the first look toward the watered plains of Sodom. (Chap. 14. - 15)

In the whole of this, indeed, we get great lessons, whether of comfort or of warning. It tells us that family religion is a beautiful thing, and that true godliness may begin in that way as in Abram's house. But it admonishes us that each one in the scene should take good care to cultivate the power of godliness in a very personal way, lest our religion betray the weakness of a mere general or family influence, and in a little season leave not a trace behind it.

Under Abram family religion, as I was observing, did spread, but not under Lot; for his wife continued with the mind of Sodom in her, and is made a beacon-light to warn passengers on their way to this hour. His two daughters defile themselves and become the parents of two such corrupt seeds as are denied, under special prohibition (Deut. 23:2), any place in God's house; and his sons-in-law, when he spoke to them of judgment, profanely thought that he was a trifler or a fool.

Here surely is serious matter for our souls to deal with If our religion or profession of Christ have sprung up under the influence of a family atmosphere, we have warning here to watch and cultivate a deep and personal power of godliness, in holy fear and suspicion of the weakness of the root of such a plant.

But again, if our profession of Christ have not more or less, as in the case of Abram, spread an influence in the family, we have great reason to be humbled and to fear that it is so, because like Lot we have not in our own persons exhibited faiths in its separating and victorious power.

Lessons of serious and holy importance on the subject of family religion are in that way read to us by this little history. It tells us, as I have said, that we ought to be the means of spreading it; but that if we ourselves are the subject of its influence, we should watch specially as those who have special reason to suspect their weakness. For it is equally said by the same perfect unerring Spirit, “Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another;” and again, “Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Family religion is thus honored by the Lord, but the thorough and the personal power of it is also assisted. The fathers to the children are to make known the truth (Isa. 38), but each man must be born again, or he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Beautiful to see “unfeigned faith” dwelling in one generation after another of the same family, as in the grandmother Lois, the mother Eunice, and the child Timothy; but it is beautiful also to read, in the third of those family generations, the tears and the affections which draw up the full persuasions that their religion is not imitative or educational, or the mere catching of a family influence, but the precious inwrought power of a kingdom which God Himself has set up in the soul.

“What we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from their children, showing to the generation to come the praises of the Lord, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done.”

J. G. B.

Chapter 34

Fellowship in Days of Ruin

ONE may often get a principle for action out of the Old Testament, whilst living under the New. “No prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.” It does not exhaust itself upon the occasion of being written. It serves for other events and other times than those under which it was given. So too out of the New. Some of the Epistles of Paul, 2 Timothy for instance, were written in the forecast of the dark days of evil which were to come, the symptoms of which, indiscernible to an unpracticed eye, were present to Paul who saw full well that they were to come to maturity in our present Christendom. Besides what was before his eyes, he also prophesies of the evil days (Acts 20:29, 30 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3) which were to come.

We may well adore that goodness which allows thousands of souls to live on in “patient continuance in well doing” among their fellow Christians, without any realization of the painful picture placed before us in such passages. They feed, we trust, to the full on such heavenly truths as are found in the Gospel of John—truths which set forth the relationships of children to a Father, and they partake of that redeeming grace which has made them God's own forever! Happy souls!

It is certain notwithstanding that we are bound to know the whole mind of God—His entire revealed will—and if along with them, we are privileged to appropriate the truths set forth in John's Gospel and to hold them in common with all Christians, we must still not hang back from any statements, which, however trying to the flesh, however separating, are sure to give occasion to fresh disclosures of the love and power of Jesus. For that word is sure: “Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord.”

If then we learn from Jude, or 2 Peter, or 2 Timothy the corrupt condition of Christendom, would there be any fellowship for us with God, peculiar and proper, arising out of this knowledge, constituting as it were a fresh element of communion with Him and with one another, always remembering that the more general character of Christian fellowship remains intact? Let us turn for a moment, as a kind of introduction to Mal. 3 This book is a closing up of the Old Testament canon, and being more especially addressed to the priests, gives, according to the maxim “like people like priest,” by a picture of what those had become who ought to have been the best (for “the priests' lips should keep knowledge”) an intimation of the condition of the nation at large. Before speaking of the remnant, or feeble few who confessed the Lord, it sums up the state of the mass with these words: “And now we call the proud happy; yea, they that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered.” As soon as this is said, there is a discovery of the remnant of true believers. “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another,” &c. These few were doubtless in attendance upon the temple with others; but they had a peculiar fellowship arising from a common agreement as to the state of the nation, which brought out what was in the heart of God towards them—no doubt too felt by them. “The Lord hearkened and heard and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and that thought upon his name.” They had true association with God in all that He was (or, at all events, would have been) to Israel, but in addition to this, they had fellowship with Him and with one another as

to its fallen state, and, we may add, were no doubt looking out for the Messiah, under whom the real hopes of the nation would be realized. Simeon and Anna of Luke's Gospel were their legitimate successors.

We do not dwell on this, interesting though it be, but pass on to the New Testament in order to select two or three instances, among many, which give the character of fellowship for those who apprehend the true state of things around. The first is from the Epistle to the Hebrews. We find Paul writing it to show doctrinally the entire superiority of everything connected with the person and offices of the Lord Jesus to the person and offices of Moses and Aaron. In this view we may say that “perfect” is the keyword. But there is another line of thought; viz., he brings the true nature of Christian worship and approach to God before our eyes, in the way of pictures from the Jewish tabernacle. In this view we might say that the approachableness of God is the leading thought. But then at the end (chap. 13.) Judaism in his eyes turns out to be utterly corrupt and sentenced; and we are told to “go forth unto him [Jesus] without the camp, bearing his reproach.” (Compare Ex. 33:7 for the prototype of this.) They were to leave the whole Jewish system behind and to come out in a new order of things, of which Jesus Himself was to be the center, as He was indeed also the substance. With Him outside the camp, they had also communion with Him as the High Priest in the holiest. Their fellowship had a new order of existence, entirely distinct from those Jewish elements to which hitherto they had been clinging.

But it is in Jude more particularly that, in the face of a corrupt Christendom, the recommendations or injunctions are more explicit and pointed. Jude depicts departures from God of all kinds—from the order of nature in Sodom and Gomorrha—the angels not keeping their first estate. Then come Cain, Balsam, Core, all in full-blown character in the last days. And observe, it is not like the Epistle of John where “they went out from us, because they were not of us,” which has also its tale to tell; but here the corruption is within, “certain men crept in,” “spots in your feasts of charity.” It is the general condition of inside corruption. Now comes the exhortation: “Ye beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith,” &e.

We have already said that we bless God for all the truth adapted to every phase of the Christian's life—we have common concern in it with all who are Christians, and are not, if indeed we see the ruin, one whit better than those who do not; but did the remnant shown to us in Malachi lose by their discovery of the condition the hopeless condition of that nation, a part of which they were? By no means—they are gainers. Like Daniel, they had (it may be) sorrowful communion with the Lord about it; but they were in fellowship with His thoughts, and so He met them, for it is everything to have fellowship with His thoughts. To be sure they were marked persons, and whenever their history is opened to us, whether in the Psalms or in a suffering Jeremiah, there is persecution; but their sorrow had its counterpart of joy, and they had the hope of the coming Messiah.

Here let us guard ourselves particularly, and vindicate the ways of our gracious God, for it is an unprofitable task to be engaged in the dissection of evil. “I would have you wise unto that which is good and simple concerning evil.” (Rom. 16:1.9; Comp. Jer. 4:22.) The poring over evil does not in itself improve our tone of soul, and if the Lord shows it to us, it is not that we should be engaged with it. No, He would have us in the enjoyment of Himself, notwithstanding the mischief which Satan has worked. He has made a certain fellowship for us in the midst of the evil. We have all our necessities met in Himself and with one another: “Ye, beloved, building yourselves up in your most

holy faith." Here we find a company— "yourselves" —recognizing that their faith is a "most holy" one, in contrast with the oft-repeated word "ungodly" of verses 15-18. They recognize too the Holy Ghost as the One who alone gives power and efficacy to prayer, "praying in the Holy Ghost," and they keep themselves "in the love of God." Is not this all declaratory of a fact that in the midst of evil their resources were in God, and were richly found from Him, whilst at the same time realizing their own weakness, insufficiency, failure, they were "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life?" Others were denying His lordship, that is, His authority over them; whilst they were owning it to the full, and looking for the consummation of His mercy in receiving them to Himself at His coming. It was a sense of true fellowship with the Lord and with one another in view of the existing state of evil, or, if the expression be allowed, proper to it. They are words expressly addressed to those who are in earnest, who see the dishonor done to the name of the Lord in Christendom. Isolation is not contemplated, although separation is, for we find companions in the same tribulation. This is all-important.

As to one peculiarity of the times we live in, be must be but a casual observer who does not perceive in the ecclesiastical proceedings which come daily before us that Christians, whether individually or collectively, do not recognize that God has any controversy with them. From the (Ecumenical Council downwards, through convocations, synods, diocesan societies, church unions, and the many other channels for the display of united energies, there seems no consciousness of anything being wrong. Does Popery fill up the Epistle of Jude Is it not rather a "general" Epistle? and we would ask, Can there be any true blessing (church blessing, be it observed, being sought for throughout by these combined exertions) with the condition of failure unrecognized? Surely not. We have a wonderful divine writing with the elements of latter-day mischief indicated very prominently in it, and along with this a very clear path marked out for those who see it; and we are persuaded, that, together with the cultivation of all that is suitable to Christ individually, if we take any ground of united action, we shall fail unless we are aware of the condition of Christendom. Immense energies are at work to set up something imposing, by which simple souls are beguiled. It is akin to the Laodicean condition, "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;" whilst there is the rarely realized sense of the general failure, with a resource to be found in God Himself alone. We may remark also, that it is not enough to say, that this or that is wrong, and I will endeavor to improve it by setting up what is right. This state of feeling, honorable and true in itself, implies hope of recovery, such as was hoped for, when sects with really right intentions split off from a mother church. As a result, it comes to be one system in opposition to another—one perhaps, in outward form, far more scriptural than another; but with the direct power of the Holy Ghost lacking in each. It is simply because they have not got upon the ground (the church thought being still the only one we are recognizing) on which He can act. What we do need to see is, that church recovery is hopeless; but that in this condition God remains true, Christ remains true, and the Holy Ghost remains true. Indeed the question assumes this form, not the building up of churches but of souls, "Ye beloved, building up yourselves." Moreover those who see the failure have this particular vantage ground, that they are able to help and warn many a tried and anxious soul, according to that word, "Of some have compassion, making a difference: and others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire."

Finally, with saints of this complexion, the first thought should be, fellowship, not discipline, nor preaching, nor teaching; there is no such thought in our type passages out of Malachi and Jude. It is quite true there can be no pretense to combined associations, call them by what name you will, without teaching and without discipline; but in the latter days this is not the first, the primary, thought. Things have gone beyond this. It is not how to keep things in order, but felt communion with God. Hence there must be a certain experience reached before one can enter into the thoughts given us in Jude's Epistle. This fellowship is not upon the ground of ruin, for Christ must be ever our true ground of fellowship, but is only an element of it. If this element be omitted, one is sure to be found setting up something; and if so, it is almost certain to be pulled down again. But if in real intelligence of the thoughts of God, things or persons that we have had hopes of fail, we are never disappointed, for fellowship may be with two or three as well as two or three thousand. Once being settled as to the character of communion for the latter days, you may own every feeble saint or newly converted child, for you have among you all the elements of strength, and may sing with them sweet hymns of praise and thanksgiving; for, blessed be God, hymns know nothing of failure and ruin, but without this the best-intentioned efforts eventually fail, or else turn into the channel of simple evangelizing (a most enviable gift); but the question then is, What becomes of the souls as to their further edification? If evangelizing goes on without distinct thoughts as to the place which salvation puts us into and as to the responsibilities which flow from it—responsibilities not only as individuals, but as members one of another, having a common Head, even Christ—if, in short, the fellowship we have been considering, looked at in its largeness or in relation to the perilous times we live in, be lacking, we shall dwindle into units, and some of the most precious truths connected with the action of the Holy Ghost on earth, whilst Christ Himself is on high, will have but a shadowy appearance and feeble hold upon our souls. W. W.

Chapter 35

Fragment: Antichrist

It is no real difficulty, if the second beast be Antichrist, how his general influence in deceiving those who had the mark of the beast should stand with it. It would suit their idea of and pride in their Messiah, carnally deluded as the Jews are. He who is their king extends his influence over the Gentiles. This would do better than a little flock and their despised Savior.

Chapter 36

Fragment: Conscience

Conscience, under the influence of the word, takes knowledge of principles which are judged by it, even when all is not yet ripe for judgment, and as yet the judgment is not executed.

Chapter 37

Fragment: Conscience Hardened

Ecclesiastical influence is always greatest at the moment when the conscience is hardened against the testimony of God; because unbelief, which trembles after all, shelters itself behind the presumed stability of that which God had set up and makes a wall of its apostate forms against the God whom they hide, attributing to these ordinances the stability of God Himself.

Chapter 38

Fragment: Eliezer and Laban

In Eliezer's dealings with Rebekah, it is jewels first; with Laban, it is bringing into the house before the jewels. The Spirit alone acts in the power and confidence of grace. Laban was a legalist.

Chapter 39

Fragment: Faith Shown in Love for God's Work

In times of difficulty faith does not show itself in the magnificence of the result but in love for God's work, however little it may be, and in the perseverance with which it is carried on through all this state of weakness.

Chapter 40

Fragment: Hebrews 3

The exhortations in Heb. 3 are to preserve the Christian in a confidence which he has, and to persevere, not to tranquillize doubts and fears. The use of the epistle to sanction such doubts is of the enemy. But though the knowledge of grace alone can set free from fears, it is very important practically to maintain a good conscience

Chapter 41

Fragment: Isaiah

Isaiah is convicted, cleansed, given a ready devoted serving heart, and finds a tenderly sympathizing heart—all in the divine presence. It is as to his nature that he is convicted—what he has in common with others: this is true conviction. In devotedness he yields himself without knowing what it may cost him. (Isa. 6)

Chapter 42

Fragment: Learning His Love in Sorrow

If I trust to my own strength in the hour of temptation, I break down: but if I have learned, through grace, to cast myself on Christ, I find all in Him to help me, and to go through the temptation unscathed. I must learn the lesson. If I learn it with the Lord, I am spared the sifting; but if not, I must be sifted. If not in intercourse with the Lord, it must be with Satan. “Nevertheless,” saith the Lord, “I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not.” It is blessed to believe that God loves us, notwithstanding all our failure. It is worth (not any sin but) any sorrow to learn this.

Chapter 43

Fragment: Matthew 26:46

Matt. 26:46.—When the enemy is at hand, it is the time for action, not for watching and praying.

Chapter 44

Fragment: Prophecy

Prophecy is the intervention of God's sovereign grace in testimony, in order to maintain His relationship with His people when they have failed in their responsibility to God in the position they held, so that their relationship with God in this position has been broken; and before God has established any new relationship by His own power in grace. The subjects of prophecy are, consequently, the following:—The dealings of God in government upon the earth, in the midst of Israel; the moral details of the conduct of the people which led to their sin; God's intervention, at the end, in grace, by the Messiah, to establish His people in assured blessing, by God's own power. Two things are connected with these leading subjects: the judgment of the nations, which was necessary for the establishment of Israel in their own land; and the rejection of Christ, by the Jews, at His first coming into this world. Finally, Israel had been the center and keystone of the system that was established after the judgment upon Noah's descendants for their pride at Babel. In this system the throne and temple of God at Jerusalem were:—the one, the seat of divine authority over all nations; and the other, the place where they should go up to worship Him who dwelt between the cherubim. Israel having failed in that obedience which was the condition of their blessing and the bond of the whole order recognized by God in the earth, another system of human supremacy is set up in the person of Nebuchadnezzar. Prophecy treats, therefore, of this unitary system also, and of its relationship with the people of God on the earth. Guilty of rebellion against God, and associated with Israel in the rejection of Christ, and at the close rising in revolt against Him, this power is associated with the Jews in the judgment, as being united with them in evil.

Chapter 45

Fragment: Provision in the Wilderness

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

Chapter 46

Fragment: Revelation 3:8

Rev. 3:8 tells of the Lord's love to the church. Nothing marks the low state of things more than this, that the thought of legality is connected with God's looking for works. It is not so at all. Christ desires that the life he has given should appear. If you say to Christ, I will give no works, He says, you do not care for My love. If we really cared for His love, we should wish to hear Him say, I wish for this thing—that thing. It is the jealousy of His love that cannot bear that another should be in our hearts in His place

Chapter 47

Fragment: Romans and Ephesians Compared

In Romans we find experiences, because the soul is brought through the process which brings it into liberty. In Ephesians we find no experiences, because man is seen first dead in sins; and then united to Christ exalted to God's right hand.

Chapter 48

Fragment: Self-Exaltation Drawing Man to Antichrist

All the resources in the character and nature of man, apart from conscience, will astonish the world and draw it into following Antichrist; because the glory of man in self-exaltation, and not service to Christ in humiliation, is man's natural bent.

Chapter 49

Fragment: Separation of That Which Is of God

The desire of the faithful man being the reproduction of the Word and of God's affections revealed in it, can He reject His people in a mass as wicked? This cannot be. Can He accept them in a condition of rebellion, which is so much the worse because they belong to God? He must learn to do that which God does—take account of all that is good, and, if it is too late to preserve everything, never condemn that which is of God. The penetrating eye of God never loses sight of this, and the affections of His servant are fixed on it also. But God has His own mind and acts according to His own will: He lays hold of what is precious, owns it, and separates it from what is vile. If Satan can, he will mingle them together. Those who know how to separate them shall be as the mouth of God.

Chapter 50

Fragment: Sufferings of Christ

It is in the point of death that the sufferings of Christ meet, whether for righteousness' sake and that which He underwent in order to sympathy with them when suffering under God's government, on the one hand, or in atonement, on the other. Christ suffered onward up to death; then He also made atonement for sin. Some of the remnant also may suffer unto death, as faithful under the trials of this government; but then, like Christ, they will obtain a better resurrection. Of course the atoning part is exclusively His.

Chapter 51

Fragment: the Lord Condescending in Grace

As a person the Son emptied Himself; He could not have done so save as God. A creature who leaves his first estate sins therein. The sovereign Lord condescends in grace; in Him it is love.

Chapter 52

Fragment: Trusting God to Foil Satan

“The whole world wondered after the beast.” I ought not to wonder about evil. I ought to trust God to foil Satan.

Chapter 53

Fragment: What Christ Is

The great truth now is what Christ is. At the reformation it was His work. If He reveals what He is, it is but to add, “I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it.” Here is liberty. It is an open door for all blessing.

Chapter 54

Fragments Gathered up: Ananias and Jonah

Ananias, in Acts 9, was something of a Jonah, unprepared for full grace. And so shall we be, if we do not come to God ourselves as “the chief of sinners,” taking up all sin as in our own persons.

Chapter 55

Fragments Gathered up: Blessing

God can bless in a direct manner with the light of His grace, when the soul is brought into its true place, to what it really is in His sight. Then, whatever its state may be, He can bless it in respect of that state, with increased light and grace. If I have got far from Him and careless in walk, when I have the consciousness how far I am, He can fully and directly bless. But the soul must be brought into the recognition of its state, or there would be no real blessing. I should not see God in unison with it. For its sensible did not answer to its real in God's sight.

Chapter 56

Fragments Gathered up: Brazen Altar

The brazen altar is the measure of man's responsibility; but saving has nothing to do with responsibility. God saves us for Himself, and brings us to Himself.

Chapter 57

Fragments Gathered up: Changing Scripture to Suit Self

It is a deadly principle running through all rationalists that they make men's present habit of thinking the measure of the fitness of God's word; and thus gradually lead to the belief that it was the product of the age and country it was written in. If I change scripture for what suits the west and the nineteenth century, I shall soon change it for what suits myself; and we might as well not have it at all.

Chapter 58

Fragments Gathered up: Christ Revealed in the Fullness of His Person

There is a contrast between Christ, object of promise and prophecy, and Christ revealed in the fullness of His person as beginning and foundation (having accomplished His work) of the new creation, its head, filling all things, having re-established the relationship between God and them, a relationship ruined by sin; and at the same time beginning, foundation, and head of the Church, which He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, having united it, quickened in Himself, by the Holy Ghost to Himself as His body. These two things constitute the mystery in its whole extent.

Chapter 59

Fragments Gathered up: Communication From God

If there be no inspiration, we have no communication from God—the greatest privilege one can have on earth—the only thing that puts us in a sure and divine way in relationship and intercourse with God.

Fragments Gathered up: Communication From God

The poorest believer knows what he means by inspiration. He could not define it—does not know what “define” means; but he knows he has communications from God in which his soul drinks of living water—a word of God sharper than any two-edged sword, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. They have an authority over him which he delights to obey—reproofs, if needed, his heart bows to—promises his faith leans on—a Savior revealed whom his soul loves; and all this because he receives it with a divine faith as inspired, as God's word, as God's having condescended (taken pains, shall I say?) to speak to him for every want here and the brightness of heavenly hopes hereafter.

Chapter 60

Fragments Gathered up: Esther

In the Book of Esther we see the Gentile wife set aside on account of her disobedience and her failure in displaying her beauty to the world, and she is succeeded by a Jewish wife who possesses the king's affections; we see the audacious power of Haman, the Gentile oppressor of the Jews destroyed, and the Jewish Mordecai, protector of Esther, formerly despised and disgraced but raised to glory and honor in place of the Gentile.

Chapter 61

Fragments Gathered up: Experimental Power of Romans 5-8

The beginning of 2 Corinthians presents the experimental power of that which is doctrinally taught in Rom. 5:12 - ch. 8, and is extremely instructive in this respect.

Chapter 62

Fragments Gathered up: Faith

Faith brings to God and separates from the world.

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IN CONNECTION WITH THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

BY J. N. D.

Chapter 63

Fragments Gathered up: Faith of the Shunammite

Compare the faith of the Shunammite in 2 Kings 4 with that of her of Zarephath in 1 Kings 17. The latter put her dead into her bosom, the former on the prophet's bed. Death reminded one of her own sin; it reminded the other of God's resources.

Chapter 64

Fragments Gathered up: Five Books of Psalms

The first two books of Psalms are distinguishable from the last three in this: the first and second are more Christ personally among the Jews; the third, fourth, and fifth are more national and historical.

Chapter 65

Fragments Gathered up: God's Enemies

It is very afflicting and very humbling when we are obliged to confess that God's enemies are right as against His people. The only comfort is that God is in the right and that in the end He cannot fail to accomplish His gracious promises.

Chapter 66

Fragments Gathered up: Government of the World

In Israel's case man had been tried on the ground of obedience to God, and had not been able to possess the blessing that should have resulted from it. Then God abandoned this direct government of the world (while still the sovereign Lord above), and casting off the elect people with the nations round them and His own throne there, subjected the world to one head, proving under this new trial whether man will own the God who gave him power to make those happy who are subjected to him when he can do what he will in the world. This began with Nebuchadnezzar, the head of the image—the system of imperial power. We know that man failed here too. But the Lord Christ will re-unite the two things in His person. He will be the one man to whom the whole dominion is given, and Israel, as well as the various nations with their kings, shall be re-established, each in his own land and his own heritage, as before the time of Nebuchadnezzar, with the exception of Edom, Damascus, Hazor, and Babylon herself (that is to say, those nations which occupy Israel's territory; and Babylon which had absorbed and taken the place of all the others, and which must disappear by the judgment of God, to give them their place again).

Chapter 67

Fragments Gathered up: Humbling

If we were perfectly humble, we should not need humbling; but we do, all of us, even Paul who had a thorn in the flesh to keep it down.

Chapter 68

Fragments Gathered up: Introduction of the Millennium

The instrument of introducing the millennium is not the diffusion of the truth, but the sword proceeding out of Christ's mouth, sitting on a triumphal horse, wherewith He could smite the nations. It is treading the vintage of God's wrath. It is an invitation to all fowls to feast on the sacrifice the Lord God Almighty will make of the great and their followers, and a time of judgments in the earth when the world's inhabitants learn righteousness.

Chapter 69

Fragments Gathered up: Job

In Job we have man put to the test—man renewed by grace, upright in his ways—to show whether he can stand before God in presence of the power of evil, whether he can be righteous in his own person before God; and, on the other hand, God's dealings by which He searches the heart and gives it the consciousness of its true state before Him. It is God that sets the case of Job before Satan who disappears from the scene.

Chapter 70

Fragments Gathered up: Judgment-Seat

The truth is that the judgment-seat is what most brings out our assurance before God; for as He is, so are we in this world; and it is when Christ shall appear, we shall be like him.

Chapter 71

Fragments Gathered up: Law Taken in Positive Action

The law taken in its positive action would be for a child of Adam, but in an unfallen state.

Chapter 72

Fragments Gathered up: Love for God's Work

In times of difficulty faith does not show itself in the magnificence of the result, but in love for God's work, however little it may be, and in the perseverance with which it is carried on through all the difficulties belonging to this state of weakness.

Chapter 73

Fragments Gathered up: Made Perfect in One

As now Christ is in the Father, and we in Him, and He in us; so in the day of His appearing shall it be Christ in us and the Father in Him that we may be made perfect in one.

Chapter 74

Fragments Gathered up: Mediationship of Blessing

The mediationship of blessing does not cease when that of intercession does. Aaron in the holy place is the type of one; Melchisedec coming forth to bless Abraham is of the other.

Chapter 75

Fragments Gathered up: Millennium

If the spread of Bibles and missionary exertions is to produce per se the millennium, what is the meaning of unclean spirits like frogs gathering all the kings of the earth &c. to battle, to be destroyed? and that then Satan was to be bound and the thousand years commence?

Chapter 76

Fragments Gathered up: New Jerusalem

The new Jerusalem is divine in its origin and also heavenly. It might be of God and earthly. It might be heavenly and angelic. It was neither, but divine in origin and heavenly in nature and character. It was clothed with divine glory, as founded on Christ's work.

Chapter 77

Fragments Gathered up: No Vail in Hebrews

There is no vail in Hebrews, therefore the holiest and the holy are not distinguished; the holy things could not be guilty, but they could be defiled.

Chapter 78

Fragments Gathered up: Old Bottles

Ishmael as an old bottle burst in the day of Abraham's feast: so did the elder brother in Luke 15 The Galatians were in danger of becoming the old bottles again. Ananias, in Acts 9:13, savored of this.

Chapter 79

Fragments Gathered up: Perfectly in and Perfectly Out

The saints are perfectly in and perfectly out, whether in John's Gospel (9) or in the Epistle to the Hebrews. (10, 13.)

Chapter 80

Fragments Gathered up: Pilgrims and Strangers

We are pilgrims and strangers here: this is our place by redemption itself. The Abrahams and Davids were pilgrims and strangers because they were only looking for redemption by power not yet come, by getting nothing of what was promised, or else by persecution under the government of God on the earth; so that after all under that order of things it was a puzzle to both, though the final inheritance of the land, the heir, and the judgment of the wicked met the puzzle in their minds.

Chapter 81

Fragments Gathered up: Redeemed and Called Out

The moment the people are redeemed, they are called out, though as yet only into a wilderness, to hold a feast to the Lord. And be it so that they have holden a feast to the golden calf, while Moses is in the mount to receive the given law, this does not alter what it is to faith.

Chapter 82

Fragments Gathered up: Righteous Government to Come

God has not yet made such a government of the earth as can be an adequate measure and manifestation of His righteousness. Christianity does not even contemplate this, but is a display of His grace to faith calling souls to heavenly glory. The law in Israel did take this ground, but necessarily failed through their rebelliousness. The millennium will be exactly this, when Christ shall be exalted in earth as in heaven to the glory of God the Father.

Chapter 83

Fragments Gathered up: Righteousness Established in a Heavenly Way

Remark the great difference between the Psalmist's celebration of God's righteousness, sitting on the throne, judging right, and vindicating the righteous man from the oppressor; and Christ on the cross who was not vindicated on the earth but declares Himself forsaken of God (His enemies, outwardly, having all their will against Him), and then, righteousness being established in a heavenly way, God's righteousness in setting Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places.

Chapter 84

Fragments Gathered up: Romans

The Epistle to the Romans begins, not with governmental judgments, but with the revelation of wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men holding the truth in unrighteousness; and brings in personal justification as the fruit of God's righteousness to the believer.

Chapter 85

Fragments Gathered up: Romans and Ephesians Compared

In Romans we find experiences, because the soul is brought through the process which brings it into liberty; while in the Ephesians we find no experiences, because man is seen, first dead in sins, and then united to Christ exalted to God's right hand.

Chapter 86

Fragments Gathered up: Standards

A standard must be a standard for everything; and for this it must be the whole and the perfect record of truth. As this is not in the mind of man, it must be revealed, and this with authority for all, or it is not a rule to which every one is responsible. Otherwise individual responsibility and mutual sense of righteousness are destroyed, and manifest fruits of righteousness cease to be of avail as a test of conduct and fellowship, because there would be no common standard to which they could be brought.

Chapter 87

Fragments Gathered up: the Affliction of Christ

The affliction of Christ was infinitely deep; but His perfect communion with His Father caused all the anguish, that in others broke out into complaints, to be in secret between Him and His Father. It is very rarely expressed in the Gospels: He is entirely for others in grace.

Chapter 88

Fragments Gathered up: the Olive Tree

The olive tree (Rom. 11) extends from Abraham's time on to the millennium.

Chapter 89

Fragments Gathered up: the Power and Wisdom of God

Under the first Adam we have either the corrupt woman or violent man; but Christ is the power of God and the wisdom of God.

Chapter 90

Fragments Gathered up: the Veil Not Rent Until Christ's Death

Till Christ's death the veil was not rent, the holiest unapproachable. There was knowledge more or less clear of a redeemer—of a personal redeemer to come; of God's favor toward those that walked with Him, and the confidence of faith in Him and His promises. But there was no such knowledge of sin as led to the consciousness of exclusion from God's presence as a present state, nor of such a putting of it away as reconciled us fully and forever to God by its efficacy, and brought us to Him.

Chapter 91

Fragments Gathered up: Thinking on Christ Only

A man likes thinking badly of himself, ay, and saying so, better than not thinking of himself at all, and simply displaying Christ's gracious life by thinking on Him only. We have to judge ourselves; but our right state is thinking of the Lord alone

Chapter 92

Fragments Gathered up: Truth As to the Spirit

The truth as to the Spirit is perhaps the most important practically, and the most characteristic of Christianity, not as to foundation, but as to state and power of all in scripture.

Chapter 93

Fragments Gathered up: When a Pause Is Needed

Jacob had seventeen years in Egypt ere he was called hence; Paul was called up from the midst of his labors. (2 Tim. 4) It is a bad symptom of previous ways when a pause is needed, like that in Egypt to Jacob.

Chapter 94

Fragments: Peter's Conscience

I do not think Peter's conscience was reached before the third time of asking. He felt (not passed over) the gap in his heart as forgiven and in favor; but God must have the conscience fully reached to have confidence and communion.

Genesis 3

It is not only the word of God which lets us know that there is sin and misery in the world. Man knows very well that iniquity and defilement are in himself, and no one is satisfied with his portion here below because he is ill at ease in his own heart. The word of God shows us much more—how Satan entered the world and the consequences of sin in our relations with God.

The first thing the old serpent does is to put something between God and us, to put himself between both. The only thing which can render us happy is that there is nothing between God and us, and that God loves us. Satan begins by rendering the soul distrustful of God, and suggests to the woman to wish for a forbidden thing and satisfy the wish, hinting that God does not love to gratify us and would keep some great good from us. The enemy does not direct our mind either to the goodness of God or to our obeying God. The woman knew well why she ought not to eat of the fruit of that tree, and that death would be the inevitable result.

God has warned us of the consequences of sin. He had said “In the day that thou eatest dying thou shalt die.” But Satan, who ever seeks to deny and lower the truth of God, says to the woman, “Ye shall not surely die ye shall be as God.” And it is true that the fall has rendered man much more intelligent relatively to good and evil; but Satan hid from him that he would be severed from God and with an evil conscience. Their eyes were opened, it is said; and they knew that they were naked as they looked at themselves.

All that which is near us appears more important and greater than that which is still distant. The forbidden tree being near, and the judgment of God far off, Eve takes of the fruit and eats. So the spirit of falsehood says till this day to men, Ye shall not die; the threatenings of God will not take effect. He conceals the warnings of God; and one does then what Satan and one's own lusts push us on to do. If a Christian is not vigilant, his conscience will lose its activity, and in place of seeing God he will see his own nakedness.

Man still takes leaves to cover his nakedness. He does his utmost to bide from himself the evil which is there; but when God reveals Himself, it is quite otherwise. God draws near as if nothing had happened; then what ought to have been a joy for man without sin becomes because of sin the source of immense alarm. Adam flees and seeks to hide from before the eye of God as if he had succeeded in veiling his nakedness to his own eye. What a horrible thing for man to be thus hiding himself before God!

Adams fears, for conscience is always touched by the presence of God; it takes away every hope of enjoying sin when it penetrates into our conscience. Then one only sees God who is feared without our being able to appreciate Him.

The relations of man with God were thenceforward broken and in a manner irreparable as to man.

“Who told thee that thou wast naked?” says the Lord. Adam answers by accusing the woman and God who had given her to him. Dastardliness always comes into the soul with sin. Adam wishes to

excuse himself by lies and to leave the fault and blame between his wife and God. He leaves to God the care of arranging the thing with the woman. Thus a bad conscience fears God too much to confess its sin, yet it knows too well that it has sinned to deny it. If you had full confidence in God and were perfectly sure that God loves you, you would be very happy. But Satan is here; and his great power consists in producing distrust where there is happiness and intimate relation with God to destroy in our hearts. You trust your own will and your own efforts for your happiness; but, distrusting God, you will not or cannot confide to Him the care of this happiness and leave yourself to His mighty love.

The beginning of sin is the unbelief which doubts God. Thereby in effect Satan began. He persuaded Eve that God had kept something for Himself that the creature might not be too happy and blest.

The woman was wrong in conversing with Satan; she ought not to have listened to a voice which insinuated distrust of God. What Satan did then and always, he persuades every man that God is too good to condemn us because we sin; and man, spite of his sin and his conscience, hopes and persuades himself that he will not be condemned. It is the voice of the old serpent. Now God has shown by the death of His Son that the wages of sin is death.

Conscience being evil, every effort of the world is to hide from itself its nakedness before God. It would remove from men gross and outward sin, drunkenness, murder, and robbery. It seeks by law, and efforts of philanthropy, individual and co-operative, to blot out the open effects of sin in the world. Such are the aprons of fig leaves which remove nothing at all but serve for the moment to hide from ourselves our nakedness and our misery, to avoid thinking of the justice of the condemnation God has put from the beginning on the sin that dwells in us. Now that sin is between our conscience and God, one wishes at least that there should be something to hide us before Him! With this end in view man employs what he calls innocent things. Thus the trees were so, but man made use of them to conceal himself from before God. God had given all to man in this world; but man uses it now only to deprive himself of the sight of God, and thus pretends to be innocent in employing these good things after such a sort!

When the voice of God awakens conscience, people still wish something to hide them from Him; but this is impossible. God says to Adam “Where art thou?” There is no means of hiding any longer. If God said so to each of your souls, would it be your joy to be in His presence? God alone is our resource and refuge when we have sinned. It is only God who takes away guile from the heart, for He alone can pardon. Now if you hide yourself from God, where are you for your soul? God had not yet driven Adam from His presence till Adam fled from the presence of God. Conscience tells us that if we have sinned, no leaves or trees can hide us in His presence. If there be a just God, man is wretched in his conscience and cannot be quiet in sin but solely on condition that there is no God. Every hope of unbelief is that there be no God, or, what comes to the same thing, that He be not just or holy.

Adam wishes to excuse himself, as if he had not lusted himself, as if he had not followed the voice of his wife instead of hearkening to God, as if he was not responsible for having failed himself. Now if there were not lust in us, sin would not be produced. In the midst of all God's goodness who has given His Son for poor sinners, you have no confidence in God, and this is a state of sin. It matters little how it is manifested; it displays ingratitude and distrust. Eve listened and believed

Satan instead of hearing and believing God. This man ever does; and he hopes for salvation and eternal life though he sins. All the efforts you make to be happy show that you are not happy. Why the arts and pleasures of the world if the world were happy? All that which would have been the effect of God's presence in your hearts and consciences would stop your pleasure; Therefore if all your pleasures are incompatible with the presence of God, what will they be for you in eternity? Will they carry you to the foot of the throne of the Holy and Just to show Him that you have spent many innocent hours far from Him? There are only disobedience, distrust, falsehood, which are sin: there is worse still—the state of soul which seeks to be light and giddy far from the presence of God.

Man may withdraw himself from God's presence whilst grace lasts: but he will not be able when God shall judge him. Satan will help you, your best friends according to the world will also help you to withdraw yourself from His presence, to deny and forget it, but that will certainly not go on longer than the time of grace granted to us. Therefore while it is called to-day, if ye hear His voice harden not your hearts. God knows that you are sinners: He knows the iniquity of Satan, who would make man his prey; but there is an answer to that which Satan knew and of which man could have no idea: God makes a revelation of grace (ver. 15). A promise is not given to those who are incapable of enjoying it. The natural man cannot enjoy what flows from grace, because faith is necessary to that, and confidence in God. The question thenceforward is wholly between the serpent and the Second man. God says nothing to Adam but words which show the actual consequences of sin; He says to the serpent what He will do. Thenceforth the only hope for lost man is in this promised Seed; and even before he is driven from His presence, God reveals what Jesus will do to destroy the work of Satan.

There is not a single sign of repentance in Adam after his sin. He had shown the dastardliness, meanness, and fraud of his heart; but God only occupies Himself with His counsels and the answer He has in Himself. He announces the Seed of the woman, whose glory and power are developed throughout all His word.

Now it is no longer an anticipation or promise of grace: Jesus is come. Wretched man thought that God did not wish to give him something through jealousy of his happiness; but this was the lie of Satan. God who seemed to refuse a fruit to man innocent has given His Son to man a sinner. And the heart of man is so perverted that he has no confidence though God has given His Son. Jesus instead of fleeing from condemnation went to meet it; He took on Him the sins of His bride instead of loading her with fetters. He has by death destroyed him that had the power of death. The effect of the death of Jesus is to inspire us with perfect confidence. The death of Jesus puts us in relationship with God without fear and without difficulty because it clothes us when we are naked and miserable. There is nothing but grace for us after the judgment which has struck the Son of God.

Is your confidence in God? Do you believe that He gave His Son, that His love did so to save fully poor sinners? This confidence gives peace and obedience, because nothing is more precious than the love of God; and this love makes us prefer obedience and its consequences spite all the difficulties. May God touch your heart and give you to render Him glory by receiving all that His love has done for you!

Chapter 96

Genesis 3 and John 8

The same great moral is continually exhibiting itself in the serious action of human life. Distance of time makes no difference. The energies at work are still the same. There is the way of God and the way of Satan, the principles of light and of darkness.

It is instructive to mark this—to notice how the most distant scenes of action in the book of God are quickened by the same instincts and energies. Thus in John 8 we find Gen. 3 again; the great opposing elements of the garden of Eden taking their several course, and doing their different work, in the temple at Jerusalem four thousand years after.

The serpent, or the serpent's seed, is in this solemn scene, and exactly in the old character. The serpent had found a pure creature in the garden, and had corrupted and destroyed her, and then did what he could to destroy the One who had undertaken her cause. He had murdered the woman, and conceiving enmity to her Seed was to bruise His heel. After which pattern his seed, in John 8, seek the full ruin of the poor adulteress, and then also the life of Jesus, because He had taken up her cause and the cause of all such ruined sinners.

And still further: the serpent who entered the garden had worked by a lie. The weapon in his murderous hand was a lie; and so here the serpent's seed are found utterly destitute of truth. Jesus was speaking the truth, as He tells them again and again (ver. 14, 37, 45, 47); just as the Lord God was speaking it when, in the garden, He told of death upon the eating of the tree. But the Jews do not understand Jesus. They have no faculty to comprehend the language of truth. “Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot bear my words.” So deeply, so thoroughly, so awfully, were they departed from the power of the light and truth of God.

Thus do they indeed take the place of the seed of the serpent in his two characters expressed at the beginning; so that the Lord has only to say of them, “ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it.”

But, again, in the garden man destroyed himself, and then hid away from the presence of God. The voice of promise, the glad tidings about the woman's Seed, however, drew him forth, and Adam walked again in “the light of life,” calling his wife “the mother of all living,” and receiving from God's own hand the pledge or seal of righteousness by faith. And so in John 8 the poor adulteress is a self-ruined sinner. She is detected and sentenced to death. She hides herself and is silent. But she hears, like Adam, the voice of the Son of God, the woman's Seed, and she is at peace and walks forth again in “the light of life.” That voice had again overthrown the serpent, or the serpent's seed. There was enmity between it and them, between the woman's Seed and the serpent's seed, according to the promise. And, like Adam in the garden, the poor adulteress finds life where she deserved and might have expected death.

In this also the scene in the garden of Eden stands revived or reflected in the scene in the temple at Jerusalem. Four thousand years have made no difference. The moral energies, the principles of light and darkness, are the same in the world's infancy or age, in the earth's eastern or western borders.

These similitudes are very exact; but so also with Jesus, the Son of God, the Seed of the woman. As we read of Him, so we see Him, “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”

In Gen. 3 the promised Seed of the woman is evidently from God—for the sinner, and against the serpent. And such are most blessedly and most clearly the relationships which the Lord Jesus fills and assumes in all the action and argument of John 8. He is God's provision for dead and ruined sinners in defiance of all the malice and wrath of the enemy.

And, further, He is this at all personal cost. The. serpent was to bruise His heel according to Gen. 3, and the serpent's seed according to John 8, was “to lift him up,” the very same thing as bruising His heel. See verse 28.

But further still, though bruised He was to get the victory, and bruise the head of the serpent according to Gen. 3 And so in John 8 He lets the Jews know that continued resistance of Him would be their doom and final destruction—that it would prove, as another scripture expresses it, “a kicking against the pricks,” or a bringing of utter ruin on themselves by the very enmity they vented against Him.

And finally, He was their only hope (see verse 24), as in the garden, fig-leaves were insufficient, and there was no return to life through the sword—all rested on the woman's Seed.

These similitudes are very marked, and it is interesting to the soul to trace them. But there is another thing suggested to me.

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It is used in John 13:19, and there properly defined by the translators, “I am [he],” meaning to identify Himself with the one prophesied of in Psa. 41 against whom the companion's heel was to be lifted up.

So, in our chapter, in John 8:24, 28, the words are found again, and again correctly defined by the italic word “he.” Because the Lord was teaching the need of their believing now, and the certainty that they should know hereafter, that He was the One whom He had been presenting Himself to be. But in verse 58, the same words “I am” are left, as they are found, indefinite. And I judge most correctly so. Because, at the close of a long and trying conflict with the Jews, the Lord announces His high personal glory as Jehovah. And they so understand Him; because they immediately deal with Him as they would with a blasphemer of the unutterable name.

All this is very distinct, and very simple too, when by a little meditation we get on the right track with the solemn words “I am.”

But again, in connection with Gen. 3, I ask, Who is the “he” or the “I am” of John 8:24, 28? Plainly, from the whole discourse, “the light of the world,” or the One who had “the light of life” for dead sinners. And then again I ask, Who is He that carries “the light of life” for dead sinners, but “the Seed of the woman?” This we have seen. It was faith in that promised Seed which enabled Adam to walk again as alive from the dead, in the divine presence, and it was faith in Jesus, “the light of life” which enabled the convicted adulteress to do the same.

Chapter 97

Genesis 3 Compared With John 8

The same moral is continually exhibiting itself in the great action of human life. Distance of time makes no difference. The energies at work are still the same. There is the way of God and the way of Satan, the principles of light and of darkness.

It is instructive to mark this—to notice how the most distant scenes of action in the book of God are quickened by the same instincts and energies. Thus in John 8 we find Gen. 3 again; the great opposing elements of the garden of Eden taking their several course, and doing their different work, in the temple at Jerusalem four thousand years after.

The serpent, or the serpent's seed, is in this solemn scene, and exactly in the old character. The serpent had found a pure creature in the garden, and had corrupted and destroyed her, and then did what he could to destroy the one who had undertaken her cause. He had murdered the woman, and conceiving enmity to her Seed was to bruise His heel. After which pattern his seed, in John 8, seeks the full ruin of the poor adulteress, and then also the life of Jesus, because He had taken up her cause, and the cause of all such ruined sinners.

And, still further, the serpent who entered the garden had worked by a lie; the weapon in his murderous hand was a lie. And so here, the serpent's seed are found utterly destitute of truth. Jesus was speaking the truth, as He tells them again and again (ver. 14, 37, 45, 47), just as the Lord God was speaking it when, in the garden, He told of death upon the eating of the tree. But the Jews do not understand Jesus. They have no faculty to comprehend the language of truth. “Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my words.” So deeply, so thoroughly, so awfully, were they departed from the power of the light and truth of God. Thus do they indeed take the place of the seed of the serpent in his two characters expressed at the beginning, so that the Lord has only to say of them, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do; he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.”

But, again, in the garden man destroyed himself, and then hid away from the presence of God. The voice of promise, the glad tidings about the woman's Seed, however, draw him forth, and Adam walked again in “the mother of all living,” and receiving from God's own hand the pledge or seal of righteousness by faith. And so in John 8. The poor adulteress is a self-minded sinner. She is detected and sentenced to death. She hides herself and is silent. But she hears, like Adam, the voice of the Son of God, the woman's Seed, and she is at peace, and walks forth again in “the light of life.” That voice had again overthrown the serpent, or the serpent's seed. There was enmity between it and them, between the woman's Seed and the serpent's seed, according to the promise. And, like Adam in the garden, the poor adulteress finds life, where she deserved and might have expected death.

In this also the scene in the garden of Eden stands revived or reflected in the scene in the temple at Jerusalem. Four thousand years have made no difference. The moral energies, the principles of light and darkness, are the same in the world's infancy or age, in the earth's eastern or western borders.

These similitudes are very exact; but so also in Jesus, the Son of God, the Seed of the woman: as we read of Him, as we see Him, “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.”

In Gen. 3, the promised Seed of the woman is evidently from God, for the sinner and against the serpent. And such are most blessedly and most clearly the relationships which the Lord Jesus fills and assumes in all the action and argument of John 8 He is God's provision for dead and ruined sinners, in defiance of all the malice and wrath of the enemy.

And, further, He is this at all personal cost. The serpent was to bruise His heel, according to Gen. 3; and the serpent's seed, according to John 8, was “to lift him up,” the very same thing as bruising His heel. (See ver. 28.)

But, further still, though bruised, He was to get the victory and bruise the head of the serpent, according to Gen. 3 And so in John 8 He lets the Jews know that continued resistance of Him would be their doom and final destruction; that it would prove, as another scripture expresses it, “a kicking against the pricks;” or a bringing of utter ruin on themselves by the very enmity they vented against Him.

And, finally, He was their only hope (see ver. 24); as in the garden fig-leaves were insufficient, and there was no return to life through the sword—all rested on the woman's Seed.

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Chapter 98

Scripture Queries and Answer: Ginetai

Q. Psa. 21:2, 4.—What is meant by “He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him?” and when did He ask? Was it as the Messiah, as in Psa. 102:24, and answered in resurrection?

But why asked for? Was it not of necessity, so to speak, that as a man He should ascend to His Father?—Psa. 16:11.

M.

A. If we compare Heb. 5:7 (and Gethsemane's cry, I think the force of the Psalm will be evident. The answer in the Psalm is not being preserved from dying; but life as risen in glory above, made most blessed forever, not sparing life for a time here, but honor and great majesty laid upon Him as man in a higher and more glorious condition. Christ as a man, though mighty to do all things, asked everything of His Father. Dependence was His perfection. At Lazarus' tomb He asked, knew His Father heard Him always; asked in John 12; asked that the cup might pass. Only the word α■τ■ω is not used of Him. The necessity of an event does not hinder asking. Everything in God's purpose will be necessarily accomplished; but He leads men's hearts to ask, as the moral filling up of their relationship with Him. In Christ, as man, this was perfect.

Q. What is the proper force of γ■νεται in 2 Peter 1:20? Is it true that the verse refers to the coming of prophecy, whence it draws its origin, rather than how its meaning is to be interpreted? Is it true of all prophecy alike (for example, 1 Tim. 4:4) that it is not of self-interpretation?

A. I take prophecy in this passage to mean the subject matter of the prophecy when the actual declaration of the mind of God in the revelation made to the mind of the prophet is given, which is the force of ■πιλ■σεως. But this cannot be gathered like the words of an oracle merely from the words not carried on beyond their own force on the subject of which the utterance speaks. Coming from the Holy Ghost; the words are a part of the great scheme of God with His ends always in view. Hence I apprehend prophecy of scripture. A particular prophecy may be recorded in scripture, not in the sense of a prophecy of scripture. Thus when Pharaoh's servants dreamed it was not a prophecy of scripture. Joseph gave the ■π■λυσις (the word used in Aquila), and they were as thus interpreted a prophecy of the fall of the two servants; but could not come under the character of prophecies of scripture. They ended through bringing about God's purpose as to Joseph in diverse fate of the two servants. In prophecies of scripture the Holy Ghost gives as from one mind, though partially revealed what is in that one mind, what is a link in the chain of all the counsels and purposes of God. Τινεται is practically tantamount to ■στι. Still there is more thought of result. The prophecy (that is, the mind of God in what is said) does not derive its being from a particular interpretation of an isolated communication, like the servants' dreams.

Prophecy among the heathen was not in the proper sense of the word the revelation itself, but the carmen which expressed the god's mind. That is, it expressed the import of the revelation as expressed in the language into which it was put for the inquirer; only, as the word of God, He took care that the communication should be as divine as the revelation. (1 Cor. 2:13; 2 Peter 1:21.)

So I should not call Agabus' prophecy a prophecy of scripture, though it be more connected indeed with the scheme of God in Christianity. Thus the prophets sought what the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand, and the prophecy to ■πιλελυμμ■νη gave the mind of God as to its place in the divine plans. Prophecy is not properly the revelation of the thing to the prophet, but the communication of it by the prophet as the Holy Ghost moved him to speak. This, when a prophecy of scripture, was not an isolated communication which began and ended in itself in what it had to tell. Ιδ■α ■π■λυσις does not characterize a scripture prophecy.

Chapter 99

God's Communications in Grace and the Saint's Intercession

Gen. 18

The Lord communicated the knowledge of what He was about to do concerning Sodom. The place the Church stands in is similar to that of Abraham with God; and this word is a very descriptive display of the ground of intimacy the Lord sets His people on with Himself. Ours is in a higher sense because Abraham stood on the earth, the place of judgment; but in us it is a far more blessed thing as we are altogether out of the place of judgment, enjoying the blessing itself; God "having made known to us the mystery of his will," &c.

The men rose up and looked towards Sodom. The Lord directed them as the executors of His judgment, and Abraham went with them to show them the way. The Lord makes His saints His companions, not invariably, but still it is their privilege. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? but we have the mind of Christ." Thus in the communications God has made to us, He has made us His companions in the best way; for there cannot be a better way one can show love to another, than by communicating to him his thoughts and feelings. "Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him." So we are to walk with Christ until He comes to take us up to Himself. The exercise and path of faith is down here; and, mark, the Church is above judgment (not above discipline for their good). Lot looked towards Sodom; but Abraham was out of it. Abraham being the Lord's companion is not only delivered out of the judgment, but when the Lord is going to judge, He tells Abraham about it. "Shall I hide from Abraham the thing which I do?" "For I know him." So it is with us, the ground of this communication is the thought the Lord has about us—He has centered His love upon us, and therefore He lets us into His confidence. He has put Abraham into the place of covenant blessing. So He has united the Church to Christ—associated it with Christ. And He says, If I have brought Abraham into this place I will introduce him into the knowledge of what it is— "spoken of his house for a great while to come." So God has made known to us the mystery of His will because of the place in which He has put the Church.

"I know him" —there is great blessing in this word. It is a different thing from the judgment. The Lord does not talk in this way about those He is going to judge. When He talks about judgment, He talks about inquiring, "I will go down and see;" and until He has fully investigated it, He will not touch them. It is not so with the saints; He has no need to go down to see about them, for He fully knows them, as He said of Abraham "I know him." The cry of Sodom had come up before God; but, before going to execute judgment, He will go down and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it which is come unto Him. "The men went towards Sodom: but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." That is blessed. Thus if the Lord knows Abraham, so that he is able to get the blessing, he stays with the Lord Himself. He is going to bring judgment on the world, but He will not smite until He cannot help it; but no judgment coming on the world can separate Abraham from God. God's eye so rests upon Abraham, that Abraham rests quiet in God. And so it is with us, whatever trial may be coming on the world, our place is to abide with the Lord Himself, and then, like Abraham, the effect of having drunk into this grace will be to be calm, quiet,

and happy. Our place is not to go down to search out the depths of iniquity, but to let the cry come up to us. There will be Lots many; but let us be with God on the mountain, abiding in perfect peace with the Lord Himself. Abraham, being in perfect peace, had nothing to ask for himself, and was therefore free to intercede for others. So it was in the case of Abimelech: if Abraham be a prophet, if he has this intimacy with the mind of the Lord, let him pray for thee. So it is with us “If ye abide in me, and my words,” &c. The possession of the Lord's mind gives the power of intercession for others (not like Jacob, with whom the Lord had to wrestle, because of the crookedness in himself, and therefore He could not communicate to him His name which was secret, although He blessed him). Jacob had to get the blessing for himself, and therefore he had not power to get it for others, but Abraham had the knowledge of that communion which must produce great peace and joy (there is reverence of course “I am but dust and ashes,” but perfect intimacy as well). “And the Lord went his way as soon as he had done communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.” Abraham's position is with the Lord, in perfect peace, in unquestioning confidence, having no question to settle with God, but on that ground where he can enjoy perfect communion.

Chapter 100

Grace the Spring of Righteousness

1 John 3:1-3

This passage is a kind of parenthesis which comes in between the close of chapter 2 and 3:4, &c., where the subject of righteousness is treated more fully. He had been exhorting the family of God to abide in Christ that, when He shall appear, those who labored might have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming. “If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.” Then he pursues the subject of righteousness in the following verses, beginning at verse 4. It is plain in reading from that point that he is occupied with practical righteousness. “Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.” But then the Spirit of God lets us know that we have no power to be consistent in our relationships, which is the meaning of righteousness, unless we are strengthened by the grace of our God.

I consider therefore that this is at least one of the motives why the apostle was inspired, on entering into the subject of righteousness, thus to turn aside. It is worthy of divine love, and assuredly not without the deepest purpose and consideration of us. It is to give us the true spring and power of righteousness. Hence John brings in here the Father. Whenever it is a question of grace, we hear of the Father; where it is a question of righteousness, God is rather the name of whom mention is made. God has moral claims, and He does not abate these claims in the case of a Christian. On the contrary, responsibility on our part must rise in proportion as He makes known His grace and truth. But then let us not forget that His grace gives power: claim never does. You may have the fullest right to a thing but that will not enable you to get what you ought to receive, unless there be a spring of power enabling the person to meet your demands. So our God does with us. His full intention is to have us according to Christ here; perfectly according to Him in heaven. But in order to accomplish either the one or the other, it must be by the dealings of His grace; and it is in this way that He works. The Father sends His Son that we may see and believe on Him unto life everlasting; and John has such a sense of the efficacy of Christ that, for him, to see Him is to be like Him. If you see Him, says he as it were, you are sure to follow in His steps. John will not allow that any one who is unlike Jesus has ever seen Him. Now there is nothing that gives a better idea of the transforming power of Christ than this. John does not admit of a person having seen Jesus without being like Him. This may be hindered by the flesh here; but the day is coming when all hindrances will be gone. We shall see Him perfectly then, and we shall be perfectly like Him when we do.

This is exactly the way in which the matter is put. He says, “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” Rather understand children of God, for so it should be. It is not sons. John never makes use of the word υ■■ς, (son) in describing the Christian, but invariably τ■κνον, or child. Paul calls us both sons and children; but John always children.

The difference is this a man might be conceived to become the son of God without being His child in a real sense; that is, he might be conceived and have the name of son without the possession of a new and divine nature. Certainly any one might be adopted as the son of a man without being the man's child. It is common when a rich man is childless to take another's child and make it son and heir. In the dealings of God we might conceive such a course on His part; but He does nothing of the sort. In point of fact God not only adopts those who were children of wrath even as others, but He makes them to be His children; He brings them into all the reality of the relationship, He gives them a life that is of Himself. They are not only adopted, but born of God: and if born of Him, we are not only sons (which refers to public position and inheritance), but besides we are His children. The consequence is that the title of inheritance is made far closer. A person might be adopted as a son in order to make him an heir; but if I am the child of the family, there is no doubt about it at all— “if children, then heirs.” Paul, when he speaks of our public place in glory by and by, styles us also sons of God, but in the relationship of children. John always speaks about the latter. He was not led by the Holy Ghost to bring out the public place of sons; but be makes a great deal of our being born and consequently “children of God.” “Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called children of God.” We are not put in the distant place of Israel under the law; nor are we merely brought by title into our actual place of nearness. This he shows still more clearly in what follows: “Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” We are so closely bound up with Christ that we have the place of Christ not only with God but from the world. The world did not know Him. This is enough for us, thinks John: the world does not know us either. We are so bound up with Christ that, if the world did not know Him, the world does not know the Christian.

But this is not all. “Beloved, now are we children of God.” Before this it was said that we are “called” the children of God. Now there is a further statement, lest it should be thought that we were merely called so. “Beloved, now are we children of God.” It is not that we are going to be or that it is a high-flown figure used of us, but now we are so.

The object of the Spirit of God is to fill the children of God with the certain sense of their relationship. It is impossible to do anything properly Christian, unless the soul be conscious of this moral bond and hold it fast. But may a person not Slip into what is dishonoring to God? Undoubtedly he may, and particularly if he do not keep firm and bright before him Christ and his own nearness to God in Him. When a person bearing His name is tempted to sin and yield to it, he is filled with an object that is not Christ and for the time forgets that he is really a child of God. If there is an object that gets possession of your mind that is not Christ, you have already slipped aside and outward acts of sin will surely follow, and if unjudged a state even more deplorable. It may be not that which openly disgraces a man; but sin is the will working and carrying away to rebellion, and this is never Christ. The exercise of self-will is just the principle of sin. The apostle says, Sin is lawlessness, which is indeed the true and only meaning of the close of verse 4. When a person is thus led astray from God by the power of his own will, he never realizes at that time that be is a child of God. If he had Christ before him, he ought with Him to have the sense that he is a child of God, and if he has this simply in his heart, he must (as the ground and title to it) have Christ before his soul, because it is nothing but Christ has brought us into this blessed place. If you know the truth of the gospel, you cannot truly have the sense of Christ without having the sense also that you are a child of God. To sever the two is either unbelief or Antinomianism; that is, it

cuts off the privilege of being a child of God, from Christian responsibility with Christ as the standard and motive for the walk. And clearly the man who does so is either grievously misled for a season or not born of God at all, but is merely making use of the name or title of the child of God to do what he likes, which is the worst sin.

The fact is that “Now are we the children of God.” It is a settled and existing relationship. The apostle does not address them as if they had any doubt about the matter. The awful departure from the truth which is now so common—that of people counting it a presumption and danger to believe that they are even now without doubt children of God—had not yet become prevalent, though (I suppose) beginning to be instituted by the false teachers against whom John warns in this very Epistle. Even in this last time when the apostle was going away, he could remind them thus: “Beloved, now are we the children of God.” He foresaw this real danger, not from believing the gospel, but from these false teachers casting doubts on the actual relationship of the believer. This seems the reason why the apostle John so strongly insists on it. “Now are we the children of God.”

But he adds something not yet manifested; and what is this? It is not yet manifested what we shall be. What does he mean? That we shall be like Christ even in our bodies. He does not say or mean that it is not revealed to us, for it is set forth in scripture fully and simply. We should err if we understood that there is the smallest doubt about the result. Who can doubt that it is all the same to God, whether a thing be done or only going to be done? It is far from being the same to man as such, but it is to Him. Hence it is equally certain to the believer if he rests on the word of God, because his faith depends not on the things that are seen, but on His assurance as to things as yet unseen. Hence even for our relationship as children of God we do not see but we believe His word. We believe in Jesus according to the gospel sent by God; and as the consequence we know that we are the children of God, the joy and assuring witness of which we have also by the Spirit. But it has not yet been manifested what we shall be. We know however that, when He shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Many seem to fancy “it doth not yet appear” means that it is ambiguous, or at least unrevealed. But this is not the sense. For it is fully revealed in the word. It is not yet manifest to every eye: such is the true force. The appearing means the manifestation before the world. Thus when the apostle says, “It is not yet manifest what we shall be, but we know that when he is manifested, we shall be like him,” he speaks of our manifestation with Christ before the world. In point of fact we shall have been taken up before the day of manifestation. Hence when He is manifest, we shall be also at the very same time, for we shall appear with Him in glory. We are like Him according to the measure of the simplicity of our faith now; but we shall all be assuredly and perfectly like Him then. If there were a single child of God not perfectly like Christ then, it would be a failure in His victory, and so far would deprive Him of the travail of His soul. But God will not permit this. He will exert and display His own gracious power; so that when the Lord Jesus shall be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, We see Him now in spirit and are like Him in spirit; we shall see Him then in body and shall be like Him in body.

“And every man that hath this hope in him” means founded on Him. The “him” does not speak of the man but of Christ. Where the hope is based on Christ, he purifies himself even as Christ is pure. If about to be so perfectly like Him then, I shall strive earnestly not to be inconsistent with

Him now. And this he says for the purpose of guarding us against allowing sin, making excuses for self-will, or in any way trifling with the moral glory of the Lord Jesus, which is now committed to the believer's keeping and testimony in a practical way.

Chapter 101

Grace the True Source and Support of Practical Righteousness

Gal. 6:7-11.

It is well to remind our souls and one another, by times, that whatever may be the mighty—almighty—power of God's grace, He nevertheless always maintains His own moral principles. Whatever may be His mercy in calling a soul—whatever the fullness of love that embraces even a prodigal, He never leaves the prodigal in his evil. He never leaves the unrighteous in his unrighteousness; He never deals lightly with ungodliness: even in forgiving it, He has shown Himself utterly, irreconcilably, against it; but, thanks be to God, for us, against our evil and for ourselves. And this is the gospel. And as this is the manner of His love in our deliverance and reconciliation to Himself, so it is throughout that God maintains His authority in our souls, His hatred of sin, and delight in what is good. He undertakes to make the reflection of His own holiness in every soul that He delivers from the wrath to come. And let us remember there is no exception. In one sense there is no difference. Just as there was no difference in saving us as miserable lost sinners—we were all alike lost, and yet there were grave differences in the character of our sinfulness—so now. There may be no small differences in the measure in which we serve and resemble Christ. But there is no difference in this, that we resemble Christ—if indeed we belong to Him, we must. As God is true, He cannot give up working the active watchful work of His love in changing us into the same image, even now as we pass through the wilderness.

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

But here is a passage now before us that sometimes startles many a soul not founded in grace; a passage which those who are unacquainted with grace wrest as they do also the other scriptures to their own destruction. They say, There, you see, it all depends upon what we are—how we overcome self, and how far we are changed men: all depends upon our being thoroughly spiritual and entirely devoted. I need not stop to prove that such a statement is altogether false; that the only foundation on which we can stand at all is Christ: “other foundation can no man lay than that is laid which is Jesus Christ.” That foundation is not the work of the Spirit in us, but of Christ for us; it is a work entirely outside us, on which we stand forever before God. But as surely as we do stand on that foundation, there is a work of the Spirit in us, and a constant and serious work. I do not say it may not be eclipsed from time to time and interrupted. There may be sad checks to it; but I do say that God never allows such a thought as that a child of His, blessed with Christ, should not be subject to the present care, and government, and discipline of His heart and hand in our ways and conversation, so as to produce a moral conformity to His own will. He would cease to be God if He did, and He would treat us as bastards and not as sons; for “if ye be without

chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."

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

If it were not so, what must be the consequence? I must suffer in hell for it. If God did not carry on this discipline in my soul now, as sure as God lives and we live, what is contrary to God must be judged, and it will be judged in hell. Therefore no matter what the thing—be what many would think a matter of indifference, it is impossible that God could pass over a little sin: impossible that He could have communion with anything that is not of Christ. What a mercy that now is the time when God deals with what does not flow from His Spirit! It may have to be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ another day, when we shall receive the things done in the body according to that we have done whether good or bad. But now is the time when the rod is upon us: if it be not so, it is only because a heavier rod is preparing. Where we think that we can go on for a certain time, and it does not appear that God is taking notice of our ways, He is only waiting to deal with us in a more effectual manner.

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

to be otherwise.

May our desire be that Christ be formed in us in everything; not only that we should have life everlasting, but that our hearts should be according to His heart—our spirit, our ways, our walk, according to the mold of Him to whom we belong. This is what God has before Him; and it should be the object of our souls. “Therefore let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.”

Chapter 102

The Ground of God's Dealings Now

Sin is the groundwork of all God's dealings now. Is not judgment in respect of sin? So much so that there could be none without it; hence in itself it can only be condemnation. If God judges His own workmanship as it came out of His hands, He is judging Himself, not the work, or if you please, in the work. But if it has departed willfully into rebellion, judgment as such must be condemnation. If man had never fallen, there was nothing to judge, speaking of human nature: all was then as God made it. If man has abandoned God and gone into sin, I repeat, judgment must be condemnation; and this is the ground Christianity goes upon. Christ comes to seek and to save the lost. and so every divinely taught soul: “enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” But I pursue my theme a little.

Is not the exercise of mercy in respect of sin? and law, and grace, and salvation, and judgments, and patience, and vengeance? All is in respect of sin. Hence the immensely deep moral development in the soul in its relationship with God. No angel would know God, or be in the kind of relationship in which a sinner brought to God is. All the highest attributes and qualities in Godhead are brought out. Mercy, patience, goodness, condescension, love in its perfect exercise in the shape of grace, on one side, and restoring in righteousness on the other, to perfect delight in itself—in a word, redemption. The intimacy with the working of grace, whether in the incarnation or in the soul of one in whom grace is, the estimate of good and evil, by the proximity of what is divine to evil as it is in us; yea, the communication of what is divine to one who, on the other side, is weakness and yet willfulness and self, the dependence of a creature who has both on continual grace, and yet the capacity of the enjoyment of the highest good: all this, which is not Christianity exactly, but its working in us, gives a display of divine wisdom, a purifying and elevating process, a knowledge of God in His highest nature, most intimate, and yet most adoring, which makes philosophy puny and dry beyond all belief—empty, utterly empty. Christianity is light and love come into darkness and selfishness, and in the human heart reaching all its springs, and destroying self by skewing it and replacing it by God; and this, not by the flimsy spinnings of the human brain, but by a divine person; who, if divine desires are wrought in me, takes me out of myself by divine affections instead of exalting self, by producing in it qualities to be admired, which being by self makes them bad and false. The Christian, qua Christian, has divine qualities, but sees, and because he sees, only God.

Christianity reveals a person, God Himself, who has adapted Himself to the lowest, yea, the vilest; who is holy enough, for He is perfect in it, to bring love into all the recesses of the human heart, because never defiled Himself, and awake, even by its sorrows and its miseries, the want of, and to the enjoyment of, the love that has visited it. It has set too, by a glorious redemption and atonement, the poor soul, that by love has learned to delight in light, at liberty to enjoy it, because it is spotless in it, and the adoring object of the love that has brought it there.

I look around. What can I say? Heathenism—men worshipping stocks and stones; Christendom—what would often disgrace a heathen; yet goodness and wisdom evidenced in the

midst of it all. What can I think? All is confusion. The goodness and wisdom I see lead me in spite of me to God, and the thoughts of God confound me when I see all the evil. Philosophy, poor philosophy, would justify the evil to justify God. But when I see Christ, the riddle is gone; I see perfect good in the midst of the evil, occupied with it and then suffering under it. My heart rests: I find one object that satisfies all its wants—rises above all its cravings; I have what is good in goodness itself; I see what is above evil which was pressing on me. My heart has got rest in good, and a good which is such in the midst of and above evil, and that is what I want; and I have got relief, because I have found in that One what is power over it.

But I go a little farther and I get a great deal more. I follow this blessed One from whom all have received good, and who has wrought it with unwearied patience, and I hear the shouts of a giddy multitude, and I trace the dark plans of jealous enemies, man who cannot bear good; I see high judges who cannot occupy themselves with what is despised in the world, and would quiet malice by letting it have its way, and goodness the victim of it. But a little thought leads me to see in a nearer view what man is: hatred against God and good. Oh what a display! The truest friend denies, the nearest betrays, the weaker ones who are honest flee; priests, set to have compassion on ignorant failure, plead furiously against innocence; the judge washing his hands of condemned innocence; goodness absolutely alone; and the world, all men, enmity—universal enmity—against it. Perfect light has brought out the darkness; perfect love, jealous hatred. Self would have its way and not have God; and the cross closes the scene, as far as man is concerned. “The carnal mind is enmity against God.” But oh! here is what I want. Oh! where can I turn from myself? Can I set up to be better than my neighbors? No, it is myself.

The sight of a rejected Christ has discovered myself to myself, the deepest recesses of my heart are laid bare, and self, horrible self, is there; but not on the cross. There is none. And the infinite love of God rises and shines in its own perfection above it all. I can adore God in love, if I abhor myself. Man is met, risen above, set aside in his evil, absolute as it is in itself when searched out. The revelation of God in Christ has proved it in all its extent on the cross. This was hatred against love in God; but it was perfect love to those that were hating it, and love when and where they were such. It was the perfect hatred of man, and the perfect love of God doing for him that hated Him what put away the hatred and blotted out the sin that expressed it.

There is nothing like the cross. It is the meeting of the perfect sin of man with the perfect love of God. Sin risen up to its highest point of evil and gone, put away, and lost in its own worst act. God is above man even in the height of his sin; not in allowing it, but in putting it away by Christ dying for it in love. The soldier's insulting spear, the witness, if not the instrument of death, was answered by the blood and water which expiated and purified from the blow which brought it out. Sin was known, and to have a true heart it must be known, and God was known, known in light, and the upright heart wants that, but known in perfect love, before which we had no need to hide or screen the sin. No sin allowed, but no sin left on the conscience. All our intercourse with God founded on this—grace reigning in righteousness.

It is a wonderful scene. There is, in truth, nothing like it—nothing in heaven or earth, save He who was there for us. The glory we shall share with Him; but on the cross He was alone. He remains alone in its glory. Associated there with Him nothing can be, save as it is the expression of the nature which was revealed and glorified in it. That we find ever in God who is thus known. Eternal

life is become thus association with God. But, though reluctantly, I must turn again to deal with the effort to supplant the cross, for such it is, by the progress of corrupt human nature—the cross which writes death on corrupt humanity, and brings in a new and divine man risen up out of that death, and a walk in newness of life.

Chapter 103

Growing up Into Christ

Eph. 4:15

One cannot help seeing in such a passage as this the profound interest the Lord takes in blessing. There is profound love in it, as well as that it is a fact that He delights in blessing. His purpose is to bring us into the enjoyment of His own blessedness. His thoughts are blessings; and there is none anywhere else but in Him. If I speak of blessing, it must be what is in the heart of God. A father's thoughts of giving to His children are measured by his love for them. When we see what is in God's heart for us, and that all His thoughts have the form and power of blessing, what must be for us! He is bringing us to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ—this is to be the result; but it is the principle and spring of blessing that was in my mind to speak upon. He is conforming us as to His own thoughts in blessing at the end. The objects of such love, we abject sinners taken up by Him, show the greatness of His love. Christ is the great workman of it all. It is by Christ that He does it. When God sets about to bless, it is by the Son of His love. It is an immense foundation for us to rest upon—not only strong but wide and large and deep. “He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.” “He descended first into the lower parts of the earth.” What then is to escape the power of Him, who has been borne up to the throne of God, after going down to the very lowest place of death under sin? He has been in the lowest place of misery and death, and is taken up to the highest place of glory—the throne of God—and all between is filled up by Christ. Thus nothing can escape. He went down to the place of death and sin, “made sin for us,” and went up to the throne of God! There is strength for me a poor sinner; something to rest on. Yet it is not distant from us, but we have the consciousness of its being in and around us. It is said in Revelation of the “city,” “the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.”

The Lamb is nearer to my heart than any. He has known me better than any, better than I know myself; and this Christ who dwells in our hearts by faith is the One we shall meet there. I shall find One in heaven nearer and dearer to my heart than any one I know on earth. Nothing is so near to us as the Christ that is in us, and nothing is so near to God as Christ. Yet the world is in a man's heart. All that is agreeable and outwardly good in this world finds its echo in a man's heart, and all the evil that has come in finds its place there too. Christ was here amidst it all. He met it all without having the evil in Him, yet He knows it all. Everything we feel, all that passes through the heart of man, Christ has gone through, not by grasping at the thing but by resisting the evil. With all the sensibilities of the heart to good or evil (and this makes the heart of man such a wonderful thing) Christ can meet all. The center key to all this is Christ: He has power to put away the evil. If there was one thing where my heart could not rest on Christ, it would be dreadful. All have the knowledge of good and evil, even the unconverted man. Without Christ he sets about racking his heart to find any good thing that is under the sun. All the best affections of a man are the occasion of his greatest distress, because sin has come in: the heart gets pulled and torn every way, but it must go through it. See a wife losing her husband, a mother her children. The instant I see Christ in all this trial, I find the perfect good God delights in. Divine sympathy is found in God Himself. I

may have trial and conflict, I must have it in passing through the wilderness; but I become weaned from the thing that was a snare to me by looking to Christ in it.

Present confidence in Christ is needed in trial (losing a near relative, &c.) but the practical effect is that every trial a man goes through gives him (if the heart is thus trusting) to know more and more of what Christ is to meet the need, and more of Christ as possessing Him.

“I bare thee on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself;” and there we find all the unfoldings of what God is in Christ. I cannot do without Christ. I want manna in the wilderness God gives it to me; and not only I get all this, water, manna, &c., but I have Christ Himself in it all.

No matter what it is that exercises my heart in the knowledge of good and evil, and the need of the heart in consequence, it makes Christ more known and more enjoyed. Our natural portion as Christians is to enjoy God. Where has God planted us? In the enjoyment of an accomplished redemption; and the result is that love has not only been manifested towards us, but poured out in us. The love of God is shed abroad in our souls by the Holy Ghost which He has given unto us. We dwell in God—for His love is infinite, but I am in it. I dwell in it, and He dwells in me: I, a poor little thing, nothing, dwell in Him. I must learn it, as a sinner, in Christ. A proud sinner will try to prescribe to God this and that &c., but God will have His way; and blessed it is that it should be so. “Builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit” —this is the “vocation.” What a thought! What a bringing down, not of heaven, but something more, by special blessing bringing Him down to dwell in us. God would not dwell in angels: there is not the same want in them, but He will make Himself better known to angels, through His kindness towards us by Christ Jesus. There is a great deal more for us than the bringing down heaven. “Whosoever shall confess Jesus the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.”

What is the first practical effect of this calling to be “the habitation of God through the Spirit?” “With all lowliness and meekness,” &c. (Chap. 4:2.) A vessel of God! All the passions of the flesh there, but having the presence of God makes us unspeakably happy: that is our portion! “In all lowliness,” &c. A man who is humble needs not to be humbled. There is no safety but in being low. Then what is the consequence if self is not working and there is lowliness? Why love works. I cannot be happy with you all, if self is working; but if self is not working, love is, and I am full of love towards you all. What a spring of blessedness in communion there is; so far as self is down, broken to pieces, there is an out-going of perfect love to the brethren. “Love is of God.” His nature is at work when we love one another. The spring of the fellowship we find just now is God being here. God is our joy, and love, God's own nature, working, and God our common object. There are trials and difficulties for us all; but there is blessed joy in knowing one another thus, and seeing Christ in one another. “Receive ye one another to the glory of God.” If we meet a Christian, though he may be a stranger, we can be more intimate with him than one's own family who are not. Why? Because God is there. Another thing, there is the consciousness of what this unity is. “There is one body, and one Spirit, one Lord, one faith,” &c. We are brought together, not only through being united, but by what we possess together, one Lord, one faith, &c., rich or poor. He has his particular trials, and I mine; but both have God.

“One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all.” God is above the world: you cannot tell me of one thing God is not above, and therefore there is not one thing that can separate me from His love. He is “through all.” You cannot find yourself in trouble and God not

there; you cannot find yourself in any difficulty, perplexity, and not find God through it all. And He is “in you all;” He has come to be the spring of all happiness in us. If I know what water is, it is by drinking; if I know what sweetness is, it is by tasting it; if. I know God, it is by His being in me. We can look upon one another and see God in us all. Then these light afflictions what are they? God is come to take possession of us, and He is the spring in our hearts also. He comes to make us love, because He loves. We shall find it is fully so in heaven. If anything is a safeguard against evil, it is that such an one dwells in us; but it is more, it is the spring in the new nature, God's nature.

The perfecting of the saints is before God, and should be before us. Christ is the object of His thought. I must have these loved ones like Christ: therefore what God does is to make them grow up unto Christ. In the unity of the body, and in all the communion, and through all the exercises of heart, we have the end of all. In ministering to you or you to me, it is to grow up into Christ for there to be more of Christ in us. All the flow of Christian affection, all the enjoyment we have here, is for this end. I can look at my brother and know he is going to be in heaven with me. The enjoyment of all this shuts out the world—you are not thinking of your cares and troubles now. Fellowship with the brethren is perfect deliverance from all that is of the flesh; flesh cannot enter into it, all that is of the world is gone. I am dead to it. Every bit of fellowship I have with a brother is a proof that outside things are gone, done with. The more we are individually full of divine things, the more this communion with each other is realized. Two together, if both are spiritual, open the sluices that all the wells in the world cannot dry up. The power of the Holy Ghost that makes me overcome now will make me enjoy heaven, where there is nothing else: “they that dwell in thine house will be still praising thee.” The power of evil, of the world, of Satan, is all gone. Our common joy now is in Christ, in the communion of His love; and when we are with Him, it will be completely without alloy.

Chapter 104

Hagar

Gen. 16 - 25

Abraham had already received the promise of a seed; so, by faith in that promise (trusting God as the quickener of the dead), he was now standing in righteousness before Him. (Gen. 15)

That promise, I may observe, had not mentioned Sarah in connection with the Seed, but there was strong intimation that she was to be the mother.

However, be this as it may, Sarah's suggestion to her husband at the opening of chapter xvi. too clearly discloses the working of an unbelieving heart, and the principle of confidence in the flesh. For of course they measure each other. The more the simplicity of faith is surrendered and grace is refused, the law will either in its morality or religiousness be taken up.

For grace, or the promise, calls us out of ourselves, unto God and His resources. And Abraham had followed that call in Gen. 15 But now at the suggestion of Sarah he takes up himself again. He is back again in the flesh, or under the law, or becomes a dependent on his own resources. For these are all one and the same thing. Hagar is his confidence, and not the divine quickener of the dead.

This is very sad; but it is not destructive of his standing. Surely not. It betrays the bad mistrustful habit of the soul, and has to be rebuked and chastened, but Abraham is still the heir of God through righteousness by faith.

Very expressive, I judge all this to be, and very significant or typical also. For the law after this pattern entered through man's confidence in himself, Israel accepting this offer of it, and saying, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do” (Ex. 19:1); as Hagar is now seated in Abraham's house through the same want of faith and the same confidence in the flesh.

But there is much more of this same typical character. For Hagar's despising of her mistress is in the Lord's esteem highly out of place; and as He meets her in her wanderings, He knows her only as Sarah's maid, and sends her back with this injunction, “return to thy mistress, and submit thyself under her hand.” She may get promises respecting the son that was to be born to her, but she is Sarah's maid still, and submission is her only duty. The law, too, has its hour. It may fill the house of God for a time, as Hagar and Hagar's seed now do the house of Abraham for fourteen years. But to the elect, or the heirs of promise, even the dispensation of the law still is, or was, only a servant. Sarah, likewise, may betray herself in other ways, in her undue impatience against Hagar, as well as in giving her to her husband, but still the relationship is unaffected by all this. Hagar is still and only Sarah's maid, and as such she must reside in the family as long as she is permitted.

All this is strong decided teaching, and teaching of mysteries, as I have said. For Hagar, as we know (Gal. 4), is the law of the old covenant, which, though it filled and formed the house of God for its hour, was but serving some great purpose of instruction or discipline to the heirs of promise.

And all the time there was a great underplot, so to express it, in this mystic house of the patriarch. In a divine sense it was surely the chief thing. Ishmael is born and circumcised, and, being the only child and heir apparent, he becomes the object no doubt of daily solicitude. But with God Ishmael is but second. He appears to be principal in the scene, but he is not really or divinely so. Accordingly neither he nor his mother is scarcely noticed by the Spirit or hand of God after this, while they reside in the house, till the due time for their dismissal comes. Abraham, through human or fleshy fondness, draws him forward for a moment under God's eye, and he is circumcised as any purchased slave would have been, but neither he nor his bondwoman mother is the Lord's object. The elect Abraham and Sarah, or persons and things connected with them, are his thoughts. His communications are with them, and his discipline spent upon them: they learn and experience their value in His esteem, and others are made to know it also. (Chap. 17 - 20.)

Is not this, in like manner, a word of instruction to us Hagar and her child were in the house all this time. But Sarah and Abraham are God's objects. As again I may say, during the age of the law, the house of God was, it is true, manifested as under law, the law filled it with a material of its own workmanship, but there was all the while a hidden action of the Spirit with the elect—the elect in the house were really God's objects.

These two stages in the way of the Egyptian bondwoman are thus very significant. Her entrance into Abraham's house as the mother of his first child Ishmael, and then her residence there for a season, have this mystic sense in them. But these things do not dispose of the whole history. We have still to look at her dismissal from the house.

Her child grew up to boyhood, and was, as I have suggested, no doubt, the object of family concern. But the current which had long run underground, or was known only in the counsels and promises of God, must appear and assert its course. Grace and the covenant must have their way and become principal in the scene. And therefore in due time, yea at the very right moment, “when the fullness of the time had come,” Isaac is born.

The appearance of such a child was a great era. And soon was it found that he was set for a sign that should be spoken against, as well as for the joy of the elect. Abraham makes a feast, but Ishmael mocks over the same event. Here was the revealing of hearts. One taunts what the other glories in. But Sarah is bolder still. She will not merely take part in Abraham's joy, but she is for judging the scorners. “Cast out the bondwoman and her son,” says she. Here was another heart revealed, a great heart truly. Here was an energy of faith which far outdid even Abraham's. Abraham would personally and quietly enjoy the child of promise, but Sarah will not only do this, laughing with divine believing delight over him, but is for cleaning out by a summary dismissal all that would disturb his full unrivaled heirship of everything.

This was indeed great-hearted faith. This spoke the mind of God. (Gal. 4:30.) This was interpreting the gift of God, the child of promise, aright. This was putting honor upon that gift as it well deserved. It was not a mother's fondness, but faith's boldness; for shall the gift of God be kept merely on a level, on the same floor as it were, with the fruit of human strength or the creatures of man's resources?

This great-hearted faith of Sarah is very encouraging, receiving too, as it does, the full and ready sanction of the Lord Himself. It is very happy to watch this. It is well when the soul can, with

Abraham, rejoice over the accomplished counsels and promises of God. But it is better, when we can be so bold in the faith as with this joy to cast out from our hearts all spirit of bondage and fear, every fruit of nature and every confidence save in the sovereign and glorious resources of the living God—God of all grace and salvation as He is—when we can refuse to hear anything or to see anything that may bush or cloud that goodness and power of God by which He has brought Himself unspeakably near to our hearts.

From the presence of such a faith as this everything must retire and make room for God and His gift. Hagar is dismissed, and of course the mocking Ishmael. Sarah will have it so—faith, rather, will have it so. And so will God; and Abraham, let fondness and nature be as reluctant as they may, must have it so likewise.

What precious mysteries may our souls thus feed upon while they meditate on Hagar's introduction to the house, her residence in the house, and her dismissal from the house, of our father Abraham!

But I would now also, for a little, trace the results of the birth of Isaac, of the appearance of the child of promise in the house of Abraham.

The immediate fruit of this appearance of Isaac, as I have been observing, is the dismissal of Hagar and her child. And, as I also have observed, this is a mystery. “When faith came, we were no longer under a schoolmaster;” but the exhortation now is, “Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.”

The Spirit of sonship displaces that of fear. There must be no room in the house for two children of such opposite tempers. Since Jesus had appeared, the elect stand in the righteousness of faith and wait for the hope it inspires (Gal. 5:5), and fear and bondage depart.

The future fruit of this great mystic event is the covenant of peace between Abraham and the Gentiles, Abraham on that great occasion taking the lead, and soon afterward owning, for the first time, the earth as a beautiful or millennial scene, and the Lord God as the everlasting God, or the Father of the millennial age. (Chap. 21.)

In this way the immediate and the final results of the appearance or birth of the child of the freewoman are exhibited. But there is more to be observed in the history down to chapter 25. Another thing is incidentally shown also—the fortunes of the outcast child of the bondwoman.

At first he is all but dead. The provision with which he left Abraham's house is all spent, and he is cast entirely upon God. But under His provision he grows up and thrives, as a man of the wilderness. There he dwells and has his occupation, and the prophecies which went before on him (chap. 16.) were made good. But in the principle and taste of his mind he returns, as far as he can, to his mother's native land. She gets him an Egyptian wife.

All this is significant. For we know that Ishmael is, mystically, the children of “the Jerusalem that now is.” (Gal. 4) And quite after this pattern of Ishmael, is it now with the Jew; for the Jew (or the nation of Israel) since the day of his dismissal from the house of God, since he ceased to be owned of the Lord in the land of his fathers, has been kept alive by the peculiar hand or provision of God. A full end has been made of other nations but not of Israel, and never will. For so runs the promise: outcast that people are, but not destroyed. They have, it is true, gone back all they could

to the flesh out of which by profession through circumcision they had come; they have in principle returned to Egypt, or found affinity with the ways of an uncircumcised world; but there they are to this day, kept by the present hand of God for the coming purposes of God, all their history marking the energies of a divine hand over them.

This is all significant: the wilderness of Ishmael is as much mystic ground as the land of Israel. But, further, during this growth of Ishmael in the wilderness, the house of God has been enjoying its liberty. Isaac has filled Abraham's and Sarah's heart with laughter. And all this liberty and joy was as much divine as the preservation of the life of Ishmael in the wilderness—the one betokening the Spirit, the other the hand of God. God sanctioned this joy. He would by no means have it otherwise.

And, blessed to tell it, it was a worshipping as well as a deep personal joy; for it could associate itself with any sacrifice. The father and the son, Abraham and Isaac, loved each other with the warmest affections, but at the bidding of the Lord they can go to the altar as the offerer and His Lamb. And it was also a joy that could dwell in thoughts of resurrection, and lay its objects in scenes beyond the grave. And it was holy jealousy as well. It refused all kindredness or Ishmael's affinities with the world. Chapters 22 - 24 exhibit these qualities in Abraham and Isaac, while Ishmael is growing up no better than an Egyptian in the desert. (Chap. 22 - 24.)

This is, I believe, all deeply significant. Is it not the picture of what we in this age ought to be—in a spirit of full gladness and liberty before our God, but also in a spirit of sacrifice, and in a spirit of separation from the world?

Finally, as I have already anticipated, in a little time the scene will change to glory or the kingdom. Abraham or Israel will be courted by the Gentiles and their kings—the earth will be beautified, or planted with groves again, and the altar of the everlasting or millennial God (see chap. 21.) will be raised, while a covenant of peace binds all the families of the earth together; as here at the close Abraham's seed, as by Keturab, are sent into distant lands, with gifts as from a father, though Isaac was at home the heir of his estate! (Chap. 25.)

“Witty inventions,” surely, divine wisdom employs to teach our souls with joy and profit!

J. G. B.

Chapter 105

How They May Be Viewed Christians

Christians may be viewed as the seed of Abraham (Galatians, Hebrews), part of the line of the heir of promise on earth, and not only as those united to Christ as His body, a new and special and heavenly thing true of us on earth. (Ephesians, Colossians)

Chapter 106

On Intercession and Forgiveness

The intercession of Christ, as priest in Hebrews, is not for the forgiveness of sins, nor for sin properly at all, but for mercy and help in time, of need to succor them that are tempted, because all the sanctified are viewed as perfected by one offering. In 1 John, the advocacy is exercised when one has sinned, because there fellowship or communion are spoken of, and this is interrupted by sin. Forgiveness in the sense of non-imputation cannot be sought by one set free in Christ because he does know that sins are not imputed to him. But he confesses his sins, and fatherly forgiveness is given him. Confession goes much deeper into the conscience than merely asking forgiveness.

There is a forgiveness which applies to Christians and to Christians only—what I may call administrative forgiveness, which has nothing to do with non-imputation or righteousness. See James 5:15. Compare 1 John 5:16, and 2 Cor. 2:10.

In 1 John 2 the advocacy of Christ is founded on righteousness and the efficacy of propitiation being already there in Christ. That pardon is plenary on coming to Christ is clear, and (to refer to none else) in Heb. 9; 10, it is largely reasoned out by the Holy Ghost. If not, such sins never could be cleared, as Christ cannot now die over again, and without shedding of blood is no remission. Christ must often have suffered. To make a difference of time is to confound the time of the Spirit's operation in bringing our souls to faith in Christ and His work with the work itself. All our sins were future when Christ bore them. The way in which “once for all,” “forever,” and “no more” are used in Heb. 9; 10 is most distinct and characteristic.

Chapter 107

Is Scripture Typical?

A WORD ON INTERPRETATION.

Symbolism means types of the Old Testament applicable to things in the New. Both concur in stating that this is so. Moses was commanded to make the tabernacle according to the pattern seen in the Mount. Now if God made such a system, ought we to expect no more in it than gowns and curtains? The whole language through scripture is framed on such a symbolical use, and the great facts of the New are the plain counterpart to the symbols of the Old. You must tear the warp out so that it ceases to be a texture before you undo this. Altars, tabernacles, the dwelling place of God, sacrifices, priesthood, the rock, the water, the anointing, the holy place, the mercy-seat, the blood shedding. I should go through every element in its whole structure of thought before I had closed the list of facts and objects presented in the Old Testament and taken up in the New, and which have entered (and this according to scripture) into the conception of our religious thought. It is not a way of interpreting but scripture itself. Christ is the Lamb of God. He is a great High Priest entered into the holiest. And Paul goes farther, telling us as to the history itself, “And these things happened unto them for types, and they are written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the world are come.” One, and only one, true meaning therefore is not the fact in this case.

Say Moses was foolish, and Paul foolish; but if you so interpret scripture, you interpret it contrary to its nature and positive directions; that is, you do not interpret it, you correct it. I have the facts—important, very important, in the history of the people—important as a history of God's dealings with the people; and I get them avowedly pattern facts. Keep the imagination in check—all quite right. Look for doctrines in doctrinal passages, and here for details and illustrations—all right. But do not pretend you are teaching us to interpret scripture rightly when you are directly contradicting it, and saying to it, You are wrong. It is not the Fathers who have said that Sarah and Hagar were an allegory. We do not follow them in such a point as saying, Does God take care for oxen?

If I use scripture at all, and on the weightiest subjects, the rationalist's principle becomes impossible. It breaks down, as you say, the whole structure of scripture itself. And I see that he does not merely check the indulgence of imagination in it, which is quite right, but rejects the idea of more or less. He declares, that “in whatever degree it is practiced, it is equally incapable of being reduced to any rule.” I do not know whether he rejects the Epistle to the Hebrews; but evidently that book is gone wholly if his principle be true, and countless passages throughout the whole New Testament.

Temporal and spiritual Israel, as commonly used, I give him freely up. It is a mere abuse of words. I say, as commonly used; because, in the common adaptation of prophecies, prophecies explicitly referring to Israel are applied to the assembly, where the subject matter and principles are completely opposed. Ordained forms, and facts of history, may have a symbolical application; but moral addresses refer to the objects and moral state of those addressed, and do not give us objects to interpret, but persons addressed. Zion means Zion when she is prophesied about. The

prophecy concerns her because it speaks to her on the moral ground she is on, and the arbitrary application to the assembly is entirely false, because the principle of relationship with God is different. A general principle, as that God is faithful or good, may be of course applied, with just care to see how it is used; yet the people addressed are not symbolical objects but moral persons, and the facts to happen real. If we are to speak of the Lord's prophecy as to Jerusalem, I apply the same principle, but I deny wholly that in Matthew, Titus &c., are spoken of at all. There may have been something analogous; but its only direct application is to dealings yet to come, immediately after which the Lord will appear, I believe this because it says so. In Luke 1 have the siege of Jerusalem, and the language is carefully altered. I believe what is said in both passages. In Luke, whose gospel always looks out to Gentiles, the times of the Gentiles after the siege are distinctly spoken of before the signs that are to come.

Remark here how doubt is thrown on all. It is asked, Is the application of types “to be regarded as the meaning of the original text, or an accommodation of it to the thoughts of latter times?” Now, note that the Lord instituted the last supper as taking the place of the Passover. The apostles apply in every passage these figures, so that the question is not if we are interpreting right; it extends to this—if the Lord and the apostles are merely accommodating these figures or not? What does the rationalist think? He says, “Our object is, not to attempt here the determination of these questions, but to point out that they must be determined before any real progress can be made.” The answer is, for every Christian the matter is determined. They believe in the Lord's and the apostles' use of them—man's uses now they judge by scripture to see if they be just.

The use of any given type now is, of course, to be judged of when it is used. They are most instructive, and, fitting in with positive doctrines which warrant what is drawn from them, they become living pictures and illustrations of what otherwise would escape you. They may not, in our hands, serve to found a doctrine as a first revelation of it; but as a vivid illustration and suggestion of truth they are invaluable.

The rationalist insists on this because “The Old Testament will receive a different meaning accordingly as it is explained from itself or from the New. In the first case, a careful and conscientious study of each one for itself is all that is required; in the second case, the types and ceremonies of the law, perhaps the very facts and persons of the history, will be assumed to be predestined or made after a pattern corresponding to the things that were to be in the latter days.” Now all this is confusion from beginning to end. It ignores the positive statements of the volume pretended to be interpreted. And further, if the book be inspired, one Mind has formed it from beginning to end, and we must look for a coordinated system. If it be not, we find there is an end of predestinating facts or even statements. But we have seen that, if it is a true history, the whole system of the tabernacle was made after a pattern, which the Epistle to the Hebrews largely and specifically declares to be a heavenly one, and the tabernacle a pattern of things in the heavens. But we have this even more specifically defined. The law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image. There were sacrifices: so Jesus was a sacrifice. But the Jewish were repeated, proving that sin was not forever put away for him who came by them; Jesus' was not repeated, because it was. There were many priests, because they died; for us but one, because He ever lives. There was a veil, and no one could go into the holiest; now the veil is rent, and we have boldness to enter. The high priest stood, because his work was never finished; Jesus is set down at the right hand of God, because His work is finished forever, and so on. These were the

outlines of this vast exhibition of God's ways, to be a key, so to speak, near the eye. But neither Testament is simply to be explained by the other. In some points there is contrast, as law and gospel; in others analogies; in others common principles; in others prophetic announcements. The only point we learn to have been hidden was the assembly. This could not be revealed because it was based on the casting down of the middle wall of partition, as the Jewish system was on its being strictly kept up.

But, if God be the Author of the sacred volume, it is monstrous to suppose there was not a preparatory leading on to the full revelation of God Himself, or that He revealed something which was wholly unconnected with and no way introductory to what followed. It was necessary to make distinct the difference between man's standing on the ground of his own responsibility, and grace—between requiring, however justly, and giving. And this, though prophets point to the giving, there is. But promises came before law; and even under law (a ministration of condemnation and death) there were ordinances which prefigured the way of grace, while the exacting of righteousness, which man had not, led him to the sense of the need which grace met. The understanding of all this rests on this: “They shall be all taught of God.” Each part, as to its statements, is to be understood in itself; but, when simply understood, the correspondences and differences will appear, and rich instruction for man's soul be acquired out of them.

All this division of the rationalists, with its consequences, is in the air, and written without any kind of reference to the facts of the case. We do not assume anything about it. We take what is said in the book itself about itself, and find it verified in the richest and most instructive manner. One would think the rationalist had never read Paul's Epistles, or the Hebrews, or indeed any part of the New Testament; for, as I said, he does not reason on its interpretation here, but against its contents. And man's fancies, and scriptural (that is, divine) expositions, are thrown together as of equal weight.

Chapter 108

Jehovah Is My Shepherd

Psa. 23

The blessings of this Psalm modified in this way—the blessings into which as the Shepherd He leads the flock—are not merely temporal but spiritual. The veil is now rent from top to bottom, and we are brought up to God, so that God is not only caring for us all the way, but the exercise of our souls should be to walk in the light with Him, “if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead.”

The care He has is to bring us up to walk in the power of that heavenly glory with Himself. “Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.” God is not only known to us as Jehovah giving us mercies all along the road, but it is the Father blessing us with spiritual things. True, “the hairs of our head are all numbered,” but there is discipline for our souls as well, which leads into blessing.

This Psalm is not only for us, but there was this experience in the Lord Jesus Himself, of God as His Shepherd. As a man upon earth He was kept by God. “He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” He knew restoration of soul in Gethsemane where He, being in an agony, prayed the more earnestly. He never erred in His ways, never needed to be restored in that way. The very same care was exercised for Him—faultless object as He was of it—as there is for us.

Any pious Jew having a renewed nature, in old time, might know and use this Psalm and say, Jehovah my Shepherd. The holiness of God was not fully revealed, and therefore the conscience was not disquieted, and the distance not felt. They knew the favor of God and counted on His goodness then; but now we are brought into the light and see what judgment is. The veil is rent and God's holiness is manifested, for we are in the light as He is in the light through Jesus. “The darkness is past and the true light now shineth.”

Now that sin has been fully shown out, the death of Christ proving what the enmity of the heart was, this matter must be settled. I cannot say, “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever,” if I have not the knowledge of sin forgiven. I cannot talk of confidence, if I have a fear of judgment, and I see the desert of sin in the light of His holiness. I cannot speak of One who may be my Judge, that He is my Shepherd, and “I shall dwell,” &c.

We cannot know Him as our Shepherd if it is an unsettled matter about sin being forgiven. God cannot let sin into His presence. There must be a conscience purged. Christ has been accepted, and He puts us into His place, having made peace through the blood of His cross. “He has put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.” “By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified” — “entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” God does not see sin in Jesus, and we are in Him: therefore He sees no sin in us. The comfort and peace Christ had as a man walking on the earth, He gives us. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you.” Now I have come to put you in the place of unhindered confidence with the Father, and

that is what you could never have, if the least sense of sin were upon you. The peace is made; therefore He can not only say, “Peace I leave,” &c.; but “my peace I give unto you.” These were not idle words; and we can see how He can give it us, having brought us to God and put away everything against us.

Now the question is one of happiness with God (conflict by the way of course, but God is my Shepherd). Not only has He done something for me, but He is something to me. Therefore it is said, “that your faith and hope might be in God.” I believe in God in Christ, as One who has loved me perfectly and manifested His love by putting away my sin. The kindness and love of God our Savior toward man has appeared.

The thought I may now have of God is that He has done all this for me, and that He is all this to me. I may fail and so get into evil, and this will make me ashamed, but it will not destroy my confidence, because my faith and hope are in God Himself. Now God is my Shepherd, and we may have confidence in Himself, for it does not say, He has done this and He will do that; but “I shall not want.” There never can be a want to the soul that has the supply. It is the application of this power and goodness of God to my every-day need that I shall feel; and all this must go on the ground of sin forgiven. Now I have found out not only my need of being justified, but that He has justified me. “Whom he called, them he also justified.” (Rom. 8)

The starting point of Christian experience is, “God for me,” and “if God be for me, who can be against me.” I am the object of His favor, which is “better than life.” “He maketh me to lie down in green pastures.” I shall find food in everything—lie down, no one making me afraid. There are not only green pastures to be seized, with wolf in the way, but I lie down in them, and it is “he leadeth me,” and that must be in perfect peace and enjoyment, “beside the still waters.” This is the natural Christian state, realizing all things ours, for God is for us: therefore we may lie down. We shall have conflict, but, amidst it all, enjoyment.

Further, “He restoreth my soul.” This we know in a different way to what the Lord Jesus could. In one sense it could be said of Him, for He had had trouble without sin. “I cry in the day time, and thou hearest not, and in the night season,” &c. See John 12:27, 28 also. Sorrow is not sin. Christ knew sorrow but not distrust of God. If the sorrow gets between our souls and God, so as to produce distrust, it is sin; and if sin comes in, He can restore the soul. Whether from trouble or offending, He can restore.

See what thought he had about God! He does not say, I must get my soul restored and then go to God; but “he restoreth my soul.” It is not said, If any man repent, but “if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father.” Who can restore but He? There may be something to correct in us, if not actually a fall—hardness in my heart, which trouble shows me, &c. For our good in this way, He sends trouble—the soul needs plowing up, and cannot tell what God is doing—as well as that which is our proper portion as followers of Him who was the “man of sorrows.” But when He does restore, it is “for his name's sake.” Here am I, a poor failing wretched creature, and the Lord comes in and restores. Why? “For his name's sake.” Whatever I am, God is for me, and not only in this way, but also against enemies. “Though I walk through the valley,” &c. Man had reason to quail at death, before Christ came, for death was the wages of sin, Gen. 3; but now we need “fear no evil,” death is “ours” now: “the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.” If they took my life, they could not hurt me, for I was trusting to One

who could raise me; Paul meant to say, If they take this life I have lost nothing; nay, it is positive gain, for it hastens me on the road. Death is not terrible now. Why? “Thou art with me,” terrible without. “Thy rod,” &c., not only a rod, but “Thy rod,” &c. I shall fear no evil. Why? Because no one can compete with God. Death is the very thing by which Christ has saved me, and it is by that He will take me into His presence: “absent from the body present with the Lord.” “Though I walk,” &c., it may come as a trial to exercise my soul, well, I have to remember, “Thou art with me.”

Ver. 5. There is not only failure in life, and failure in death to meet, but mighty enemies; and I can sit down amongst them and find everything given me for food. I feed on this dying Christ, and it was in His death Satan's power was most put forth. In another light, Satan comes and tempts me with the flesh, but I can say to him, I am dead. I have a right to say it, I may fail in saying it, but that is another thing. Satan cannot touch anything but my flesh, and, if I am mortifying my members, he has no power. If my members are alive, Satan cannot count me dead. In the presence of all these I can sit down and say, I have done with them all, for “Thou art with me.” I have found that power by which they are made nothing to me. Then we get into farther security still, not only lying down in green pastures, &c., and led on in the paths of righteousness, comfort and support in walking through the valley so that there is no fear, and a table spread in the presence of enemies; but my head anointed with oil, “my cup runneth over.” Now that Christ has ascended, and the Holy Ghost has been given, there is triumphant joy, abounding over all, “through the power of the Holy Ghost.”

Ver. 6. “My cup runneth over.” I now find God Himself. the source of all, and not only this as a present thing, but seeing what God is, I can say, “goodness and mercy shall follow me,” &c., and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. We shall never want goodness and not find it. It “shall follow me.” The goodness of God is better than man's, if we could get it, and there is a place to dwell in— “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord,” &c. That is my hope. In the Father's house, there are not only blessings conferred, but a place to dwell in with the Father forever. As He brought Christ through, of course He will bring me through too; and I am there now by faith. I am at home with God my Father. Temporal mercies come from God's love, and spiritual, which are far better. And He would have us feel that all the correctings and chastenings by the way are founded on the fact that He is for us. When peace is really settled through the work of Christ, I have all these exercises; and what is known only to faith at the beginning becomes afterward experience, though always faith too; but every step, having had this experience, we can say, we know it—whatever it be we meet with by the way—we know it is all for good, and “we shall dwell,” &c. Wonderful grace!

We may notice that the Lord may put us through all kinds of trials, to teach us His faithfulness and love, while finding out what we are, we know ourselves so little. He studies as it were our characters, as we do our children.

There is a measure of confidence produced the moment God begins to work in the heart, but not quietness and peace until there is the knowledge of sin put away.

Notes on Jeremiah 42

THE heart, even where unrenewed, feels the need of religion till hardened by sin without conscience or blinded by the speculations of a misguided mind. But, however fair its promise or its actual form, the will is soon put to the test of God's word, which nothing stands but faith.

“Then all the captains of the forces, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and Jezaniah the son of Hoshaiah, and all the people from the least even unto the greatest, came near, and said unto Jeremiah the prophet, Let, we beseech thee, our supplication be accepted before thee, and pray for us unto the Lord thy God, even for all this remnant (for we are left but a few of many, as thine eyes do behold us): that the Lord thy God may show us the way wherein we may walk, and the thing that we may do.” (Ver. 1-3.)

Real faith is unsuspicious, and it can afford to be so; for the believer knows in whom he has believed, and can commit oneself and others, the present and the future, to the One whose grace has looked on us for eternity, and whose righteous government notices every word and way and feeling and desire along the road. Hence if wise, one is spared from censoriousness; and though liable to be deceived, it is only when we fail to bring every difficulty to our God. So it was here. “Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them, I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the Lord your God according to your words; and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you. Then they said to Jeremiah, The Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not even according to all things for the which the Lord thy God shall send thee to us. Whether it be good, or whether it be evil, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God, to whom we send thee; that it may be well with us, when we obey the voice of the Lord our God.” (Ver. 4-6.) If protestation could have assured the prophet, there was enough then; but he was not ignorant either of man or of Satan. His trust was in God, let the Jew be true or false.

But how painful it is to prove that the flesh betrays itself quite as much by its excessive show of piety as by profanity! It is not by want of fervor that its hollowness is detected by the experienced eye, but rather by too profuse, or at least too self-confident, a readiness to obey the divine will, whatever it be. The duty may be plain; but what of the heart? of the power to go on and to go through? Faith supposes the sense of our own weakness as surely as it counts on God and His grace. Human resolution in divine things has its force only where it is allowed its own will.

“And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah. Then called he Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces which were with him, and all the people from the least even to the greatest. And said unto them, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto whom ye sent me to present your supplication before him; if ye will still abide in this land, then will I build you, and not pull you down, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up: for I repent me of the evil that I have done unto you. Be not afraid of the king of Babylon, of whom ye are afraid; be not afraid of him, saith the Lord: for I am with you to save you, and to deliver you from his hand. And I will shew mercy unto you, that he may have mercy upon you, and cause you

to return to your own land." (Ver. 7-12.) The prophet himself waits till the divine answer comes: it was no question of his wisdom, but of God's word. And God now as peremptorily warns against fleeing into Egypt for protection, as He had before admonished them to submit to the king of Babylon. Faith accepts the chastening of sin, yet withal confides in God and His grace. Unbelief is fruitful in resources, all of which are merely the workings of a rebellious heart and secure nothing but ruin to those who are carried away by it. If they believed, low as their estate was, they need not make haste, and would surely be established; for they would be in His hand who could turn the heart of Nebuchadnezzar toward them: why should they be terrified by their adversaries? "But if ye say, We will not dwell in this land, neither obey the voice of the Lord your God, saying, No; but we will go into the land of Egypt, where we shall see no war, nor hear the sound of the trumpet, nor have hunger of bread; and there will we dwell: and now therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye remnant of Judah; Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, If ye wholly set your faces to enter into Egypt, and go to sojourn there; then it shall come to pass, that the sword, which ye feared, shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine, whereof ye were afraid, shall follow close after you there in Egypt; and there ye shall die. So shall it be with all the men that set their faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there; they shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: and none of them shall remain or escape from the evil that I will bring upon them. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; As mine anger and my fury hath been poured forth upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem; so shall my fury be poured forth upon you, when ye shall enter into Egypt and ye shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach; and ye shall see this place no more." (Ver. 13-18.)

Thus God in the long run invariably accomplishes His will. Happy they who are in its current all the way through! If men resist, they gain nothing but grief and disappointment, which temporary success only embitters; but far from hindering the word of Jehovah, they only accomplish it by the measures intended to give effect to their own wishes, and the evils they most dread they bring infallibly on themselves.

"The LORD hath said concerning you, O ye remnant of Judah; Go ye not into Egypt: know certainly that I have admonished you this day. For ye dissembled in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it. And now I have this day declared it to you; but ye have not obeyed the voice of the Lord your God, nor anything for the which he hath sent me unto you. Now therefore know certainly that ye shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence, in the place whither ye desire to go and to sojourn." (Ver. 19-22.)

The prophet had walked in patience, the people in dissimulation, and God made all plain to His own glory and in His own time. Justly are those destroyed for their disobedience of God who had made the most pious protestation of unswerving devotedness to His will.

Notes on Jeremiah 43

The preceding scene ended with the gravest warning to the Jews in the land who had consulted the prophet. The present chapter shows how soon it proved unavailing. Will was at work. The difficulty lay there. They trusted themselves. They did not trust God. Egypt was near, Nebuchadnezzar at a distance. He who had chastised the apostate pride of Judah was offensive to them. They refused to bow to the word, or to confide in the working of the Lord in their favor. They had nevertheless loudly proffered to obey His voice; and He forbade them by His prophet to go down into Egypt, whither they wished to betake themselves.

“And it came to pass, that when Jeremiah had made an end of speaking unto all the people all the words of the Lord their God, for which the Lord their God had sent him to them, even all these words, then spake Azariah the son of Hoshaiah, and Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the proud men, saying unto Jeremiah, Thou speakest falsely: the Lord our God hath not sent thee to say, Go not into Egypt to sojourn there: but Baruch the son of Neriah setteth thee on against us, for to deliver us into the hand of the Chaldeans, that they might put us to death, and carry us away captives into Babylon.” (Ver. 1-3.) Unbelief may go on quietly for a while, and even put forth pious professions; but a time of trial inevitably comes, and tests whether it is God's will, or our own, that we are really seeking. Johanan, the son of Kareah (who had so lately opposed the crafty assassin and royal plunderer, Ishmael), is one of the proud men who insult the prophet and reject the message God sent by him. Had there been a lowly and contrite spirit, he would have trembled, and been enabled to bear the voice of Jehovah. But he was not of God; and an unjudged will blinded his eyes and dulled his ears. Perhaps he honestly thought what he said; but if so, how did he come to think so? What ground had Jeremiah given to sanction or so much as to excuse a doubt of his communication as from Jehovah? His own evil heart of unbelief not only mistrusted the prophet, but gave itself loose reins in surmising a plot between Baruch and the prophet to hand the rest over to the Chaldean conquerors. The credulity of the unbeliever is proverbial; and an evil self-willed action promptly follows.

“So Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, and all the people, obeyed not the voice of the Lord, to dwell in the land of Judah. But Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces, took all the remnant of Judah that were returned from all nations, whither they had been driven, to dwell in the land of Judah: even men, and women, and children, and the king's daughters, and every person that Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard had left with Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Jeremiah the prophet, and Baruch the son of Neriah. So they came into the land of Egypt: for they obeyed not the voice of the Lord: thus came they even to Tahpanhes.” (Ver. 4-7.) Those who believe can afford to be calm and submit. If the hand of power compels them to go here or there, it is no longer their responsibility, but the guilt of such as despise the word of the Lord. Till Jesus returns in glory, the faithful, above all those entrusted with the testimony, have to swim against the current, and to suffer where overborne by violence.

But this does not silence the prophet, however naturally timid and sensitive. “Then came the word of the Lord unto Jeremiah in Tahpanhes, saying, Take great stones in thine hand, and hide them in the clay in the brick kiln, which is at the entry of Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah; and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon, my servant, and will set his throne upon these stones that I have hid: and he shall spread his royal pavilion over them. And when he cometh, he shall smite the land of Egypt, and deliver such as are for death to death; and such as are for captivity to captivity; and such as are for the sword to the sword. And I will kindle a fire in the houses of the gods of Egypt; and he shall burn them, and carry them away captives: and he shall array himself with the land of Egypt, as a shepherd putteth on his garment; and he shall go forth from thence in peace. He shall break also the images of Beth-shemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.” (Ver. 8-13.) Little did “all the proud men” expect that they were only carrying along with them one whose voice would so shortly open in Egypt to pronounce their doom; and this by the hand of the very conqueror against whom they hoped to erect an impassable barrier in the power of the king of the south. Vain hope to escape the hand of the God they despised! Out of their own will and in defiance of His word, did they retire into Egypt for shelter? For this very reason destruction fell not only on themselves, but on the broken reed in which they trusted.

So it is always. In righteous government our sin becomes ere long our chastening and the world's woe, and what our blindness built on as the rock turns out to be a quicksand, the sport of waves and winds in the swift-coming day of visitation.

Notes on Jeremiah 44

The path of unbelief is a rapid descent when the heart hardens itself against a direct warning of the Lord; and the greater the profession of piety before, the more profound the fall. To go down into Egypt for safety was not natural in those who had ever reluctantly bowed to Babylon, and dreaded the wrath of the Chaldean king because of the murder of the governor and the rest. But it was a fatal step when the prophet gave them the word of Jehovah, and they were assured of safety in the land subject to Nebuchadnezzar, of destruction in Egypt whither their impulse, yea determination, was to go prudentially for shelter. God loves to be the Savior of those who bear His name; if they desert Him for another, woe to them! It cannot but be to their shame, sorrow and ruin. Even when they have revolted to the uttermost, they are not left without a message, if peradventure any might yet hear and escape.

“The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the Jews which dwell in the land of Egypt, which dwell at Migdol, and at Tahpanhes, and at Noph, and in the country of Pathros, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Ye have seen all the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem, and upon all the cities of Judah; and, behold, this day they are a desolation, and no man dwelleth therein, because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke me to anger, in that they went to burn incense, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, ye, nor your fathers. Howbeit I sent unto you all my servants the prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh, do not this abominable thing that I hate. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear to turn from their wickedness, to burn no incense unto other gods. Wherefore my fury and mine anger was poured forth, and was kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; and they are wasted and desolate, as at this day.” (Ver. 1-6.) Such was the wretched part of the chosen people and their king.

Had God pleasure in recounting their sins, and His judgments as well as warnings? Nay, it was His pity and desire that those in Egypt might at length hearken. “Therefore now thus saith the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel; Wherefore commit ye this great evil against your souls, to cut off from you man and woman, child and suckling, out of Judah, to leave you none to remain: In that ye provoke me unto wrath with the works of your hands, burning incense unto other gods in the land of Egypt, whither ye be gone to dwell, that ye might cut yourselves off, and that ye might be a curse and a reproach among all the nations of the earth? Have ye forgotten the wickedness of your fathers, and the wickedness of the kings of Judah, and the wickedness of their wives, and your own wickedness, and the wickedness of your wives, which they have committed in the land of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem? They are not humbled even unto this day, neither have they feared, nor walked in my law, nor in my statutes, that I set before you and before your fathers.” (Ver. 7-10.) Imminent peril bung over them; Egypt would be a vain shelter, but meanwhile it was too sure a decoy into idolatry.

Let it be noted here that the prophet lays stress on the wickedness of wives, and the place it had in precipitating the disasters of Israel before and now. Women are more ready to hear and feel, for

good or ill, than men. The brighter side we see in the Acts of the Apostles, and also in the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament. The darker side appears here as elsewhere. It is a great grace from the Lord when they receive the truth and are saved; it is an awful sign of speedy judgment when they, renouncing the truth, are bold and shameless in their resolution to serve a false god. But we shall see more presently.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will set my face against you for evil, and to cut off all Judah. And I will take the remnant of Judah, that have set their faces to go into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, and they shall all be consumed, and fall in the land of Egypt; they shall even be consumed by the sword and by the famine: they shall die, from the least even unto the greatest, by the sword and by the famine: and they shall be an execration, and an astonishment, and a curse, and a reproach. For I will punish them that dwell in the land of Egypt, as I have punished Jerusalem, by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence: so that none of the remnant of Judah, which are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall escape or remain, that they should return into the land of Judah, to the which they have a desire to return to dwell there: for none shall return but such as shall escape.” (Ver. 11-14.) Alas! they had ears, but they heard not. The remnant was rotten to the core.

“Then all the men which knew that their wives had burned incense unto other gods, and all the women that stood by, a great multitude, even all the people that dwelt in the land of Egypt, in Pathros, answered Jeremiah, saying, As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we, and our fathers, our kings, and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem: for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well, and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. And when we burned incense to the queen of heaven, and poured out drink offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her, and pour out drink offerings unto her, without our men?” (Ver. 15-19.) Thus they gloried in their shame, regarding not the works of Jehovah nor the operation of His hands, to their own destruction. Their calamities they interpreted as the consequence of slighting the queen of heaven, for their will was thoroughly committed to a so-called religion, which consecrated mere depravity and passion.

Why did they not attribute their troubles, as was the truth, to the chastening hand of God? This is precisely what the prophet charges home with the simplicity and force of truth. “Then Jeremiah said unto all the people, to the men, and to the women, and to all the people which had given him that answer, saying, The incense that ye burned in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, ye, and your fathers, your kings, and your princes, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them, and came it not into his mind? So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of your doings, and because of the abominations which ye have committed; therefore is your land a desolation, and an astonishment, and a curse, without an inhabitant, as at this day. Because ye have burned incense, and because ye have sinned against the Lord, and have not obeyed the voice of the Lord, nor walked in his law, nor in his statutes, nor in his testimonies; therefore this evil is happened unto you, as at this day.” (Ver. 20-23.)

Next the prophet solemnly lays before all of Judah in Egypt the inevitable end of their idolatry, as in former chapters of their unbelief and rebellious disobedience. “Moreover Jeremiah said unto all the people, and to all the women, Hear the word of the Lord, all Judah that are in the land of Egypt: thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying, Ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, We will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her: ye will surely accomplish your vows, and surely perform your vows. Therefore hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold, I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah in all the land of Egypt, saying, The Lord God liveth. Behold, I will watch over them for evil, and not for good: and all the men of Judah that are in the land of Egypt shall be consumed by the sword and by the famine, until there be an end of them. Yet a small number that escape the sword shall return out of the land of Egypt into the land of Judah, and all the remnant of Judah, that are gone into the land of Egypt to sojourn there, shall know whose words shall stand, mine or theirs. And this shall be a sign unto you, saith the Lord, that I will punish you in this place, that ye may know that my words shall surely stand against you for evil: thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will give Pharaoh-hophra king of Egypt into the hand of his enemies, and into the hand of them that seek his life: as I gave Zedekiah king of Judah into the hand of Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon, his enemy, and that sought his life.” (Ver. 24-30.) The sign should be the utter downfall of Pharaoh-hophra (Apries in Herodotus, and Uaphris in Manetho), who was then reigning, and historically known as a singularly self-confident monarch; and yet he was put down ignominiously by a revolt of his own subjects, who set up a rival king; and he finally, spite of intervening, kindness, gave him up to the Egyptians, who strangled him. Those who forgot the ruin of Zedekiah should soon see the arrogant reed of Egypt break before the blast which was not to spare their own guilt,

Notes on Jeremiah 45

(Chap. 45.)

No little speculation has been expended on this chapter and the reason why it is found here. Historically, it would follow chapter 36. It stands as a fact wholly apart from what precedes and follows. But I do not entertain a doubt that its divinely assigned place is where we find it in the Hebrew Bible, the order of which is of course adhered to in the authorized version.

It is plain that, as the preceding chapter 44 gives us the last direct account of the life of Jeremiah, chapter 45 furnishes the latest notice of his friend and scribe Baruch, though in point of fact the message here inserted was delivered some twenty years before the scene immediately before described in the land of Egypt.

But moral considerations enter also; and, as I think, of greater moment than any such motive for collocation. It is not merely at a season of danger from an incensed monarch that the mind of God conveyed by the prophet is of value; it may be increasingly needed when that pressure yields to a crowd of disasters, and a spurious calm succeeds blast after blast of evil. The question is, how Jehovah would have one who served Him to feel and act in a day of grief, and when His hand is still held out to execute summary judgment on the guilty people who dishonor His name entrusted to their keeping. This the prophet answers from God. May we have ears to hear what was said to Baruch!

“The word that Jeremiah the prophet spake unto Baruch the son of Neriah, when he had written these words in a book at the mouth of Jeremiah, in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, unto thee, O Baruch; thou didst say, Woe is me now! for the Lord hath added grief to my sorrow; I fainted in my sighing, and I find no rest.” (Ver. 1-3.) It is evident that Baruch was not only troubled on every side, but straitened, his way hedged up as he thought, abandoned to distress without measure or end, and destruction staring him in the face. He was disheartened and weary; he could find no rest for his soul. This should never be for the believer. Not only the Christian now can never be thus without sin and unbelief at work; but even of old it ought not to have been. For, as Isaiah declares not only the everlasting God, Jehovah, faints not nor is weary, but He gives power to the faint and increases strength to those who have no might. Thus, while nature's vigor fails utterly in the hour of trial, they that wait on Jehovah but change their strength, mount up as eagles, run without being weary and walk without being faint. How much more should we not be “weary pilgrims,” though we may well wait in sorrow though surely with a joyful hope in the Spirit!

There is always in such cases an inner forgetfulness of the Lord, a lack of communion with His mind and ways, an allowance of desires which spring from self whatever be the plausible cover they may wear in our eyes or before others.

Did Baruch simply and thoroughly vindicate Jehovah's ways with Israel? Did he in his heart sanctify the Lord God who had broken to pieces the people that He loved? This I gravely doubt.

Otherwise he had not been so overwhelmed, but would surely have looked to Him and found an answer of repose in his spirit for the tears which He puts in His bottle. But as with us, so with His afflicted servant of old: God knew every thought and intent of the heart; and this in pitifulness, yet fidelity withal. Hence the word that follows: “Thus shalt thou say unto him, The Lord saith thus: Behold, that which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up, even this whole land. And seekest thou great things for thyself? seek them not: for, behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord: but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey in all places whither thou goest.” Verses 4, 5.

This instruction is of great price to us who are partakers of a heavenly calling in the present ruined state of Christendom. Not that it was ever allowed to the Christian to seek great things for self or even for the church. True discipleship is inseparable from the cross, as our hoped for portion in the glory of God depends on the crucified One. And Christianity only comes in when God had tried man and found him wanting in every time and way and place; in the end of the world, as it is said (or rather consummation of the ages) when the proof was complete and manifest that the creature, as far as his own responsibility was concerned, was in no less ruin and misery than dishonor to God; and, in principle therefore, it could be said, “now is the judgment of this world.” Thereon the wisdom of God gave those He separated to Himself by Christ Jesus in grace now, and for heavenly glory in hope, a place not of the world—while in it and passing through it, not of the world as Christ is not. This, however, it becomes us even more peremptorily to hold fast, now that the outward framework of the Christian profession must be added to the ruins of man and of Israel; and we cannot but testify according to the word of our Lord His speedy appearing to judge the world in righteousness. We, it is true, have a blessed hope and await His coming to receive us to Himself. Baruch had but his life guaranteed to him, come what might, and wherever he might go. Our place as Christians is association with Christ—the cross, and the glory. May we never forget it, nor seek aught inconsistent with Him in both! But if we be ever so right in other respects, we fail if we do not act and feel suitably to the ways of God in a day when He has pronounced on evil and is about to judge. Lowliness especially becomes him whom grace has separated from that which is offensive to God; pride and hardness and self-seeking, always evil, become such an one least of all, and especially at such a time.

Notes on Jeremiah 46

We now enter on a series of prophetic threatenings against various nations, beginning with Egypt and going through with the neighboring foes of the Jews, and ending with the utter destruction of Babylon; for the last chapter is an appendix, inspired but not Jeremiah's, though (I doubt not) rightly winding all up with the ruin of Zedekiah, and of the temple, and of the poor captives of Judah, among whom we see the royal son of David the pensioner of Evil-merodach king of Babylon. It is a complete picture of the then woes on the guilty people of Jehovah with judgment on their enemies. Israel had as yet wrought no deliverance in the earth. I do not doubt that the order of the Hebrew, followed by the Authorized Version and most others, is put in moral order by God, and that a mere chronological sequence would defeat this intention. Our business is not to arrange but believe.

Our chapter consists of two parts which refer to transactions severed by a considerable interval. The opening verse is general, “the word of Jehovah which came to Jeremiah against the Gentiles,” and seems to introduce chapters 46 - 51. Verses 2-12 comprise the first of the two denunciations of Egypt which fill the chapter; as verses 13-28 the second.

The first then runs, “Against Egypt, against the army of Pharaoh-necho king of Egypt, which was by the river Euphrates in Carchemish, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon smote in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah. Order ye the buckler and shield and draw near to battle. Harness the horses; and get up, ye horsemen, and stand forth with your helmets; furbish the spears, and put on the brigandines.” (Ver. 2-4.) It was the same energetic king whom Josiah attacked at Megiddo on his route to Carchemish but to his own ruin, not at all by any design of the Egyptian monarch who in vain begged the king of Judah to leave him alone. He subsequently deposed Jehoahaz and set up Eliakim as king, changing his name to Jehoiakim. But reverse was at hand. His army at Carchemish was utterly routed by Nebuchadnezzar, and the consequence was not merely the loss of all Asiatic possessions, but the shutting up of the king within his own land henceforth. “Wherefore have I seen them dismayed and turned away back? and their mighty ones are beaten down, and are fled apace, and look not back: for fear was round about, saith Jehovah. Let not the swift flee away, nor the mighty man escape; they shall stumble, and fall toward the north by the river Euphrates. Who is this that cometh up as a flood, whose waters are moved as the rivers? Egypt riseth up like a flood, and his waters are moved like the rivers; and he saith, I will go up, and will cover the earth; I will destroy the city and the inhabitants thereof. Come up, ye horses; and rage, ye chariots; and let the mighty men come forth; the Ethiopians and the Libyans, that handle the shield; and the Lydians, that handle and bend the bow. For this is the day of Jehovah God of hosts, a day of vengeance, that he may avenge him of his adversaries; and the sword shall devour, and it shall be satiate and made drunk with their blood: for the Jehovah of hosts hath a sacrifice in the north country by the river Euphrates. Go up into Gilead, and take balm, O virgin, the daughter of Egypt: in vain shalt thou use many medicines; for thou shalt not be cured. The nations have heard of thy shame, and thy cry hath filled the land: for the mighty man hath stumbled against the mighty, and they are fallen both together.” (Ver. 5-12.)

The rest of the chapter is another word of Jehovah and relates to Pharaoh-hophra (the Apries of Herodotus and Iraphris of Manetho), who was attacked by Nebuchadnezzar in his own dominions, as we saw in chapter 44. “The word that the Lord spake to Jeremiah the prophet, how Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon should come and smite the land of Egypt. Declare ye in Egypt, and publish in Migdol, and publish in Noph and in Tahpanhes: say ye, Stand fast and prepare thee; for the sword shall devour round about thee. Why are thy valiant men swept away? they stood not, because the Lord did drive them. He made many to fall, yea, one fell upon another: and they said, Arise, and let us go again to our own people, and to the land of our nativity, from the oppressing sword. They did cry there, Pharaoh king of Egypt is but a noise; he hath passed the time appointed. As I live, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of hosts, Surely as Tabor is among the mountains, and as Carmel by the sea, so shall he come.” (Ver. 13-18.) Nothing can be conceived more life-like. As proud as he was prosperous, he trusted chiefly to mercenaries. This is noticeable in the prophecy, verse 16; and it is repeated in verse 21. It is known indeed that his own subjects revolted, fought and defeated his foreign supports, as they also in the end put him to death. But whatever the disasters on Egypt inflicted by the king of Babylon or his servants, “Afterward it shall be inhabited, as in the days of old, saith Jehovah.” (Ver. 26.)

The chapter ends with consolation to the chosen people who might have dreaded now at least utter extinction for their folly and self-will. “But fear not thou, O my servant Jacob, and be not dismayed, O Israel: for, behold, I will save thee from afar off, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; and Jacob shall return, and be in rest and at ease, and none shall make him afraid. Fear thou not, O Jacob my servant, saith the Lord: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee: but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished.” (Ver. 26, 27.) The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

Chapter 114

Notes on Jeremiah 47

Jehovah was now judging: who could escape? Certainly not the Philistines. They were very far from the importance of Egypt; but it was the judgment of the nations under God's hand, and their diminished might since the days of Saul, or their insignificance compared with a power which aspired (though in vain) to the sovereignty of the world, could furnish no protection.

“The word of Jehovah that came to Jeremiah the prophet against the Philistines, before that Pharaoh smote Gaza. Thus saith Jehovah; Behold, waters rise up out of the north, and shall be an overflowing flood, and shall overflow the land, and all that is therein; the city, and them that dwell therein: then the men shall cry, and all the inhabitants of the land shall howl.” (Ver. 1, 2.) The king of the south might smite Gaza; but there were graver perils impending from a wholly different quarter, and this too announced before the blow struck by the king of Egypt. Under the well-known figure of rising waters and an overflowing flood, which Isaiah makes so familiar to his reader, was set forth the overwhelming scourge, and this from “the north,” by which God was going to visit the neighbors of Israel on their south-western frontier. Utter devastation should come through their Chaldean invaders. Country and town should alike feel, men and all howl for anguish.

“At the noise of the stamping of the hoofs of his strong horses, at the rushing of his chariots, and at the rumbling of his wheels, the fathers shall not look back to their children for feebleness of hands; because of the day that cometh to spoil all the Philistine; and to cut off from Tyrus and Zidon every helper that remaineth: for Jehovah will spoil the Philistines, the remnant of the country of Caphtor. Baldness is come upon Gaza; Ashkelon is cut off with the remnant of their valley: how long wilt thou cut thyself?” (Ver. 3-5.) Thus does the Spirit energetically set forth the might of the assailants bearing down all before them, and the helpless agony of the once proud lords who formerly tyrannized over Israel, when they should look in vain for succor to Tire and Zidon, and superstitious humiliation before their gods be as useless as the help of their old allies, themselves wasted and cut off. In truth, as the prophet tells them, it was Jehovah who would spoil the Philistine; whatever instrumentality He might be pleased to employ; and even this, to make all the more evidently of Himself, is not obscurely intimated.

Hence the bold appeal of the closing verses: “O thou sword of Jehovah, how long will it be ere thou be quiet? put up thyself into thy scabbard, rest, and be still. How can it be quiet, seeing Jehovah hath given it a charge against Ashkelon, and against the sea shore? there hath he appointed it.” (Ver. 6, 7.) It is a tremendous thought that Jehovah's sword should have no rest; but so it was. Little did Nebuchadnezzar think that Jehovah arranged the campaign of that bitter and hasty nation whose judgment and dignity proceeded of themselves. Little did Ashkelon on the sea shore see in those swift and fiery horsemen a charge appointed of Jehovah against them.

Notes on Jeremiah 48

“Against [or “concerning,” for it is not exclusively a prediction of calamity] Moab thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel.” The judgments of God were abroad; and should Moab be unpunished? Confidence in political wisdom is not the characteristic as with Egypt; but pride may be shown in other ways, and in all is most offensive to God: in what land or people was it more conspicuous than in Moab?

“Woe unto Nebo! for it is spoiled.: Kiriathaim is confounded and taken: Misgab is confounded and dismayed. There shall be no more praise of Moab: in Heshbon they have devised evil against it: come, and let us cut it off from being a nation. Also thou shalt be cut down, O Madmen; the sword shall pursue thee. A voice of crying shall be from Horonaim, spoiling and great destruction. Moab is destroyed; her little ones have caused a cry to be heard. For in the going up of Luhith continual weeping shall go up; for in the going down of Horonaim the enemies have heard a cry of destruction.” (Ver. 1-5.) The language, especially in what follows, so echoes that of Isaiah that one can hardly resist the inference that the same judgment is before the eyes of the revealing Spirit. Only we must bear in mind that the earlier prophet appends to “the burden of Moab,” in the last verse of chapter 16, an approaching blow “within three years,” which would be an earnest of still deeper humiliation in store when Nebuchadnezzar would bring them to the dust. To this latter Jeremiah confines himself save so far as room may be left for both judgment and mercy in the then far distant future—the yet future day of Jehovah.

In verses 6-9 the prophet addresses his solemn counsel: “Flee, save your lives, and be like the heath in the wilderness. For because thou hast trusted in thy works and in thy treasures, thou shalt also be taken: and Chemosh shall go forth into captivity with his priests and his princes together. And the spoiler shall come upon every city, and no city shall escape; the valley also shall perish, and the plain shall be destroyed, as Jehovah hath spoken. Give wings unto Moab, that it may flee and get away: for the cities thereof shall be desolate, without any to dwell therein.” They had flesh for their arm and trusted in man, departing in heart from Jehovah. But wings do not suffice to flee away, when Jehovah directs the blow, denouncing him that does His work with negligence. “Cursed be he that doeth the work of Jehovah deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, and hath not been emptied from vessel to vessel, neither hath he gone into captivity: therefore his taste remained in him, and his scent is not changed. Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will send unto him wanderers, that shall cause him to wander, and shall empty his vessels, and break their bottles.

And Moab shall be ashamed of Chemosh, as the house of Israel was ashamed of Beth-el their confidence. How say ye, We are mighty and strong men for the war? Moab is spoiled, and gone up out of her cities, and his chosen young men are gone down to the slaughter, saith the King, whose name is Jehovah of hosts. The calamity of Moab is near to come, and his affliction hasteneth fast. All ye that are about him, bemoan him; and all ye that know his name, say, How is

the strong staff broken, and the beautiful rod!" (Ver. 10-17.)

Then calls follow to the daughter that inhabits Dibon to come down, and to the inhabitress of Aroer to stand and espy. (Ver. 18, 19.) The truth is, the time of ruin was surely come: Moab was confounded, and spoiled, and judgment come on the plain and on all the cities of the land far or near. (Ver. 20-24.) "The horn of Moab is cut off, and his arm is broken, saith Jehovah. Make ye him drunken: for he magnified himself against Jehovah: Moab also shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision. For was not Israel a derision unto thee? was he found among thieves? for since thou spakest of him, thou skippedst for joy. O ye that dwell in Moab, leave the cities, and dwell in the rock, and be like the dove that maketh her nest in the sides of the hole's mouth. We have heard the pride of Moab, (he is exceeding proud) his loftiness, and his arrogancy, and pride, and the haughtiness of his heart. I know his wrath, saith Jehovah; but it shall not be so; his lies shall not so effect it." (Ver. 25-30.)

The prophet then adopts Isaiah's words, as also his howling for its fallen pride. "Therefore will I howl for Moab, and I will cry out for all Moab; mine heart shall mourn for the men of Kir-heres. O vine of Sibmah, I will weep for thee with the weeping of Jazer: thy plants are gone over the sea, they reach even to the sea of Jazer: the spoiler is fallen upon thy summer fruits and upon thy vintage. And joy and gladness is taken from the plentiful field, and from the land of Moab; and I have caused wine to fail from the winepresses: none shall tread with shouting; their shouting shall be no shouting. From the cry of Heshbon even unto Elealeh, and even unto Jahaz, have they uttered their voice, from Zoar even unto Horonaim, as an heifer of three years old: for the waters also of Nimrim shall be desolate. Moreover I will cause to cease in Moab, saith Jehovah, him that offereth in the high places, and him that burneth incense to his gods. Therefore mine heart shall sound for Moab, like pipes, and mine heart shall sound like pipes for the men of Kir-heres; because the riches that he hath gotten are perished." (Ver. 81-86.) But the picture is much amplified here: "For every head shall be bald, and every beard clipped: upon all the hands shall be cuttings, and upon the loins sackcloth. There shall be lamentation generally upon all the housetops of Moab, and in the streets thereof: for I have broken Moab like a vessel wherein is no pleasure, saith Jehovah. They shall saying, How is it broken down! how hath Moab turned the back with shame! so shall Moab be a derision and a dismaying to all them about him." (Ver. 37-39.)

In verses 40-46 is given a vigorous sketch of their enemy's resistless course of victory, and of Moab's presage of helpless ruin, under Jehovah's resolve against those who magnified themselves against Him. "For thus saith Jehovah; Behold, he shall fly as an eagle, and shall spread his wings over Moab. Kerioth is taken and the strongholds are surprised, and the mighty men's hearts in Moab at that day shall be as the heart of a woman in her pangs. And Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against Jehovah. Fear and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith Jehovah. He that fleeth from the fear shall fall into the pit; and he that getteth up out of the pit shall be taken in the snare: for I will bring upon it, even upon Moab, the year of their visitation saith Jehovah. They that fled stood under the shadow of Heshbon because of the force: but a fire shall come forth out of Heshbon, and a flame from the midst of Sihon, and shall devour the corner of Moab, and the crown of the head of the tumultuous ones. Woe be unto thee, O Moab! the people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives."

Yet the last verse (47) which pronounces this awful course of judgment on Moab declares that Jehovah will bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days. Has He spoken and will He not perform? Nothing is more sure.

Notes on Jeremiah 49

The judgment of Moab is followed by that of Ammon, kindred alike in their source, their conduct to Israel and Jehovah, as well as in the end His mercy would assign them.

“Concerning the Ammonites, thus saith Jehovah; Hath Israel no sons? hath he no heir? why then doth their king inherit Gad, and his people dwell in his cities? Therefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will cause an alarm of war to be heard in Rabbah of the Ammonites; and it shall be a desolate heap, and her daughters shall be burned with fire: then shall Israel be heir unto them that were his heirs, saith the Lord. Howl, O Heshbon, for Ai is spoiled: cry, ye daughters of Rabbah, gird you with sackcloth; lament, and run to and fro by the hedges; for their king shall go into captivity, and his priests and his princes together. Wherefore gloriest thou in the valleys, thy flowing valley, O backsliding daughter? that trusted in her treasures, saying, Who shall come unto me? Behold, I will bring a fear upon thee, saith Jehovah God of hosts, from all those that be about thee; and ye shall be driven out every man right forth; and none shall gather up him that wandered). And afterward I will bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon, saith Jehovah.” (Ver. 1-6.) Jehovah demands what right they had to the land of Gad. For this was one of their sins as we see in Amos, a violent raid on Gilead and a possession of the land and cities for a season. But they are here shown that, secure as they thought themselves, their own capital should know the alarm of war, and their daughters share its destruction, when Israel shall be heir to those that were his heirs. It is a poor interpretation which finds in the Church the accomplishment of such prophecies; but this is owing to ignorance on the part of many that God is going to bring Christ in His kingdom to inherit the earth and all nations at His coming; as distinct from the gospel now as from the eternal state which follows the judgment of the great white throne. That desolation befell Moab, Ammon, with the rest, in the day of Nebuchadnezzar, through linking their fortunes with Egypt, the great southern rival of the Chaldean, is, I suppose, the fact. Possibly the howling and lamentation and panic, the more piteous because of previous self-complacency and boast, described in verses 3-5, may also precede the return of their captivity in the last days. (Ver. 6.)

With Edom (ver. 7-22), Damascus (ver. 23-27), and Hazor (28-33), there is a different future in the sovereign wisdom of God. They are to be destroyed without remedy, though not all, it would seem, for the same reason, though all assuredly in perfect justice. Let us follow the prophet: —

“Concerning Edom, thus saith Jehovah of hosts; Is wisdom no more in Teman? is counsel perished from the prudent? is their wisdom vanished? Flee ye, turn back, dwell deep, O inhabitants of Dedan; for I will bring the calamity of Esau upon him, the time that I will visit him. If grape-gatherers come to thee, would they not leave some gleaning grapes? if thieves by night, they will destroy till they have enough. But I have made Esau bare, I have uncovered his secret places, and he shall not be able to hide himself: his seed is spoiled, and his brethren, and his neighbors, and he is not. Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me. For thus saith Jehovah; Behold, they whose judgment was not to drink of the cup have assuredly drunken; and art thou be that shall altogether go unpunished? thou shalt not

go unpunished, but thou shalt surely drink of it. For I have sworn by myself, saith Jehovah, that Bozrah shall become a desolation, a reproach, a waste, and a curse; and all the cities thereof shall be perpetual wastes. I have heard a rumor from Jehovah, and an ambassador is sent unto the heathen, saying, Gather ye together, and come against her, and rise up to the battle. For, lo, I will make thee small among the heathen, and despised among men. Thy terribleness hath deceived thee, and the pride of thine heart, O thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock, that holdest the height of the hill: though thou shouldest make thy nest as high as the eagle, I will bring thee down from thence, saith Jehovah. Also Edom shall be a desolation: every one that goeth by it shall be astonished, and shall hiss at all the plagues thereof. As in the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, and the neighbor cities thereof, saith the Lord, no man shall abide there, neither shall a son of man dwell in it. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan against the habitation of the strong: but I will suddenly make him run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me? therefore hear the counsel of Jehovah, that he hath taken against Edom; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the inhabitants of Teman: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitations desolate with them. The earth is moved at the noise of their fall, at the cry the noise thereof was heard in the Red Sea. Behold, he shall come up and fly as the eagle, and spread his wings over Bozrah and at that day shall the heart of the mighty men of Edom be as the heart of a woman in her pangs." (Ver. 7-22.)

Thus wisdom would not avail the proud relentless enemy of Israel who ought to have been a friend and should have enjoyed the honor God was pleased to put on his kinsman. Esau's calamity should be theirs in the day of divine visitation. The stripping of a vine by grape-gatherers would be light compared with what awaits Esau's race: for if Israel drank of that cup of woe, could they go unpunished? Impossible. No clefts should hide, no heights avail. Edom should be made small, yea a waste like the cities of the plain. One should come like a lion to give effect to Jehovah's purposes which should be so complete that even the least one should suffice against their once haughty strength. Whatever might be God's remembrance of kin in Moab or Ammon, in Edom it tells in an opposite way; for it made their implacable hatred of Israel unbearable and only closed in their own perdition.

Damascus and Hazor follow. "Concerning Damascus: Hamath is confounded, and Arpad: for they have heard evil tidings: they are fainthearted; there is sorrow on the sea; it cannot be quiet. Damascus is waxed feeble, and turneth herself to flee, and fear hath seized on her: anguish and sorrows have taken her, as a woman in travail. How is the city of praise not left, the city of my joy! therefore her young men shall fall in her streets, and all the men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith Jehovah of hosts. And I will kindle a fire in the wall of Damascus, and it shall consume the palaces of Ben-hadad. Concerning Kedar, and concerning the kingdoms of Hazor, which Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon shall smite, thus saith Jehovah: Arise ye, go up to Kedar, and spoil the men of the east. Their tents and their flocks shall they take away: they shall take to themselves their curtains, and all their vessels, and their camels; and they shall cry unto them, Fear is on every side. Flee, get you far off, dwell deep, O ye inhabitants of Razor, saith Jehovah; for Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon hath taken counsel against you and hath conceived a purpose against you. Arise, get you up unto the wealthy nation, that dwelleth without care, saith Jehovah, which have neither gates nor bars, which dwell alone. And their camels shall be a booty,

and the multitude of their cattle a spoil: and I will scatter into all winds them that are in the utmost corners; and I will bring their calamity from all sides thereof, saith Jehovah. And Hazor shall be a dwelling for dragons, and a desolation forever: there shall no man abide there, nor any son of man dwell in it." (Ver. 23-33.) Here too destruction falls: no restoration is foretold; but there is no such solemn knell of judgment as in Edom's case. They justly deserved what God did by the Chaldean, as they will whatever God may do by and by; but as they had no special tie, so they will meet with no special. judgment, any more than exemption or restoration in the last days.

But the chapter closes with another. "The word of Jehovah that came to Jeremiah the prophet against Elam in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, saying, Thus saith Jehovah of hosts; Behold, I will break the bow of Elam, the chief of their might. And upon Elam will I bring the four winds from the four quarters of heaven, and will scatter them toward all those winds; and there shall be no nation whither the outcasts of Elam shall not come. For I will cause Elam to be dismayed before their enemies, and before them that seek their life: and I will bring evil upon them, even my fierce anger, saith Jehovah; and I will send the sword after them, till I have consumed them: and I will set my throne in Elam, and will destroy from thence the king and the princes, saith Jehovah. But it shall come to pass in the latter days, that I will bring again the captivity of Elam, saith Jehovah." (Ver. 31-39.) Here mercy rejoices at length against judgment. The portion of Elam did not interfere, like Philistia, Damascus or Razor, with the due development reserved for Israel in the latter day; and God will show His goodness in behalf of Elam when the kingdom comes. To refer its fulfillment to Acts 2:9, as Calvin and others do, is only to show how little such men enter into either the old or the new.

Notes on Jeremiah 50

The last of the heathen objects of judgment is now brought before us. They had been judged chiefly by Babylon whose turn is come. It is the greatest, the earliest, and most characteristic of the world's empires, Babylon of the Chaldees.

“The word that Jehovah spake against Babylon and against the land of the Chaldeans by Jeremiah the prophet. Declare ye among the nations, and publish and set up a standard; publish, and conceal not: say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces; her idols are confounded, her images are broken in pieces. For out of the north there cometh up a nation against her, which shall make her land desolate, and none shall dwell therein: they shall remove, they shall depart, both man and beast.” (Ver. 1-3.) Its doom is come under the Medes, led on by Cyrus the Persian. The consequence of deepest interest to God is, that the fall of Babylon opens the door for the return of His people from captivity. It is the type of a final deliverance, when a greater than Cyrus shall be there to the utter destruction of the last holder of the last empire. Compare Dan. 2; 7.

Hence says the prophet immediately after, “In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go and seek Jehovah their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join ourselves to Jehovah in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten. My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray, they have turned them away on the mountains: they have gone from mountain to bill, they have forgotten their resting place. All that found them have devoured them: and their adversaries said, We offend not, because they have sinned against Jehovah, the habitation of justice, even Jehovah, the hope of their fathers.” (Ver. 4-7.) It seems clear that, whatever the application to the past, these words cannot be satisfactorily explained without awaiting a yet larger and closer fulfillment in the last days, when the sons of both Israel and Judah shall take the place of penitence and shall return from their long and distant wanderings to Zion under the everlasting covenant and their Messiah. As Jehovah bore witness of their rain, so they will confess their sins themselves, instead of leaving it to their enemies to make their evil an excuse for their own hatred and plunder.

Then from verse 8 the prophet calls to remove from the city devoted to so decisive a judgment. “Remove out of the midst of Babylon, and go forth out of the land of the Chaldeans, and be as the he goats before the flocks. For, lo, I will raise and cause to come up against Babylon an assembly of great nations from the north country: and they shall set themselves in array against her; from thence she shall be taken: their arrows shall be as of a mighty expert man; none shall return in vain. And Chaldea shall be a spoil: all that spoil her shall be satisfied, saith Jehovah.” (Ver. 8-10.)

From verse 11 there is a reproachful rebuke to the destroyers of Israel and their land. “Because ye were glad, because ye rejoiced, O ye destroyers of mine heritage, because ye are grown fat as the heifer at grass, and bellow as bulls: your mother shall be sore confounded; she that bare you shall

be ashamed: behold, the hindermost of the nations shall be a wilderness, a dry land and a desert. Because of the wrath of Jehovah it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate: every one that goeth by Babylon shall be astonished, and hiss at all her plagues." (Ver. 11-13.)

Next, all warriors are summoned against this queen of the nations. "Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about: all ye that bend the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows: for she hath sinned against Jehovah. Shout against her round about: she hath given her hand: her foundations are fallen, her walls are thrown down: for it is the vengeance of Jehovah: take vengeance upon her; as she hath done, do unto her. Cut off the sower from Babylon, and him that handleth the sickle in the time of harvest: for fear of the oppressing sword they shall turn every one to his people, and they shall flee every one to his own land. Israel is a scattered sheep; the lions have driven him away: first the king of Assyria hath devoured him; and last this Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon hath broken his bones. Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Behold, I will punish the king of Babylon and his land, as I have punished the king of Assyria. And I will bring Israel again to his habitation, and he shall feed on Carmel and Bashan, and his soul shall be satisfied on mount Ephraim and Gilead. In those days, and in that time, saith Jehovah, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve." (Ver. 14-20.) The heart of the prophet, like Jehovah Himself, ever turns from the judgment of the great foe to poor guilty Israel; nor is it pity only that is pledged but restoration so truly divine that the end will far surpass all beginnings. It is moral too, not national only. The heart is to be set right with God, as surely as they are destined to refreshment and repose in their land.

Again, from verse 21 there is a renewal of the call to go up against the imperial city, described as doubly rebellious and the object of visitation. "Go up against the land of Merathaim, even against it, and against the inhabitants of Pekod: waste and utterly destroy after them, saith Jehovah, and do according to all that I have commanded thee. A sound of battle is in the land, and of great destruction. How is the hammer of the whole earth cut asunder and broken! how is Babylon become a desolation among the nations! I have laid a snare for thee, and thou art also taken, O Babylon and thou wast not aware: thou art found, and also caught, because thou hast striven against Jehovah. Jehovah hath opened his armory, and hath brought forth the weapons of his indignation: for this is the work of Jehovah God of hosts in the land of the Chaldeans. Come against her from the utmost border, open her storehouses: cast her up as heaps, and destroy her utterly: let nothing of her be left. Slay all her bullocks; let them go down to the slaughter: woe unto them! for their day is come, the time of their visitation. The voice of them that flee and escape out of the land of Babylon, to declare in Zion the vengeance of Jehovah our God, the vengeance of his temple. Call together the archers against Babylon: all ye that bend the bow, camp against it round about; let none thereof escape: recompense her according to her work; according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been proud against Jehovah, against the Holy One of Israel. Therefore shall her young men fall in the streets, and all her men of war shall be cut off in that day, saith Jehovah. Behold, I am against thee, O thou most proud, saith Jehovah God of Hosts: for thy day is come, the time that I will visit thee. And the most proud shall stumble and fall, and none shall raise him up: and I will kindle a fire in his cities, and it shall devour all round about him." (Ver. 21-32.) Here Jehovah intimates the special ground for unsparing vengeance on Babylon for desecration of His temple, and pride against Himself, the Holy One of Israel.

Again also the prophet resumes the note of relief to Israel from the trouble of Babylon. If Assyria and her haughty rival vied in contemptuous oppression of Israel, Jehovah would plead the cause of His people thoroughly. “Thus saith Jehovah of hosts; the children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took them captives held them fast: they refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong; Jehovah of hosts is his name: he shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and disquiet the inhabitants of Babylon. A sword is upon the Chaldeans, saith Jehovah, and upon the inhabitants of Babylon, and upon her princes, and upon her wise men. A sword is upon the liars; and they shall dote: a sword is upon her mighty men; and they shall be dismayed. A sword is upon their horses, and upon their chariots, and upon all the mingled people that are in the midst of her; and they shall become as women: a sword is upon her treasures; and they shall be robbed. A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols. Therefore the wild beasts of the desert with the wild beasts of the islands shall dwell there, and the owls shall dwell therein: and it shall be no more inhabited forever; neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation. As God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah and the neighbor cities thereof, saith Jehovah; so shall no man abide there, neither shall any son of man dwell therein. Behold a people shall come from the north, and a great nation, and many kings shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. They shall hold the bow and the lance: they are cruel, and will not show mercy: their voice shall roar like the sea, and they shall ride upon horses, every one put in array, like a man to the battle, against thee, O daughter of Babylon. The king of Babylon hath heard the report of them, and his hands waxed feeble: anguish took hold of him, and pangs as of a woman in travail. Behold, he shall come up like a lion from the swelling of Jordan unto the habitation of the strong: but I will make them suddenly run away from her: and who is a chosen man, that I may appoint over her? for who is like me? and who will appoint me the time? and who is that shepherd that will stand before me Therefore hear ye the counsel of Jehovah, that he hath taken against Babylon; and his purposes, that he hath purposed against the land of the Chaldeans: Surely the least of the flock shall draw them out: surely he shall make their habitation desolate with them. At the noise of the taking of Babylon the earth is moved, and the cry is heard among the nations.” (Ver. 33-46.) The allusion to the manner of Babylon's fall in the beginning of verse 38 is as plain as Isaiah's in chapter 44:27; yet each preserves his own characteristic style though both refer to the same remarkable fact which was yet to be accomplished. The picture of the king's anguish, in verse 43, may be compared with the description in Isa. 21, and with the history in Dan. 5.

Notes on Jeremiah 51

There is a renewal of the divine warning against Babylon. Nothing seemed less likely than the fall of the haughty city which had for the first time succeeded in achieving a world-wide supremacy, where the civilization of that age prevailed. It was well therefore to express in the clearest manner and repeated by a reverse of which men could have had no previous experience, and this as a sign that Jehovah had not widowed His people, spite of their sin and its punishment in their land.

“Thus saith Jehovah; Behold, I will raise up against Babylon, and against them that dwell in the midst of them that rise up against me, a destroying wind; and will send unto Babylon fanners, that shall fan her, and shall empty her land: for in the day of trouble they shall be against her round about. Against him that bendeth let the archer bend his bow, and against him that lifteth himself up in his brigandine: and spare ye not her young men; destroy ye utterly all her host. Thus the slain shall fall in the land of the Chaldeans, and they that are thrust through in her streets. For Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of His God, of Jehovah of hosts; though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel.” (Ver. 1-5.) The reference is to the Medo-Persian conqueror, who should make a clear riddance of all that man valued in Babylon and among the Chaldeans.

Some read ìà not as the preposition ìÈà but as the negative ìÇà. The difference in the sense resulting from the latter would be that the verse would begin with a call to the defender of Babylon not to bend his bow, nor to be proud of his coat of mail; while the same verse would close, as admitted on all sides, with a charge to the followers of Cyrus to spare not their enemies.

Then verse 6 calls on the Jews to hasten their escape from the guilty and doomed city, once used of Jehovah in vengeance on others (ver. 7), now the object of His vengeance herself (ver. 8), so that her allies, though challenged, own her hopeless ruin. (Ver. 9.)

“Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and deliver every man his soul: be not cut off in her iniquity; for this is the time of Jehovah's vengeance; he will render unto her a recompence. Babylon hath been a golden cup in Jehovah's hand, that made all the earth drunken: the nations haveLdrunken1 of her wine; therefore the nations are mad. Babylon is suddenly fallen and destroyed: howl for her; take balm for her pain, if so be she may be healed. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed: forsake her, and let us go every one into his own country: for her judgment reacheth unto heaven, and is lifted up even to the skies. Jehovah hath brought forth our righteousness: come, and let us declare in Zion the work of Jehovah our God.” (Ver. 6-10.) Babylon's fall is the justification of Judah, who thence turns in heart to Zion, that they might there publish the work of Jehovah their God.

Babylon had need of all its military appliances now; for Jehovah had roused the spirit of her northern foes against her, and resolved to destroy her. Hence the prophet says, “Make bright the arrows; gather the shields: Jehovah hath raised up the spirit of the kings of the Medes: for his device is against Babylon, to destroy it; because it is the vengeance of Jehovah, the vengeance of

his temple. Set up the standard upon the walls of Babylon, make the watch strong, set up the watchmen, prepare the ambushes: for Jehovah hath both devised and done that which he spake against the inhabitants of Babylon. O thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness. Jehovah of hosts hath sworn by himself, saying, Surely I will fill thee with men, as with caterpillars; and they shall lift up a shout against thee." (Ver. 11-14.)

This is followed by a noble testimony to God, in contrast with idols and their votaries, in verses 15-19. "He hath made the earth by His power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heaven by his understanding. When he uttereth his voice, there is a multitude of waters in the heavens; and he causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth: he maketh lightnings with rain, and bringeth forth the wind out of his treasures. Every man is brutish by his knowledge; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. They are vanity, the work of errors: in the time of their visitation they shall perish. The portion of Jacob is not like them; for he is the former of all things: and Israel is the rod of his inheritance: Jehovah of hosts is his name." This differs from chapter 10:12-16, only in the omission of Israel in the last verse. It is evidently understood, if we regard its insertion as a correction of some of the copies.

Then the Spirit of prophecy addresses Babylon in a minutely graphic enumeration of the ways in which she had been employed of God before her fall. "Thou [not "art" but] wast my battle ax, weapons of war: with thee I have broken nations in pieces; and with thee I have destroyed kingdoms. And with thee I have broken in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee I have broken in pieces the chariot and its rider; and with thee I have broken in pieces the husband and the wife; and with thee I have broken in pieces the aged and the young; and with thee I have broken in pieces the youth and the maid. And with thee I have broken in pieces the shepherd and his flock; and with thee I have broken in pieces the plowman and his team; and with thee I have broken in pieces the governors and prefects. And I have rendered unto Babylon and all the inhabitants of Chaldea all the evil which they have done in Zion in your sight, saith Jehovah." But this did not hinder His vengeance now. "Behold, I am against thee, O destroying mountain, saith Jehovah, which destroyest all the earth: and I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. And they shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be desolate forever, saith Jehovah." (Ver. 25, 26.) The Medes would be joined by the nations in Asia Minor or the neighborhood. "Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her, call together against her the kingdoms of Ararat, Minni, and Ashchenaz; appoint a captain against her; cause the horses to come up as the rough caterpillars. Prepare against her the nations with the kings of the Medes, the captains thereof, and all the rulers thereof, and all the land of his dominion." (Ver. 27, 28.) Jehovah's purpose was fixed and sure. Babylon must be reduced to a desolation without an inhabitant. The circumstances of its fall next portrayed confirms this. "And the land shall tremble and sorrow: for every purpose of Jehovah shall be performed against Babylon, to make the land of Babylon a desolation without an inhabitant. The mighty men of Babylon have forborne to fight, they have remained in their holds: their might hath failed; they became as women: they have burned her dwellingplaces; her bars are broken. One post shall run to meet another, and one messenger to meet another, to shew the king of Babylon that his city is

taken at one end, and that the passages are stopped, and the reeds they have burned with fire, and the men of war are affrighted. For thus saith Jehovah of hosts, the God of Israel: The daughter of Babylon is like a threshingfloor, it is time to thresh her: yet a little while, and the time of her harvest shall come." (Ver. 29-33.)

In verses 34, 35, is given the plaint of Jerusalem. "Nebuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicates, he hath cast me out. The violence done to me and to my flesh be upon Babylon, shall the inhabitant of Zion say; and my blood upon the inhabitants of Chaldea, shall Jerusalem say." (Ver. 34, 35.)

This the answer of Jehovah follows at length in verses 36-44. "Therefore thus saith Jehovah; Behold, I will plead thy cause, and take vengeance for thee; and I will dry up her sea, and make her springs dry. And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling place for dragons, an astonishment, and an hissing, without an inhabitant. They shall roar together like lions; they shall yell as lions' whelps. In their beat I will make their feasts, and I will make them drunken, that they may rejoice, and sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith Jehovah. I will bring them down like lambs to the slaughter, like rams with he-goats. How is Sheshach taken! and how is the praise of the whole earth surprised! how is Babylon become an astonishment among the nations! The sea is come up upon Babylon she is covered with the multitude of the waves thereof. Her cities are a desolation, a dry land, and a wilderness, a land wherein no man dwelleth, neither doth any son of man pass thereby. And I will punish Bel in Babylon, and I will bring forth out of his mouth that which he hath swallowed up: and the nations shall not flow together any more unto him: yea, the wall of Babylon shall fall." The prophet thereon exhorts the people to leave a city, which, far from sheltering any, could only expose to its own destruction. "My people, go ye out of the midst of her, and deliver ye every man his soul from the fierce anger of Jehovah. And lest your heart faint, and ye fear for the rumor that shall be heard in the land; a rumor shall both come one year, and after that in another year shall come a rumor, and violence in the land, ruler against ruler." (Ver. 45, 46.)

Jehovah again takes up the word of judgment for her idols in verses 47-58. "Therefore, behold, the days come, that I will do judgment upon the graven images of Babylon: and her whole land shall be confounded, and all her slain shall fall in the midst of her. Then the heaven and the earth, and all that is therein, shall sing for Babylon: for the spoilers shall come unto her from the north, saith Jehovah. As Babylon hath caused the slain of Israel to fall, so at Babylon shall fall the slain of all the earth. Ye that have escaped the sword, go away, stand not still, remember Jehovah afar off, and let Jerusalem come into your mind. We are confounded, because we have heard reproach: shame hath covered our faces: for strangers are come into the sanctuaries of Jehovah's house. Wherefore, behold, the days come, saith Jehovah, that I will do judgment upon her graven images: and through all her land the wounded shall groan. Though Babylon should mount up to heaven, and though she should fortify the height of her strength, yet from me shall spoilers come unto her, saith Jehovah. A sound of a cry cometh from Babylon, and great destruction from the land of the Chaldeans: because Jehovah hath spoiled Babylon, and destroyed out of her the great voice; when her waves do roar like great waters, a noise of their voice is uttered: because the spoiler is come upon her, even upon Babylon, and her mighty men are taken, every one of their bows is broken: for Jehovah God of recompenses shall surely requite. And I will make drunk her princes, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men: and they shall sleep a

perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is Jehovah of hosts. Thus saith Jehovah of hosts, The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken, and her high gates shall be burned with fire; and the people shall labor in vain, and the folk in the fire, and they shall be weary."

The closing verses (59-64) constitute a kind of seal on the charge laid by Jeremiah on Seraiah, who, after coming to Babylon, was to read this book, and cast it with a stone attached to it into the Euphrates in token of the sure and total fall of Babylon.

Chapter 119

Notes on Jeremiah 52

The last chapter appears to be an inspired appendix to the prophecy of Jeremiah rather than his own composition. It is substantially similar to the last chapter of 2 Kings, but with some remarkable points of difference in dates and numbers, owing, I presume, to a difference in the way of looking at the facts.

The chapter opens with Zedekiah's reign in Jerusalem for eleven years, evil in Jehovah's eyes according to that of Jehoiakim. There was this especially which provoked the anger of Jehovah, that he rebelled against the king of Babylon, to whom, on the apostasy of Judah, the empire of the world had been given. It was the bounden duty of the faithful to bow to God's sovereignty in this, and the more because it was the idolatrous sin of the people of Judah and the king of David's house, which was the final occasion of this solemn change in the government of the world.

Zedekiah ought to have been a pattern of subjection therefore, in owning the just judgment of God. It was their evil preeminently which had not only hindered the blessing of all nations of the earth as independent powers; but had precipitated not themselves only, but all others with them, under the empire of the golden head, the king of Babylon. And now Zedekiah rebelled against Babylon, which was really against the sentence of Jehovah, who was thus, as it were, morally compelled to cast out the Jews from His presence. (Ver. 1-3.)

“And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth day of the month, that Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And in the fourth mouth, in the ninth day of the month, the famine was sore in the city, so that there was no bread for the people of the land. Then the city was broken up, and all the men of war fled, and went forth out of the city by night by the way of the gate between the two walls, which was by the king's garden (now the Chaldeans were by the city round about); and they went by the way of the plain. But the army of the Chaldeans pursued after the king, and overtook Zedekiah in the plains of Jericho; and all his army was scattered from him. Then they took the king, and carried him up unto the king of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath; where he gave judgment upon him. And the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes: he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah: and the king of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.” (Ver. 4-11.) Thus far the account minutely agrees, dates and all, with 2 Kings 25:1—7, save that Jer. 52 is somewhat more detailed, and attributes to the king of Babylon personally what the history gives to his servants under his orders.

Verse 12 furnishes an instance of the first striking discrepancy in appearance with 2 Kings 25, verse 8 of which seems at first sight to fix the entrance of Nebuzar-adan to the seventh day of the fifth month, whereas in the prophecy it is connected with the tenth. But there is a real difference in the original statement which the Authorized Version appears to have represented by “unto Jerusalem” in 2 Kings, and “into Jerusalem” in Jeremiah; and this is substantially correct. The truth

is that there is no preposition whatever in the former, and therefore the natural rendering would be that the servant of the king of Babylon had only come to Jerusalem on the seventh day, not that he had actually entered then. On the other hand, in the prophecy, we are told that he was in Jerusalem on the tenth day of the month; and this is distinctly expressed by the particle.

Nebuzar-adan then “burned the house of Jehovah, and the king's house: and all the houses of Jerusalem, and all the houses of the great men, burned he with fire: and all the army of the Chaldeans, that were with the captain of the guard, brake down all the walls of Jerusalem round about. Then Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard carried away captive certain of the poor of the people, and the residue of the people that remained in the city, and those that fell away, that fell to the king of Babylon, and the rest of the multitude. But Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard left certain of the poor of the land for vinedressers and for husbandmen. Also the pillars of brass that were in the house of Jehovah, and the bases, and the brazen sea that was in the house of Jehovah, the Chaldeans brake, and carried all the brass of them to Babylon. The caldrons also, and the shovels, and the snuffers, and the bowls, and the spoons, and all the vessels of brass, wherewith they ministered, took they away. And the bacons, and the firepans, and the bowls, and the caldrons, and the candlesticks, and the spoons, and the cups; that which was of gold in gold, and that which was of silver in silver, took the captain of the guard away, The two pillars, one sea, and twelve brazen bulls that were under the bases, which king Solomon had made in the house of Jehovah: the brass of all these vessels was without weight. And concerning the pillars, the height of one pillar was eighteen cubits; and a fillet of twelve cubits did compass it; and the thickness thereof was four fingers: it was hollow. And a chapiter of brass was upon it; and the height of one chapiter was five cubits, with network and pomegranates upon the chapiters round about, all of brass. The second pillar also and the pomegranates were like unto these. And there were ninety and six pomegranates on a side; and all the pomegranates upon the network were an hundred round about.” (Ver. 13-23.)

It is remarkable that among the prisoners who are specified in verse 25, we have seven men here who answer to five men in 2 Kings 25:19. I presume that two more were added of which this inspired account takes notice in addition to the more general description given in the history. We have already remarked its greater precision. There were five, but this does not hinder the addition of two more in a notice of greater detail. “So Nebuzar-adan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land.” (Ver. 26, 27.)

In verses 28-30 we have an account of three minor deportations to Babylon in the seventh, eighteenth, and twenty third years of Nebuchadnezzar’s reign, amounting in all to four thousand and six hundred. But 2 Kings 24:12, 16 speaks of another carrying away of Jews, as Dan. 1 tells us of those that were carried away in the first year of his reign, which was a more considerable affair.

The last incident of the chapter is the compassion which Evil-merodach the king of Babylon extended to Jehoiachin in the seven and thirtieth year of his captivity. Not only did he bring the captive king of Judah out of prison with kind words, but set his throne above the subject monarchs that were there, and gave him to eat bread before himself continually for the rest of his life. Thus, if

after solemn warnings of the prophets, one king of Judah was now proving the truth in his own misery, God was showing in Jehoiachin's case that He has the hearts of all men under His control, and that long years of languishing may be changed at His will to a peaceful end of life, though not a prosperous one, according to His word. (Chap. 22:30.) But this does not hinder His pitifulness and tender mercy.

Chapter 120

Thoughts on John 1:1-13

There is one remark that furnishes a most important key to the Gospel of John, which is illustrated very simply and manifestly in this first chapter. The object of the Holy Ghost is to assert the personal glory of Jesus; and hence it is that there is not perhaps a single chapter in the New Testament that presents our Lord in so many different aspects, yet all personal, as this opening chapter of his Gospel. His divine glory is carefully guarded. He is said in the most distinct language to be God as to His nature, but withal a man. He is God no less than the Father is, or the Holy Ghost; but He is the Word in a way in which the Father and the Holy Ghost were not. It was Jesus Christ the Son of God who alone was the Word of God; He only after a personal sort expressed God. The Father and the Holy Ghost remained in their own unseeable majesty. The Word had for His place to express God clearly; and this belonged to Him, it is evident, as a distinctive personal glory. It was not merely that He was the Word when He came into the world, but “in the beginning was the Word” when there was no creature. Before anything came into being that was made, the Word was in the beginning with God, not merely in God, as if merged or lost in God, but He had a distinct personal subsistence before a creature existed. He was in the beginning with God. This is of immense importance, and with these truths our Gospel opens.

Then we find His creation glory stated afterward. “All things were made by him.” There is nothing which more stamps God to be God than giving existence to that which had none, causing to exist by His own will and power. Now all things exist by the Word: and so emphatically true is this that the Spirit has added, “and without him was not anything made that was made.”

But there was that which belonged to the Lord Jesus that was not made: “In him was life.” It was not only that He could cause a life to exist that had not before existed, but there was a life that belonged to Him from all eternity. “In him was life.” Not that this life began to be: all else, all creation, began to be; and it was He that gave them the commencement of their existence.

But in Him was life, a life that was not created, a life that was therefore divine in its nature. It was the reality and the manifestation of this life which were of prime importance to man. Everything else that had been since the beginning of the world was only a creature; but in Him was life. Man was destined to have the display of this life on earth. But it was in Him before He came among men. The life was not called the light of angels but of men. Nowhere do we find that eternal life is created. The angels are never said to have life in the Son of God. They were kept by divine power, and holy. Theirs is a purely creature life, whereas it is a wonderful fact of revelation that we who believe have the eternal life that was in Jesus Christ the Son of God, and are therefore said to be partakers of the divine nature. This is in no way true of an angel. It is not that we for a moment cease to be creatures, but we have what is above the creature in Christ the Son of God.

And this “light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.” It is striking to remark here the entire passing over of all the history of the world of which we are apt to make so much, yea, even of the dispensational dealings of God with men. All is passed by very briefly indeed—those ages that man thinks all but interminable, in which God gave being to the creature

and in which He may have changed over and over again the various forms of the creature, where science is endeavoring to pursue its uncertain and weary way. All this is closed up in the few words, “All things were made by him.” Scripture, and this chapter in particular, summarizes it with striking brevity. “All things were made by him.” The details of it were left completely aside. What was good for us to know we are told in Gen. 1. There is nothing like that chapter even in cosmogonies which borrowed from it. And all that man has thought, or said, or written about a system of the world is not to be named with it for depth or certainty, as well as for simplicity in the smallest compass.

But there is a reason why all such matters vanish after two or three words. It is because the Lord Jesus, the Word of God, is the object that the Holy Ghost is dwelling on. The moment that He is brought out creation just pays Him homage, owning Him to be the Creator, and is then forthwith dismissed. “All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made.” It is enough to say that He created all. He remains in His own grace. Now we learn what is the Spirit's object in this. It was not to give us details of the creation; it was to acquaint us with Jesus as the light of men.

In what condition then did He find men? Were there not great differences among them, as was thought? There were some, most indeed, idolaters, yet wise and prudent, worshipping stocks and stones; and others who were not idolaters but very zealous for the law as given by Moses. Not that a word is said yet about the law, nor about any differences, but that the Word of God was the light that manifested everybody: whether Jews or Gentiles, they were only darkness. It is not therefore only that the physical creation is passed by most curtly, but the moral world is closed with almost equal brevity. “The light shineth in darkness,” and whatever the boasting of the Gentiles, and the law of the Jews, which was real as compared with the Gentiles, here all is measured and put out, as it were, by the true light, the Word of God. Jew or Gentile, they are but darkness and the light shineth in darkness, and, spite of all its pretension and pride, the darkness comprehended it not. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God.” When the Holy Ghost is come down, things are also tested and convicted by Him; and He is brought forward by Paul somewhat as John here introduces the Son of God. It shows how poor all of man is in comparison with God, and how little he is capable of appreciating the truth in the Son or by the Spirit.

Then we find John brought in. The reason why he is singled out from all others I believe to be this: be was the immediate forerunner of the Lord Jesus. He would surely have been named here if it were not because he was the moon that derived its light from the sun—from the Lord Jesus just about to come. His was only a derivative light, and he seems brought in here because of that peculiarity. Other prophets were too distant from Christ, but John was near enough to be an immediate precursor of the Messiah. “There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.” It is no question of law-testing or proving. All this was very important in its place; but the glory that the law had is completely eclipsed by a brighter glory. Scripture therefore takes pains to say, John “was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light.” He might be a burning and a shining lamp (as it ought to be in chapter 5.), but he was only an earthly and derived light. “He was not that light.” “That was the true light;” Jesus is the light, the true light, which (as rightly rendered) on coming into the world lighteth every man. It is speaking of the effect of Christ's coming into the world. It is not every man that cometh into the world; but that, when He comes into the world, He is

the One that casts His light on every one here below. There had been a time when, as it is said in the Acts, God winked at the ignorance of men; but now everything must appear in its own light, or rather darkness, because the true light was come; and therefore when He comes into the world He lights every man there: all are brought out just as they are and none can escape. “He was in the world, and the world was made by him,” and the awful result of this darkness was that “the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.” The world was guilty enough, it was so dark that it did not even know Him; the Jews had abundance of truth by which they might know Him, but their will was still more set against the Son of God than even the poor Gentiles. “His own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power [title or right] to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: high were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” What a blessed place! and blessed to know that this is our place to which grace has entitled us now in His name! May we seek to make Him known to every creature with all our hearts in the measure of power the Lord has given us, and honoring thus, and in every other way, the Lord Jesus, whom the Holy Ghost loves to honor!

We have other glories of His brought out afterward. We hear of Him as the Son, the Lamb of God, the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, the King of Israel, and the Son of Man. All these are successively unfolded to us in this chapter. Indeed it would be difficult to say what glory of our Lord is not presented here except that of Priest, and of Head of the Church. John never gives us the priesthood of Jesus. He touches what is close upon it, when he speaks in his epistles of advocacy with the Father; but the business of John was to show His divine personal glory, yet man upon earth. Priest was what He was called to in heaven; and as Head of the Church He is there also. But John shows us what He was in Himself as coming from heaven, and that He does not lose one whit of His glory by becoming a man. In His being Priest and Head of the Church we see special glories which He received on going up to heaven, and these Paul develops fully. John's point is God and the Father manifested on earth in the person of Jesus Christ His Son.

Thoughts on John 15

There is no place where the selfishness of our nature oftener betrays itself than in the way we look at scripture. We do not ourselves always know how our thoughts of the word of God tell the tale of our state in the sight of God. I do not speak merely of such extreme cases as that of the avowed unbeliever—though he too shows what his condition is—as being not merely bad but unable to appreciate what is good—not only not obedient in heart, but rejecting and rebelling against the only light whereby God Himself brings a man out of darkness to the knowledge of Himself. It is plain therefore that, rejecting the word, he as good as says to God that he desires not the knowledge of His ways. But then the children of God themselves let us see what their state of mind is not only by their want of relish for the word, or their want of appetite for every means that will give their souls an increasing enjoyment of the Lord, but, further, by the way in which they take it up, by their understanding, or rather misunderstanding, of it. For this is the secret of true intelligence: people do not understand the word by brighter minds than others, but by a more obedient heart. It is the single-eyed desire to do the will of God which insures intelligence of His word. And the Spirit of God it is that produces both the one and the other. Assuredly the will it is that darkens the understanding; and, where the Spirit of God gives the soul to please the Lord, there the obstruction in the way of His word disappears. When by grace we want to do His will, the light of God is assuredly not withheld: it is the will when not judged which produces darkness for us.

In no instance perhaps do we find this more frequently than in the way in which this chapter is taken. When men are not thoroughly happy in the Lord, they use the vine as a means of assurance to their souls; for comforting them with the thought that they are in Christ, and that they will be kept by Him. They take the vine as the Lord viewed as a Savior. But this is not the meaning of the chapter; for the vine is not introduced to show His sustaining grace in carrying us through, but the responsibility of all who bear the name of Christ, the true vine, and the means of producing fruit unto God. Consequently it is not a question of abiding in Christ simply for security nor of the grace that keeps up the feeble. Where this is required, the Lord presents Himself as a rock, and no matter how feeble one may be, if one rests on the foundation, the feeblest thing cannot be moved. There is indefeasible security for us in Christ. So again, if He tells us that we have eternal life, He shows us that we are in His hand and in the Father's hand. It is evident therefore that none will be able to pluck us out of their hand.

But when we reach the figure of the vine, it is another truth. It is to show the absolute necessity of fruit being borne for God; and consequently the Spirit of God tells us here what the hindrances, at least what the ways of God with us, are. Now the first and grand point of all is that Christ Himself is the spring of all that contributes to any fruit-bearing. It is not good desires only, nor the word of God, and it is not at all our being saved, though all these are precious and blessed and important in their place. Nay, it is not even prayer, nor is it the various means that God gives for sustaining our souls and cheering us on; but the one secret of fruit-bearing is having Christ before our souls and continually reminding ourselves that we belong to Him as branches to the vine—not merely as

the hymn has it, “For as the branches to the vine so would we cling to Thee.” The sense is not at all here one of security, though this be of course most true; but what we find here is the serious thought of responsibility to God.

The Jews regarded themselves as the only people in the world that God looked upon. Consequently their tendency was always to put inordinate value on the fact of being Jews. It was very important that the Gentiles should own the place of the Jews, but it only puffed up the souls of the Jews themselves to be occupied with it. It was all right for the Gentiles to feel how precious the Jews were to God, but there is no strength in the Jew continually boasting of his peculiar privileges. We want more than that if we are to bear fruit, and this is what Christ substitutes for it—Himself—to have Him as the One that we are inseparably a part of, wherever we may be or whatever our duty. Supposing I am in a family who put me to great trial, if I look at either the family or the trial, I may give way to a murmuring spirit; but let me remember, in the midst of that family, or in my business or anything else, the secret that produces fruit is that I look up to God, remembering that I am a part of Christ in this sense—a branch of the only true vine. It is full of solemnity withal, and checks the spirit of finding fault. Does not Christ know all about the family, the business, the bodily health, the threats or malice of others, the sorrow, all the things that try me day by day? What has He put me here for? To bear fruit. Of what kind? The fruit that suits the vine, even our Lord Himself. You are in Christ as branches in a vine.

It is not a question of being members of His body to be cared for by Christ, but of being branches of the vine to bear fruit for God. “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” There are times when the Lord so does, as He has ever done. There are times when the work is done, or the Lord sees fit for any reason to take away, whether there has been all the fruit that He looks for, or whether they are not bearing fruit. “And every branch in me that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.” We see that every one who is bearing fruit is tried, has sorrows, difficulties, and a great deal to break the spirit. We need it. It is all a mistake to suppose that, because a branch bears fruit, He does not purge; whereas that which does bear good fruit He deals with and disciplines, that it may bear more. And what a comfort for us to know that it is all for His glory! It is only a little cup of sorrow by the way, but the fruit is everlasting. Is that very hard to bear—discipline in this world, that the fruit may last forever?

Now He addresses the disciples and tells them that they were already clean through the word that He had spoken unto them. He does not say, Through the blood that I am going to shed. This was not a fact yet; but the word connects itself with our responsibility, the blood with His grace. The chapter is full of our responsibility, and it is the word of God that deals with our shortcoming and makes us feel what the will of God is.

But there are two kinds of cleansing true of every Christian. There is the word, by which a man is first converted to God, when he gets a new nature that hates sin, and by the same word he is afterward cleansed practically. It is the purifying of every day. Besides, the believer is (as all know) washed by blood, the precious blood of Christ, that he may be clear from all question of guilt. The former is connected with our responsibility to bear fruit for God. We must be cleansed first, but already it was true that they were born of God, and now the urgent call was to bear fruit. It is not here connected with the fact that their sins were forgiven. This might be true; but there was more than this true. The believer receives a new and holy nature, and it is in virtue of this that he is

called upon, by having Christ before him and the continual remembrance that he is a member of Christ in this world, to bear fruit for God. For we can only act for the Lord by acting from the Lord; and we cannot act from the Lord except we are abiding in Him, which means the habit of continually looking and referring to Him, of dependence upon Him. Therefore He says, “Abide in me.” He does not say, I will abide in you for eternal life, but He exhorts them to abide in Him, that they may bear fruit. There is responsibility throughout.

“As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me.” It is not a question of eternal life, but of bearing fruit for God; and He who best knew says that it is by abiding in Christ. How is it that we do not bear fruit? It is when we are not abiding in Christ, where something of our own carries us away; wherever we have an object that is not Christ, although the object itself may be right. If we walk in dependence on Christ continuing in His love, and not drawn into what is unbecoming and beneath Him, we are kept: it is abiding in Christ. But wherever I have an object even if it be a right one, I must take care that the way in which I seek to carry it out be right, and the only thing that can make us either choose the right object, or take the right way, is having Christ before us. The vine does not represent Christ in heaven, but now on earth, and ourselves a part of that which bears His name here below. He knew it well whose words are “To me to live is Christ.” His motive, his object, his life day by day was Christ. Not many of us can say this, or we may say it in very little measure. But there is nothing like it. May the Lord strengthen us earnestly to desire it, looking up to Him for grace to profit by His own word, and thus have it made true of ourselves! It was not because he was an apostle that Paul could so say.

He did not lose his Christianity because he was an apostle; and we, though not possessing an official place, should at least seek it. Christ is better than all gifts, is better than any position in the Church. Yet Christ belongs to the simplest Christian, and the simplest Christian is a branch in the vine truly as an apostle.

Do not then let us excuse ourselves for our little faith shown in having grown so little. It is dependence on Christ that keeps one right. The strongest, if not dependent, will break down; the weakest will be kept if dependent. Let us then keep Christ simply and solely before our hearts.

Chapter 122

Sketch of John

John’s great doctrine is the Son of God on earth, and eternal life in Him, and the revelation of God in and by Him. In his first Epistle he goes on to the manifestation of this same life in the disciple. He is the eternal life which was with the Father, and has been manifested unto us. Then “He that hath the Son, hath life,” and so “which thing is true in him and in you.” The details are the traits of this life, the knowledge of the love of God in it through the Spirit, and fellowship with the Father and the Son. In the Gospel, to which I will now confine myself, it is His person and the gift of the Comforter when He is gone.

I will run through the chapters of his Gospel to see if there be not a leading idea running all through, to which the peculiar facts recorded are subservient. That idea is the Son of God outside of and above all dispensational dealings, in the blessedness of His own person, though, as a man, and taking fully a man's place. But it is, as I think I have remarked, not man taken up to heaven, but a divine person come down to earth.

In chapter 1 there are three parts, 1-18, 19-34, and thence to the end; but this continued in chapter 2:1-22. The first is the abstract glory of His nature. He is God, but a distinct person with God, and that in eternity, life, light. John was His witness. There was this singular phenomenon—light shining in darkness, and the darkness remaining what it was; and then the Word made flesh and dwelling among us—the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father—who makes God known. Next we have what Christ does, His work, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, and the baptism with the Holy Ghost. We then find Christ the center and gatherer of the remnant of Israel. In the first of the two days John the Baptist's work to this end is spoken of; in the second, Christ's. This last, I doubt not (like Matt. 10), goes down in principle to His return.

I would note in passing, that we have here Christ as a divine center, for none can be such truly but God; next the one only path through a world in which there is none for man, for there can be none for children who have willfully abandoned their Father's house till they turn back to it; and then the heaven open, and man (in Christ) the object of divine favor, and the mighty ones, the most exalted of creatures, His servants. Nathanael owned Him according to Psa. 2. He takes His place according to Psa. 8. Here note, that the Jews and world, as such, are wholly outside (verses 10, 11), (the Jews are always treated as reprobates in this Gospel), and those born of God alone owned (verses 12, 13). In a word, we have not dispensational dealings, but the deep realities of the divine nature in relationship to men and the world, though it is fully owned that the Jews were God's people.

Chapter 2, called the third day, I have no doubt, intimates the double aspect of Christ's reunion with His earthly people—the marriage and the judgment. I can quite accept that such a figure (though to me, from the connection, undoubted) may not be admitted. I do not complain of this, but, as I am saying what I think, I would not omit it.

In chapters 2:23; 3:21 we have the great foundations of the new state of things—born of God, and the cross; the latter in the double aspect of, the Son of man must be lifted up, and the love of God has given His Son. The condemnation is the coming in of light. (Ver. 22-36.) Then the full aspect of the new state of things, and the absolutely heavenly character of the witness, are gone into.

After this introduction, for such it is (John was not yet cast into prison, and Christ had not yet presented Himself), He leaves Judaea (chap. 4), practically driven out by the Jews, and in Samaria, where no promise was (salvation, He declares in the chapter, was of the Jews), unfolds the living power of the Holy Ghost, which He could give as God—for God was giving, not requiring—and which He was humbled, so as to be the weary One craving a drink of water, that man might have; and then finds the way to man's unintelligent heart, as it ever must be, by the conscience. Nothing more lovely than this whole picture—the rejected and weary One finding His meat in showing grace to this wearied but guilty heart; but I must not dwell on it here. It opened to His view the fields white for harvest at the moment He was cast out.

In chapter 5 we have the Son of God giving life to whom He will. The general picture is man's incompetency to get healed by strength in himself; and Christ, in contrast, bringing life, and that eternal life, so as to escape judgment. The end of the chapter shows life in Him, with every evidence; and man would not come to have it. This is man's responsibility as to Christ.

In chapter 5 He is the life-giving Son of God. In chapter 6 He is the Son of man, the object of faith come into the world, and dying, so that faith feeds on Him. The general picture is Christ satisfying the poor with bread, according to Psa. 132; owned Prophet, refusing then to be King, going up on high alone, while His disciples were tossed and toiling in His absence; He rejoins them, and they are at land: a Christ, the true manna (ver. 2-9), incarnate, and dying (understood in spirit), their true food.

In chapter 7 He cannot show Himself at the Feast of Tabernacles. The Feast of Passover is fulfilled in Him; the Pentecost, on the day so called. But the Tabernacles, where Israel celebrated their rest after the harvest and vintage (known figures of judgment), are not even yet. He promises the Spirit meanwhile, as Israel had the water out of the rock in the desert: only now it should be in him who came to Him to drink, and flow forth as rivers in this desert world. Thus we have the triple fruition of the Holy Ghost, giving life as born of Him, the spiritual power of life in us rising up to its full blessing as eternal life, and flowing forth in blessing from us as a river. This closed the direct communication of Christ as to His position on earth.

In chapter 8 His word is rejected; there He is light.

In chapter 9 His works; here He gives eyes to see. He gives eyes to a poor sheep cast out, who, having owned Him as a prophet, finds He is the Son of God. Then comes all He is for His sheep, from His entering in Himself by the door as a subject man, then laying down His life for them (of infinite value in itself also), to His being one with the Father.

In chapters 11 and 12, being thus rejected, He receives just testimony, in spite of men, to His being Son of God (resurrection and life), in Lazarus' resurrection; to His being Son of David, in riding on the ass; to His being Son of man, by the Greeks coming up. But He declares that, to take this place, He must die or abide alone. He must be lifted up to draw (not Israel as a living Messiah, but) all men. The evangelist then unfolds how it stood with Israel, and Christ how it stood with the

world at large in respect of Himself.

He is now owned, so to speak, as crucified—i.e., His teaching takes up what is beyond it. He was come from God and went to God. The Father had delivered all into His hand. And now, if He could not abide with His disciples as a companion upon earth, He would make them fit to be with Him in heaven—to have a part with Him. They were washed, as completely regenerated by the word; but, as priests connected with the sanctuary and holy service, they must have their feet washed as to daily conversation: this He was their servant still to do. He then refers to His betrayal and Peter's denial of Him—the perfect wickedness of flesh and its weakness; He declares the value Godward of the death of the Son of man and its fruit in His then entering into divine glory, and being no more (bodily) for any in the world.

In chapter 14 He unfolds His disciples' position in consequence. He was not going to be alone on high, He was going to prepare a place for them; but, having revealed the Father in Himself, they knew where He was going, for He was going to the Father, and they had seen Him in Him: and they knew the way, for they had come to the Father in coming to Him. This was as already there; but on going away He would obtain another Comforter for them. In spirit He would come to them, manifest Himself to them, and the Father and Himself make their abode with them. The path of obedience and responsibility on Christian (not on Adam) ground is in this chapter and the following fully set out. He left what He could only give in leaving—for He made it by the cross—peace; He gave them His own peace; but He was truly a man and cared for their love; if they loved Him, they would be glad He was going to His Father, to rest and glory.

But there was a difficulty. What about the vine that God brought out of Egypt and planted? This He meets in the following chapter. Israel was not the vine, though as a people it was so. He Himself was the true Vine, they were the branches. He was not, as they thought of Messiah, the best branch of the old vine; He was the Vine, and they the branches. He then enlarges upon the way of bearing due fruit, dependence and obedience, and, if His words abode in them, asking what they would; most important instructions, which I regret passing over so rapidly, only that I must confine myself to my present object—the general idea. As He has returned to this rejection of the old provisional vine, so to speak, He shows that to be without excuse, and as really having seen and hated (not Messiah, though He was such, but) Him and His Father. It is laid on its intrinsic moral grounds. Hence, when the Comforter was come—before, He had spoken of the Father's sending Him, now of His sending Him from the Father to testify of Him glorified (as before, to bring to remembrance what He had said upon earth), they also having to bear testimony as with Him from the beginning.

In chapter xvi., when the Comforter was come, He would bear witness in the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, in connection with His rejection and going away to His Father; and guide the disciples into all truth, show them things to come, and glorify Christ (all that the Father had being His); and then places them in immediate confidant relationship with the Father. For the moment they were to be in sorrow, and scattered.

In chapter 17, addressing His Father (wonderful thought that we should be admitted to hear!) He looks to taking His own place as Son on high, to glorify Him in virtue of His work which He had finished; the one our place, the other our title to it. He puts them in it, having manifested His Father's name to them, and gives to them all the communications made to Him in it on earth, and

prays for them, on the ground of their being the Father's, and on the ground of His being glorified in them. He prays they may be kept in the name of the Holy Father; and divine names are the power of the thing named. Holiness, His holiness, and children: these are our place—this, that Christ's own joy might be fulfilled in them. Then He gives, not the words, but the word, the testimony, and the world hates them. They are completely put in Christ's place on earth in every respect, sanctified by the truth, and He Himself set apart, away from men, on high, to be the source of this their setting apart, by the revelation of what He was to their hearts. Next, He gives them the glory the Father had given Him, but beyond all, will have them with Himself where He is; and as partaking of His glory hereafter, He will prove to the world they were loved as He was; so that He manifests the Father's name now, that the Father's love to Him may be in them on earth, and He in them.

Having thus completed the disciples' place in His absence, and even to their heavenly rest—of which John speaks little, barely in the beginning of chapter 14 and at the end of chapter 17, and this only in the full result—in chapter 18 he enters on the final history of the Lord's days on earth. But this, even more than any other part, shows the divine person who is above all circumstances. John was one of the three present—as near as any could be—in the agony in Gethsemane. He gives not a word of it; while Matthew, who was present at what John recounts, tells nothing of that, but does of the agony.

Now if these contrasted circumstances were not characteristic, they might not prove much; but they are most strikingly characteristic. I will briefly recall to you those mentioned by John. All point out the Son of God wholly above circumstances; the free offering up of Himself. Judas comes; the Lord advances and names Himself. They all go backward and fall to the ground. Had He sought escape, He had only to go away; but He asks again, and then says, “If ye seek me, let these go their way” —the blessed sign, as the apostle witnesses, how He stood in the gap, and, however poor and weak, the disciples escaped untouched. With this love we have perfect love to His Father, and perfect obedience. “The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?” —and no more. The miracle of healing, even, is not noticed by John, though he can give the servant's name. So all His answers to the chief priest are in the calm superiority of one above all that surrounded Him, while the full guilt and madness of the Jews are fully brought out, as they are seen in all the Gospel. And in rejecting Him they deny their own place: “We have no king but Caesar.” Christ's answers before Pilate bear the same stamp as one above all.

As we had no agony in the garden, so no “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” on the cross. Finally, Jesus, knowing now all was finished, a single passage remaining to be fulfilled, says, “I thirst,” and having drunk the vinegar says, “It is finished.” He then bows His head, and gives up His own spirit. Meanwhile, in perfect calmness, He committed His mother to John, and charged John with the care of her. No bone is broken, but Joseph and Nicodemus make Him to be with the rich in His death. Now, in all this—and John, mark, was with Him, as near as any could be in His agony, and standing by at the cross; all that marked the anguished Man is omitted, and all that presents the Son of God is introduced—I find design; that is, a blessed and beautiful appearing, as a true, lowly, and obedient man, no doubt, but an appearing of the Son of God as such for faith on earth; revealing His Father all His life, and even in the circumstances of His death, Son of God still.

Two chapters remain to consider, relating His history after the resurrection. These are throughout, I do not doubt, significative as to the dispensational dealings consequent on the truths already brought out. Such applications are not like doctrines: we must leave them to the judgment of others. But I will state them here. Their orderly completeness, I have no doubt, proves the truth of the view I suggest. The fact of Christ's resurrection known only by sight, without the testimony of God in the word that He must rise, produces no effect. They go home. But Mary, out of whom seven devils had been cast, wants Jesus Himself—in ignorance, no doubt, but in true affection. When this had been fully and most beautifully brought out—the world had nothing for her but Him—Jesus reveals Himself to her, and makes her the messenger of the witness of the believer's position. He was not come back to be corporeally present for the kingdom, and reign over Israel. He could, through redemption, call His disciples brethren; and they were in the same relationship to His God and Father as He was. This gathers them, and He is in their midst, and pronounces peace—for He had now made it; then sends them forth, breathing into them the living power of the Holy Ghost. Afterward Thomas believes on seeing: but full blessing arose from believing now without seeing. Now, I have no doubt, while this put the disciples historically in their true place and relationship to God, yet we have a picture of the whole period from Christ's resurrection to the time of His return: first the remnant who had known Him before; then the assembly formed without seeing Him, and in possession of peace with God, and His presence, as assembled, then sent forth in the power of the Holy Ghost with remission of sins for others. Next is the remnant of Israel in the latter days, who will believe by seeing. This introduces the millennium. The last chapter has avowedly in it that which is mysterious, and evidently intentionally so. I have no doubt myself that it follows on consecutively after the Lord's return—seen on earth, seen in resurrection, seen now the third time, i.e., when He returns. He puts Himself on the original ground of His associations with Israel—only in power. The nets do not break, the ships do not sink. He has already gathered fish; but the great haul is then taken, and without the ensuing failure, as it was in previous service.

Remark, too, we are in Galilee, and there is no ascension. This suits John; it is divine manifestation on earth, not man's going to heaven; hence, it links on to the future display of power, not to Christ's coming to receive the assembly which is united to Him while in heaven. Peter follows Christ, and is to be cut off, and, I believe, the whole Jewish church system with him. John is left in testimony to connect it with that which is to come, so that the disciples thought he was not to die; but this was not said. Now these last points I leave to the Christian perception of every one who examines the Gospel with care: but the facts prove the coordinated character of the history, from one end of the Gospel to the other, completing one distinct and clear exhibition of Christ outside legal Judaism, in every chapter up to His taking His sheep, which closed all recognition of the fold, being Christ in contrast with that Judaism, and presenting the setting up of a new thing in Him. Peter's ministry, who served in the circumcision, like Jesus, would end like His; but John's, who represented ministry outside it, but not heavenly though leading individuals there, would go on till Christ came.

Chapter 123

Thoughts on John: the Disciple Whom Jesus Loved

(Chap. 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7-20.)

I have been just feeling that I can fully enjoy the truth which these words convey. And I would cherish such an experience, and ask the Lord to fix and enlarge it.

It is far from intimating that one is more interested than another in the grace or salvation of God, or loved with a more faithful and enduring love. But it does intimate that there may be a more personal attachment between the Master and some of His disciples than between Him and others. All, I may say, sat at supper with Him, while only one leaned then on His bosom. All continued with Him in His temptations, and are to receive the kingdom together, but only three were in the garden or on the holy hill with Him. For there is more personal oneness of thought and feeling in some than in others, more of that which, as among ourselves, draws the willing heart along.

If I look at a brother whose way savors much of that which I know Jesus must delight in, being meek, and self-renouncing, and unaffectedly bumble, and withal devoted and unworldly, I may remember John, and see that disciple whom Jesus loved reflected in my brother. But then, how happy is it to remember that John himself was but one of a company whom the same Jesus had chosen and called, and bound to Himself forever! Did John exclude Thomas or Bartholomew? Thomas and Bartholomew, in the great evangelical sense, were as much to Christ as John. The one was not a whit more accepted man than the other.

This is sure and blessed, as well as plain and simple. I may rejoice in it with all certainty. And if I have any love to Him who has called me to such assured and eternal blessedness, will I not rejoice in this, that He has an object in which He can take more delight than I must well know I and my way can afford Him?

Thus do I find reasons for enjoying that sentence, again and again repeated, “the disciple whom Jesus loved,” and for delighting also in the thought that such a truth finds its illustration among the saints now, as it did in the midst of the apostles in earlier days.

The love with which we have to do is too perfect to be partial. It does not act irregularly or carelessly. We are all the objects of it. Thomas is not neglected because John is thus loved. But because this love is real, it is moved in this way by a John. But when I see a John leaning on Jesus while I myself am at a distance, let me have grace to look still, and to delight in the vision, and to say, “It is good for me to be here.” If I am not in the same experience, still it is blessed to enjoy the thought that another is there. Peter was gladdened by the vision of a glory in Moses and Elias, though it was all beyond him. So is my happy and thankful spirit to entertain the thought of my more heavenly brother pressing the bosom of our common Lord. J. G. B.

Chapter 124

Joshua 5

The call of the Christian is a marvelous thing. I do not speak only of glory; but in saying so I think also of being called to be like Him, to partake of His nature; and I become spiritually like Him. Therefore the apostle says (Eph. 5:25) that Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water by the word, to the end of presenting it to Himself glorious. The word does not render the Church glorious; it sanctifies the Church; but communion with Christ in glory is what glorifies. It is in virtue of the power of what He is that we share His glory.

In Eph. 4; 5 we see that we are conformed to what we know. Here is the reasoning of the apostle: you have known what God is in pardon, in love, and in glory. If you have laid hold of that, it is well; but you ought to reproduce it in your conduct. What is spiritually received in the heart does reproduce itself. Therefore it is said, Be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect. God loved you when you were only His enemies. I do not now speak of our perfection in Christ, for it is already accomplished; but it is a question of our realizing on earth that which we know. John says, That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life. As much as I enjoy, so much I reproduce. When I realize what Christ is, it is the joy of my soul. Without doubt that will judge the flesh; for when Christ enters, all that is contrary to Him is manifested. We are going to see a little how Christ nourishes, and how one is sustained by Him in ordinary life, so that the power of Christ could not be enfeebled even in the midst of all the worryings which tend to distract us. If we cannot pass through them occupying ourselves with the Lord, then when we would come back to Him the heart is cold. His love is weakened in us if we have not that which we used for going through all circumstances with Him;

We may distinguish three characters in the Christian. First, he is a sinner redeemed. We see in him an object of grace in redemption. There are in him two opposites brought close, God and the sinner. Never has been, never will be, seen such a manifestation with an angel. Secondly, he has part with Christ in glory. Later on we shall see the other character: he has Christ as the manna for the passage through the wilderness. It is therefore of a passing nature, as the two other characters are everlasting.

When God visited His people in Egypt, He did not speak to them of the desert they had to cross, but of Canaan. So in drawing us out of the world for communion with Jesus, God speaks to us of heaven; He has glory in view for us. But we are apt to stop and consider our circumstances in the wilderness; but when the Spirit acts, one sees only the end.

Paul did not live in the things that are seen, because they pass away and are null in this sense; but he abode in the things eternal. Consequently the first requisite for enabling us thus to regard the world as null is to know that we are not of it. God found us in sin, entirely estranged from Him, and the question is how to place us in heaven. As He took Christ from the tomb and set Him at His right hand in heaven, by the same power He has taken us out of our sins to place us in heaven, all

the rest being blotted out.

In the chapter just read we find two things: the passover and the old corn of the land. All other things are left aside. It is a question of being in heaven for leaving the manna. This is a great deal to say; it supposes not only shelter from the judgment of God but a place in heaven. Even when Israel were no longer in Egypt, they did not want the old corn of the land whilst they were in the wilderness. Pharaoh was no longer there. Israel was delivered from the bondage of Egypt; nevertheless they did not eat the old corn of the land. It is just the same for the Christian who has not learned the salvation he has in Christ. He is no longer under condemnation; but he cannot glorify God. He is sheltered from judgment, but he does not know the efficacy of Christ's work for glory.

All effort therefore must be entirely done with, and like Israel outside Egypt and the power of Satan, we must know God as a Savior without fear any more. A Christian is one who can say, All is done by Christ for my salvation; He has plucked me forever from the power of Satan, as Israel could have said, We shall know Pharaoh no more: he is at the bottom of the sea.

Satan was conquered when Jesus drank of the cup which His Father gave Him to drink. The deliverance is complete for us, for God has shown our Savior, and as the apostle Paul says, If God is for us who can be against us? It matters little then that Satan and the wilderness are still there. I leave all aside, because I know that God is for me. But there is another which I ought to know. The Jordan remains, which is a different thing. Christ is dead and risen for me: such is what the Red Sea tells me; but the Jordan declares that I am dead and risen with Christ. It is the knowledge and the enjoyment of my union with Him. When we have this, we begin to eat the old corn of the land. We are seated in heavenly places in Christ. Being thus introduced into Canaan we begin to have warfare with the enemies who are there, but we eat the corn of the land. And there is Gilgal, and circumcision, which means that, when we have the consciousness of being thus in the heavenlies in Christ, we judge all according to the standard of heaven. If I am there, I say of such or such a thing I see in the world, This is not of heaven and I leave it: there I must abide, and must judge the flesh in the presence of God.

Returning to the manner of being nourished with Christ, we see that, when the old corn of the land was eaten, the manna ceased; that is, we enjoy redemption in quite a new way. The principle of the difference lies here. At the beginning I thought of my sins and of Christ; this is the door by which we must enter. We must be humbled and enter by Christ. But afterward, knowing that God loves us as He loves Christ, and that His favor rests on us, and knowing all the bearing of redemption accomplished by Jesus, I begin to estimate the love of Jesus as God estimates it, to have the same thoughts as He in this respect. Then I see Christ in quite another way than before; I am nourished with Him in a way entirely new. It is no longer a mere question of being sheltered only, but I am united to Christ Himself. I contemplate all the perfection of the Lamb who is there; and when I think of the abasement He submitted to on the cross, how He annihilated Himself to make good the character of God in order that God might be just without giving up love, and that He might act according to love without giving up righteousness, then I adore Christ. The Son of man has been glorified because God has been glorified in Him. He has been content to be compromised in order that God might be glorified. He has renounced all, yet had an absolute confidence in His Father. “But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.” He goes

to the end and drinks the cup that the Father might be glorified and we saved. Now I nourish myself with all this; not only am I sheltered, but I adore. What occupies him who is in his sins is to be sheltered; but he who feeds on Christ while adoring Him rejoices, while contemplating Him, that He is seated with Christ in heavenly places.

The more spiritual we are, the more we know what the glory is that Christ would share with us. That which He was through all eternity, and all He has won by His obedience is given us, and we shall be like Him.

Is not Christ seen in heaven an object of affection to me? Am I glad to see Him there He wishes that our affections should find nourishment in seeing Him in glory. “If ye loved me,” said He to the disciples, “ye would rejoice because I go to my Father.” And when I think that Jesus has been banished and rejected by the world, I am happy to see Him in heaven. He is the old corn of the land, for He is of the heavenly country. He is also the food that suits us. The Christian is heavenly and ought to occupy and nourish himself on Him who is there as the Lamb.

When I say that we ought to abide in Canaan, it is in Canaan where the warfare is that I speak of. There are continual conflicts in the heavenly places represented by Canaan; for it is clear that in heaven by and by there will be perfect repose.

As a sinner the believer was of Egypt; as a Christian he is of Canaan: but he is crossing the wilderness, and sometimes his spirit is still in Egypt, because he gets weary of the wilderness and the heart then turns back. The world should be for him, as for Jesus, only a dry land where no water is. (Psa. 63) Here below we have nothing but a desert, where are fiery serpents; but it must be crossed and passed through with God. If our affections are capable of being nourished with Christ, we shall be able to endure everything.

I say to myself, Why is it that I am not there? I know however that Christ is my Savior. Oh! it is when one does not feed on Christ as the old corn of the land that one does not abide in communion with Him. The manna is for the wilderness, but the old corn of the land is for Canaan. The other character which I have named is Christ as manna for the people in marching through the desert. Jesus speaks of it when He says to the Jews, “My Father giveth you the true bread from heaven,” which the manna set forth.

If the Christian neglects to feed on Christ in this sense, he has no strength to put on Christ here below in his walk. If he walks ill, if there are falls, he cannot at Gilgal (for we must come there after all) feed on Christ as the old corn of the land, that is, feast in communion with Him, the heavenly rest. In this case one must be humbled and settle accounts with Christ, which is an immense difference in the moral state of the soul. If Christ went up the mountain, then came the transfiguration; it was for Him the old corn of the land; He fed as it were on the glory; but if lie went down, He found at the foot the power of Satan. In all the circumstances of the desert, however, Jesus lived on account of the Father. We too should live on account of Jesus. It is where we meet with the enemy's power that Jesus is our food as manna. Jesus could always say, “As the living Father sent me, and I live on account of the Father; so he that eateth me, even be shall live on account of me.” As Christ Himself crossed the wilderness, and walked there by faith, we are called to do the same. In all circumstances He prayed; if difficulties increased, He prayed more earnestly. He was there as man and passed through everything with the Father's help.

The Christian feeds on a Christ who has been tried and humbled, and ought to be himself as Christ, crossing the world with all the grace necessary in order that one should own his Master in Him. If he walks with Christ, every sort of goodness, mildness, of longsuffering, will be seen in him. For Jesus the effect of temptation was to bring out grace. If I am with Him, and people insult me, I endure; I shall not cease to be meek, because I feed on Him who is such. It is not that my Christian character obliges me to be in these things, but I have all needful for going through them and I forget them because I am not of this world but of elsewhere. If I walk with Christ in me, if I eat manna in the desert, I feed also on the old corn of the land in Canaan. Every day one may do both. The manna is wanted and daily diligence (for the manna spoiled). They had need of manna to go to Canaan. But to glorify God and reproduce the character of Jesus in all positions of husband, wife, master, servant, one must feed on Christ the old corn of the land.

Another circumstance may be pointed out. Israel wanted the old corn of the land in the plain of Jericho before the victory was won; then Christ presents Himself as captain of Jehovah's host. (Ver. 13.) “Art thou for us or for our adversaries?” said Joshua. It must be for or against when it is a question of Christ. I may, as man, have relations with others in certain things; but every man I meet is “for” or “against,” when the question is of following Christ in heaven. If it is some one more spiritual than me that I meet, he is for me; if it is some one less spiritual, he is against me, for I might be drawn into evil by him.

If we would enjoy the heavenly joy, we must feed on Jesus as the manna come down from heaven, which is all we want for all the circumstances where we are found. Then we shall enjoy Him and the glory as our everlasting portion.

Chapter 125

Notes on the Kingdom

“It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,” was God's announcement to the serpent in the hour of its apparent triumph that He would not leave it in undisturbed possession of power over man and the earth. From the time however of man's acceptance of Satan's guidance, violence, self-will, and oppression began to be manifested in the world; but God's purpose must be fulfilled. So, from time to time, during the forty centuries which rolled by between the prophetic announcement and the appearance of the one predicted, God disclosed something of the future concerning the kingdom to be established in power and permanence, where His authority has been disowned and His rights denied.

To Abraham it was promised, “In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed,” and to Isaac and to Jacob after him was this promise confirmed. (Gen. 22:18; 26:4; 28:14.) In the hope of the kingdom saints died. Jacob, before gathering up his feet into the bed, predicted the gathering of nations to Shiloh, who was to come (Gen. 49:10); Moses closed his blessing of the tribes with the prospect of the people's welfare, when the Lord should be reigning in person over the earth (Dent. 33:28); and David's last words are descriptive of the One who is yet to put down all that opposes itself to God. (2 Sam. 23) In the days of Israel's triumphs the hope of the kingdom was remembered, for they sang of it at the Red Sea, and looked on to it as the ark entered Jerusalem under David. (Ex. 15 Chron. 16:23-33.) Individuals cherished one prospect of it in their hearts: witness Hannah, who, pouring forth the joyful utterance of a grateful heart, cannot close her thanksgiving for special favors without making mention of the king, the Lord's anointed. And David, as he wandered over the land he was one day to govern, and as he sat on his throne in the city of Zion, looked onward to that which we too expect (Psa. 18; 63); whilst the personal majesty of the king he sung of in Psa. 45, and the beneficent character of His reign he celebrates in Psa. 72. After him the prophets took up the strain. Isaiah, Micah, and others predicted the blessings that will be enjoyed under His rule, and Daniel fixed the date of His first coming to earth; whilst to Nebuchadnezzar God revealed in dreams the crushing power of the stone cut out without hands, and the setting up by the God of heaven of a kingdom which shall never be destroyed.

To Jewish ears then it was no strange sound which John the Baptist gave forth, as he proclaimed, “The kingdom of heaven [or heavens] is at hand.” After him the Lord Jesus uttered the same words, when He began His ministry in Galilee; but both prefixed to their announcements the imperative call to repentance. (Matt. 3:2; 4:17.) For the children of Israel being sons of the kingdom (Matt. 8:12), its establishment in power is connected with that nation's blessing, and their future glory depends on it, as Daniel had predicted: “The kingdom, and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High” [or high places]. (Dan. 7:27.) To them, then, whilst announcing the near approach of the kingdom, it was needful to declare the terms upon which they could enter it, and what God looked for from those who should receive it. In Galilee, therefore, the Lord preached repentance; on Nicodemus He impressed the necessity of the new birth (John 3; 5); to His disciples He made known the childlike spirit requisite for those who shall enter it (Matt. 18:3), and warned all against

mere profession without practice, which would forever shut out souls from that which Israel had been taught to expect. (Matt. 5:20; Luke 13:25-29.) To John the kingdom was future, for dispensationally whilst on earth he was outside it (Matt. 11:11); but the Lord could speak of it as existing on earth, manifested by the power over Satan which He exercised. (Matt. 11:28.)

John spoke of the prospect, the Lord preached the kingdom of God, and commissioned the twelve, and the seventy disciples, to proclaim it likewise. (Luke 4:43; 9:1, 60; 10:9.) The devils discerned the great change which had taken place consequent on His presence in the midst of Israel, for they felt His power, confessed His authority, and owned what alone they expected from His hands. (Mark 1:34; Matt. 8:28-31.) He had come, who was to destroy the works of the devil. The people who heard Him, and witnessed His works, should have discerned the great change and have rejoiced; for if He preached to them, as Matthew and Luke express it, “the gospel” or “glad tidings of the kingdom,” or as Mark perhaps really wrote “the gospel of God” (Matt. 4:23; 9:35. Luke 8:1; Mark 1:14), the kingdom was in existence, for the king was present. A power which could deliver man from that one into whose hands he had put himself was manifested in Him who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil. The people saw it and marveled; the rulers confessed the works and caviled, and blasphemed. (Mark 1:27; 3:22-30.) Men, released from the tyranny of demoniacal possession, were witnesses none could gainsay. The King was really on earth, and gathering souls around Himself by the words of the kingdom, the seed spread abroad by the sower; all who heard and received His word became really what Israel were only nationally, true children or rather sons of the kingdom (Matt. 13:19-38), wheat or good seed sown in the field.

Turning back to Dan. 7:18, 27, we find mention made of two classes of saints: “the saints of the Most High” (or high places) who “take the kingdom and possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever;” and “the people of the saints of the Most High” (or high places) to whom the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given. The former are the heavenly saints who shall reign on high over the earth, the latter are the people of Israel on earth during the millennium; for the kingdom, as prophesied in the Old Testament and often when spoken of in the New Testament, has reference to a rule to be exercised over the earth. To Jews therefore, though the term “kingdom of heaven” is not found in the Old Testament, the thought it conveyed was not a new one, and when Jesus preached “the kingdom of heaven (or the heavens) is at hand” (and He did not, that we read of, use any other formula), whilst His message must have gladdened the hearts of the faithful, He would have stumbled by His language none who were acquainted with Israel's hopes, or had studied the Old Testament scriptures. And, often as we meet with the term “kingdom of heaven” in Matthew's gospel, where alone it is found, we never read of any one asking either John or the Lord what they meant by it, or what it was intended to express. The term might be new, but the thought it expressed had cheered the heart of many a saint in previous ages, as the language of the priest Zacharias, when his mouth was opened, shows us how the godly before the Lord's first advent looked onward to the fulfillment of God's word. (Luke 1:71-76.)

John the Baptist spoke of the kingdom of heaven, the Lord spoke besides of the kingdom of God.

Are there then two kingdoms, or one? One only. It is the kingdom of God, because it belongs to Him; it can be called the kingdom of the heavens because in the heavenlies is, and will be, the seat of royal authority and power. If we take in the full range of the kingdom it comprehends both

heaven and earth. So we read of the righteous shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (that is the heavenly part of it), and of “the kingdom of the Son of man” (that is the earthly part of it), which has earth for its sphere, though the seat of power will always be in the heavenlies. (Matt. 13:43, 41.) Again, addressing those who form part of the heavenly saints, the Lord said, “I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom” (Matt. 26:29): whereas in the address He will at a future day make to the sheep, those amongst the Gentiles who shall have a portion on earth when He reigns, we read, “Come ye blessed of my Father (not your Father) inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” (Matt. 25:34.)

In general however in the gospels where the kingdom is spoken of, what was to be on earth, not in heaven, forms the subject of the teaching. And often we find the terms, kingdom “of God” and “of heaven” used interchangeably. Thus the Lord could announce that both were at hand (Matt. 4:17; Mark 1:15.) He could speak too of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven as in Matt. 13:11, and of the mysteries of the kingdom of God as in Mark 4:11, and Luke 8:10; for He was teaching the things concerning the kingdom in existence, but not in display as it would be known to the faithful, during the time of His absence before it would be manifested to the world. So the parables of the leaven and of the mustard tree are similitudes of the kingdom of heaven as well as of the kingdom of God (Matt. 13; Mark 4; Luke 13); for they describe the outward appearance and character of the kingdom on earth after that the King should have entered into heaven: and looking on to the day when the kingdom shall be seen in power, and the heavenly saints shall have entered into their inheritance; the Lord could speak of souls sitting down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8:11) as well as in the kingdom of God. (Luke 13:28.) Both terms could thus be used, because the epoch contemplated was that subsequent to His ascension to the heavenlies. And even since the day that the cloud received Him out of the sight of His disciples, who stood gazing up to heaven, the kingdom as it exists on earth might be rightly called the kingdom of heaven as well as the kingdom of God.

But such was not always the case. When the Lord was on earth the kingdom of God was on earth, because He the King was there; but it would not be called the kingdom of heaven till He had taken His place in the heavenlies. So in certain places in the gospels, where Matthew adduces something characteristic of the whole of the present epoch, he uses the term the “kingdom of heaven,” whereas in the parallel places in Luke, where something is introduced characteristic of the time when the Lord was on earth, the term employed, and the only one which could be, is “the kingdom of God.” Compare Matt. 11:12, 13 with Luke 16:16. In the former the Lord points out the new feature manifested in connection with the kingdom, of entree which would be characteristic of the whole time till He return in power. The Jew looked on the kingdom as his by right, his title to it he considered was bound up with his genealogy. As a son of Abraham he was a son of the kingdom; his birth according to the flesh settled the whole matter. But this was a grievous mistake, as the aspect of things around would point out. The Spirit of God was at work on souls, and the kingdom whilst connected with birth, was connected with the new birth and not with descent from Abraham according to the flesh. Men were finding that out, and as acted on by the Spirit were taking the kingdom of heaven by violence, being in earnest about it. God's Spirit had then begun to work on souls who could not rest till they entered it. Such was, such is, the character of things as regards the kingdom. But in Luke the Lord speaks of what actually was done in His day: “The

kingdom of God is preached," hence the change in the language, for we never read of the kingdom of heaven being preached. He preached—proclaimed—the kingdom of God, and taught about the kingdom of heaven.

Again comparing Matt. 5:3 with Luke 6:20 we may note the difference, and understand the reason of it. Describing the character of those to whom the kingdom belongs, the Lord speaks of it as the kingdom of heaven, but, telling those before Him of the blessings already theirs, He calls it the kingdom of God, for that was the character of it then existing.

Very guarded then is the language of scripture, and it is well for souls to observe it. This Matthew illustrates. For whilst he so often wrote the words of the kingdom of heaven, he teaches us that there were occasions when, the Lord Jesus Christ could not use it. Disciples were to seek first the kingdom of God (chap. 6:33), which had come unto Israel (chap. 12:28), into which publicans and harlots were entering before the chief priests and elders; and from whom, because they rejected Christ it should be taken and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. (Chap. 21:31, 43.) These four passages are the only ones in which Matthew has used the term, the kingdom of God, except in chapter 29:24. In the preceding verse we have the more common term for the evangelist, "kingdom of heaven." And whilst the common text with the majority of MSS. in verse 24 reads, kingdom of God. Lachmann, and Tischendorf, Tregelles and Alford, following Z and many of the fathers, read here also the kingdom of heaven. Whichever reading be preferred, on textual ground, there is nothing to forbid looking at the passage exegetically, the reading of the Dublin rescript from being the faithful preserver of the original form of expression.

The hope of Israel was the kingdom in power when Messiah should reign. The angel in his message to the Virgin Mary took cognizance of it (Luke 1:32); the wise men from the East expected it. (Matt. 2:2.) The aged Simeon died in the hope of it. (Luke 2:32.) John the Baptist's question by his disciples, when in prison proves it. (Matt. 11:3.) All classes were familiar with it. The chief priests and scribes could turn up the scriptures which spoke of it. Andrew a humble fisherman, and the woman of Samaria, and the penitent thief, by their language confirm it. So with Messiah at last really on earth, the appearance of God's kingdom was looked for as close at hand. To correct this mistake, the Lord spake the parable of the "pounds." (Luke 19:2.) Yet how deeply engraven this thought was on the hearts of the Jews is evidenced by the question addressed to Him by the disciples in their last moments with Him on earth. (Acts 1:6-9.) Joseph of Arimathea who buried the Lord waited, we learn, for the kingdom of God; and the two disciples on their journey to Emmaus confided to the stranger, as they thought, the once cherished hopes of their heart, now dashed to the ground by His death. (Luke 23:51; 24:21.) His answer confirmed the correctness of their hopes, and revived the anticipations of the nation's future blessing. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" His death then, however startling and stumbling to His disciples, is no bar to the accomplishment of the prophecies recorded in the scriptures; for, as Paul taught the assembled multitude in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia, the mercies of David would be made sure through the King reigning in resurrection. (Acts 13:34.)

All this however is yet future, though the kingdom exists on earth. What then would characterize the epoch whilst this anomalous condition of matters should last, the kingdom in existence without the king's power being everywhere really owned? The prophets can tell us nothing about it, as the Lord gave these parables, which are called similitudes of the kingdom to explain it, and they

supply the link in the chain, which we should in vain search for elsewhere. Found in Matt. 13; 18:20; 22:25, Mark 4, Luke 13, they come in each gospel, it should be remarked, only after His rejection by the nation has been unequivocally declared. See Matt. 12, Mark 3:22-30, Luke 11; 13 “Therefore,” said the Lord, “every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old:” — “old things,” because he can speak of what the prophets predicted; “new,” because he can teach what the Lord revealed.

Of the parables in the gospels all are not similitudes of the kingdom. Those only are similitudes which have special reference to the characteristic features of the epoch between the Lord's ascension and return in power. Thus the parable of the sower is not a similitude of the kingdom, because it deals with the Lord's work, as the sower of the seed, whilst He was on earth; but the parable of the tares is a parable of the kingdom, because it describes the evils that would be disseminated in the field by the enemy while men slept. So that parable, peculiar to Mark, of the seed cast into the ground, is a similitude of the kingdom of God, because it tells of the crop growing during the absence of Him who sowed the seed. Again the parable of the husbandmen (Matt. 21), is not a similitude of the kingdom, because it only carries us down to the Lord's death, the heir killed, and the announcement of the judgment to be executed on the unfaithful husbandmen; but the parable of the marriage supper, which immediately follows is a similitude of the kingdom, as it treats of events on earth in the kingdom after the Lord's ascension. And these two, placed so close together, and dealing with acknowledged facts in history, the death of the Lord, and the death of His servants afterward, help a careful student of the word to discern, when what is called the kingdom of heaven really did begin. Other parables there are, such as “the talents,” and “the pound,” which treat of God's general dealings with men, but are neither of them similitudes of the kingdom (notwithstanding the unfortunate interpolation of the Auth. Ver. in Matt. 25:14); for though they apply to all who shall be in the kingdom, they do not confine themselves to what is characteristic only of the time during the Lord's absence from the earth.

That He will return to the earth, having received the kingdom, many of these parables intimate, as they speak of judgments to be executed and rewards to be bestowed. But this event, the ushering in of the kingdom in power, is rather outside their scope, and is treated of fully elsewhere in the book. They suppose it, for responsibility as servants does not cease till the Lord takes the kingdom; but they do not describe His advent, which will not take place till the gospel of the kingdom shall have been preached in all the world as a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come. (Matt. 24:14.) This statement, very clear yet much misunderstood, marks at once the difference there must be between the character of the testimony that has been going forth since the Lord's ascension and that which was when He was on earth and will again be ere He returns to reign— “the gospel of the kingdom.” This glad tidings He first announced and this glad tidings will again be heard. He preached it in the land of Israel; it shall be preached throughout the whole world among all nations. How this is to be effected we learn in Rev. 14:6, and what the terms of the message are we there read. It is the everlasting gospel or good news, as it speaks of God's kingdom to be at last established in power on earth, to whom all are exhorted to submit, though it differs widely from the gospel or good news of God's grace. The former will be good news because it will proclaim the end of the reign of wickedness and of Satan's meddling with the affairs of earth, and that the reins of power will henceforth be in the hands of the man competent to retain them.

The latter is good news, as it tells us of God's plan of salvation for all the lost who believe on His Son Jesus Christ. Since the time when the Lord and His disciples preached the gospel of the kingdom before His crucifixion, that joyful sound has not been heard. When next it breaks forth, a message from God to a groaning creation and a downtrodden people, from heaven will the tidings fall on the ears of all who will give heed to them. How those in heaven will regard the approach of the epoch, when the Lord shall appear to the world and reign openly, Rev. 11:15-17 discloses. Without one dissentient voice it will be hailed with joy. How creation and God's people on earth will view it, Psa. 95-100 bring out: “Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced, because of thy judgment, O Lord,” is the simple statement of the Psalmist. And the Spirit, speaking by Isaiah, exclaims, “How 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 reigneth.” (Chap. 52:7.) Till these days approach, though the gospel of the kingdom will not be proclaimed, the kingdom should have its due place in the teaching and preaching of God's servants. It had a place in the instruction which the first teachers of Christianity gave to their disciples, it should always have a place still.

During the forty days which elapsed between the Lord's resurrection and ascension, the kingdom of God had a prominent place in His teaching. (Acts 1:3.) Philip went down to Samaria and spoke about it. (Chap. viii. 12.) Paul at Ephesus, at Rome, and elsewhere preached it, and taught the things concerning it (chap. 14:22; 19:8; 20:25; 28:23-31), but always as the kingdom of God and of Christ—terms which must bring before the heart the thought of responsibility. It is God's kingdom, therefore to His will souls should conform and His mind they should seek to discern. Were there contentions and strife about days and meats among the converts at Rome, the apostle would remind them that “the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Chap. 14:17.) Were the Corinthians taken up with gifts and the eloquence of their teachers, the apostle would have them remember, that “the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.” (1 Cor. 4:20.) And when he has to expose unrighteousness in various forms, he warns them that the unrighteous shall not inherit it (chap. 6:9); and whereas, some were seeking to persuade them that there was no resurrection of the dead, he would have them know that all the godly must be changed, “for flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.” (Chap. 15:50.) To the Galatians, and in the Epistle to the Ephesians he has to speak of the same subject; for whether he has to write and reprove those who were slipping away from foundation truth, or is able to unfold the true place of a believer in Christ, the truth concerning the kingdom having to do with the believer's walk on earth finds its proper place in both these letters. (Gal. 5:21; Eph. 5:5.) The saints of Colosse are reminded of the grace which had delivered them from the power of darkness, and translated them into the kingdom of the Son of His love (chap. 1:13), though its display in power was and is yet future. The saints at Thessalonica had heard of it, and when in trouble were comforted by the prospect of it. (1 Thess. 2:12; 2 Thess. 1:5.) Timothy was reminded of it, and the Hebrews received exhortations founded on the hope of it. (2 Tim. 4:1-18; Heb. 12:28.) James speaks of it (chap. 2:5); Peter would stir up those to whom he wrote that they might have an entrance into it ministered unto them abundantly (2 Peter 1:11); and John declares that he and the saints in his day had part in it (Rev. 1:9), as all saints have still. At times then they taught about it as in existence, at times they spoke of its manifestation in power which is future, as servants and instructed scribes they knew how to speak of it, and what to teach about it.

To enter the kingdom however, and to be found in it when the Lord returns, are very different things. None can enter it now without being born of water and of the Spirit, nor even see it without being born again, and all who are so born during the time of Christ's absence become inheritors of it. It is the inheritance of God's Son, and God's children will inherit it with Him— “Heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.” But within its range, as it now exists, all manner of evil is found, which at His coming will be gathered out of it (Matt. 13:41); and ever after nothing actively will be allowed in it unjudged, though the unconverted will enjoy earthly blessings under His reign, if outwardly obedient to His sway. (Psa. 101; 18:44—margin.)

Are the kingdom and the Church then the same, it may be asked? By no means. All who are of the Church inherit the kingdom, but all the heavenly saints will share in it likewise. (Rev. 20:6.) Connected with each there is a hope. The hope of the Church is Christ's descent into the air; the hope connected with the kingdom is the Lord's appearance with His saints. In the kingdom there are ranks, in the Church there are gifts. The rank and reward of each one in the kingdom will be determined by his service, as the catalog of David's worthies shadows out, and the parable of the pounds clearly intimates. The gifts are bestowed on the Church in accordance with God's sovereign will, and responsibility flows from the possession of them. The place in the kingdom will be determined by the right use of the opportunities afforded and responsibilities discharged. From the kingdom all evil will be put out when the Lord returns; from the assembly evil should be put out by His members on earth whilst He is absent on high. The kingdom awaits an absent Lord, the Church is joined to a head in heaven.

A few words in conclusion. Varied are the terms used in scripture when speaking of the kingdom. It is God's kingdom as we have seen, and the kingdom of heaven likewise. It is also the kingdom of God's dear Son, because to Him the rule in it has been committed. It is the everlasting kingdom, because it never will end. The Father's kingdom and heavenly kingdom speak of the heavenly part of it; the kingdom of the Son of man is the earthly portion of it. We learn from the word the commencement of the existence of the kingdom on earth. We learn too when the present form of it will cease. We read in the prophetical portions of the book how it will be displayed in power, and we read too that a time will come when Christ shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; but the kingdom will never end. He delivers it up, but it does not terminate. Daniel declares it shall last “forever, even forever and ever,” and John in the last chapter of the Bible reaffirms it, as he writes “they shall reign forever and ever.” C. E. S.

Chapter 126

Lamentations of Jeremiah: Introduction

Introduction

It is no uncommon thought now, as of old, to assume that the book on which we are now entering consists of the Lamentations written by the prophet on the occasion of Josiah's death. (2 Chron. 35:25.) If a divine testimony affirmed this, it would be our place to believe it: to that no one pretends, still there is the secret assumption that what Jeremiah composed in sorrow for Josiah must be in the Bible, and hence must be this book. But there is no sufficient reason to conclude that all the writings of prophets were inspired for the permanent use of God's people: rather is there good ground to conclude that they were not. Hence we are free to examine the character of the work before us, not to question its divine authority but to ascertain as far as may be its aim and the subjects of which it treats. But, if so, the contents themselves are adverse to the idea; for the distressing prostration of Jerusalem, not the death of the pious king cut down so young, is clearly in view. The description of the state of the city, sanctuary, and people does not accord with Josiah's death; and even the king, whose humiliation is named (chap. 2:9), could not possibly be Josiah, who was slain in battle, instead of being among the Gentiles and therefore in captivity. It was no doubt Jehoiachin whose varied lot we can easily trace by comparing the prophecy and 2 Kings 24; 25. All the circumstances of that time tally with the bewailings here.

That the Spirit of prophecy dictated the book cannot be justly doubted, though it may not have direct predictions like the former work from which in the Hebrew Bible it has long been severed as to place, though not so in the days of Josephus. Nevertheless, the distinctness of object, tone, and manner is sufficiently marked to justify our viewing it as a separate work of the same writer, Jeremiah. It was morally good that we should have not only predictions of the deep trouble coming on the house of David and Jerusalem, but also the outpouring of a godly heart broken by anguish for the people of God, and the more because they deserved all that fell upon them through their enemies at God's hand. We little think what such an one as Jeremiah must have felt to see the temple destroyed, the holy service suspended, the king and priests and bulk of Judah carried off by their idolatrous conqueror, compelled to own also that their desolation was most righteous because of their sins. Even when he had survived the events which proved the value of his own slighted prophecies, he was inspired to pour forth these elegies which were no vain complaints as we shall see, but a spreading out of the woes of the city and people before a God whose compassion and faithfulness are alike infinite. He vindicates God in what He had done to unhappy Jerusalem. He places before God the utter ruin of the people, civilly and religiously, charging the false prophets with luring them into the pit by their false hood and flattery, but exhorting the people to repentance. He shows his own sense of sorrow deeper than that of any other, as indeed he both suffered peculiarly from the Jews themselves before the crash came, and the Spirit of Christ that was in him gave him to realize all, where others nerved themselves to brave it with the mailed armor of insensibility and indomitable pride; yet does he cherish hope in what God is, who loves to lift up the fallen and abase the proud. He contrasts their present misery, because of the sins of their priests and prophets, with their former prosperity, but declares that an end will be to Zion's

punishment, but none to Edom's. Lastly, he prayerfully spreads out all their own calamities before Jehovah; his only confidence too is in Him who can turn us to Himself, whatever may be His just wrath.

The form is very notable; save in the last chapter, all are acrostic or at least alphabetic. De Wette, with the usual arrogance of a rationalist, pronounces this of itself as an offspring of the later vitiated taste. But this he must do in defiance of the plain fact that those admirable and even early Psa. 25; 34; 37 are similarly constructed, not to speak of the wonderful Psa. 119 and several others in the same fifth book of the Psalter (111., 112., 145.). Those who pronounce these psalms cold, feeble, and flat, as well as unconnected, simply betray their own lack of all just appreciation, not to speak of reverence which we may not expect from men who deny them in any true sense to be of God. The first, second, and fourth chapters are so written that each verse begins with one of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet in due succession, save that in the second and fourth follows instead of preceding E; and the same transposition occurs in chapter iii., where we have three verses instead of single ones, which so commence; and hence there are in it 66 verses. Another peculiarity is to be noticed, that each verse (except 1:7, 2:19) is a sort of triplet in chapters 1, 2, and 3. Chapter 4 is characterized by couplets (save ver. 15); and a singular structure is traceable in chapter v., save that it does not begin with the letters of the alphabet, though it consists of twenty-two verses. “Difference of authorship” is the ready but monotonous cry of dark skepticism: others as despairing of intelligence impute it to forgetfulness, a third to accident! The propriety of the change in what throughout is a prayer and confession to Jehovah must be apparent to the spiritual mind. The alphabetic form may have had a mnemonic object in view. For pathos the book as a whole is unequaled.

Chapter 127

Lamentations of Jeremiah: 1

The prophet presents a graphic view of Jerusalem once abounding with people now sitting alone, and as a widow; she that was mighty among nations, a princess among the provinces, now become tributary. She is seen weeping sore, and this in the night when darkness and sleep bring respite to others, to her only a renewal of that grief, less restrained, which covers her cheeks with tears. Now is proved the folly as well as the sin that forsook Jehovah for others; but there is for her no comforter out of her lovers. All her friends, the allies she counted on, deal treacherously by her, and are but enemies. (Ver. 1, 2.)

The last hope of the nation was gone. Israel had been long a prey to the Assyrian. But now in the captivity of Judah mourning overspreads Zion where once were crowded feasts. And there is no exception to the rule of affliction: her priests sigh, her virgins are afflicted, herself as a whole in bitterness. On the other hand her adversaries are in power and command over her. How bitter was all this to a Jew! and in a sense most bitter where the Jew was godly. For besides the grief of nature he might share with his countrymen, there was the added and poignant sorrow that the normal witnesses of Jehovah on earth had proved false, and he could not see how glory would be brought to God in spite of and through Israel's unfaithfulness.

It is necessary to bear in mind the peculiar place of Israel and Jerusalem: otherwise we can never appreciate such a book as this, and many of the Psalms, as well as much of the Prophets. The patriotism of a Jew was bound up as that of no other people or country was with the honor of Jehovah. Providence governs everywhere: no raid of Red Indians, no maneuver of the greatest military power in the West, no movement or struggle in Asia, without His eye and hand. But He had set up a direct government in His own land and people, modified from Samuel's days by kingly power, which had blessing guaranteed on obedience. But who could guarantee the obedience? Israel pledged it indeed, but in vain. The people disobeyed, the priests disobeyed, the kings disobeyed. We see too that in Jeremiah's days false prophets imitated the true, and supplanted them in the heed of a court and nation which desired a delusive sanction from God on their own wilfulness, prophesying what pleased the people in flattery and deceit. Hence the corruption only lent an immense impetus to those who were already hastening down the steep of ruin. But this did not lessen the agony of such as Jeremiah. They realized the inevitable ruin; and he, not in moral sense only but by divine inspiration, gives expression to his feelings here. The blessed Lord Jesus Himself is the perfect pattern of similar grief over Jerusalem, in Him absolutely unselfish and in every way pure, but so much the more deeply felt. Unless the relation of that city to God be understood, one cannot enter into this; and there is danger of either explaining it away into care for their souls, or of perverting it into a ground for similar feelings, each for his own country. But it is clear that a man's soul is the same in Pekin or London, in Jerusalem or Baltimore. The Lord does show us the immeasurable value of a soul elsewhere; but this is not the key to His tears over Jerusalem. The impending judgment of God in this world, the dismal consequences yet in the womb of the future, because of the rejection of the Messiah as well as all other evil against God, made the Savior weep. We cannot wonder therefore that the Spirit of Christ which was in

Jeremiah, and guided him in this Book of Lamentations, gave the prophet communion with his Master before He Himself proved its worst against His own person.

God might raise up a fresh testimony, as we know He has done; but, while bowing to His sovereign will, the utter ruin of the old witness justly filled the heart of every pious God-fearing Israelite with sorrow unceasing; and surely not the less “because Jehovah hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions.” Grief is not less over God's people because they have dishonored God and are righteously chastised. “Her children are gone into captivity before the enemy. And from the daughter of Zion all her beauty is departed: her princes are as harts which find no pasture and go powerless before the pursuer.”

There was the bitter aggravation, ever present, of what the city of the great King had lost, which He, when He came and was refused, told out in His broken words of weeping over it. “Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and of her miseries all her pleasant things that she had in the days of old, when her people fell into the hand of the enemy, and none did help her: the adversaries saw her, and did mock at her sabbaths. Jerusalem hath grievously sinned; therefore she is removed: all that honored her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness: yea, she sigheth, and turneth backward. Her filthiness is in her skirts; she remembereth not her last end; therefore she came down wonderfully: she had no comforter. O Jehovah, behold my affliction: for the enemy hath magnified himself. The adversary hath spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things: for she hath seen that the heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into thy congregation. All her people sigh, they seek bread; they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul: see, O Jehovah, and consider: for I am become vile.” (Ver. 7-11.) Faith however sees in the prostration of the guilty city under the relentless adversary a plea for Jehovah's compassion and interposition on its behalf.

Then the prophet personifies the downtrodden Zion turning to the passing strangers for their pity. “Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith Jehovah hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger. From above hath he sent fire into my bones, and it prevaileth against them: he hath spread a net for my feet, he hath turned me back: he hath made me desolate and faint all the day. The yoke of my transgressions is bound by his hand: they are wreathed, and come up upon my neck: he hath made my strength to fall, the Lord hath delivered me into their hands, from whom I am not able to rise up. The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me: he hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men: the Lord hath trodden the virgin, the daughter of Judah, as in a winepress. For these things I weep; mine eye, mine eye runneth down with water, because the comforter that should relieve my soul is far from me: my children are desolate, because the enemy prevailed.” (Ver. 12-16.) Still all is traced to Jehovah's dealing because of Jerusalem's rebellious sins; and hence He is morally vindicated. “Zion spreadeth forth her hands, and there is none to comfort her: Jehovah hath commanded concerning Jacob, that his adversaries should be round about him: Jerusalem is as a menstruous woman among them. Jehovah is righteous; for I have rebelled against his commandment: hear, I pray you, all people, and behold my sorrow: my virgins and my young men are gone into captivity. I called for my lovers, but they deceived me: my priests and mine elders gave up the ghost in the city, while they sought their meat to relieve their souls.” (Ver. 17-19.)

Finally, Jehovah is called to behold, because Jerusalem was thus troubled, and this too inwardly, because of its own grievous rebellion; and He is besought to requite the enemy who took pleasure in their abject shame and deep suffering. “Behold, O Jehovah; for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled; mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth, at home there is as death. They have heard that I sigh: there is none to comfort me: all mine enemies have heard of my trouble, they are glad that thou hast done it; thou wilt bring the day that thou hast called, and they shall be like unto me. Let all their wickedness come before thee; and do unto them as thou hast done unto me for all my transgressions: for my sighs are many, and my heart is faint.” (Ver. 20-22.)

Chapter 128

Lamentations of Jeremiah: 2

It has been noticed that the solitude of Jerusalem is the prominent feeling expressed in the opening of these elegies. Here we shall find its overthrow spread out in the strongest terms and with great detail. Image is crowded on image to express the completeness of the destruction to which Jehovah had devoted His own chosen people, city, and temple; the more terrible; as He must be in His own nature and purpose unchangeable. None felt the truth of His love to Israel more than the prophet; for this very reason, none could so deeply feel the inevitable blows of His hand, obliged as He was to be an enemy to those He most loved. “How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with the cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger. The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitations of Jacob, and hath not pitied: he hath thrown down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah; he hath brought them down to the ground: he hath polluted the kingdom and the princes thereof. He hath cut off in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy, and he burned against Jacob like a flaming fire, which devoureth round about. He hath bent his bow like an enemy: he stood with his right hand as an adversary, and slew all that were pleasant to the eye in the tabernacle of the daughter of Zion: he poured out his fury like fire. The Lord was as an enemy: he hath swallowed up Israel, he hath swallowed up all her palaces: he hath destroyed his strongholds, and hath increased in the daughter of Judah mourning and lamentation.” (Ver. 1-5.)

But even this was not the worst. Their civil degradation and ruin were dreadful; for their outward place and blessings came from God in a sense peculiar to Israel. But what was this to His degrading His own earthly dwelling in their midst! “And he hath violently taken away his tabernacle, as if it were of a garden: he hath destroyed his places of the assembly. Jehovah hath caused the solemn feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Zion, and hath despised in the indignation of his anger the king and the priest. The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath abhorred his sanctuary, he hath given up into the hand of the enemy the walls of her palaces; they have made a noise in the house of Jehovah, as in the day of a solemn feast.” (Ver. 6, 7.) It was of no use to think of the Chaldeans. God it was who brought Zion and the temple, and their feasts and fasts and sacrifices, with king and priest, to naught.

Hence in verse 8 it is said with yet greater emphasis, “Jehovah hath purposed to destroy the wall of the daughter of Zion: he hath stretched out a line, he hath not withdrawn his hand from destroying: therefore he made the rampart and the wall to lament; they languished together. Her gates are sunk into the ground; he hath destroyed and broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more; her prophets also find no vision from Jehovah. The elders of the daughter of Zion sit upon the ground, and keep silence: they have cast up dust upon their heads; they have girded themselves with sackcloth the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.” (Ver. 8-10.) The prophet then introduces his own grief. “Mine eyes do fill with tears, my bowels are troubled, my liver is poured upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people; because the children and the sucklings swoon in the streets of the city.

They say to their mothers, Where is corn and wine? when they swooned as the wounded in the streets of the city, when their soul was poured out into their mothers' bosom. What thing shall I take to witness for thee? what thing shall I liken to thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? what shall I equal to thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Zion? for thy breach is great like the sea: who can heal thee?" He justly feels that no object can adequately match the miseries of Zion. The sea alone could furnish by its greatness a notion of the magnitude of their calamities.

Another element now enters to aggravate the description—the part which false prophets played before the final crisis came. "Thy prophets have seen vain and foolish things for thee: and they have not discovered thine iniquity, to turn away thy captivity; but have seen for thee false burdens and causes of banishment." (Ver. 14.)

Then He depicts the cruel satisfaction of their envious neighbors over their sufferings and ruin. "All that pass by clap their hands at thee; they his and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying, Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth? All thine enemies have opened their mouth against thee: they hiss and gnash the teeth: they say, We have swallowed her up: certainly this is the day that we looked for; we have found, we have seen it." (Ver. 15, 16.) But the prophet insists that it was Jehovah who had done the work of destruction because of His people's iniquity, let the Gentiles boast as they might of their power over Jerusalem. "Jehovah hath done that which he had devised; he hath fulfilled his word that he had commanded in the days of old: he hath thrown down and hath not pitied: and he hath caused thine enemy to rejoice over thee, he hath set up the horn of thine adversaries." (Ver. 17.) Sorrowful, most sorrowful, that His hand had done it all; yet a comfort to faith, for it is the hand that can and will build up again for His name's sake. Nor was it a hasty chastening; from earliest days Jehovah had threatened and predicted by Moses what Jeremiah details in his Lamentations. Compare Lev. 26, Deut. 28; 31; 32. To Him therefore the prophet would have the heart to cry really, as it had in vain through mere vexation. "Their heart cried unto the Lord, O wall of the daughter of Zion, let tears run down like a river day and night: give thyself no rest; let not the apple of thine eye cease. Arise, cry out in the night: in the beginning of the watches pour out thine heart like water before the face of the Lord: lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street. Behold, O Jehovah, and consider to whom thou hast done this. Shall the women eat their fruit, and children of a span long? shall the priest and the prophet be slain in the sanctuary of the Lord? The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword; thou hast slain them in the day of thine anger; thou hast killed, and not pitied. Thou hast called as in a solemn day my terrors round about, so that in the day of Jehovah's anger none escaped nor remained: those that I have swaddled and brought up hath mine enemy consumed." (Ver. 18-22.) He arrays the most frightful excesses the Jews had suffered before God that He may deal with the enemies who had been thus guilty.

As to the apparent alphabetic dislocation in verses 16, 17, I do not doubt that it is intentional. In chapter 1 all is regular as to this. In chapters 3, 4 a transposition occurs similar to what we find here. It cannot therefore be either accidental on the one hand, or due to a different order in the alphabet on the other, as has been thought. Some of the Hebrew MSS. place the verses as they should stand in the regular order, and the Septuagint pursues a middle course by inverting the alphabetic marks but retaining the verses to which they should belong in their Masoretic place. But there is no sufficient reason to doubt that the Hebrew gives the passage as the Spirit inspired it,

spite of the strangeness of the order, which must therefore have been meant to heighten the picture of sorrow. In sense they must stand as they are: a change according to the ordinary place of the initials ô and ò would cut the thread of just connection.

Lamentations of Jeremiah 3:1-21

This strain differs, as in the triple alliteration of its structure, so also in its more distinctly personal plaintiveness. The prophet expresses his own sense of sorrow, no longer representing Zion but speaking for himself, while at the same time his grief is bound up with the people, and none the less because he was an object of derision and hatred to them for his love to them in faithfulness to Jehovah. Other prophets may have been exempted for special ends of God, but none tasted the bitterness of Israel's portion more keenly than Jeremiah. His desire is that others should bear the grief of the people's state as here expressed for the heart in order to final comfort and blessing from God. In the opening verses he tells out his experiences in trouble. “I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day.” (Ver. 1-3.) He owns it to be from Jehovah's hand and rod. Indignation was gone forth from God against Israel, and a true-hearted prophet was the last one to screen himself or wish it. There was affliction; this too in darkness, not light; and again with oft-recurring visitation of His hand.

Next (ver. 4-6) Jeremiah recounts his wearing away; the preparations of Jehovah against him; and his evidently doomed estate. “My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. He hath builded against me, and compassed me with gall and travel. He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old.” (Ver. 4-6.)

In verses 7-9, the prophet shows that his portion was not only an imprisonment with heavy chain, but with the awful aggravation that entreaty and prayer could not avail to effect deliverance, the way being fenced, not to protect but to exclude and baffle.

Then Jeremiah draws imagery from the animal kingdom to tell how God spared him in nothing. “He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places. He hath turned aside my ways, and pulled me in pieces: he hath made me desolate. He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.” (Ver. 10-12.)

Nor does he content himself with telling us how he had been the object of divine attack, as game to the hunter, but lets us see that the mockery of his brethren was not the least part of his trial and bitterness. “He hath caused the arrows of his quiver to enter into my reins. I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day. He hath filled me with bitterness, he hath made me drunken with wormwood.” (Ver. 13-15.)

Inwardly and outwardly there was every sign of disappointment and humiliation; and expectation of improved circumstances cut off even from Him who is the believer's one resource. “He hath also broken my teeth with gravel stones, he hath covered me with ashes. And thou hast removed my soul far off from peace: I forgat prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from Jehovah. (Ver. 16-18.)

Yet there is the very point of change. From verse 19 he spreads out all before Jehovah, whom he asks to remember it; and from the utter prostration of his soul he begins to conceive confidence.

“Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me. This I recall to any mind, therefore have I hope.” (Ver. 19-21.) It is not Christ, but assuredly the Spirit of Christ leading on an afflicted and broken heart. Weeping may endure for a night; but joy cometh in the morning.

In what sense then are we to account for language so strong uttered by a holy man, and this not about the persecutions of strangers or the enmity of the Jews, but mostly indeed about Jehovah's ways with him? Certainly not what Calvin and the mass of commentators before and since make of it, as if it were the pressure of the hand of God on the sufferers as Christians when their minds were in a state of confusion and their lips uttered much that is intemperate. Such an interpretation does little honor to God, not to speak of Jeremiah, and makes the Spirit to be a reporter, not merely of a few words or deeds which betray the earthen vessel in its weakness, but of outpourings considerable and minute, which, according to such a view, would consist of scarce anything but complaints spoken according to the judgment of the flesh under feelings so little moderated as to let fall too often things worthy of blame. Can such a view with such results satisfy a thoughtful child of God, who understands the gospel?

I believe, on the contrary, that the language is not hyperbolical, but the genuine utterance of a sensitive heart in the midst of the crushing calamities of Israel, or rather now also of Judah and Jerusalem; that they are the sorrows of one who loved the people according to God, who suffered with them all the more because they did not feel and be did that it was Jehovah Himself who was behind and above their miseries and shame, inflicting all because of their sins, with the added and yet keener fact of his own personal and poignant grief because of what his prophetic office exposed him to, not so much from the Chaldeans as from the people of God, his brethren after the flesh. It was in no way the expression of his own relation to God as a saint or consequently of God's feelings towards himself individually; it was the result of being called of God to take part in Israel for Him at a time so corrupt and so calamitous. I am far from meaning that personally Jeremiah did not know what failure was in that awful crisis. It is plain from his own prophecy that his timidity did induce him to sanction or allow on one occasion the deceit of another, adopting if not inventing it. But he seems to have been, take him all in all, a rare man, even among the holy line of the prophets; and, though morbidly acute in his feelings by nature, singularly sustained of God with as little sympathy from others as ever fell to the lot of a servant of God among His people. Even Elijah's experience fell far short of his, both on the side of the people's wickedness among whom lay his ministry, and on the score of suffering inwardly and outwardly as a prophet who shared all the chastening which the righteous indignation heaped on his guilty people, with his own affliction to boot as a rejected prophet. He appears indeed in this to have the most nearly approached our blessed Lord, though certainly there was a climax in His case peculiar to Himself, hardly more in the intensely evil and degraded state of Jerusalem then than in the perfection with which He fathomed and felt all before God as one who had deigned to be of them and their chief, their Messiah, who must therefore have so much the deeper interest and the truer sense of what they deserved as a people from God through the instrumentality of their enemies. As a fact this came on them soon after under the last and most terrible siege by Titus; but Jesus went beforehand through all before the cross as well as on it, this apart from making atonement, with which nothing but the densest ignorance could confound it, and mere malice attack others for avoiding its own palpable error.

Chapter 130

Lamentations of Jeremiah 3:22-42

There is no doubt, I think, that the ground of hope which the prophet lays to heart, as he said in verse 21, is stated in the following verses: “It is of Jehovah's mercies that we are not consumed, because his mercies fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. Jehovah is my portion; therefore will I hope in him.” The last clause confirms the thought that verse 21 is anticipative, and that here the spring is touched.

For the turn given by the Targum, and the older versions, save the Vulgate, namely, “The mercies of Jehovah are not consumed, for his compassions fail not,” I see no sufficient reason, though Calvin considers this sense more suitable. The Latin and our own version seem to me preferable, not only as being clearer but as giving greater prominence to the persons of His people, and yet maintaining in the last clause what the others spread over both clauses. His mercies then have no end; “they are renewed every morning: great is thy faithfulness. Jehovah is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.” It is a goodly portion without doubt, though unbelief thinks it nothing and pines after some one to shew any good after a tangible sort, the corn and wine and oil of this creation. But to have Him who has all things and who is Himself infinitely more than all He has is beyond comparison a better portion, as he must own who by grace believes it.

“Jehovah is good to them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that one should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of Jehovah. It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.” Confident expectation is thus cherished, while an illusive profession of waiting for Him is detected and judged. For though a careless spirit might pretend to wait for Him, could it be thought of such a one that he is a soul which seeks Him! Activity is implied in this. The next clause asserts the value of patient looking to Him. But it is not tolerable to infer that we err in looking for the continual light of God's favor. For to this redemption entitles us; and Christ is risen the spring and pattern of life in resurrection, on which the Father ever looks with complacency. The last good here contemplated is that one bear the yoke in his youth. Subjection to God's will and to the trials He sends is ever blessed, and this from tender years.

“He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him. He putteth his mouth in the dust, if so be there may be hope. He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him: he is filled full with reproach.” Thus God's ways are accepted in silence; and humiliation is complete unto death in conscience, yet not without hope; and man's contemptuous persecution and reproach are submitted to.

“For Jehovah will not cast off forever: but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies. For he doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men.” Hope is thus confirmed, without which indeed there is no power of endurance any more than of comfort. His judicial chastenings of Israel are measured and will have an end, as is equally true of His righteous government of ourselves now.

The next triplet is peculiar in its structure, each verse beginning with the infinitive, as is fairly presented in the common Authorized Version. “To crush under his feet all the prisoners of the earth, to turn aside the right of a man before the face of the most high, to subvert a man in his cause Jehovah, approveth not.” They are acts of oppression, cruelty, and wrong: should the Lord not see this? Certainly they have no sanction from Him.

The utter ignorance of the future on man's part is next set before us. “Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, when Jehovah commandeth it not? Out of the mouth of the most High proceedeth not evil and good? Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?” All is plainly declared by God. But complainers are never satisfied nor otherwise right. It were better to complain of ourselves, yea every man because of his sins.

Then in verses 40-42 self-judgment is the word of exhortation. “Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to Jehovah. Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens. We have transgressed and have rebelled: thou hast not pardoned.” It was just but tremendous thus to find no sign of pardon in His ways.

Chapter 131

Lamentations of Jeremiah 3:43-66

NEXT the prophet sets forth without disguise or attenuation the ways of God's displeasure with His people. This was true; and it was right both to feel and to own it, though the owning it to such a God makes it far more painful. “Thou hast covered with anger, and persecuted us; thou hast slain, thou hast not pitied. Thou hast covered thyself with a cloud that our prayer should not pass through. Thou hast made us as the offscouring and refuse in the midst of the people.” (Ver. 43-45.) There are times when it does not become the saint to seek a deprecation of a chastening—where, if prayer were ignorantly so made, it were a mercy that it should not be heard. And so it was for Jerusalem then. The divine sentence must take its course, however truly God would prove His care of the godly under such sorrowful circumstances.

Then in verses 46-48 he expresses his sense of the reproach heaped on them by their enemies; so that between inward fear and outward desolation the wretchedness was unparalleled. “All our enemies have opened their mouths against us. Fear and a snare is come upon us, desolation and destruction. Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water for the destruction of the daughter of my people.” Only those could know it who had been favored of God as they had been; only one who knew Him as Jeremiah could feel and tell it out as he does. It is but to be expected that some should feel his lamentations to be excessive, as others do the glowing anticipations of the prophets; faith would receive and appreciate both, without criticizing either.

In the next stanza he repeats the words of the last in order to bring Jehovah in. Faith does not hinder but increases grief because of the deplorable state of that which is near to God, when its state is so evil as to be the object of His judgments; yet it is assured that such grief is not unavailing but that He will surely intervene. “Mine eye trickleth down, and ceaseth not, without any intermission, till Jehovah look down, and behold from heaven. Mine eye affecteth mine heart because of all the daughters of my city.” (Ver. 49-51.)

In verses 52-54 the prophet sets forth by various figures the calamities which fall on the Jews from their enemies. “Mine enemies chased me sore, like a bird, without cause. They have cut off my life in the dungeon, and cast a stone upon me. Waters flowed over mine head; then I said, I am cut off.” They were no more than as a bird before skilful fowlers, as one shut up in dungeons secured by a stone overhead, as one actually overwhelmed in waters rolling over him.

But prayer may be and has been proved effectual even in their distresses; and so the following verses show as with Jeremiah. “I called upon Thy name, O Jehovah, out of the low dungeon. Thou hast heard my voice: hide not thine ear at my breathing, at my cry. Thou drewest near in the day that I called upon thee; thou saidst, Fear not.” (Ver. 55-57.)

And here it may be as well to point out the danger of those who cite Psa. 22:1, as an ordinary saint's experience, despising or at least failing to use the lesson scripture gives us, that those words suited Jesus on the cross, and certainly no Christian since. He was thus forsaken then that we might never be. It is not then true that the believer under any circumstance is forsaken of God.

Jesus only could say in the fullness of the truth, both “My God” and “Why hast thou forsaken me?” And even He never did nor could, I believe, have said these words save as atoning for sin. To suppose that, because David wrote the words, he must have said them as his own experience, is to make the Psalms of private interpretation, instead of recognizing the power of the Spirit who inspired them. Psa. 16 might as well or better be David's experience; yet it needs little discrimination to see that both in their full import belong to Christ exclusively, but in wholly different circumstances.

“O Jehovah, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life. O Jehovah, thou hast seen my wrong; judge thou my cause. Thou hast seen all their vengeance and all their imaginations against me.” (Ver. 58-60.) The prophet is confident that He will appear for vindication and deliverance. The deep and deserved humiliation put on His people does not weaken his assurance or stifle his cry. On the one hand, if He has seen the wrong of the righteous, He would judge his cause; on the other, He had seen all the foe's vengeance and imaginations against him.

This is repeated in the next verses, in connection with what Jehovah had heard. “Thou hast heard their reproach, O Jehovah, and all their imaginations against me: the lips of those that rose up against me, and their device against me all the day. Behold their sitting down, and their rising up; I am their music.” (Ver. 61-63.) At all times throughout their daily life his sorrow was their desired object and liveliest pleasure.

In the closing strain the prophet prays according to the righteous government of God for the earth. “Render unto them a recompense, O Jehovah, according to the work of their hands. Give them sorrow of heart, thy curse unto them. Persecute and destroy them in anger from under the heavens of Jehovah.” (Ver. 64-66.) It is no light thing in God's eye that His enemies should find only a matter for mirth in the sufferings and sorrows of those who were under His mighty hand. If the righteous are thus saved with difficulty, what will it be when judgment falls on the ungodly? Even under the gospel we may love and should rejoice in the prospect of the Lord's appearing, though we know what fiery indignation must consume the adversaries. Here of course the prayer is according to a Jewish measure, though none the less just. We are called to higher and heavenly things.

Lamentations of Jeremiah: 4:1-11

It is impossible to view this sorrowful plaint of the prophet as merely historical. Nothing which had ever occurred in the way of disaster or humiliation at all approached the picture of desolation here described. The Spirit of prophecy is therefore forecasting the horrible abyss that awaited the beloved but guilty people.

“How the gold is become dim! the most fine gold is changed! The sacred stones are thrown down at the top of every street! The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how they are esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of the potter.” Who could say that God screened or spared the iniquity of Israel? The most exalted in rank, dignity, and office were those who made their affliction most conspicuous. Could the most obdurate conscience in Jerusalem doubt whose hand had inflicted such reverses, whatever the instrument employed?

Hence the prophet, as he is growingly solemn in his glances at the uttermost distress, so is he calm but the more complete in setting it forth. It is as it were the evil all out, the leper white from head to feet, whose very extremity assures of God's opportunity to interfere both for the Jew and against the adversaries more especially such as ought to pity Jerusalem in the day of her calamity.

That the Chaldean foe should be bitter in reproach and cruel in punishment was not wonderful; but alas! the chosen nation's cup was not full of the indignity they must drink till they were the bitterest, out of sheer want and woe, against their own kin. “Even the dragons [or jackals] draw out the breast, they suckle their young: the daughter of my people [is] cruel like the ostriches in the wilderness.” It is of the last bird we read in Job 39:14-17, “which leaveth her eggs in the earth, and warmth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them. She is hardened against her young ones, as though they were not hers; her labor is in vain without fear; because God hath deprived her of wisdom, neither hath he imparted to her understanding.”

The sense seems to me certain, though one may not say indisputable, seeing that so sensible a commentator as Calvin contrives to extract a different meaning. He understands the clause to mean that the daughter of the people had come to a savage or cruel one; and hence that whelps of serpents were more kindly dealt with than the Jews. The people had to do with nothing but cruelty, there being no one to succor them in their miseries. Thus the force would be, not that the people are accused of cruelty in not nourishing their children, but that they were given up to the most relentless of enemies. But I see no force in his reasoning which appears to be founded on unacquaintance with the Hebrew idiom, the masculine gender being used for emphasis where formally we might have expected the feminine, as not infrequently happens. Hence there is no real ground for going on with the allusion to the ostrich, as if the prophet meant that the Jews were so destitute of every help that they were banished into solitary places beyond the sight of men.

The true meaning is far more expressive and sets forth the awful state of the Jews, when not enemies only but those who should have been their own tenderest protectors were destitute of

feelings found in the fiercest brutes, and only comparable for heartlessness to creatures of the most exceptional hardness and folly. Such were the mothers of Salem in the outpouring of Jeremiah's grief.

Accordingly in verse 4 he pursues the case. “The tongue of the suckling cleaveth to its palate for thirst; infants ask bread—none breaketh [it] for them.” Such was the pitiable state of children from the tenderest days upward. Was it any better with their elders? “They that fed daintily perish in the streets; they who were brought up on scarlet embrace dunghills.” (Ver. 5.) Parents and other adults were famishing and dying of hunger, and this gladly as it were on the dunghill instead of the splendid couches on which they used to recline when weary of pleasure itself.

Next the prophet draws out the proof that the vengeance under which the people were worse than that of Sodom, especially in this, that the notorious city of the plain was overwhelmed in a sudden blow of destruction, whereas that of Jerusalem was prolonged and most varied agony. “For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her.” (Verse 6.) The “hands” of man added to the soreness of the Jewish chastening: Sodom was dealt with by God without any human intervention. Compare the feeling of David when he brought to the verge of ruin the people whom God had entrusted him to feed. (2 Sam. 24:13, 14.)

Nor does any consecration to God avail to shelter: so complete the ruin, so unsparing the vengeance let. loose on every class and every soul. “Her Nazarites were brighter than snow, they were whiter than milk; they were more ruddy in body than rubies (or coral), their cutting (shape) of sapphire. Their aspect is darker than dusk, they are not known in the streets; their skin cleaveth to their bones, it is dried up like a stick.” Nothing availed in presence of these searching desolating judgments. The blessing which was once so marked on those separated was now utterly and manifestly fled, yea, wretchedness as under His ban had taken its place. And so truly was it so, that he proceeds to show how but a choice of ills awaited the Jew, a violent death or a life yet more horrible. “Happier the slain with the sword than the slain with hunger; because these pine away pierced through for the fruits of the field, i.e., for the want of them. For it is very forced to take it as Calvin does, pierced through by the fruits of the earth, as if the productions of the earth became swords.

So obliterated were all traces of compassion or even natural feeling that, as we are next told, “the hands of pitiful women boiled their children; they became their food in the destruction of the daughter of my people.” (Ver. 10.) Nothing could account for such barbarity but that which he adds immediately after (ver. 11): “Jehovah hath spent his fury; he hath poured out his fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion which hath devoured her foundations.” What can be more thorough than to devour foundations? So it was declared of God against Jerusalem for their heinous sins. Impossible to escape His hand stretched out against His own: how deep their sin and vain to deny it!

Chapter 133

Lamentations of Jeremiah: 4:12-22

Verse 12 introduces a new topic, which gives remarkable vividness to the prophet's picture of Jerusalem's desolation. It was not the king of Judah who was surprised at the taking of his capital, but the kings of the earth who treated it as incredible that they could force it; it was not the Jews merely who fondly dreamed that their city was impregnable, but all the inhabitants of the world gave up the hope as vain. “The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem.” (Ver. 12.)

This prepares the way for a fresh exposure of the real causes of Jerusalem's ruin. Their sins were so glaring, where they were most odious and offensive, that God must have denied Himself if He had not brought His people down to the dust and scattered them to the ends of the earth. “Because of the sins of her prophets, the iniquities of her priests that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her, they wandered blind in the streets, they were defiled with blood, so that men could not touch their garments.” (Ver. 13, 14.) The greater the privilege in having such servants of Jehovah, the more distressing that they should pollute His name and people.

There is no reason that I know for Calvin's version of the last clause of verse 14: “They were defiled with blood, because they could not but touch their garments.” It seems indeed an ungrounded departure from the common and correct translation, both in giving the reason where it should be rather a statement of consequence, and in needlessly supposing a particle which brings in a very different idea. Nor do I see any just meaning in what results; for where would be the force of saying that they were defiled with blood because they could not but touch their garments? One could understand pollution from such contact, but hardly with blood from it. As the clause stands in the common version, the import appears to be that wandering blindly in the streets they defiled themselves in the worst way possible, with blood, so that their very garments must pollute any who might touch them. So universal was the defilement of the holy city that the clothes of the in. habitants could not be touched without contamination to others. There was as it were a fretting leprosy in the whole body politic. “Depart, unclean, they called out to them; depart, depart, touch not. So they flee away and also wander. They say among the nations, they shall dwell no more [there].” Thus most graphically does the prophet show that the exile of the Jew from the land was inevitable and of another character from an ordinary deportation of a people through the cruelty of a conqueror or the jealousy of an ambitious rival nation. It was in vain for the Jews to flatter themselves that it was God employing them for a season as a missionary people: God will send them forth; a few preparatorily to the kingdom, and when it is set up yet more largely as a nation. But here it is a people once holy, now profane, not honored in a gracious service and a grave trust, but punished for their dishonor of His law and sanctuary, and hence outcasts so ignominious that they flee themselves like lepers, proclaiming their own defilement and misery. So complete is the ruin that among the nations it is said, They shall no more sojourn in their land and city.

But this is an error. Impossible that God should be defeated by Satan, good by evil, in the long run. Appearances in this world ever give such expectations; and unbelieving man is as ready to credit them as to doubt God. But in the midst of judgment God remembers mercy; and therefore the more unsparing He might be, the more assuredly He would turn again with deliverance for His own name's sake. “The face [i.e. anger] of Jehovah hath divided them, he will no more regard them: they respected not the faces of the priests, they spared not the elders.” (Ver. 16.) Undoubtedly their overthrow was complete, and the contempt of the enemy so much the better because their success was beyond their own hopes; for there had ever been a lurking fear that God would avenge their wrongs and once more espouse the cause of His people. But now that He gave them up to the will of His adversaries, their pleasure was to wound them to the quick in the persons of the most honored sons of Zion.

And what could the prophet say in extenuation? He could only add here another heavy fault: “As yet for us [i.e., while we yet remained], our eyes failed for our vain help; on our watchtowers we watched for a nation that could not save us.” (Ver. 17.) They turned with longing desires after Egypt against the Chaldeans, instead of turning to God in repentance of heart, spite of reiterated warning from His prophets not to trust in an arm of flesh, least of all in that broken reed.

But no: sentence was passed by God, incensed with the unwearied evils of His people; and the fiercest of the heathen were let loose as executors of His wrath upon them. “They hunted our steps, so that we could not walk in our streets; our end was near, our days were fulfilled, for our end had come. Our persecutors are swifter than the eagles of the heaven: they pursued us upon the mountains, they laid wait for us in the wilderness.” (Ver. 18, 19.) No mountain was steep, no desert lonely, enough to protect the guilty fugitives. It was God who was punishing them by means most just, yet to them most painful, for their revolt from Himself.

Alas! the remnant returned from Babylon have only added another and incomparably worse sin in the rejection of the Messiah and the refusal of the gospel, so that wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.

But even then how lamentable the desolation! “The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of Jehovah, was taken in their pits, of whom was said, Under his shadow we shall live among the heathen.” (Ver. 20.) It is of course Zedekiah who is alluded to. They had hoped in his office, whatever his demerits personally, forgetting that all the honor God bestowed on it was in view of Christ, who alone shall bear the glory. But their hearts were in the present, not really for Messiah; and they had only to lie down disappointed in sorrow.

Did Edom then taunt their fallen brother in the day of his distress? Indeed they did it with murderous treacherous hatred too. Hence the apostrophe of the prophet: “Rejoice and be glad, O daughter of Edom, that dwellest in the land of Uz; the cup also shall pass through unto thee: thou shalt be drunken, and shalt make thyself naked. The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion; he will no more carry thee away into captivity: he will visit thine iniquity, O daughter of Edom; he will discover thy sins.” (Ver. 21, 22.) Did they say in the day of Jerusalem, Down with it, down with it to the very foundation? They too must be brought to shame. If the Chaldean swept the holy land, the daughter of Edom must await no less when her day came to be carried away captive for her sins.

Lamentations of Jeremiah: 5

The last chapter differs from all before in that the alphabetic series drops, though there are evidently twenty-two verses as in other cases, with the modification we have seen in chapter 3 and its triplets. Internally also the elegy approaches more to the character of a prayer as well as a compressed summing up of the sorrows detailed before.

Hence, says the prophet, “Remember, O Jehovah, what hath happened to us; behold, and look on our reproach. Our inheritance is turned over to strangers, our houses to aliens.” (Ver. 1, 2.) It was not merely a human or natural feeling of their loss and degradation. We must bear in mind that Israel had the land of their possession from Jehovah. No doubt they expelled or subjugated the Canaanites. According to men they held by right of conquest. But a deeper fact lay underneath the successes of Joshua. Strength was given from God to put down the most corrupt race then on the face of the earth who had intruded into a land which He had from the first destined and given by promise to the fathers. For when the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of man, He set the bounds of the tribes according to the number of the sons of Israel. Alas! they took the blessing not as promises by faith on the ground of God's grace, but under the condition of their own fidelity to the law—a condition necessarily fatal to the sinner. Hence the disasters, and finally ruin, which Jeremiah here groans out to God. But the title, in which Moses (Deut. 32:8) had thus declared His purpose as to His people, is to be noted; for it is His millennial name more specially than any other, and hence that by which Melchizedek is characterized, who typifies the day of blessing after the victory is won over the assailing and previously triumphant kings of the Gentiles. Thus there is assured hope in the end for the scattered and peeled people of God. Meanwhile how bitter the sight of their inheritance transferred to the foreigners, their houses to strangers!

“We are orphans and without a father, our mothers [are] as widows.” (Ver. 3.) Even this did not convey a vivid enough picture of their desolation. The common possession of all, the freest uses of their land, belonged to hard masters. “Our water have we drunk for money; our wood cometh for a price. On our necks [i.e. with a yoke on them] are we persecuted; we toil and have no rest.” (Ver. 4, 5.) What slaves so abject? And this Jeremiah who did not go to Babylon stayed long enough to see, and feel, and spread in sorrow before God. “To Egypt we gave the hand and to Asshur to be satisfied with bread.” (Ver. 6.) But neither could effectually help, still less could either resist the king of Babylon; and this because of Israel's sins which had so long called for an avenger. “Our fathers sinned [and are] not; and we bear their iniquities.” (Ver. 7.) This, we know was become a proverbial complaint about this time. (Ezek. 18,) But God tried them on their own ground, with precisely the same result of ruin because of their evil. For if fathers and children are alike sinful, the punishment is due whether for those or for these: come it must if God judges. How much better then to repent than to repine and murmur, only aggravating the evil and ensuring vengeance on such accumulating rebellion against God!

“Slaves rule over us: no one delivereth us out of their hand. With our lives we bring in our bread because of the sword of the wilderness. Our skins glow like an oven because of the hot blasts of famine. Women have they ravished in Zion, virgins in the cities of Judah. Princes were hung up by their hand; the faces of elders they honored not. Young men they took to the mill, and boys fell under the wood. Aged men have ceased from the gate, young men from their song. The joy of our heart hath ceased; our dance is turned into mourning. The crown of our head is fallen: woe now unto us, for we have sinned! Because of this our heart is faint; for these our eyes are dim; because of the mount of Zion which is desolate, foxes walk about on it.” (Ver. 8-18.) Such is the dismal state so pathetically described by a heart crushed under grief which could not exaggerate the prostration of God's ancient people. Sex, age, condition, place—nothing spared, and nothing sacred. Every word carries weight; not a particular which is not an intolerable burden. How overwhelming for the heart which justly feels everything!

Thus mournfully had Jeremiah's warnings been executed. As Shiloh had been profaned, so now the place of Jehovah's choice, the mount Zion that He loved.

The outward indefectibility of His dwelling on earth is but the fond dream of the men whose unrighteousness, holding the truth in unrighteousness, will surely bring on its judgment from the enemy under the righteous dealing of God.

What then is the resource of the faithful? Never the perpetuity of what is visible, never the first man, but the Second. “Thou, O Jehovah, remainest forever; thy throne from generation to generation.” (Ver. 19.) Hence the righteous cry with the assurance that His ears are open, even though He tarry and justly rebuke sin especially in those that bear His name, in whom He will be sanctified by His judgments till they by grace sanctify Him in their hearts.

God however will have His blows felt; and faith does feel and gather blessing even in the grief, while it looks onward to the day. The foolish pass on and are punished, harden themselves and perish in unbelief. “Wherefore dost thou forget us forever?—forsake us for a length of days?” (Ver. 20.) But there is no despair, though the way was then dark before the true light shone; for the heart pleads, “Turn thou us unto thee, O Jehovah, and we shall be turned; renew our days as of old. For certainly thou hast utterly rejected us, thou hast been exceedingly wroth with us.” (Ver. 21, 22.) To own our own sins and God's judgment is the constant effect of the Spirit's work in the heart, the sure pledge of coming and better blessing in store for us from the God of all grace.

Chapter 135

Law and the Walk of the Christian

According to scripture, law must always have its effect as declared in the word of God, always necessarily upon whoever is under it; but then that effect is always, according to scripture, condemnation and death, and nothing else, upon a being who has in him a lust or a fault. Thus it knows no mercy, but must pronounce a curse upon every one who does not continue in all things written in it; and hence whosoever it of the works of the law is under a curse. Now, in fact, the Christian has sin in him as a human being, and, alas! fails; but if law applies to him, he is under the curse; for it brings a curse on every one who sins. Do I enfeeble its authority? I maintain it, and establish it in the fullest way. I ask, Have you to say to the law? Then you are under a curse: no escaping, no exemption. Its authority and claim must be maintained—its righteous exactions made good. Have you failed? Yes, you have. You are under the curse. No, you say, but I am a Christian; the law is still binding upon me, but I am not under a curse. Has not the law pronounced a curse upon one who fails? Yes. You are under it; you have failed, and are not cursed after all! Its authority is not maintained; for you are under it, it has cursed you, and you are not cursed. If you had said, I was under it and failed, and Christ died and bore its curse; and now, as redeemed, I am on another footing, not under law but under grace, its authority is maintained. But if you are put back again under law (after Christ has died and risen again, and you are in Christ) and you fail and come under no curse, its authority is destroyed; for it pronounces a curse, and you are not cursed at all. The man who puts a Christian under law destroys the authority of the law, or puts a Christian under the curse; for in many things we all offend. He fancies he establishes law, but destroys its authority. He only establishes the full immutable authority of law, who declares that a Christian is not under it at all and therefore cannot be cursed by its just and holy curse.

What the measure of Christian conduct is I shall show from scripture before I close. I only remark now that, in point of fact, what we specially need is not the rule of right and wrong, though that be most useful and necessary and in its place, but motive and power for our new nature. The law gives neither. The scripture declares it is an occasion for sin's working concupiscence in me, that the motions of sin are by it, that it is the strength of sin, and that sin shall not have dominion over me, because I am not under it but under grace. Let a bowl lie reversed on the table: who thinks of it? Say, “No one is to know what is under it;” and who is not wishing to know? The law is the occasion to lust. If we only remember that the apostle is speaking of law—is speaking of its effects on every one that is under it, and particularly on Christians putting themselves under it, after they are Christians, and not merely (though he does that fully) of being justified by it, but of its own proper and necessary effect in all cases, and the question, if scripture be an authority, is soon decided.

How, then, is a conscientious man delivered from the law without any allowance of sin? First, they that sin without law shall perish without law, so that he is none the better for setting aside the law in order to sin with impunity. Secondly, the law is no help against sin. Sin has not dominion over us, according to the apostle, because we are not under law but under grace. What, then, does deliver from sin and law? It is death, and then newness of life in resurrection. We are in Christ, not

in Adam.

Let us first see the legitimate effect of law, for it is good if a man use it lawfully. It condemns sins. But known in its spiritual power, it does more: it condemns sin. It first condemns all transgressions of its own commandments. Here, as to outward conduct, a man, as Paul, may escape its fangs in the conscience. But, known spiritually, it condemns lusts. But lusts I have. Yet I see the law is right. I am self-condemned. It judges the working of my nature in lusts, but gives no new one. It condemns my will, claiming absolute obedience as due to God; and, if my will be right, I discover that under law 1 have no power. How to accomplish that which is good I find not. Acts, lusts, will—all I am morally is judged and condemned to death, and I have no force to accomplish what is good. Such is the effect of the law on one when it does not take effect in the conscience. It kills me. I have, as to my conscience, died before God under it. But, then, law applies to man as a child of Adam living in flesh. It condemns and brings death into me in this way, because I am such. As such I have died under it; but then, that to which it applied is dead under it, and it applies no more. A man is put into jail for thieving or murder; he dies there. The law can do no more, the life it dealt with is gone. I, through law, am dead to law, that I might live to God. As regards my conscience before God, it has killed me. It can do no more. But there is more than this, because I got at the intelligence of all this by faith, by being a Christian, and could not else thus see or reason on it. Hence I am dead to the law by the body of Christ. The death it sentenced me to in my conscience has fallen on another. I have died with Him, with Christ. The sin has been thus put away from my conscience. Had this come upon me, it would have been everlasting misery. But, Christ having put Himself in this place, it is everlasting love: and I have a right to reckon myself dead, because Christ has died, and I have really received Him into my heart as life; and He is really my life, who died for me and rose again. I am alive by the life of Him who is a life-giving Spirit, and hence have the right and am bound to account myself dead, since He in whom I live did die. On this the apostle founds all his reasonings and exhortations, as to sin and the law. He looks at the Christian as dead and risen again, because his true life, his “I,” the life he has got, and in which he lives as a Christian, is Christ who has died and is alive again. After saying, “I, through law, am dead to law,” he adds, “I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” “If ye have died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living (alive) in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?” “for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Let us see how he applies this doctrine to sin and the law. In Rom. 5 he had applied the resurrection to justification. Christ (chap. 4:25) was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. It is justification of life; not merely the putting away of sins, but the putting us in a quite new accepted place before God. This connection of life, the power of life in Christ, and justification in Him that is risen after dying for us, it is (and not the law) which, in the apostle's doctrine, assured also godliness. (Chap. 6:2.) “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” We cannot if we are dead to it. But such is our place in Christ dead and risen, and that a real thing, by having a wholly new life in Christ who is our life. “Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin, for he that is dead is freed from sin.” Then he shows how Christ died and is risen again and lives to God, and adds, “Reckon ye yourselves likewise to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. “Let not sin therefore reign,” be continues, “in your mortal bodies,” adding what I have already quoted: “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are

not under law but under grace." He then refers to the abuse the flesh would make of this; but, instead of insisting that the moral law was binding, shows them to be freed from sin, and servants to righteousness and to God, yielding their members servants to righteousness unto holiness. Thus, by being dead and alive in the life of Christ, are we freed from sin.

In chapter 7 again the apostle applies the same truth more elaborately to the law. You cannot, he insists, have two husbands at the same time. You cannot be under obligation to Christ and the law. Well, how is freedom to be obtained for the man under the law? He dies in that in which he was held. The law could only assert its claim on the man as a living child of Adam. The "law has power over a man as long as he lives;" but I am dead to law by the body of Christ; the bond to the law has absolutely, wholly, and necessarily ceased, for the person is dead; and the law had power over him only as long as he lived. Hence he says, in such strong and simple language, When we were in the flesh, the motions of sins which were by the law. The law applies to man in the flesh; but we have died, we are not in the flesh. When we were, it applied. It applied to flesh, provoked the sin, and condemned the sinner. But he died under it, when he was under it—died under it with Christ, and lives delivered from it in a new life, which is Christ risen out of the reach and place of law. He is not tied to the old husband; death has severed the bond, his own death and crucifixion with Christ; for he has owned that that was his affair as a sinner. He is married to another—Christ, who is risen from the dead that he may bring forth fruit to God. He is not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of Christ dwell in him. If not, he is none of His.

You will say, Yes; but the flesh is still there, though he has a right and ought to reckon himself dead; and, therefore, he needs the law, not to put away sin, but that it may not have dominion. But I read, "Sin shall not have dominion over you, because ye are not under law." When I was in the flesh, the law was the occasion of the working of sin in my members. I have died in that, and the law cannot pass death. Godliness is in the new life, which lives by the faith of the Son of God. It is death—conscious death—with Christ, and my being in Him, so that I am no longer in the flesh at all, but have Him for my life, which is the scriptural way of godliness—righteousness, with its fruit unto holiness—not the being under the law.

Living in a risen Christ, as one who has been taken out of the reach of law by death—that is Christian life. The measure of that walk is Christ, and nothing else. "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk as he walked." Let us consult scripture as to this point—the scripture rule of life. I have given it. We ought so to walk as Christ walked. Again, it is written— "He has left us an example, that we should follow his steps." He is life, motive, and example too; He lives in us, and the life which we live in the flesh we live by the faith of Him. He has trodden the path before us. He is all, and in all. It is as beholding in His face unveiled the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 3) we are changed into the same image from glory to glory; and thus, He being engraved on the heart by the Spirit of the living God, we become the epistle of Christ. (2 Cor. 3) And mark, it is there in contrast with the law on the tables of stone. We are to put on Christ, to put on the new man. This goes so far that it is said, "Hereby perceive we love, that he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John) The law knew no such principle, no such obligation as this. Was it the law which made Christ come and lay down His life for us? Does not this example show the extreme poverty of the thought that the law is the rule or measure of our conduct? The truth is this—there were two parts of Christ's life. First, man's obedience to God's will, which itself went much farther than law; for law did not require the path of grace and devoted ness to man in

which Christ walked. He did, as under the law, magnify and make it honorable. But there was another—the manifestation of God Himself in grace and graciousness. This is not law; it is God in goodness, not man in responsibility. It is mischievous to confound the two.

Will any one say, But we are not called upon, and cannot be, to follow Christ in the latter? I reply, We are expressly called upon to do so, and never to follow Him under law. What scripture says on this last point is, that if I love my neighbor as myself, I shall fulfill the law, so that I have no need to be under it; and, again, that in walking after the Spirit, the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled in me, and produce what the law could not do, because it was weak through the flesh. The Spirit will produce fruits against which there is no law. It is a new nature—guided by the Spirit and formed by the word, growing up to the Head in all things—which walks worthy of the Lord. The commands of law do not produce this; but looking through grace at Christ does change us into the same image. But in this path of Christ manifesting God, He is expressly set before us as our example. “Be ye followers [imitators] of God as dear children, and walk in love, as Christ has loved us, and given himself for us as a sacrifice and an offering to God of a sweet smelling savor.” We are called upon to be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, that we might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, not according to law. We are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us. See this character described. “Put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another; if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” If any one desires to have a complete exhibition of Christian life, the life of Christ risen, in us, let him read Col. 3:1-17.

I believe I have said enough and quoted enough to show the mind of scripture on the point that engages us—what its views of law and of its operation and effect are, and what the Christian rule of life is too, of one who has died with Christ, and is associated with Him risen, and lives through Him. Law is the measure of man's responsibility as such to God. It is perfect as such and no more; it could not have been more than the measure of man's walk. Christ was perfect in this as in everything; but He went farther, and displayed God Himself in His own sovereign grace and goodness, and we ought to follow Him here, as in His perfect obedience to God. He, and He alone, is our pattern and example, and nothing else. He is the object for the heart to rest on, and is to govern it, and to which it is to grow like, and nothing else. He is the motive and spring of conduct in us, as well as its perfect model, which the law cannot be; for it is not life, and neither gives nor feeds it.

Chapter 136

Leviticus 1-27

This book opens with Jehovah speaking to Moses out of the tabernacle of the congregation, in their midst as having already a people recognized as His around His sanctuary. Thus it differs from Genesis, where there could be no such dwelling place for God because redemption in type was not yet in view; and from Exodus, after the passover and Red Sea, where God was about to prepare Himself an habitation, yet speaking as One outside and above on the mountain of law which tested the responsibility of man.

First in the various sacrifices and offerings we have in type the display of God in grace to man and the means of approach to God. Of these there are two classes: those of sweet savor (chap. 1 - 3.), and those for sin (chap. 4 - 6:7), with the laws of all following (chap. 6:8 - 7.). The burnt offering takes precedence; and it is instructive to notice this as the primary and most perfect presentation of Christ. It might be of herd or flock, or of fowl; but in every case it is Christ, through the eternal Spirit, offering Himself without spot to God. No part was reserved for man's use or enjoyment. It was entire self-surrender in death, as the meat or cake offering (chap. 2.) was in life to God. Observe that the latter was a bloodless offering, consisting of various forms, but all so characterized. The presence of oil and salt, the absence of leaven and honey, should be noted. Then came the peace offering, which sets forth communion with God, with the priest, and with one another, fitly following the types of Christ's devotedness dying and living to God, as all fellowship must be based on Him thus our portion. Next came the offerings for sin and trespass, and the mingling of these two, in which the idea is, not the identification of the offerer with the sweet savor of the offering, but the transfer of the guilt of the offerer to the victim on which his hands were laid with the confession of his sin. It is Christ who knew no sin made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. The law of each lays down what was to be burnt, and what eaten where this was permitted. Of the burnt offering all went up to God; of the meat and sin offerings the priest had his part, as enjoying the grace of Christ or in sympathy with Him who suffered for man's sin; of the peace offering the people also partook. And this descending scale appears to account for the change in the order of the laws, which places the law of the peace offerings last.

Chapters 8 and 9 give us the history (as Ex. 28; 29 the direction) of the consecration of the priests with Aaron and the high priest; and chapter x. shows us the ruin of some, the failure of all, before that consecration was completed. What a blessed contrast in Him who not only never failed but died and rose to present us before God according to His own acceptance with all our evil effaced forever! This is appropriately followed by instruction whereby the priests might teach the children of Israel, and they themselves might know, to put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean (chap. 11.); also by provision for purifying persons defiled, whether in nature from birth (chap. 12.), or in active life, surrounding circumstances, and aggregate position, under the type of leprosy (chap. 13, 14), or in the weakness of humanity (chap. 15.).

Then comes the central and crowning regulation of the great day of atonement, which stands out from all before and after. There is the testimony that the way into the holiest was not yet made

manifest in the very provision for Aaron's coming there once a year with incense and not without blood; then expiation was made for the priestly house and for the people, the blood being sprinkled upon and before, the mercy seat. But atonement was also made for the sanctuary, the tabernacle, and the altar, representing the reconciliation of all things, as well as all saints, by Christ's blood; and then confession of Israel's sins was made on the living goat (Azazel) which was not killed but let go into the wilderness. This set forth the remission of the people's sins, as the slain goat maintained the righteous majesty of God in the judgment of sin.

The directions that follow are intended to guard from defilement. Chapter 17 would have Israel honor God, owning life forfeited to God; chapter 18 would preserve them from dishonoring themselves; chapters 19 and 20 from dishonoring God in their mutual as well as religious relations; as chapters 21, 22 insist on what became priests in their specially privileged place.

The rest of the book is rather dispensational. Chapter 23 gives us, in the feasts of Jehovah, the cycle of the divine ways with man, especially Israel, as bringing in His counsel, before Him at first and finally accomplished. We have then in chapter 24 the priestly provision for the continual light of the sanctuary in Israel, and as a memorial of sweet incense; whilst blasphemy against the Name is adjudged to death in any, stranger or not. Then, chapter 26, the Jubilee, or witness of redemption power and liberty is introduced; direct warning of the Lord's ways, but prophecy of His pitiful “end” in chapter 26. In the last chapter Jehovah regulates singular vows through the priest according to the estimation of Moses, who, as contradistinguished from the priest, represents the royal rights of Christ.

Chapter 137

Notes on Luke 11:37-54

WHAT follows is of a very different character from that which we had before. It is not now the setting aside of Jewish expectations for the word of God, which the Holy Spirit makes efficacious by judging self, and thus the eye is made single and the whole body full of light. There is no substitution here of God's word and spiritual blessing for the Messiah; and all the natural mercies and external glory that Israel looked for then and shall look for by and by. Now it is the moral judgment of Israel in their present state; and for this occasion was given, by a certain Pharisee asking the Lord to dine with him. He goes at once. He in no way chooses what was pleasing to Himself. As He entered into the house of a publican, and refused none of the company there, so also He declines not to seat Himself at table with a Pharisee. When He went into the tax-gatherer's house, the wonder was how He could eat with sinners; the wonder with the Pharisee now is, “that he had not first washed before dinner.” Such was their religion. Yet the truth, on the face of things, is that washing is for those that are unclean: He that was pure and holy did not need it. The Pharisee therefore condemns himself doubly. There is a vague sense that he needed cleansing. He shows also his blindness to the personal glory of the Lord Jesus, the only One that needed nothing from without—the Holy One of Israel, the Holy One of God.

The Lord takes this accordingly as the ground of appeal. He “said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.” Their religion, all protest to the contrary notwithstanding, was essentially of the outside; and, far from being clean, they were full of plunder and wickedness, plundering others and wicked themselves. Although they had the highest reputation among the people, the Lord pronounces them fools; and what His word censures now His judgment will act on by and by. The judgment of God is always according to the word of God. What is condemned by the word of God now will certainly be condemned by the Lord Jesus when He takes the judicial throne. But it was the same God that made both the outside and the inside. “Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also?” They had forgotten Him; they were anxious only for what was seen of men. The Lord looks upon the heart. They did not think of this. Unbelief is always blind, and fixes, if there be a difference, on things the least important. The reason is manifest: it seeks the praise of men and not that of God. The Lord Jesus however bids them “rather give alms of such things as ye have: and, behold, all things are clean unto you.” He knew well that a Pharisee would do nothing less than this—that intense selfishness characterized the whole party. They were faithless and covetous. Him whom God gave they despised; what they had they kept for themselves. All things therefore were unclean to them.

But there is much more than this. The Lord pronounces successive woes upon them for their zeal about trifles, their love of religious distinction, and their hypocrisy. “Woe unto you, Pharisees! for [beginning with that which was seemingly the least evil] ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” It was really the same root of self, fallen human nature under a religious veil. Why did they thus seek to be distinguished from others? Others gave tithes honestly due to God;

the Pharisees laid hold of the most minute points which did not cost much and gave themselves credit in the eyes of men not wiser than themselves, but they slighted judgment and the love of God. Righteousness is a due sense of our relationship to God and man; of it they had no adequate measure whatever before them. The love of God was the last thing that came before or from their hearts. “These things ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.” Let them value their infinitesimals, if they would, but let them not neglect the greatest duties.

But it was not merely this God-dishonoring pettiness. “Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.” Now we come not so much to personal conduct and pretension to the strictest conscientiousness, but to their love of public reputation for sanctity and of honor in the religious world.

Another ground detected was lower still. “Woe unto you, scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.” Now they are put with the scribes—people learned in the law, who had the character of being the most punctilious in their conduct: both are alike treated as hypocrites—as sepulchers which appear not. Unremoved death, all uncleanness and corruption, was under these fair-seeming religionists.

One of the lawyers was offended “and said unto him, Master, thus saying thou reproachest us also.” Then the Lord answers them, “Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.” They were notorious for their contempt of the very people from whom they derived their importance. It is an easy thing to lay burdens upon others; it is hard to bear them. Christianity is the exact opposite of this. Christ comes down first of all and takes the sorest of all burdens, the judgment of our sin and guilt, our condemnation from God; then He leaves us, under the gospel, without that burden. It is true that, till He comes again, we are groaning in the body, waiting not uncertainly but in confidence for Christ to change us even into the likeness of His glorious body. Hence it is that the practical exorcise of Christianity is in liberty and joy. No doubt grace brings with it the highest obligations, but they are those of men who are free and who use their liberty for the One whom they love. It was not so with these doctors of the law. They laid burdens upon men that were grievous to be borne, but they themselves did not touch the burdens with one of their fingers. It is only grace that enables one to manifest what the law required. The doctors of the law were precisely those who showed the least conscience. They thundered the law at others; they did not subject themselves to any of its precepts, except where it suited them. It is grace which purifies the conscience by faith and strengthens it in the will of God.

But if they did not touch any of the burdens that they laid on others, they built the sepulchers of the prophets. This sounded well and holy. What could be more laudable than that they should honor the ancient sufferers and prophets by building their sepulchers? It was really the spirit of the world. First of all they proved that they were the successors of those that killed them, not the successors of the martyrs but of their murderers. Although it seemed the opposite of what their fathers had done, it was the same love of the world which then slew the martyrs in that day, and now led men to build their sepulchers in order to make religious capital out of this pious honor. They would fain have the halo that surrounded those men of God thereby to shine upon themselves. It was the love of the world that made the fathers slay them; and the love of the world it was that led their sons to build these sepulchers over them. There was of course nothing of Christ in those that

persecuted the martyrs. Was there a whit more in these men bent on empty self-glorification under cover of the righteous victims of old? Therefore, says the Lord, “Ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchers.” And to prove that they were the lineal successors of the murderers of the old martyrs, the Lord adds, “Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute.” It is expressly put as the wisdom of God, because it is not what would appear to man. The builders of the sepulchers of the sufferers might seem to be the farthest removed from the persecuting violence of the fathers; but not so. The contrary would soon appear. God would test them soon by sending prophets and apostles, some of whom they would slay, and some they would persecute, getting rid of them all in one way or another, “That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.” This is a searching and solemn principle. Man fails from the first, and God pronounces on it. But it is always the last who is the most guilty, because the cases of former slaying of the prophets ought to have aroused their consciences. Their building of sepulchers for the saints whom their fathers slew proved that they knew how wrong it was. But the heart was unchanged; and hence a similar testimony produced no less results, but more evil. God's testimony at the present day arouses quite as much hatred as His warnings of old. Hence, little as the Jews thought it (for they had been long without prophets), now that the truth was sent out in power, the same murderous spirit would be manifested, and God would hold the people guilty of all the blood that had been shed from the foundation of the world. Instead of using the example of their fathers to deter them, they followed their guilty footsteps. They were more guilty, because they despised so solemn a warning.

So it will be in the latter day. There will be a violent outbreak against the witnesses of Jesus whose blood will be shed like water—a persecution all the more guilty, because men will have known it before hand, they will have owned the guilt of those who did it, and yet they will fall into the same rut themselves. Alas! unbelief is most of all blind to self.

The Lord pronounces finally one more woe. “Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves and them that were entering in ye hindered.” So they were doing then as others at this present time. Wisdom was there, truth was there, Christ was there: all that the doctors of the law did was to hinder people from profiting by it, in order to maintain their own importance. “And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things.” They wanted Him to commit Himself—that the Lord might utter something for which they could drag Him to their tribunal, “laying wait for him and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.” Their hearts were filled not only with plunder, but with wickedness that would take the shape of violence against the truth and those who bore it, just like their fathers. The first Adam is never changed for the better: he is only evil continually: the more good is shown him, the more evil he proves himself to be.

Chapter 138

Notes on Luke 12:1-12

We have seen the favored nation set aside, and judgment awaiting “this generation,” not glory, and the woes upon those classes among them that stood highest in public estimation, who indeed were now the manifest adversaries of the Messiah. Our chapter opens with the Lord's warning to the multitude who were crowding around Him, to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees which is hypocrisy.

Accordingly we find the Lord showing that a new testimony was to be formed, not governed by law, but by the light of God. “For there is nothing covered which shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known.” And this testimony, as it was in the light, so also it was to be spread abroad. There was to be nothing hidden, nothing kept silent now. With this entirely falls in the teaching of the Apostle Paul—that now, on the rejection of Israel, God has brought to light the “mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” The same thing is true morally. The heart is laid bare, nature is judged, all now is brought into the light of God. “Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops.”

This is of all-importance, and extremely solemn. Even now God is forming souls in the light as that which puts them to the test. His own moral nature that detects everything inconsistent with itself. This shows us what a wonderful character Christianity has morally as well as doctrinally. Under the law it was not so; there were many things allowed because of the hardness of their hearts. The veil was not yet rent. God had not brought out His own absolute nature made relative in Christ to judge man by. There was no proper revelation of God Himself under the law, though many revelations from Him. There were commands, there were promises, there were prophecies when things failed; but Jesus is the manifestation of God. Even as He is the only begotten Son, He is the true light that; now shines; and such also is the atmosphere which the Christian breathes. We walk in the light even as God is in the light. This was altogether new doctrine, especially for the Pharisees to hear. They were characterized by a fair appearance before men, which was hypocrisy in the sight of God. The multitude were warned that an end was coming to all this. Not only will the day of judgment make it manifest, but faith anticipates that day. And now faith is come. Christianity is not of law but of faith; and Christianity alone, both as a question of light and of love, goes forth energetically. Everywhere is the gospel to be preached, to every creature. Christ's word is to be proclaimed to all nations. The law was given to Israel.

But there is another consideration also, that now it is not the intervention of present earthly judgments, but the fear of God whose eternal judgment is revealed for those who despise His word. “I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.” The law displayed earthly dealings: now wrath is revealed from heaven, and this wrath has eternal consequences. It is not merely the setting aside of man's wrath, nor the instructive lesson of all in a chosen nation on the earth; but the certainty that body and soul must be cast into hell. This will be proved true presently for those who are found alive in opposition to

God and rejection of His final testimony; and it will be true also at the close of the kingdom for those who had died in their sins since the world began. Then God will show how truly He is the One to be feared; for the hypocrisy of the Pharisees had its root in the fear of man. They did not fear God. They would stand well with men, especially in the way of religious reputation: is this the true fear of God “Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.” By redemption we are brought to God. Christianity essentially supposes the putting the soul in the presence of the unseen and eternal. “I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.”

But then the Lord brings in motives of comfort, as these were of warning. The present light of God and the future judgment of God were solemn considerations for any soul of man; but now comes in the comfort of His present care and future reward. “Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?” What infinite care of God that can descend to the least thing, that man despises most! How much more then His care for those that are His witnesses! For now, on the setting aside of the Jewish nation, a fresh body of men to testify for Christ was to be formed, the very hairs of whose head would be numbered. There is nothing that more strengthens one that is bearing witness for the truth than the consciousness of God's love, and than the least one or thing that pertains to him is of interest to God. “But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.”

No present consciousness, however, of goodness, would be sufficient to maintain a soul now as in presence of evil. And God does not set aside the evil, but gives spiritual power to endure; He sends a testimony that utterly condemns the evil, and vouchsafes power to bear. Power is now in suffering for righteousness' or Christ's sake, not in reforming the world; it does not consist in judgment of the world's evil. God alone is competent for this, and He will set aside and judge finally instead of reforming. But, besides all that, the soul needs the comfort of the time when it shall be completely taken out of the power of evil; and the future prospect is bright before us. “Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God; but he that denieth me before men shall be denied before the angels of God.” Both faithfulness and unfaithfulness bear their consequences in the day of glory. “And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.” This had been proved. Who spoke more against Him than Saul of Tarsus? Who was a more blessed proof and witness of forgiveness than he was? So it will be even with the nation. If “this generation” must suffer, are suffering them now, and are yet to suffer them, still the nation will be forgiven in the end. “But unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.” Such is the fate of “this generation.” They would reject not only Christ Himself, but the further testimony which, we have seen, it is the object of the Spirit of God to bring before us in this chapter. Now we have a most important element of this new thing. Not only was there light and truthfulness, not only the energy that went out in proclamation and the preservative care of God now, with future reward by and by; but, besides all, there is the power of the Holy Ghost. This makes it unspeakably grave. “Unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.” What an issue! On the other hand, to the believer what a gracious support! What earnestness also and exercise of love in giving their message must there be in realizing that, in a certain sense, it is worse to reject the testimony now that the Holy Ghost is given than when even the Lord Himself was here below! For the Holy Ghost bears witness not only

of Christ, but of His accomplished redemption and His cross. Then he that rejects the fullest mercy of God, when He has completely put away sin by the sacrifice of His Son, shows himself utterly insensible both to his sin and to God's grace as well as to the glory of Christ. All this the Holy Ghost now brings out without a cloud. Hence to blaspheme Him is irretrievable. “Unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.”

But the Holy Ghost does not merely act in thus putting so solemn a seal on the testimony; He is also a positive power for him that is engaged in the testimony. “And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.” For when the Spirit should be given, there would be no setting aside the evil in the world: this as we know goes on worse and worse. Accordingly, when they should be brought before the powers of the world, “Take ye no thought,” the Lord says unto them, “how or what thing ye shall answer or what ye shall say.” The spirit of absolute dependence upon God is shown us here. “The Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.” This completes the first part of the chapter and shows us the power of the testimony, and thus the danger of those that reject it, and the encouragement of those that are rendering it.

Notes on Luke 12:13-30

The rejection of Christ leads to an important change, both in His position and in what men would find in and from Him. A Jew would naturally have looked to the Messiah as the judge of every vexed question. Even he who valued the Lord Jesus for His unblemished ways and holy conversation might well seek His aid. But it is here shown that His rejection by man changes everything. One cannot reason abstractedly therefore from what the Messiah was as such; we must take into account the fact of the state of man towards Him and God's action thereon. The cross of Christ, which was to be the fruit and measure of the rejection of the Lord, would have in its train consequences immense, and of all possible difference from what had gone before; and this not only on man's part, but on God's.

Hence, when one of the company said to Him, “Master speak, to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me,” the Lord answers, “Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?” He was not come to judge. The rejection of Christ leads into that infinite salvation He has wrought, in view of which He declines the settlement of human disputes. He was not come for earthly purposes, but for heavenly. Had He been received by men, He would undoubtedly have divided inheritances here below; but, as they were, He was no judge or divider over men or their affairs here below. But Luke, as is his manner and habit, presents the Lord immediately looking at the moral side of the matter, as indeed the rejection of Christ does lead into the deepest manifestation and understanding of the heart.

The Lord therefore addresses the company on a broader ground. “He said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” This anxiety for Christ's help to settle questions flows from the heart's desire of something that one has not here below. Maintenance of position is here judged, eagerness after earthly righteousness is exposed” beware of covetousness.” The rejection of Christ and the revelation of heavenly things led into the true path of faith, of confiding in God for whatever He gives, of trusting, not man but Him, for all difficulties, of contentedness with such things as we have. God arranges all to faith. Nor is this the whole matter. The heart has to be watched. “Beware of covetousness, for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” And this too He illustrates, as well as its awful end. There is exceeding selfishness, folly, and danger in what might seem to be earthly prudence. Hear the next words of the Lord. “He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?” Clearly this man counted that the prime good lay in the abundance of the things that he possessed. His desire was to employ what he had so as to get and keep more of present things.

Systematic selfishness was there, not the reckoning of faith either in its self-sacrifices of suffering or in its active and generous devotedness. There was no eye upon the future outside this world. All was in present life. It is not that the rich fool made a bad use of what he had according to human judgment, not that he was immoral, but his action did not go beyond gratifying his desire of

ever-growing abundance. “He said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.”

This conduct stands in marked contrast with what the Lord afterward brings into prominence in chapter 16, where is seen the sacrifice of the present for the future, and that such only are received into everlasting habitations. It is not the means of deliverance from hell, but the character of all who go to heaven. So far they resemble the steward in the parable, whom the lord commended, not for his injustice, but for his wisdom. He sacrificed present interests, his master's goods, in order to secure the future. The rich proprietor here, on the contrary, is ever casting down his barns and building greater, in order the better to secure all his fruits and increase his goods. His sole and entire thought was for this present life which, he assumed, would go on unchangeably. The steward looked out for the reverse that was at hand, and acted accordingly. May we feel ourselves stewards in what men would call our own and act with no less prudence. It was not so with him who says to himself, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease; eat, drink, and be merry.” There was both self-satisfaction in what he possessed, and withal the desire for a long enjoyment of present ease. It was the practical Sadduceanism of unbelief. “But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?”

He never considered this. God was not in all his thoughts. He had reduced his soul to the merest slavery of the body, instead of keeping under the body, that it might be the servant of the soul, and God the master of both. But no: God was in none of his thoughts; yet God said to him, “Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?” He had looked onward for an uninterrupted prosperity in the world. “This night!” Little did he think it. “This night thy soul shall be required of thee So is he that layette up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” Riches before God cannot be without what men shortsightedly count impoverishment of self, using what we have not for ourselves but for others. Only such are rich toward God, be their means great or small. If their means are small, they are nevertheless large enough to let them think of others in love and provide for wants greater than their own: if their means are great, their responsibilities are so much the greater. But in every case the gathering up is not for self, but for the service of grace; and this can only be by bringing God into the matter. Such only are rich toward God. Laying up treasure for oneself is the hard labor of self and the unbelief that reserves for a long dream of enjoyment which the Lord suddenly interrupts.

Then the disciples are addressed, and the Lord accordingly rises in the character of His appeal. The other was a warning for men, but for the disciples there was a new path opening. “And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat and the body is more than raiment.” That is, be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what put on. This was a great advance in the instruction given to souls—a guard against anxiety, which depends on faith in God. The Lord gives them an instance from the birds around them. “Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them.” God's care condescended to watch over even an unclean bird like a raven. “How much more are ye better than the fowls?”

But we have more than this: the utter powerlessness of man, in what most nearly concerns him, is brought out with matchless beauty and truth. “Which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?” What concerns the body is least. “Why take ye thought for the rest?” Then we are given a still more graphic instance from the flowers of the field. “Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not.” God's care of the vegetable, no less than the animal, world affords striking and familiar proofs which cannot be gainsaid. “They toil not, they spin not.” The ravens might seem to do somewhat; but as to the lilies, what can they do? “They toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.” This was not said as to the ravens. “If God then so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven” —the meanest thing as it were that He has made in the vegetable kingdom, that which is both common and transient— “how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?” The one, therefore, the ravens, rebuked their care for their food, and the lilies their care for their clothing. “If then God so clothe the grass how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?” Hence they were to beware of resembling the nations of the world, which know not God. “Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after.” They were without God. “And your Father [not only God, but your Father] knoweth that ye have need of these things.” He advances now until He puts the disciples into the enjoyment of their own relationship with a Father who cared perfectly for them, and could fail in nothing towards them. The God who watched over the ravens and the lilies—their Father—would surely care for them. He knows that we have need of these things, and would be trusted by us.

Notes on Luke 12:31-40

The instruction previously given was rather negative motives to avoid the ways and objects of the Gentiles, because of their confiding in their Father's care. And now we have more directly positive instruction. “But rather seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you.” As usual, Luke gives us the moral force of things. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink,” as the apostle says, “but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.” They were to desire and pursue what God Himself was about to bring in, what manifests His power in contrast with man's weakness. And so seeking, all other things—all that is needed for this life—all the things that mail makes to be so important, should be added unto them. God assuredly takes care of His own. If we seek His things, He does not forget ours, He could not, would not, overlook our need day by day.

Further (ver. 32), they are not to fear, although a little flock. Their strength did not at all rest on numbers or resources of an earthly kind, but on a most simple and blessed principle it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. He had delight in it, it was His complacency. This could not fail: why should they fear? Far from it, they are told to sell what they had. “Sell that ye have, and give alms.” All that would manifest love flowing out to the needy became them. It was their Father's way with them who were once poor indeed, and they were to keep up the family character. They might, it is true, provide bags; but they were to be such as waxed not old, such as heavenly treasure demands. They were not to be of an earthly kind, but rich toward God, “a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, nor moth corrupteth.” There is nothing forgotten: God is not unrighteous to forget your work of faith and labor of love; and what is of importance too, there is no disappointment with the treasure, no thief approaches it on the one hand, no moth corrupts on the other, “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The object was, that their heart should be settled on things above, and it would be so if their treasure was there. A man is always determined by what he seeks, by his objects. If he sets his heart upon a degrading object, he is degraded; if upon that which is noble and generous, his character is morally elevated. If therefore he is attracted by Christ who is at the right hand of God, if heavenly treasure is before his eyes, his heart follows his treasure, he is taken entirely above the power of present things, which cannot more drag him down.

Is it too much to say that there is nothing of such moment for the disciple? If he has Christ, it is of all consequence he should see Christ where He is, and the things of Christ, where He sits at the right hand of God. Only to look at Christ on earth would falsify a Christian. Assuredly He is and must be an infinitely blessed object wherever He is, nor is it that there would be no worthy effect of thus looking at Christ. But we must bear in mind that Christ here below was under law, and connected with Judaism, with its temple, rites, and priesthood; that as yet the great question of redemption was not decided, sin was not judged, evil was not put away; that the world was not given up as hopelessly bad, nor, consequently, was man. Whoever therefore merely looks at Christ as He was here below, shuts himself out from the great truth that all these things are questions already decided; that the world is judged before God, the earth under sentence, heaven

opened, redemption accomplished and sin put away. The soul who looks at Christ on earth is not only shut out from all the distinctive truths of Christianity, but is plunged into a state of uncertainty; whereas all under the gospel ought to be clearly seen and settled. The mighty work of redemption does not remain to be accomplished. This is one reason why the mass of Christians who look at Christ thus are necessarily of doubtful mind, and count assurance to be presumption. The spiritual character is formed accordingly. But our Lord Himself tells us to have “a treasure in the heavens that faileth not,” “for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” He wished to have them heavenly; and in practice there is no other way than seeing and knowing and possessing, in the true sense, our treasure in the heavens. If so, the heart is there also.

But there is another thing too. It is good to have before us the object that is before God. It is good to have an object, a true object, that calls one out into a state of patience and expectation. We cannot do without the power of hope; if we have not the true object, we shall have false ones. “Let your loins” therefore He says, “be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord when he will return from the wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” I do not take this expression about returning from the wedding as prophetic, but rather as moral, in accordance with the habitual style of Luke. It is certainly intended to present no aspect of judgment but of joy, and it is therefore an allusion to the well-known facts constantly before their eyes, a figure taken from them. They were to be waiting for their Lord, not in a judicial point of view, but as One who returns from a wedding that when He comes and knocks they may open unto Him immediately. This is another grand point, not only, that He is associated with joy, but that they should be free from all earthly encumbrance, so that, the moment the Lord knocks according to the figure, they or may open to Him immediately—without distraction having to get ready. Their hearts are waiting for Him, for their Lord; they love Him, they are waiting for Him. He knocks, and they open to Him immediately. Such is the normal position of the Christian, as waiting for Christ the only true object of hope. “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.” Here their blessing as waiting for Him is shown. We shall find another blessing a little later on; but the blessing here is the watching—not so much working as watching. That is, it is not so much occupation with others as watching for Him, and assuredly this is of some importance to feel. Watching takes precedence even of working. There is no doubt that working has no small value and that the Lord will remember it and reward it, but watching is far more bound up with His person and with His love. Hence it is said “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.” All the activity of His love is shown, and His gracious condescension. “And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants.” There is intentness therefore upon it. It is not vague; it is sustained; it is carried through the night. They are looking for Him from first to last— “Blessed are those servants.” “And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.” It is not the Messiah taking the throne of His father David, but the rejected Son of man who is coming in glory; and blessed are those who are thus waiting and watching for Him. “Be ye therefore ready also.”

Chapter 141

Notes on Luke 12:41-48

IN the preceding verses our Lord presented His coming as claiming the affections of the saints and dealing with their moral state. Their loins were to be girded about, their lights burning, themselves like unto men waiting for their Lord. For, their treasure being in the heavens, their hearts would be there also. This connects itself too with immediate readiness in receiving Himself, that “when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.” It is the blessedness of watching for Christ, with its infinite joy in result. “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.”

If He does tarry, and the heart that loves Him finds it long and has need of patience, it is well worth waiting for Him whatever the delay. “And if he shall come in the second watch or come in the third watch and find them so, blessed are those servants.” At the same time it is important to add the aspect of His coming for the conscience. The return from the wedding does not present this. But “this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not have suffered his house to be broken through.” Present ease and unwatchfulness in such a world as this always make the return of the Lord to be more or less unwelcome. The only right place for love or conscience is the attitude of watching for Him. “Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.”

“Then Peter said unto him, Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all? And the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household to give them their portion of meat in due season?” Now here again appears another aspect. It is the position of one called to be faithful and wise as a steward. It is one whose duty it is, ruling over the master's household, to give their meat in due season, a grave and honorable work. Still it has not necessarily the intimacy of personal affection, which the continual watching for Him supposes. Man, no doubt, thinks very differently; but we are hearing the word of the Lord, and His word ever judges and was meant to judge the thoughts of men. Accordingly there is a difference in the result. “Blessed is that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you that he will make him ruler over all that he hath.” It is not the return of His love so much as the post of honor in His kingdom. “Blessed” indeed are both; but the heart ought to need little light to discern which is the better of the two. May we answer His love and be true to His trust, and know both blessednesses as our portion when He comes again!

Undoubtedly much was left here as elsewhere to be filled up by the Spirit of God. Our Lord had many things to say, but His disciples could not bear them all then. The accomplishment of redemption, the fall of Israel definitively for the time, the call of the Gentiles, and above all, the revelation of “the mystery,” had an immense influence in giving development to the truth of the Lord's return. Nevertheless, it is deeply interesting to notice how admirably the words of the Lord on this occasion present that truth in its two main aspects of grace and responsibility. On these however I do not dwell, because the scripture before us does not enter into detail. It is enough to point out the general truth—a truth, be assured, of great importance to seize in its principles and in

its practical consequences.

The Lord next looks at the vast scene of profession, and shows us in a few solemn words how it will be affected by His return. Christendom and man at large will assuredly be judged then, for we are not here looking at the judgment of the great white throne; it is the judgment of the quick, not yet of the dead—a judgment too much forgotten, not only by the careless but by those who exercise the largest influence in the religious world. Judaism always tended to swamp the final judgment by bringing into exclusive prominence the judgment of the world when the nations shall be put down, and Israel, bumbled by grace, at length shall bear to be exalted to their promised supremacy under Messiah and the new covenant. But Christendom forgets the judgment of the quick, and its forgetfulness of it is no small part of Satan's device to ruin the testimony of Christ. Not only is the truth of His coming lost as a practical joy for the heart, and as a solemn test for the work, but the bare fact itself is disallowed by confounding that day with the judgment of the dead.

The unbelief of man however will not nullify but rather prove the value of the warning of the Lord. “But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

How exact the sketch, save indeed that the ruins of Christendom have brought out added horrors to what is depicted here, no less than the epistles furnished the fuller display of the truth of Christ's coming. And these horrors are given us at length in such scriptures as 2 Thessalonians; 1 and 2 Timothy; Rev. 17; 19.

We see that Christendom having taken the place of Christian privilege will be judged accordingly. It is “that servant.” Having no heart nor faith in Christ's coming, men were willing that it should be deferred. The heart was rather relieved than made sick through a hope deferred that was no hope. They said in their heart “my lord delayeth his coming.” The wish was parent to the thought; and in such a state of feeling circumstances will readily be found to justify it. But the moral consequences are soon seen. With Christ's coming no longer before the eye, that servant ere long began “to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink and to be drunken.” The spirit of haughty assumption and intolerance was developed on the one hand, and a demoralizing intercourse with the world on the other. “But the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and shall cut him in two, and appoint him a part with the unbelievers.” Whatever its profession, the heart of Christendom in that day will be proved to be infidel. No disguises of creed or rite, no activity, nor zeal, will shield it from the just judgment of the Lord at His coming.

Nevertheless the Lord is always just, and in that day there will be a marked difference in His dealings with the quick, as He says here. For the servant who “knew his lord's will, and had not prepared himself nor done it, shall be beaten with many stripes;” whereas be who knew it not yet was guilty, though he will not escape, will be beaten with few stripes. The less favored heathen

therefore will not fare so ill in that day as she who sits as a queen with a vain presumption that she will see no sorrow. “Therefore shall her plagues come in one day; death, and mourning and famine, and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her.” For it is a fixed thing with Him that where much has been given much shall be required, as even man's conscience and practice confess every day: “For to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”

Chapter 142

Notes on Luke 12:49-59

We have seen the Lord's coming as the object of their heart's affection and consequent expectation for the rewarder of service. As the judge of those who have wrought on earth, He will deal righteously according to their respective privileges.

But the Lord now speaks of the effect of His actual presence then. “I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I if it be already kindled?” This is in no way the purpose of His love, but the effect of His presence. He could not but deal as a discoverer of man's state. Fire is the constant symbol of divine judgment, and this was morally true even then. He came to save; but, if rejected, it was really the kindling of a fire. This in no way contradicts the great truth of His intrinsic grace. He says, “But I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!” He Himself was about to go through the deepest suffering, and this because of the necessary antagonism of God's character to sin, which was not yet judged. It was about to be judged in the person of Christ, absolutely without sin, yet made sin by God on the cross. In devoted love, glorifying God, He would be a sacrifice for sin. This was the baptism with which He was to be baptized, and till this was done, the Lord, as He says here, was straitened. Whatever might be His love, it could not yet flow out in all its fullness. There were barriers among men, and there was beyond all these a hindrance on the side of God's glory. His character, amply displayed in good during Christ's life, had not yet been vindicated as to evil. But in and from His death we find no limits to the proclamation of divine love. Before that it was more promise within the limits of Israel, not without hints of mercy beyond it. God would be true and faithful to His word, whatever the state of Israel, but He could not send out freely to the Samaritans, and to the world in general before the cross. After the cross this is exactly what He does. The Lord therefore was straitened till this was accomplished.

Hence, again, they must not be surprised if, man being what he is, Christ's presence produced conflict, opposition, if men were stirred up into jealousies and envies, hatred, arid enmity. All these things became manifest in those in whom it had not been seen before. People might have gone on quietly, but Jesus always puts the heart to the test; and if there be not faith, no man knows what he may not do, whenever the truth (as Jesus is) puts him to the proof. “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth?” Undoubtedly such will be the effect of His reign by and by, but it is far from being the case now, where good has to make its way and skew itself in the midst of evil which is in power. We must always remember that this is an essential characteristic of the time when Jesus was on earth; and it is so still. As far as the world is concerned, evil is in power: good therefore has to maintain itself by faith in conflict with it and superiority over it. It is not that good loves conflict, but that evil will oppose what is good, and consequently suffering there must be. “Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.”

This state of moral rupture is simply the result of Christ's coming to the world, as it is man in a state of alienation and opposition, more particularly man with religious privileges, who cannot bear

to have all his imaginary good sentenced to death. Therefore the Jews were ever more hostile than Gentiles. The latter could not but see their vanities judged by that which carried its own evidence of light and love along with it; but the Jews had what was really of God, only preparatory however and pointing onward to Him, who was now come, and whom they would not have, but rejected utterly. In that rejection the baptism spoken of was accomplished, and sin was judged, and God now can be righteous in justifying him who believes, and this solely on the ground of atonement for proved convicted sin. This alas! was the last thing a Jew was willing to admit. He would not own that he needed redemption as much as a Gentile, and that a Jew no less than a Gentile must enter the kingdom by being born again. Hence division in families, in no way because the grace of Christ in itself promotes discord, but because man's evil fights against the truth which puts it in the light, and man's hatred refuses the love of which it does not feel the need.

Hence, we come to yet fuller particulars. “The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” The nearest relationships, sex, age, or youth made no difference. As grace works freely according to the sovereign will of God, so man's hatred is indiscriminate, and in the most unlikely quarters. The Lord is alluding to the prophecy of Micah, who describes in similar terms the worst evil of the last days. (Chap. 7:6.) It is solemn to find therefore that, before the days spoken of by the prophet arrive, the evil was itself now come, and that the presence of divine love in the person of Jesus provokes it. This could not be if men were not thoroughly bad: but Jesus is the truth, and therefore brings all things to a head.

In the next verses he appeals to the people and convicts them of the greatest moral blindness. “He said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?” Men are good enough judges of the signs of the weather; they were sufficiently shrewd in forming a judgment as to the present in what they saw; but they utterly failed in what most of all becomes a man—judgment of what is morally above him, judgment of what touches him most closely in his relationship to God, judgment in what concerns his eternal future. In these things they utterly failed, they were hypocrites. Their love of evil, cloaked with a veil of fair religious appearance, made them blind, their love of their own interests made them sharp in discerning and practiced in the pursuit of present things. They utterly failed in conscience; and so the Lord goes on to reproach them. It was not only that they were blind as to the signs that God gave outside themselves; but why did they not even of themselves, as it is said here, judge what was right? This is peculiar to Luke. Matthew speaks of the external signs God was pleased to give them, but they had no eyes for them. Luke alone speaks of the responsibility of judging from themselves, and not merely from what was vouchsafed outside them. The truth is that all was internally wrong with themselves: therefore they did not judge what was right.

The Lord hence concludes this part of His discourse with a warning of their actual position. “When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite.” Israel were on their trial now, they were in the way. There was an

opportunity of being delivered: would they refuse? Would they throw all away? They might depend upon it, if there was not diligence to avail themselves of what God was now granting them; in the presence of Jesus, justice must take its course; and if so, they must be dragged to the judge, and the judge most assuredly would deliver them to the officer, and the officer would cast them into prison. The result would be that they should in no wise depart thence, till they had paid the very last mite. And such in point of fact has been the history of the Jews. They are in prison still, and out of this condition they will never be delivered until the whole debt is paid in the retributive dealings of God, when the Lord will say that Jerusalem has received from His hand double for all her sins, He will not allow her therefore to suffer more. His mercy will undertake her cause in the last day. His hand accomplishing at length what His mouth promised from the first.

Chapter 143

Notes on Luke 13:1-9

THE Lord pursues what occupied Him at the close of the last chapter. He is laying bare before them the crisis that was now approaching for Israel. He was the truth, manifesting the reality of things on earth—for instance, of the Jewish people in the sight of God underneath all religious forms. Nothing eluded Him and He reveals all that was needful to man. It has not the high character of the truth in John as the revelation of what was in Himself, what God was as displayed in the Word made flesh; but it is equally necessary in its place. According to the general tone of Luke, there is moral dealing with men and here with Israel.

“There were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.” The cruel and hardhearted governor had dealt with excessive unfeelingness and had shown his contempt of the Galileans. This furnished a subject for conversation: it was a judgment. They could more easily speak of it as it was a question of Galileans whom the men of Jerusalem were apt to despise. But the Lord answers them showing that the time for the kind of discriminative dealing which was in their minds was not really arrived. It will be so in the millennium, but it is not and could not come while the Messiah was in humiliation, a sufferer, sent to die by the same governor who so unworthily used those Galileans, yea, by those highest in Jerusalem whose sin was yet greater. Sent not to have His blood mingled with sacrifices, but to be Himself the sacrifice for sinners, in the infinite grace of God to all, beginning with Jerusalem. “And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” The Lord makes it an appeal to their own conscience, and shows that the light of Himself on earth reveals the deplorable state of all men without exception, and, if there be a difference, the exceeding guilt of the Jew in particular. They should all perish except they repented.

He does not here speak of believing, though no doubt it is implied and goes along with faith; but repenting brings in the thought of their sin and their want of all right moral judgment of it. On this He insists, but He does more; He brings forward a case calculated to arrest and search their consciences. They had spoken of Galileans; He reminds them of some nearer home in like case—men of Jerusalem, eighteen of whom had some time ago perished from a tower in Siloam that fell upon them. The Lord accordingly asks them, “Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” It is not so grave before God, nor so near to man's danger or best interests that a special disaster had occurred to Galileans, or to men of Jerusalem. What Jesus shows is the inevitable ruin of all that do not repent. This is characteristic of Christianity. It is the most separative of all things. It severs even out of Israel to God by the judgment of sin as it is and the knowledge of His grace; but at the same time it is the most comprehensive testimony possible. Not only does it go out to all nations to gather from them and put believers on equal privileges whether Jew or Gentile; but it is no less profound than universal, inasmuch as it shows both what God is towards every child of man, and what He is to

none but His own children. Indeed it is a revelation of God in Christ both for the Church, and in His connection with the whole universe. He is the God and Father of all, “who is above all and through all and in you all;” though this will in no way hinder the destruction of all men who do not repent. Christ, come in humiliation to redeem from sin to God, alone reveals things as they are.

The Lord adds a parable also. “A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none: cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” This manifests, on a still larger scale, a similar truth; it adds the grounds on which they were so peculiarly responsible. The fig tree was planted in his vineyard and be came and sought fruit on it and found none, and he says “Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?” So far from security, nothing could be more critical than the condition of Israel now. It was not for them to be coolly speculating about Galileans and forgetting men of Jerusalem; for the thoughts of men are always partial and self-deceptive. The Lord then does not merely bring in counter-facts, but shows in a parabolic form their moral history and what was impending from God. It was only through His intervention and intercession that God was willing to bear with Israel. “Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree and find none.” There was the most ample testimony rendered—more than enough—these three years. “Cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.” This was what awaited Israel. The Lord was giving them a last opportunity, as far as His ministry was concerned. We know well that, whatever His pains, whatever the means used, all was vain for the time and that generation. They did not bear fruit; they rejected Himself. “After that thou shalt cut it down.” And so it was. Israel has disappeared from its place of testimony: the fig tree, the emblem of their national existence, is cut down, and withered away. Not but that God can renew them on a different principle. Grace will interfere and bring in this Messiah for the generation to come; but their national position under the law, even in the feeble condition of a remnant from Babylon, is completely blotted out from their land. The fig tree is cut down; so the Lord told them it would be, and so it is.

Notes on Luke 13:10-22

Although the Lord showed the impending fate of the Jews because of their uselessly cumbering the ground, He did not the less teach in their synagogues on the sabbath day. It was still the term of patience; and, further, grace was in no way hindered from acting individually. “And, behold, there was a woman, which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.” She did not seek the gracious power of Jesus, but when He saw her, “he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.” Not satisfied with this, He laid His hands upon her. There was far more grace in acting thus than in simply curing her by a word. He could have done the one as easily as the other.

But grace, though it tenderly stoops to the wretched, does not accommodate itself to the obstinate unbelief of men, more particularly of men who make a show of their religion, but who have nothing real in the sight of God. Christ cured her on the sabbath and in face of the congregation, knowing it would provoke the enmity of the ruler of the synagogue. There is no use in striving to keep fair terms with men who profess to be the friends, but are really the enemies, of God. “And immediately she was made straight and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath day.” Now had he for a moment reflected, he would have seen the folly and wickedness of his affectedly pious indignation; he would have seen that he was fighting against God. But passion in religious matters never reflects; and, being wholly apart from true faith, it is apt to be governed by present interests. So this man, little suspecting that he was carrying on war with God to his own eternal ruin, turns to the people with the words, “There are six days in which men ought to work; in them, therefore, come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day.” Vain and wicked man, that presumed to lay down the law to God! He was far from keeping the law himself, yet ventured to give law to Him who was not more truly man than God. God is not to work on His own sabbath day! But as the Lord told the Jews in the Gospel of John, it is a folly to suppose that God, in presence of such a world, of man and Israel as they are, is keeping the sabbath. Morally speaking, He could not do so. His love would not permit Him to rest when the earth and human kind are full of sin, wickedness, and misery. Accordingly grace led both the Father and the Son to work for poor guilty man. “My Father worketh hitherto and I work.” The Jews might be keeping their sabbaths in pride; but God was working for man! Alas! the world has as little sense of the holiness as of the love of God; and so the Lord here answers the ruler with stern rebuke. “Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall and lead him away to watering?” He does not take His text from the Father, as in the Gospel of John, but from men's own acknowledged ways; what even natural conscience feels to be right, what no legalism can blot out from the heart of man. Luke is the great moralist of the gospels. It would be cruel towards the poor brute to withhold its necessary provender or drink because of the sabbath day; and if it would be a mistake of God's mind so to treat one's ox or ass to keep it from what is necessary to its refreshment in natural life, how much more was it not worthy of God to relieve in grace a victim of Satan's power? “Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, to be

loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" He puts it on the double ground of relationship to Abraham, God's friend, and of subjection to the insulting power of the enemy. A daughter of Abraham, she ought surely to have in their eyes an additional claim, and no less because Satan had bound her for so long a time. It was plain therefore that the ruler under the pretense of high respect for God's institutions was in truth a satellite of Satan. If true-hearted, he would have rejoiced at the expulsion of that spirit of infirmity by which the woman had been so long bound. The people felt the truth of what Jesus said as well as the grace of His deed. "When he had said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed, and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him." Even the open opposers, if not won, were ashamed; but all the people rejoiced, for they at least have a sense of their need and are more free to acknowledge what is good and true. There may not have been power, and there is not without faith, to receive the truth in the love of it (for the heart is alienated from God); but they hailed with joy the divine power that rescued the miserable. Where there is divinely given faith. I doubt that the first action of the Spirit of God is joy. The entrance of the word gives light, and discovers what is within of sin, and guilt, and ruin. But, even without being converted, people who have no particular animosity against the truth presented in Christ and who feel the value of light nowhere else to be seen, may well rejoice. They are not broken down in the sense of their own evil, they are not brought to God, but they rejoice in what is come to men, owning the evident and excellent hand of God, and feeling the difference between Christ, however little seen, and the parchment divinity of the ruler of a synagogue. "All the people rejoiced for the glorious things that were done by him."

Then the Lord is brought in by our evangelist, as comparing the kingdom of God to "a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and cast into his garden." The kingdom of God was not yet coming in that power and glory in which all adversaries should be destroyed. The essential feature of it, evident to every eye which beheld Christ as its actual witness, was the power of God in lowliness displayed in His own humiliation; it was in no way a king governing with external majesty, but a man who takes a grain of mustard seed, a very little germ indeed, and casts it into his garden, where it grows and waxes a great tree; so that the fowls of the air would lodge in its branches. The Lord has before His eye the rising up of a vast worldly power which Christendom should become from the very little beginning planted by Himself then present. Such is the first view that is here given by our Lord. People were premature in rejoicing for all the glorious things that were done by Him, if they counted on a mighty deliverance and kingdom just yet. This would be the result in due time at His coming again, and man would try to found it on what He has already done. No doubt there would be deeper things underneath; but He speaks now of what would be before all the people, before men's eyes. It is Christendom commencing as a little seed in the world and becoming such a power that even the very adversaries themselves should find grateful shelter there. But it is not yet the time for the kingdom of God to come in power and glory. There is divine power dealing by the Spirit with individual souls, but not at all in the direct public government of the world. Christianity would grow into an outward system of power, but not such as to expel scandals and those that practice lawlessness.

Far different is the state of things now. Christendom is become a worldly system, just as much as Mohammedanism or Judaism. It is become an active worldly power in the center of civilization; and not a few among those of chief influence in nominal Christianity are the enemies of God and His truth.

But, besides the outward power, our Lord compares the kingdom to “leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till the whole was leavened.” The man is the figure of the agent in what is done publicly, the woman of the resulting condition in what is done hiddenly. Hence Babylon is compared to the woman in Revelation. There is the spread of doctrine, of creed, of a mere verbal confession which does not suppose faith. It is not only that there is that which rising from the least beginning becomes a great and towering power in the earth; but there is also a doctrinal system spread over a defined space (Christendom) which affects men's minds and feelings. This is compared to leaven; and leaven in scripture is never the symbol of what is good. The leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees was their doctrine, which differed in each but was far from good.

Here the leaven was hid in the three measures of meal till the whole was leavened. It does not mean all the world becoming Christian—a vain and groundless inference, opposed to many plain scriptures which treat of this subject expressly. There is a very small part of the world even nominally Christian; a much larger part consists of Buddhism, Mohammedanism, and of Heathenism. We bear of “three measures,” a certain definite space of the world which God has permitted to be influenced by nominally Christian doctrine—a witness even more than enough.

Thus the spread of Christendom, as a political power, is set forth by the tree, and the spread of the doctrine, of Christian dogma, is shown by the leavening of these three measures. Both these things have taken place, and there is nothing in either to hinder the coming of the Lord on the plea that these scriptures have not been fulfilled. Christendom is long become a great power in the earth, and has spread its doctrine within extensive limits. What sort of doctrine it is, and what sort of power, scripture elsewhere at least does not leave doubtful; but the object here is not so much to show the character of its power or the quality of the doctrine, as to imply the height of pride to which it would grow, and its prevalence over a defined space. The fact is, that from a little beginning it becomes great in the earth, and is also accompanied by a certain spread of doctrine over a limited area. There is no trace whatever in these parables of the coming millennium or reign of righteousness where evil is put down. It is rather this age where evil insinuates itself and reaches the highest places under the protection of Christendom along with the spread of a mere creed without life or the power of the Spirit. How truly both have been and are before all eyes!

Notes on Luke 13:23-30

Those who had the chief place and power in Israel the Lord had convicted, under pretense of jealousy for law, of utter hypocrisy and hatred of grace even to the seed of Abraham. Under the parables of the mustard seed and the leaven, He had shown what would be the outward form of the kingdom during His rejection. But this does not hinder His going on for the present with His labor of love. “He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem.” He knew right well what was to befall Him there, as indeed is expressly stated at the end of this chapter. One now says to Him, “Lord, are there few that be saved?” Are those that shall be saved (the remnant and those destined to salvation) few? The Lord does not gratify such curiosity, but at once speaks to the conscience of him who inquired. Take care that you stand right with God. “Strive to enter into the strait gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able.” It is not, as is sometimes thought, so much a question between “seeking” and “striving.” This would throw the stress upon man, and the difference of his state; though it is true that conversion means a mighty change and that where the Spirit of God works in grace, there must needs be a real earnestness of purpose given. But the true point is that people must “strive to enter in through the strait gate.” The strait gate means conversion to God through faith and repentance. It is a person who is not content with being an Israelite, but feels the need of being born again and for it looks to God who uses the Lord Jesus as the way. This is to “strive to enter in the strait gate.” “There are many,” He says,” who will endeavor to enter in and shall not be able.” This does not mean that they would seek to enter in by the strait gate; for, if they did so, it would be all right. But they seek to get the blessing of the kingdom without being born of God; they would like to have all the privileges promised to Israel without being born of water and the Spirit. This is impossible. “Many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.” For if they enter, it must be through the strait gate of being born anew.

“When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us, and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.” The Lord takes this position outside them through His rejection; they rejected Him and He has no alternative but for the time to reject them, unless God would be a party to the dishonor of His own Son. But whatever be His grace (and He will be most gracious), God shows His complacency in Christ and His resentment at those who, though taking the highest ground of their own merits, proved their unrighteousness, and unbelief, and rebellion against God when He displayed Himself in love and goodness in the Lord Jesus.

“When once the master of the house is risen up, and has shut to the door” —it would be quite unavailing for the Jews to plead that Jesus had come into their midst, that the Messiah had been in their streets, “that they had eaten and drunk in his presence,” and He had taught in their streets. This was what most evidenced their guilt. He had been there, and they would not have Him. He had taught in their streets, but they had despised and rejected Him, even more than the Gentiles. They had insisted upon His crucifixion when the most hard-hearted of Gentile governors had wished His acquittal.

It is always so. Religious privilege, when misused and abandoned, leaves those who had it worse than before, worse than those who have never had it. Messiah therefore shall say to them, “I tell you, I know not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.” God could not have mere forms: there must be what suits His nature. This is invariably proved true, when the light of God shines. The gospel does not mean that God now sanctions what is contrary to Himself. Even in remitting sin through faith He meets what is opposed to Himself, but produces what is according to Himself by His own grace. But He always holds to His own principle, that it is those who “by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory, and honor, and incorruptibility,” that have eternal life, and none others. Those “who by patient continuance in well doing” please Him are to be with Him, and none but they. How this patient continuance in well doing is produced is another matter, and how souls are awakened to seek after it. Certainly it is not from themselves, but from God. Conversion essentially consists in distrust of self and turning to God. This the Jews had not, and, in spite of all their high pretensions to religion, they were only workers of iniquity. “There” —not among the heathen— “shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out.” But this is not all—the picture would not be complete if they did not see others brought in too. It is not only the Jews shut out from their fathers, when the time of glory comes; but others “shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south” —that is, the widest ingathering of the Gentiles— “and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.” Thus it was manifest that “there are last which shall be first.” Such were the Gentiles; they were called by grace to be first. And “there are first which shall be last.” Such were the Jews. They had held the earliest and chief place in the calling of God; but they renounced it for self-righteousness and rejected their Messiah accordingly. The Gentiles would now hear, when the natural children, we may say, of the kingdom shall be thrust out. Grace would conquer where flesh and law had utterly failed, reaping woe to themselves as much as dishonoring God.

Notes on Luke 13:31-35

Scripture is very careful to press the respect and obedience which are due to authority, but it is not a Christian's work to occupy himself with settling questions of the earth. He has nothing to do with the ways and means whereby kings or other governors have reached their place of authority. There may have been wars, and revolutions, and all sorts of questionable means for them to arrive at such exaltation. What he has to do is to obey, as a matter of fact, those who are in authority. “Let every soul be subject unto higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” Scripture does not attach obedience to the powers that ought to be, but to “the powers that be.” No doubt this may expose to danger where a revolutionary leader usurps the authority for a season; but God will care for results, and the duty of the Christian remains simple and sure. He obeys the powers that be. Notwithstanding all obedience in man has its limits. There are cases where the Christian is bound, I do not say to be disobedient, still less to set up his own authority (which is never his duty), but “to obey God rather than men.” Where earthly authority demands sin against God, for instance where a government interferes with and forbids the stewardship of the believer in proclaiming the name of Christ, it is evident that it is a question of a lower authority setting aside the highest. Consequently the principle of obedience to which the Christian is bound forbids his being swayed by what is of man to abandon what he knows to be the will of God.

Take again a peremptory call on a Christian to fight the battles of his country. If he knows his calling, can he join Christ's name with such unholy strife? If right for one side, it is right for another, or the Christian becomes a judge instead of a pilgrim, and the name of the Lord would be thus compromised by brethren on opposite sides, each bound to imbrue their hands in one another's blood, each instruments of hurrying to perdition souls ripening in sins. Is this Christ? Is it grace? It may suit the flesh and the world; but it is in vain to plead the word of God to justify a Christian's finding himself engaged in such work. Will any one dare to call human butchery, at the command of the powers that be, Christ's service? The true reason why people fail to see here is, either a fleshly mind, or an unworthy shrinking from the consequences. They prefer to kill another to please the world, rather than to be killed themselves to please Christ. But they should not ask or expect Christian sympathy with their unbelief or worldly-mindedness. To sympathize with such is to share their failure in testimony to Christ. To deplore the thing while doing it does not mend matters, but is rather an unwitting testimony of our own lips against our own ways.

In short, the divine rule is what our Lord Himself laid down with admirable wisdom and perfect truth. “Render unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.” This alone gives us the true standard of the path of Christ through a world of evil and snares. He Himself seems to act on the same principle here. “The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, Get thee out and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee.” (Ver. 31.) The Lord knew better. He knew that, bad as Herod might be, the Pharisees were no better, and that their profession of interest in caring for His person was hypocritical. Whether Herod had made use of this or not, He was not going to be influenced by any such suggestions direct or indirect

from the enemy. He had His work to do for His Father. As the child, we have seen in this gospel, He must be about His Father's business. It was not otherwise when the anxiety of His mother was expressed to Him at a later day before His public work. So now the Lord said to the Pharisees, “Go ye and tell that fox.”

There is no hiding the truth of things where there is an attempt at interference with the will of God. The cunning that wrought to hinder the Lord's testimony for God was vain. He saw through it all and does not scruple to speak plainly out. “Go ye and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out demons, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” The Lord was then evidently the vessel of the power of God on earth. The gracious work which He was doing showed man's folly in seeking to hinder God. “Behold, I cast out demons.” Not all the power or authority of the world could have done such deeds as these. This was paramount to every consideration: He was here to do the will of God and finish His work.

It was in vain therefore for Pharisees or Herod, under false pretensions, to draw Him aside and thus interrupt the execution of His task. He was obeying God rather than men. He came to do the will of Him who sent Him, and at all cost this must be done. “I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.” The work was in hand and assuredly should be done. The Lord, having finished His course, entered into a new position for man through death and resurrection into heavenly glory. “Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following.” He knew better too than that any power of man would be permitted to stop Him till His work was completed. He knew beforehand and thoroughly that Jerusalem was the place where He must suffer, and that Pharisees were to play a far more important part in His suffering unto death than even Herod. Man does not know himself. Christ the truth declares it, and shows that it was all known to Him. There is nothing like a single eye, even in man, to see clearly; and Christ was the true light that made all things manifest.

“It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.” Their anxiety therefore was a mere pretense. The Lord had His work to do, and devotes Himself to it till it is done. From the beginning and all through He shows clearly as here that He knew where His rejection was to be. We gather this clearly from a previous chapter, where we are told that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and this too when the time was come that He should be received up. He looks onward to His being perfected. He knew right well the pathway through which this lay. It was through death and resurrection. So here; it might be the perishing of the great prophet in Jerusalem, but it was the receiving up of the Lord of glory, now man after accomplishing redemption, into that glory from which He came. The Lord therefore remains perfectly master of the position.

But there is more than this. He was free in His love. Not all the cunning of Herod, nor all the hypocrisy of the Pharisees could turn aside the grace that filled His heart—grace even to those who loved Him not. If His servant could say that, though the more abundantly he loved the less he was loved, how much more fully true is it of the master! The disciple was like his master; but the Master was infinitely perfect. And so love fills His heart as now He utters these solemn words over Jerusalem, guilty of all the blood of the witnesses of God from Abel downwards. He has His own cross before Him; yet He says, “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.” He was then more than a prophet—the Lord

Jehovah. He was one competent to gather; and He had a love that proved its divine spring, source, and character by His willingness often to have gathered the children of Jerusalem together. He could have been their shield and exceeding great reward, but they would not. There is no blessing that the will of man cannot shut its eyes to and reject. Flesh can never see aright, because it is always selfish. It does not see God, and consequently misses all that is really good for itself. Man is most of all his own enemy when He is God's enemy; but of all enemies, which are so deadly as religious enemies? as those whose hearts are far from God, though they draw near with their lips and have the place of the highest religious privilege? Such was Jerusalem. They had had the prophets, but they killed them. They had had messengers sent from God to them unweariedly, but they stoned them. And now that He who was the great prophet, Messiah, Jehovah Himself was in their midst in divine love, what would they not do to Him? There was no death too ignominious for Him. “Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.” It was their own ruin, when they thought and meant it to be His. But love rises over every hindrance. It is impossible that grace should be defeated in the end for its own purposes. Therefore, He adds, “Verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see me [this was judgment, ‘Ye shall not see me'], until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord” —this is grace. He comes in glory, but in the perfect display of that love which had suffered for them and from them and which will not fail in the end by this very suffering to ensure their eternal blessing.

Notes on Luke 14:1-14

The last chapter had closed with the setting aside of the Jew and the judgment of Jerusalem. We have now the moral principles involved set forth in chapter 14. The Lord was asked to “the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath day.” One might have expected, if there was anything holy or any appreciation of grace, now was the time for it. But not so. They watched Him. They, ignorant of God, looked for evil desired evil. God was in none of their thoughts, nor His grace. Yet these were the men who most of all piqued themselves upon their nice observance of the sabbath day.

But grace will not stay its work or withhold the truth to please men: Jesus was there to make known God and do His will. “And, behold there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.” No religious forms can shut out the ruin that is in the world through sin, and our Lord, filled with the good that was in His heart, answers their thoughts before they uttered them, speaking to the lawyers and Pharisees with the question, “Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?” His question was an answer to their evil judgments. It was impossible to deny it. Hardened as man was and habituated to evil, he could not say that it was unlawful to heal on the sabbath day. Yet they really wished that it should be so, and, as we know, made it repeatedly a ground of the most serious accusation against the Lord. However here He challenges those that were ostensibly the wisest and most righteous in Israel, the lawyers and Pharisees; but “they held their peace.” The Lord then takes the dropsical man, heals him, and lets him go. Then he answers them further by the question: “Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?” This is a little different from his reply to the ruler of the synagogue in the chapter before. There it was more the need of the animal, the ordinary supply of his wants. But here it is a more urgent case. It was not simply that the animal needed watering and must be led to it, but “which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath day?” It was lawful therefore to look after the good of an animal on that day. They proved it when their own interests were concerned. God had His interests and love: therefore was Jesus in this world, therefore was He in the Pharisee's house. He had meat to eat that they knew not of. It was not the Pharisee's bread, but to do the will of His Father. In healing the dropsical man He was glorifying His Father. He was boldly acting upon that which even they durst not deny—the right of healing on the sabbath day. If they could relieve on that day their animals from their pain or danger, what title had they to dispute God's right to heal the miserable among men, among Israel?

“And they could not answer him again to these things.” How unanswerably good is the grace and truth of God!

But it is plain that the heart of Israel was sick and that this very scene showed how much they needed to be healed. But they knew it not. They were hardened against the Holy One that could do them good. They were maliciously watching Him, instead of presenting themselves in their misery that He might heal them.

But the Lord in the next scene puts forth “a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms.” (Ver. 7.) It is not only that there is a hindrance of good to others, on the part of those who have no sense of need themselves, but there is a universal desire of self-exaltation. The law did not hinder this: it can only condemn, and that too for the most part, what the natural conscience condemns. But Christ here brings in the light of God's grace, of divine love in an evil world as contrasted with human selfishness. He marked how those that were guests chose out the chief rooms. They sought for themselves, they sought the best. But “when thou art bidden,” says He who was Himself the perfect pattern of love and humility— “when thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him. And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.” (Ver. 8, 9.) Assuredly it would be so with Israel themselves. They had had the outward call of God, they had chosen the chief seats and now they were going to lose all place and nation. Jesus was in the fullest contrast with them. He went down to the lowest room, He took it in love for God's glory; and certainly there is One that will say for Him, Give this man place. Clearly, however, it is an exhortation for every heart and more particularly for those who heed the call of God.

Then comes a more positive word. “When thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room” —He had done so Himself— “that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher.” He must take the form of a servant, was found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name.” As He says here, “Then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (Ver. 10, 11.) They are universal principles of God: the one true of Christ and of all that are Christ's; as the other is of the spirit of man. The first Adam sought to exalt himself, but only fell through the deceit of Satan. The Second man humbled Himself and is set above all principality, and power, and might.

Then we find, further, it is not a question only of guests but of a host: He has a word for every man. God looks for love in this world, and this too apart from nature. His love is not for one's friends or family alone; it is not on this principle at all. “When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again and a recompense be made thee.” (Ver. 12.) A witness for Christ is marked by that which is supernatural. There is no testimony to His name in merely natural kindness or family affection, but where there is love without a human motive or any hope of recompense, there is a testimony to Him. It is exactly so that God is doing now in the gospel, and we are called to be imitators of God. It is not meant to be merely in making a feast or a supper; but that grace should stamp its character on all our Christian life. The whole time of the gospel call, as we shall see farther on, is compared to a feast to which the activity of love is gathering in from the miserable of this world.

Hence, the Lord adds, “When thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee.” How divinely fine, yet how different from the world and its social order out of which the Christian is called! If we thus act in unselfish self-sacrificing love, God will surely recompense according to all His resources and His nature. This will be at the resurrection of the just, the great and final scene when all that are severed from the world will be seen apart from it, when human selfishness will have disappeared forever, when

they that are Christ's will reign in life by one, Christ Jesus. Anything short of this is not the exercise of the life of Christ, but of our nature in this world; and this is precisely what has no place at the resurrection of the just. (Ver. 13, 14.)

The Lord speaks here of a special resurrection, in which the unjust have no part. Not that these too do not come forth from their graves; for indeed they must rise for judgment. But our text speaks of the resurrection of life in which none can be but those who are just by the grace of God—justified no doubt, but also just—those that practiced the good things, in contrast with those that did the evil. Other scriptures prove that these two resurrections differ in time as decidedly as in character; and the great New Testament prophecy determines that more than a thousand years separate the one from the other, though the effects for each never pass away. It is manifest also that only the resurrection of the just admits of recompense. For the unjust there can be but righteous retribution.

Notes on Luke 14:15-36

It was an unwonted sound to man. The evidently divine grace of the Lord acted on the spirit of one that sat at meat with Him, who, hearing that which was far more suitable to heaven than ever was as yet seen carried out on the earth, said, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” Our Lord then proves that this is a great mistake as far as concerns man's readiness to answer the grace of God. Hence He puts the case in the following parable: “A certain man made a great supper and bade many.” There was no lack of condescension and goodness to win man on God's part. His heart went out to any. He invited according to His own largeness of mercy and grace. “And he sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come, for all things are now ready.” This Gospel, like Paul's epistles, shows that God even in His grace does not forsake, in the first instance, prescribed order. So Paul, when he went to any place, went first to the synagogue; and in explaining the gospel in the epistle to the Romans, says, “To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.”

Though God has no respect of persons, He nevertheless does heed the ways that He has Himself established. This makes so much the less excusable the lack of faith on the part of the Jew. God never fails—man always. Favored man only makes the greater show of his own unbelief. Here the message to them that were bidden was, “Come, for all things are now ready.” Such is the invitation of grace. The law makes man the prominent and responsible agent; it is man that is to do this, and, yet more, man that must not do that. Man therein is commanded to love God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength, and with all his mind. But the commandment, just as it is, is wholly unavailing, because in this case man is a sinner and loveless. No law ever produced or called out love. It may demand but cannot create love; it is not within the nature or power of law to do so. God knew this perfectly; and in the gospel He becomes Himself the Great Agent. It is He that loves, and who gives according to the strength of that love in sending His only begotten Son with eternal life in Him—yea, also to die in expiation for sin. Law demonstrated that man though responsible had no power to perform. He was incapable of doing God's will because of sin; but his pride was such that he did not, would not, feel his own incapability, or its cause. Were he willing to confess it, God would have shown him grace. But man felt no need of grace any more than his own guilt and powerlessness to meet law. So he slights the call to come, though all things are now ready.

“And they all (says the Lord Jesus), with one consent, began to make excuse.” No doubt these were the Jews—the persons who were bidden. “The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused.” Not that these things were in themselves wrong; they are the ordinary duties of men. It is not a person who is too drunk to come, or one living in misery in consequence of his grossness, like the prodigal son; but these might be decent respectable men. They were engrossed in their own things, they had no time for the supper of grace. God invites them, having prepared all things for them; but they were each so pre-occupied that none had heart or care for God's invitation. Is not this a true picture of

the condition of man? yea, of man who has the Bible? of Christendom no less than Judea? It is an unbelieving excuse founded on alleged duties, certainly on present material interests. But what blindness! Does eternity raise no questions? Not to speak of judgment and its awful issues, has heaven no interest in man's eyes? If Christ or God be nothing, is it nothing to be lost or to be saved?

These are evidently serious questions, but man goes off without the moral courage to seek an answer from God. Here those bidden despised His mercy and grace, as they felt no need of it for their own souls. They lived only for the present. They blotted out all that is really admirable in man according to God's grace. They were living only for nature in its lowest wants—the providing what is necessary for food or for pleasure. The commonest creature of God, a bird or a fly does as much; the meanest insect not only provides food, but also enjoys itself. Does boastful man by sin degrade himself to be in profession no better than a butterfly, in practice far worse? “Another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.” He did not even say, “I pray thee have me excused.” His wife was an excellent reason in his eyes for refusing God's invitation. It was a question of a family in this world, not of God hereafter. It is clear that the real root of all unbelief is the absence of sense of sin, and no credit given to God. There is no sense of what God is, either in His claims or in His grace.

Again, “So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.” Such is the urgent message of grace, when the proud refused and God presses it on the most despised. Still we have before us the streets and lanes of the city. I think the Lord had Jerusalem as yet in view, though not put forward distinctly. At any rate, it was that which was orderly and settled in the world: only the despised and the wretched are now the express objects of the invitation. The busy great had slighted it—the lawyers and scribes, the teachers and Pharisees, were indifferent if not opposed. Henceforth it becomes a question of publicans and sinners, or anybody that was willing however wretched. “And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded; and yet there is room.” Then comes a third message. “The lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in that my house may be filled.” Thus we have the clear progress of the gospel among the Gentiles; and this too with the strong earnestness of divine mercy. “Compel them to come in that my house may be filled, For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden” (none of those that had the promises, but trifled with them when they were accomplished) “shall taste of my supper.”

Thus the whole case is brought before us, but with remarkable differences from the view given in Matt. 22. There it is much more dispensational. Hence it is “the kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son.” All savors of this: the king, the king's son, the marriage feast—not merely a feast, and again the messages and His action attest it. The first mission there represents the call during Christ's ministry on earth; the second was when the fatlings were killed, that is, the work was done. This is followed by the judgment that fell upon those who despised the gospel message and maltreated the servants. “The king was wroth and sent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers and burned up their cities.” There is not a word about this in Luke. It was well that it should be brought forward in a gospel that was intended for the warning as well as the winning of the Jew. And there only was it written. The destruction of

Jerusalem befell the Jews because of their rejection of Christ and of the Holy Ghost in the preaching of the apostles finally. Again, it is only in Matthew that we have the case of the man that was present without a wedding garment, setting forth the advantage that an unbelieving man would take of the gospel in Christendom, where we have the corruption of those who bear the name of the Lord, and their presumptuous pretension to be Christians without the slightest reality, without a real putting on of Christ. Need I say how common that is in Christendom? All this is left out in Luke, who confines himself to the moral dealings of God.

On the Lord's departure great multitudes go with Him, to whom He turns with the words, “If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife and children, and brethren and sisters; yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.” They might have thought that at any rate they would treat the Lord better than His message—so little does man know of himself. The Lord would not permit that the multitude, then following Him, should flatter themselves that they at least were willing to partake of the supper, that they were incapable of treating God with the contempt described in the parable. So the Lord tells them what following Himself involves. The disciple must follow Christ so simply and decidedly that it would seem to other eyes a complete neglect of natural ties, and an indifference to the nearest and strongest claims of kin. Not that the Lord calls for want of affection; but so it might and must look to those who are left behind in His name. The attractive power of grace must be greater than all natural fetters, or any other claims of whatsoever kind, over him who would be His disciple. And more than this; it is a question of bearing one's cross and going after Him. “Whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.” It is not enough to come to Him at first, but we must follow Him day by day. Whoever does not this cannot be His disciple. Thus in verse 26 we see the forsaking of all for Christ; and in verse 27 the following Christ with pain and suffering and going on in it.

Again, the Lord does not hide the difficulties of the way, but sets them out in two comparisons. The first is of a man that intended to build a tower, who had the folly not to count the cost before beginning. So it would be with souls now. Undoubtedly it is a great thing to follow Jesus to heaven, but then it costs something in this world. It is not all joy; but it is well and wise to look at the other side also. Then the Lord gives a further comparison. It is like a king going to war with one who has twice as many forces. Unless I am well backed up, it is impossible for me to resist him who comes against me with twice my array; much less can I make head against him. The inevitable consequence of not having God for us is, that when the enemy is a great way off, we have to send an ambassage and desire conditions of peace. But is it not peace with Satan, and everlasting ruin? “So likewise, whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.” A man should be prepared for the worst that man and Satan can do. It is always true, though not always apparent; but scripture cannot be broken, and in the course of a disciple's experience, a time comes when he is thus tried one way or another. It is well therefore to look all thoroughly in the face; but then to refuse Jesus and His call to follow, not to be His disciple, is to be lost forever.

The Lord closes all with another familiar allusion of everyday life. “Salt is good; but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?” There is shown the danger of what begins well turning out ill. What is there in the world so useless as salt when it has lost the one property for which it is valued? “It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill, but men cast it out.” It is worse than useless for any other purpose. So with the disciple who ceases to be Christ's disciple.

He is not suited for the world's purposes, and he has forsaken God's. He has too much light or knowledge for entering into the vanities and sins of the world, and he has no enjoyment of grace and truth to keep him in the path of Christ. The expression, “men cast it out” is perhaps too precise. It has a virtually indefinite meaning: “they cast it out,” i.e., it is cast out, without saying by whom. Savorless salt becomes an object of contempt and judgment. “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear;” how solemn the call to conscience!

Chapter 149

Notes on Luke 15:1-7

In the latter part of chapter 14 we saw the Lord's terms, if I may so say, to the multitude that was following Him. There He laid down that, except a man came to Him, hating father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters, and even his own life, he could not be His disciple. “And whosoever doth not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple.” Thus first He insists on a thorough break with nature, and next that this shall continue. Hence in His illustrations He sets forth the need of purpose and the danger of undertaking such a business. A man is sure, otherwise, to leave the work undone. And how would it fare if a king with double your forces should come against you? The moral of all this is that man is insufficient, and that God alone can enable a man to quit the world for Christ and to keep following after Christ. The worst of all is to renounce Him after bearing such a name—salt that has lost its savor.

Nevertheless His words drew to Him the outcast and degraded, too wretched not to feel and own their need. The publicans and sinners, instead of bearing a repulse, came near, immensely attracted, to hear what they felt to be the truth, and what conscience bowed to, though they had never heard it before. They heard indeed that which they could not but perceive leveled the pretensions of proud men. For the Pharisees and scribes had no notion of following Jesus any more than of coming to Him. They deified self in the name of God. It was their own tradition they valued; and if they seemed to make much of the law, it was not because it was of God, but because it was given to their fathers and identified with their system. Their religion was a settled setting up of self—this was their idol. Hence they murmured at the grace of Christ toward the wretched. For the ways of Christ, like His doctrine, leveled all and showed, according to the subsequent language of the Apostle Paul, that there is no difference. No doubt the man that is in quest of his own passions and pleasures will neither go to Christ nor follow after Him: still less will be who has got a religion of his own on which he plumes himself. Grace goes down to the common level of ruin that sin has already made. It addresses man according to the truth; and the truth is that all are lost. And where is the sense of talking of differences if people are lost? How blind to be classifying among those who are cast into perdition! To be there at all is the awful thing—not the shades of distinction in ways or character that may be found among those who are there. The tremendous fact is that, having all equally sinned against God and lost heaven, they are all equally consigned to hell.

But there is that also in the sayings of the Pharisees and scribes which skews that they too felt the point of the truth and that what they resented most was grace. For they murmured saying, “This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them.” Indeed He does; it is His boast. It is the going out of divine love to receive sinners. And it was His grace as a man that deigned to eat with them. Had He not done so, with whom could He have eaten at all? But in truth, if He deigned to eat with men, He did not choose His company. He had come down and been manifested in the flesh expressly to manifest the grace of God; and, if so, He received sinners and ate with them.

The Lord answers in a parable—indeed in three. But the first of them is that which we will look at now. He puts the case of a man—of themselves—having a hundred sheep. “If he lose one of them, doth he not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that which is lost until he find it?” He appeals to them: not one of them but would go after his own lost sheep and seek to recover it. With us indeed it is not a question here of our going in quest of Christ, but of the man Christ Jesus, the good Shepherd, going after us—that which was lost. Supposing a man had ninety-nine that did not so urgently call on his energetic efforts, he can leave the sheep that abide in comparative safety. The one that is in danger is that which draws out his love until he find it. “And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing.” It is evidently the work of the Lord Jesus that is set forth here. Who can fail to recognize in it the mighty manifestation of divine love which characterized Jesus? It was He that came, He that undertook the labor; it was His to endure the suffering unto death, even the death of the cross; it was He that found and saves the lost sheep; it is He that lays it on His shoulders rejoicing. Whose joy can compare with His? No doubt the sheep does reap the benefit; yet assuredly it was not the sheep that sought the Shepherd but the Shepherd the sheep. It was not the sheep that clambered on His shoulders, but He that laid it there with His own hand. And who shall pluck it thence? It was all His work. It was the sheep that strayed; and, the longer it was left to itself, the farther it got away from the Shepherd. It was the work of the Lord Jesus then both to seek and to save.

But further, he has His joy in it, though it goes forth far beyond the object of His care. “When he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, “Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.” It is altogether to forget the fullness of love that there is in God and in Christ Jesus our Lord, to suppose that it is merely a question of the sinner's need to be saved or his joy when he is. There is a far deeper joy; and this is the foundation of all proper worship. In fact our joy is not the mere sense of our own personal deliverance, but our appreciation of His delight in delivering us, His joy in our salvation. This is communion, and there can be no worship in the Spirit without it. And such seems to be the bearing of what is figuratively set forth in the parable as described at the close. “He calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me for I have found my sheep which was lost.”

Thus the heart of man that feels the comfort of recovering what belongs to him could apprehend in some measure how God has joy in saving the lost. At any rate, Christ appeals to the one to vindicate the other. “I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.” But man as such does not rejoice when his fellow turns in sorrow and self-judgment to God. This is not the feeling of the earth where sin and selfishness reign; but assuredly it is the mind of heaven. What is joy there over the repenting sinner! Angels sang at the good news of grace to Israel and to man above all. And so they do rejoice still, as we may fairly gather from the later words of our Lord Jesus. Here it is more general. The manifold wisdom of God in the Church is the continual object and witness to the principalities and powers in heavenly places; the Lord here gives us the assurance that a repentant sinner gives the keynote of joy on high. There are no murmurers there; it is universal delight in love. Is it so with us? Yet we have a new nature not less but more capable of appreciating the joy of grace, not to speak of ourselves knowing the need of a sinner and the mercy of God's deliverance in Christ as no angel can.

Remark in the last place that it is joy “over one sinner that repenteth,” not exactly over his salvation. It is joy over a soul brought to confess its sin and judge itself and vindicate God. We are apt to be more occupied with the deliverance from imminent danger. In short we are apt to feel for the human side far more than we enter into God's moral glory or His grace. The joy in heaven is over the repenting sinner.

Notes on Luke 15:8-10

To my mind it is impossible to avoid the conviction that these parables have a root in God Himself as well as a reference to His operations on the heart of man. As we saw that the first is a most clear prefiguration of Christ's work (the Shepherd being the well-known figure that He Himself adopted to set forth His interest and His grace for those that need Him), so also in the last parable there cannot be a question that the father sets forth God Himself in the relationship that He establishes by grace with the returning prodigal. There is also another sense of that relationship with the elder son, whose self-righteousness was so much the more glaring because of his want or respect and love for such a father, though known no doubt on a lower ground.

But if this be so, how can we avoid the conviction that the intermediate parable has a similar connection and that the woman has a propriety and a peculiar fitness, just as much as the shepherd and the father? If therefore the shepherd represents the work of the Son of God come as Son of man to seek and to save that which was lost, and if the father shows the relationship in which God reveals Himself to him that is brought back to Him and that learns his love within the house, we cannot doubt that the woman must set forth the ways of God working by His Spirit. We know that the Spirit, now particularly deigns, not only to act in man, but also in the Church, and this may account for the fact of the figure of the woman, a woman being habitually used to set forth the Church of God. However this may be, that in some form or another under the woman is set forth the activity of the Spirit of God cannot be questioned. So we shall find that all the details of the parable fit in with this view.

“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle and sweep the house and seek diligently till she find it?” Now we find the lost creature is represented, not by a sheep, which, if it has life of a certain sort, has it only to go astray; not by a man who is at last, after having perverted all that God gave him, brought into intelligent enjoyment of God; but in this parable the lost piece of money is an inanimate thing, and this is most fitted to express what a lost sinner is in the mind of the Spirit of God. He not only slipped aside, though capable of being the object of a new action by grace outside self to find him; but meanwhile the soul is but a dead thing spiritually, with no more power to return than the missing piece of silver. The propriety therefore of this coin being used to represent the sinner where there is evidently not the slightest power to go back to God, where it is utterly helpless, where only the Holy Ghost can avail, is manifest. But the woman did not so easily reconcile herself to the loss of her piece of silver. She lights a candle, sweeps the house, and seeks diligently till she find it. The candle clearly sets forth the testimony of the word of God; and this it is particularly in the use of the Spirit of God. The Lord Jesus Himself and God as such are thus spoken of. But it is the Spirit alone who, as we know, brings it home to the heart in conscience or peace, when we are brought to God. The Spirit has the character of agency very peculiarly, and in this agency employs the word. The candle therefore is said here to be lit. But that is not all. The woman sweeps the house and searches diligently till she finds it. There is painstaking love, the removal of obstacles, minute working and searching. Do we not know that this is pre-eminently the part God's Spirit is wont to take? Do we not remember

when truth was powerless to reach us? The Lord Jesus is rather the suffering Savior; His mighty work assumes that form. The Holy Spirit of God is the active agent in the soul. The Father freely gave according to His infinite love and counsels. Having in Himself the deep enjoyment of love, He would bring others, in spite of their sins, to be righteously without them, in order to make themselves happy in the enjoyment of Himself. But the Spirit of God, just as beautifully, engages Himself in activity of effort and ceaseless painstaking, till the lost thing is found.

“And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I had lost.” In every case, whether it be the Son, or the Father, or the Holy Ghost, there is communion. We know that our communion is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ; but it cannot be less familiar to the believer that there is the communion of the Holy Ghost. This is what appears to be set forth here at the close of the second parable: the spreading of universal joy among those who enter into the mind of God. “She calleth together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me.” Thus on all sides is real delight, every person of the Godhead having His own appropriate place and part in the wonderful work of redemption, but, further, deep divine joy in the result of redemption. “Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” It is not here generally in heaven, but joy in the presence of the angels of God. They enter into it. They may not have the same immediate concern in it, but it is in their presence; and they delight in it ungrudgingly and unjealously without being the parties to derive direct or personal results from it. Their joy is in what God delights in, and hence in what He is to the creatures of God. What a new scene of enjoyment, joy among those who had been lost to God, and enemies to God! “There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

Chapter 151

Notes on Luke 15:11-32

We have seen the Lord Jesus in His work set forth by the shepherd, and the more bidden but at the same time the active pains-taking operation of the Spirit of God, no less necessary in order to bring home the work to men in both giving the light to see and also searching them out. Now we have in the third parable the effect produced; for the work is not merely conversion or pardon, and therefore nothing that is done in this way would suffice unless there was the full bringing of the soul to God and also into fellowship with Him, the new and intimate relationship of a son by grace. This is what the third parable accordingly sets forth. And hence it is no longer a sheep or a piece of money, but a man. It is there that we find intelligence and conscience; and so much the more the guilt. Such is man's case. The first Adam had a certain relationship to God. When he was formed out of the dust, God dealt with him in tender mercy and gave him special advantages in Eden, privileges of every suited sort. But man fell from God, as the prodigal here left his father's house.

In a general way this is represented by a certain man who had two sons. “And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.” There was the point of departure, the first and main step of evil. There is scarce anything in which men are apt more to mistake than in what the true nature of sin consists. They measure sin by themselves instead of by God. Now the desire to have one's own way at a distance from God is positive sin and the root of all other sin. Sin against man is sure to follow; but sin against God is the mainspring. What more evident denial of Him in works than to prefer one's own will to His?

The younger son then (which makes the case the more glaring) said to his parent, “Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me.” He wished to go away from his father. Man would be at a distance from God, and this in order the more at ease to do what he likes. “And he divided unto them his living.” Man is tried—he is responsible; but, in fact, he is not hindered from having his way, God only keeping the upper hand for the accomplishment of His own gracious purposes. Still, as far as appearances go, God allows man to do what he pleases. This alone will tell what sin means, what the heart seeks, what man is with all his pretension, and the worse the more he pretends, “And not many days the younger son gathered all together and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.” There was eagerness to get away from his father. It was, as far as his will was concerned, a complete abandoning of his father to do his own pleasure. He wished to be so thoroughly at a distance as to act according to his own heart without restraint. There, in a far country, he wastes his substance with riotous living. It is the picture of man left to himself, doing his own will in this world with its ruinous consequences for the next as well as this. “And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land, and he began to be in want.” Such, again, is the picture not only of the active course of sin but of its bitter issues. Sin indulged in brings misery and want. There is a void that nothing can satisfy, and the selfish waste of all means only makes this to be more felt in the end.

So, in the extremity of distress, “he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.” Now we find the sinner's degradation; for love is not there, but self is. The citizen does not treat him as a fellow-citizen, but as a slave. There is no slavery so deep or degrading as that of our own lusts. He is treated accordingly; and what must this sound to a Jewish ear? He is sent into the fields to feed swine. “And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat; and no man gave unto him.” He is reduced to the lowest degree of want and wretchedness; yet no man gives unto him. God is the giver, man grudgingly pays his debts, if he pays them; never to God, only half-heartedly to man. But no man gives: so the prodigal found.

“And when he came to himself.” Now we begin the work of God's goodness, he comes to himself; before he comes to God. “And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger.” It is God giving him the conviction of his state. Hence his feeling is that even those who have the lowest place in his father's house are well and even amply provided for compared with him.

His mind is made up. “I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.” The last words betray the usual legal state. It is one who conceives that God must act according to his condition. This grace never does. He had wronged his father, he had been guilty of folly, excess, and lewdness; and he could not conceive of his father doing more for him at best than putting him in the lowest place before him, if he received him at all. He felt that he deserved humiliation. Had he judged more justly, he would have gathered that he deserved much worse; that the more favored he was, seeing that he was so guilty, he must be put away—not merely go away, but be put into outer darkness where should be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

But although there was this wrong reasoning, at bottom there was at least a real sense, however feeble, of his sin, and, what was more and better, a real sense of love in God the Father. If he could only see Him, hear Him, be with Him! He rises accordingly and comes to his father, “but when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him.”

It is not the son that runs; but, even though a long way off, the father saw him. It was the father that ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. The son would not have dared to have done so, still less would He have expected it from the father. But grace always surprises the thoughts of men; and therefore reason can never find it out, but rather denies and opposes and enfeebles it, qualifying it, putting clogs and fetters on it, which only dishonor God, and do not alter the truth, but most surely injure man. The father then ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. Not a word about his wicked ways! and yet the father it was that had wrought secretly, producing the conviction of his own evil, and the yearning after his own presence.

Further, it was the father who deepened all that was of himself in his own soul immensely, now that the prodigal was come to him. It is not true therefore that by not putting forward the evil in this case our Lord implied that the father was indifferent to the evil, or that the prodigal son was not to feel his outbreaks or his fleshly nature. Surely it should be so much the more, because it was allowed him to judge himself and the past in the light of such unspeakable grace. “And the son

said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." He cannot say more. It was impossible in the presence of the father to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." It was well, as far as it went, to acknowledge that he was no more worthy to be called his son. It was unqualifiedly right to say, "I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight;" but it would have been still better if he had said not a word about anything of which he could be worthy or unworthy. The sad truth was, that he was worthy of nothing but bonds or death. He deserved to be banished forever—to be driven out from the presence of his father.

Grace, however, does not give according to what man deserves, but according to Christ. Grace is the outflow of the love that is in God, which He feels even towards His enemies. For this reason He sent His Son, and He acts Himself. "But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." All must now be of the very best, because all must be in accordance with the grace of God and the gift of Christ. "Bring forth the best robe, and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." The younger son had never worn the best robe before; the elder son never did wear the best robe at all. The best was kept for the display of grace.

The two sons, therefore (of course the prodigal before his return), do not represent children of God in the sense of grace, but such as have merely the place of sons of God by nature. Thus Adam is said to be so. (Luke 3) All men are spoken of similarly in that sense—even the heathen—in Acts 17 as being endowed with a reasonable soul as men, and as having direct personal responsibility to God in presence of His favors and mercy. It is also doctrinally affirmed in "one God and Father of all." (Eph. 4)

But then sin has completely separated man from God, as we have seen in this very parable. Grace brings into the nearer and better relationship of sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. The prodigal only enters this state when he at length comes back to his father, confessing his sins and casting himself upon divine grace. The best robe, the ring on his hand, the shoes on his feet, the fatted calf, all these belong, and belong solely, to the relationship of grace, to him who is born of God by believing in the name of Jesus. It is God magnifying Himself to the lost. "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry."

It is important to see this common joy. It is not only that there is personal blessing for the heart that is brought back to God, but there is the joy of communion, which takes its rise in and its strength from God, whose joy in love is as much deeper than ours as He is above us. Nor is it now only in heaven as we saw before, but there is the effect produced on earth, both individually and also in other hearts; and the great power of it all is after all communion with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, which the Holy Ghost sheds abroad—His love shed abroad in the heart, no doubt, but issuing also in communion one with another. "They began to be merry."

But here we have a further picture. "Now his elder son was in the field, and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing." The joy of true Christian worship, of living fellowship in grace, is unintelligible to the natural heart. This was what struck repugnantly the ears of the elder son. "And he called one of the servants, and asked him what these things meant." He could have understood, debt, he could have urged right, he could see and pronounce on failure; but he did not scruple to judge God Himself, as we shall see. "The servant said unto him, Thy brother is come, and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and

sound. And he was angry, and would not go in; therefore came his father out and entreated him." His heart was outside the home of his father, nor did he breathe the spirit of the love that was being shown to the returned prodigal. He was a stranger to grace; so he had no part in all this joy. He was pursuing his own things. No doubt he was active and intelligent "in the field," in the world, away from the scene of divine mercy and spiritual joy.

When, therefore, the servant told him that his brother had come, and of the way the father had received him, he shows his aversion on the spot, and yet more, the more he hears what made the others happy. Grace was to him irksome and even hateful. Doubtless he took the ground of righteousness, though he had none; plenty of talk and theory, but nothing real. His father comes out in the fullness of love and entreats him. "And he, answering, said to his father," with that kind of pious, or rather impious, indignation against divine love, which belongs to and does not shock the natural mind, "Lo, these many years do I serve thee, [hollow and wretched service!] neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment, [the unhappy sinner had no sense of sin!] and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends." Thus he was bold enough to judge the father as the self-righteous shrinks not from judging God. To the thought of the unbeliever He is hard and exacting. There is utter blindness as to all the favors of God, total insensibility of heart as well as conscience. "But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." There is manifest dislike of grace and its ways. He does not call the prodigal his brother, but tauntingly "thy son." And though it was what the father had given, he calls it "thy living," in every case putting the worst aspect forward.

Truly the patience of God is as wondrous as His love. Hence the father perseveres: "And he said unto him, Son [for nothing can exceed the tender mercy of the father, even to the unthankful and the evil, the ungrateful and rebellious son], thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." It was just the place of the Jew under law. But it is the same position that every unconverted man in Christendom takes who is endeavoring to walk after the flesh religiously. It is just so that the natural man in these lands thinks and speaks. And no doubt the Jews had the chief place and indeed the only place that God claimed in this earth. All Other countries God had given to the children of men, but His land He had reserved for Israel. He had brought them to Himself through redemption of an outward sort and put them under law. The same principle is true of any self-righteous man who is in his way endeavoring to be good and serve God, but insensible to the truth that it is mercy that he wants and delivering grace. "It was meet that we should make merry and be glad." Wonderful thought! God Himself delighting in the joy of grace and putting Himself in it along with others. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ."

Notice again, "For this thy brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found." "Thy brother" is to be observed. God is not in any way disposed to allow the denial of proper relationship, Hence one of the sins that will draw out the last judgments of the Jews is not merely their base ingratitude toward God, but also their hatred of the grace He is showing to the poor Gentiles in their wretchedness and sin. This we find strongly put by the Apostle Paul: "Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost." (1 Thess. 2:16.) They cannot endure that others, dogs of the Gentiles, should hear the gospel of grace, which their pride of law induced them to despise for themselves.

Chapter 152

Notes on Luke 16:1-13

The Lord here addresses His disciples.

The last chapter consisted of parables spoken to the publicans and sinners that drew near to hear Him in the Presence of the murmuring Pharisees and scribes. They had for their object to show how the sovereign grace of God makes the lost to be saved; and in this the mind and temper of heaven in contrast with the self-righteous of the earth.

Now we have a weighty instruction for disciples. It is no longer sinners shown the way to God, but disciples taught the ways which become them before God, and this in view of the judgment of the world, more particularly of the elect nation. The Jews were now losing their special place. The peculiar privileges of Israel had wrought no deliverance for themselves or for the earth. Contrariwise they had caused the name of God to be blasphemed among the nations. They had been untrue to God; they had been ungracious and even unrighteous to man. The Lord accordingly sets forth in a parable the only wisdom which suits and adorns those who understand the present critical condition of the world.

“There was a certain rich man which had a steward, and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.” This had been done by man of course in general, but by the Jew especially, as being the most favored and therefore under a more stringent responsibility. He was not only a man but a steward. There was a trust reposed in the Jew beyond all others; and most justly was he accused of wasting his master's goods. What had he done for God? He ought to have been a light in the earth; he ought to have been a guide of the blind; he ought to have been a witness of the true God. But he fell into idolatry when God was displaying Himself in the temple in the Shekinah; and now he was about to reject God Himself in the person of the Messiah, His Son-a still more profound and gracious display of God. Thus he had altogether lost his opportunities, and wasted the goods of his master. He had brought shame on the law of God, and the living oracles into contempt through his own vanity and pride.

Hence, in the parable, the master called the steward, and said unto him, “How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.” The Jew was about to sink down into the level of all other nations, just as in the Old Testament times we hear that God had pronounced him Lo-ammi as set forth in Hosea. Then the last hope was gone, when not only Israel was swept away but Judah became faithless to the true God. This was confirmed when the returned remnant in the days of Christ proved no better—rather worse. There was a feeble body which represented the Jews that returned from Babylon, and it might have been a nucleus for the nation; but, instead of this they were more and more hardened against God, till all ended in their rejecting the Messiah and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.

“Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.” He had no power; for the law rather provokes evil than gives good. But what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God,

sending His own Son, in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. On the other hand the Jew was ashamed to beg. He was unwilling to take the place of a lost good for nothing sinner, entirely dependent on God, looking up that God might do and give what he could not. Alas! the indomitable pride of the Jew rose up in rebellion against God's sentence of his impotence.

“I am resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship they may receive me into their houses.” This was prudent, and the precise point of earthly wisdom in the parable which the Lord commends for our admonition. Well for the Jew, had he adopted it! “He called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill and write fourscore.”

Thus plainly the steward assumes the title to sacrifice the present in view of the future. He acts with the utmost liberality with his master's goods. No doubt it cost him little or nothing. Nor is it the honesty of the step but its prudence which his master commends. He reduced the debt of the first one half, of the second considerably. He thus bound by his favor and leniency these debtors to himself; that, when he was turned out of his place, they might receive him into their houses. “And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely.” There is no ground to suppose that the parable makes light of his dishonesty. He is especially branded as the “unjust steward.” Such really was the position and character of the Jew; they were all unrighteous in the sight of God. But had they done what the steward does when about to be discharged? No! He looked forward to the future, and acted at once upon the conviction. Were they not, on the contrary, absorbed in the present? Is not this the great snare of men, and of the Jew as much as others, to sacrifice the future for the present, not the present for the future “And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the sons of this age are in respect of their own generation wiser than the sons of light.” They look onward, though it be only on the earth, for they have a keen sense of their best earthly interests; but for the soul, for heaven, for Christ's love, for God's nature and will, men are apt to allow the smallest of present advantages to blot out all just thought of the future. This is an important consideration for our hearts as disciples. What the Lord is insisting upon is that the present—so fugitive and fallacious—is not the real prize for us; that the future—the eternal future—is the thing to consider, and that it should govern the present. For we cannot walk rightly as disciples unless filled with the sense of what is to be; not carried away by what is. What is it that spoils the testimony of disciples now? That they are living chiefly for the present moment. If circumstances guide, what can one be but governed by what is wished? This ruins not merely the sinner as such, but the disciple—because he is only living for himself and the circumstances of this life. It is impossible to glorify the Lord thus. Let us hear His will and wisdom in this parable.

The unjust steward, as here portrayed, though bad in other respects, was wise in this, that he looked out steadily at the future; so that, when he lost his stewardship, he might be received kindly by the men whom he had befriended. For this it matters not that the goods were his master's rather than his own; indeed, we may see the deepest wisdom in the parable as it is, when we come to the application to our own practical conduct. For the only means whereby we can thus

look out for the future is by reckoning what people—what self—would call ours, the resources of our master. We have nothing whereby to secure the future, except we use all as belonging to God. But this is the victory of faith; that instead of looking with a natural eye at the present moment, we resolutely contemplate the future, and act accordingly. Then, instead of seeking to hold fast what we have for ourselves, we learn to use all freely as in truth belonging to God. So assuredly those do who gain that which is future and eternal. Hence we find the Lord applies the illustration thus: “And I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.” Are you thus making to yourselves friends by the mammon of unrighteousness? Instead of keeping money as something precious, treat it as what it really is.

Observe that the Lord gives here an ignominious name to the objects man covets—money, property, and everything of the kind. He calls it, not only mammon, in itself a word of ill omen, but “the mammon of unrighteousness.” He heaps plentiful disdain upon it; just as the apostle Paul counts all that man values most, even religiously, as the vilest refuse which should be kept or thrust out of doors. This is a great point; for Saul of Tarsus had not always been disposed thus to sacrifice the present in view of the future. His place as a Jew, his tribe, his family, his earthly thoughts and feelings, his personal advantages, he once estimated as much every way to cherish. But when he viewed them in the light of Christ and of that glory to which he was hastening, he counted them but dung. Who would ever think the earth at its best an object to look back on, when they have the glory before their eyes? Who would talk of getting rid of dung as a great sacrifice? Certainly everything, yea in religion too, of which men are apt most to boast, Paul calls dung; such he counted them, and so to the last, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord. Was not this really to act in the wisdom of the steward, not in his injustice, but in his looking out and onward? In Paul's case it was heavenly wisdom; and the love of Christ was its source and spring.

The meaning of the words “that they may receive you” is simply “that ye may be received into everlasting habitations.” Just so the apostle says “That I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead.” This answers to being received into everlasting habitations when all that is of earth fails, To be received there is what should be of concern to the heart that loves the Lord and His will. There is no stress to be laid on the form of the phrase “they may receive you.” This has misled not a few. Literally this might hold good on earth, as we see in verse 4, but spiritually it simply means “That ye may be received.” Compare Luke 6:38; 12:20; the first wrongly rendered in the Authorized Version, the last rightly. God alone receives into heaven: no one else has a title to receive there. The expression alludes to the parable, but it is used with the utmost vagueness. It is a virtual impersonal—that reception may be given you into the everlasting tabernacles.

Let us not over-estimate these sacrifices of the present; but imitate the apostle who shows how little he values the best things that earth honors. So our Lord Jesus here says, “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much,” The smallest thing affords a sphere in which one can glorify God; but there must be the disregard of the present in the light of the future. It is something to be generous in money matters; it is very much more to love the Church, and be devoted to the Master, suffering with Him and for Him. But there are countless ways in which He may be

magnified. “He that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.” Yet, as all know little things constantly test our reality. Many a man might not be dishonest about a thing of great value, but he might make too free in what is petty. There cannot be a greater fallacy than decrying a severe judgment formed about moral failure in matters of little pecuniary value, as it were making much ado about nothing; whereas it is in small things often that a man's true character is best known.

“If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?” The true riches cannot be entrusted where the heart has been false in that which is so trifling in the Lord's eyes as “the unrighteous mammon.” Nor is it only that present honor and riches are not “the true,” but the mere counters of the hour; there is the further consideration: “if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's who shall give unto you that which is your own?” Present property is not strictly one's own. The whole course of the Christian here is really that of one acting for another, even Christ. We are servants in trust for the Lord. The Christian ought to regard his time, his money, his abilities, his property, as the goods of his Master; and his business is to serve his Master, faithfully carrying out His will. This is of immense importance; because covetousness consists in endeavoring to make earthly things your own which God has not given. The wisdom of the disciple is to count what appears to belong to him as really his Master's.

Now it is easy to be generous with another's money. Count your riches another's and act with all possible liberality in faith of the future. We should thus judge by faith what we have to be Christ's and then be as free with it, as the unjust steward was with his master's goods. Those who enter heaven are not men hard and grasping as if by possessing more than is needed a man's life consists of his substance. No doubt the natural spirit of man cleaves to what it counts its own (and perhaps particularly of the Jew), as if the present moment were of all importance. But the true wisdom is to be like the steward in his steady resolve to secure the future by acting freely with what belonged to his lord. When the glory comes, we shall have what is our own. What a wonderful truth! That the wide scene of Christ's glory in which we shall reign with Him will be ours. Then we shall bear power and glory without abusing it; now we can only safely use what we have by counting it Christ's and using it according to His will.

“No servant can serve two masters.” If I have not Christ for my Master, I shall make myself so; and the moment we set up our own will, we find ourselves in Satan's service, for the fallen will is Satan's slave. “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will cling to one and scorn the other.” In the first we find the stronger case. With a man warm in his feelings everything is apt to be extreme. The other case supposes a person of feeble character. But in one way or another, whatever the character, to attempt this double service is fatal. “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Alas! mammon is the real ecumenical idol; it is the object of widest homage—not only in the world, but, grievous to add, in christendom. By its own confession (witness the popular prize of that title) mammon now reigns supreme in the hearts of men generally throughout these lands professing the name of the Crucified, who most of all despised and denounced it,

Notes on Luke 16:14-18

Next the Pharisees, not the disciples, come before us. They are characterized here as covetous. It is not their forms or their legalism, but their love of money which was touched by the doctrine of the Lord to the disciples; for after they had “heard all these things,” they “derided [or sneered at] him.” The evil against which the disciples were warned was at work in the Pharisees without a check. This state was not less corrupt than haughty.

“And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify themselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” Not so those who are justified before God by faith. Such do not justify themselves before men any more than before God, unless so far as they allow nature and slip from their own ground of faith. Nevertheless they are not free from the snare of covetousness; so far as they are influenced by the thoughts of men, they are exposed. “Men will praise thee if thou doest well to thyself.” The intense selfishness of the heart naturally prefers its own care to that of God: thence is a link of worldly sympathy with the men of this age. Let us therefore beware, for “that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” No evil more common in the religious world of our own day as truly as in our Lord's. Ease, honor, influence, and position are as highly valued as ever, to the infinite disparagement of the truth. Any one can see how strongly the word of God rejects all these conditions of fallen Adam, and how incongruous they are with the cross of Christ. And they are only a worse abomination where men essay to join such worldliness with heavenly truth.

The Lord next insists upon the crisis that was come. For this too adds its emphasis to His rebuke. What is morally true may become more urgently a duty, and such is the fact in the case before us. The religion of the world always takes the ground of Pharisaism; it assumes more or less the present favor of God, and that worldly rank and prosperity are to be taken as a sign of it. Faith looks away from present things since sin came into the world, and each successive step in God's ways is but a fresh confirmation of faith. “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” It was in vain, therefore, to rest all upon the law and its rewards to faithfulness. In fact they had broken the law; and because of this indeed were given the prophets, who reproved their iniquities, laid bare the actual state of ruin, and bore witness of a wholly new condition, which would end the present by judgment and introduce a new state never to pass away. John the Baptist, as the immediate herald of the Messiah, insisted on repentance in view of the immediate advent of Christ. This sweeps away all the self-righteousness of man. It is not that the law is not good; the defect lay not there, but in those who, being sinful, felt it not, but assumed to make out a righteousness of their own under law. Since John's time, says our Lord, “the kingdom of God is preached.” It is not here as in Matt. 11:12: “the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence and the violent take it by force.” There it is a question of the true hope of Israel and the necessity of breaking through all that opposes faith. But here it is—much more ground opened to man if he believed. “The kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it.” “Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles?

Yes, of the Gentiles also; seeing it is one God who shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through their faith. Do we then make void law through faith? Far be it. Yea, we establish law." Thus the great apostle. So here the Lord says, "And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the law to fail." Neither the truth nor faith enfeebles the law; rather do they maintain its authority over all that are under it as well as its intrinsic righteousness. Certainly our Lord not only honored it to the highest degree, but gave it the weightiest sanction; for He obeyed it perfectly in His life and was made a curse according to it in His death.

But those who while under it hope to stand on that ground before God do really destroy its authority, without intending or even knowing it. For they hope to be saved under law, though they know they have broken it and that it calls for their condemnation. And even those who "being justified by faith" take the law as their rule of life at the least impair its authority and so put dishonor upon it. For what does the law denounce on those who fail to do the things that it demands? Does it not threaten death on God's part? And have they not failed to keep it? It is in vain therefore to plead that they are justified persons: the law knows no such distinction. Justified or not, if they fail, they must die. If therefore they hope to live under the law, while they must confess they have failed, do not they also enfeeble its solemn threats?

How then does the truth set forth the deliverance and maintain the holy walk of the believer? Not by the notion most erroneously taught in the common text of Rom. 7:6: "But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held." For the law is not dead. If so, the words of our Lord would be falsified; and not only one tittle of the law but the whole of it would have failed long before heaven and earth pass away. But this is notoriously inexact, not only in the Authorized Version, but in the received Greek text, where one letter makes the difference between truth and error. The English margin is right. It is we that are dead to the law, not the law to any. The believer is shown to be dead with Christ, in Rom. 6, to sin, and in Rom. 7 to the law," that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter." "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 who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The truth therefore is that, even had we been Jews, we are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, instead of living under it as our rule. And the very argument of the apostle is founded upon or at least illustrated by the principle that one cannot belong to two husbands at the same time without adultery. "If, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man she shall be called an adulteress;" if death come in, she is no adulteress though she belong to another man. And so it is with the Christian, for we now belong to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. Deliverance from law is essential to true Christian holiness. Excellent as the law is, its rule is to curse the lawless and disobedient; it "is not made for a righteous man" which every believer is; it is a rule of death for the bad, not of life for the good. Christ only is life and the light of life for the believer.

And does it not seem most striking that in the very next verse our Lord uses the same allusion on which the apostle reasons in the beginning of Rom. 7? "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Undoubtedly both principles apply to the literal fact most truly and in the letter. But can one doubt the connection with the verse before and the context? If so connected, it is a striking instance of the one Spirit throughout scripture; if not so, it is exceedingly

hard to understand why such a statement should close the Lord's words on this subject. No doubt the Jews allowed divorce for frivolous causes and marriage after such divorce; and in both encouraged adultery. I cannot but think there is more in the connection here.

Chapter 154

Notes on Luke 16:19-31

WE have seen the conclusion of the earthly state of things; the Jew, who had wasted his master's goods, losing his stewardship, the character of those who receive heavenly things, the close of all the earthly testimony and the necessity of a new one, the kingdom of God preached, which alone was gain (that or nothing), the attempt to keep the old thing being exposed as altogether evil in the sight of God.

This is followed up by the rich man and Lazarus—I was going to say, by the parable, but the Lord does not so say; though it has this character, as it seems to me. It puts in a most vivid manner the condition of the soul viewed in the light of the future, not yet of Gehenna but of torment in hades. The light therefore of the future even before the judgment is let fall upon present things to judge them. “There was a certain rich man which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.” According to a Jew's notion a good fortune, as men say, was happiness. The Jews regarded such prosperity as a mark of God's favor. His name was not to the Lord's mind worth recording, the beggar's was. The rich man had all that heart, or rather really flesh, could desire; and he gratified it. But it was all selfish enjoyment: God was not in it, nor was there even care for man. All centered in self. This was put to the proof and made evident by “a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table.” For him it was little more than desire. The rich man cared not for him but for himself; the dogs were more considerate, and rendered him better favor than their master. They came and licked his sores.

Such was man, such the Jew in present life, according to his thoughts of earthly good; but when death comes, when that stands revealed which was beyond the grave, the difference at once appears in all its solemnity. Then we have things in their true light. “And it came to pass that the beggar died.” And how different! There is not a word of his burial: perhaps indeed he was not buried; but he “was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom,” the place of special blessedness according to a Jew, in the unseen world, with the most honorable of God's servants waiting on him.

“The rich man also died, and was buried.” Here there might be splendor of retinue and ample show of grief in the eyes of men. But “in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom.” This is not a picture of the final state of judgment, but of a certain condition after death. This is of great importance. Luke gives us both, confirming what is seen in the Old Testament, and even adding to it. He gives its full prominence to the resurrection elsewhere; but here it was of consequence to know what would be even now for man's profit here below. In hades then “he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off.” We are not judges, save so far as scripture speaks and we are subject to it, of what is entirely outside our experience. How far those that are lost can have the knowledge of the condition of those that are saved, it is not for us to pronounce on. Scripture is plain as to the distance between them. There is no mingling of the two together. But what would be incredibly distant to man living on the

earth may be simply far off to those in the separate state, and the difference between them mutually known. Lazarus then, according to the word, was seen in Abraham's bosom by him who was in torment. “And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me: and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.”

Thus we have clear proof that, even before the judgment, the wicked man is in torment. Figures no doubt are employed; but these founded on that which would be intelligible to us. It is through the body that we feel in this world. From this the Lord takes figures in order to be understood by those whom He addresses in presenting according to His own wisdom the case of the unseen world. There at least the departed rich man has the sense of the need of mercy.

It is well to see that this man does not in any way take the place of an infidel. There was no faith in him assuredly, but still he talks of father Abraham; and though he had never looked to God for mercy, he sees that there at any rate the richest mercy was enjoyed—in Abraham's bosom. He asks him therefore to send Lazarus that he might dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue. What a very small favor this had been once! utterly despicable—a drop of water, and above all, sent by such as Lazarus! it would have been detestable to him on the earth. But the truth appears when man has left this life. Do we then hear while on the earth what the Lord says?

“I am tormented in this flame.” He who tells us this is Jesus; and we know that He is the truth, and that these are the true sayings of God. Abraham's answer too is most noteworthy. “Son” (says he, for he does not repudiate the connection after the flesh)— “Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.” He that was of Satan had good things on earth; he that was born of God received evil things here. The earth as it is gives no measure for the judgments of God: when Jesus comes, and the kingdom is set up, it will be different. But the Jew and men in general have to learn that it is not so now, and that, before He comes, there is still the solemn truth that men show by their ways here how little they believe such words of God as these. But when they die, they will surely prove the truth of what they refused to hear in this world. “Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.”

It is not the day of Messiah's public kingdom. Luke lets us see what is deeper even than it both in good and ill, the unseen portion of the righteous, as well as that of the unjust. “And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence.” The severance between the good and evil in the intermediate state is incalculably great and fixed. There is no passing from one to the other. The notion of possible mercy in the separate condition is absolutely excluded by scripture. It is the mere dream of men who wish to cling to evil as long as they can, or at least to enjoy themselves in this world, who therefore despise the warnings of God, being bent on holding fast or acquiring good things here, and utterly careless of the solemn lesson furnished by the rich man and Lazarus. “Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed” says Abraham—between the departed righteous and those that die in their sins the separation is complete” so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot.” Still less can any pass to Abraham that would come from beyond that gulf. In every way such change is impossible.

Thus, as no possibility of change remains for himself, he turns his attention to his family. “Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house (for I have five brethren), that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” But the

answer of Abraham brings out another grand truth from the Lord's mind—the all-importance of the word of God, and this too even in its lower forms. The New Testament undoubtedly has fuller and perfect light; but the Old is no less really inspired. “Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.” Still he pleads: “Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.” The answer of Abraham is decisive. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

There is no proof that can succeed for eternity where the word of God is rejected. Such is the testimony from the unseen world. I do not deny that, for this world, there may be a conviction pressed by crushing judgments of God; but the tale before us is in view of present things before the kingdom comes, and during this state of things there is no conviction so profound, no proof so deep, as that which is rendered by the word of God. In fact also our Lord's own resurrection seals the truth of His words. For what so evident proof of the total failure of any other means to arouse man? Though He rose from the dead, out of the midst of a band of armed men set to watch as we know, men were not persuaded; least of all the Jewish priests and elders who only hardened themselves more completely. As one portion of the people set themselves against the Lord during His life, the rest were equally chagrined by the truth of His resurrection. Thus all the people made manifest their unbelief. It was bad to prove their want of sympathy with the only righteous One here below; it was, if possible, worse to refuse the testimony of grace which had raised Him from the dead and sent the message of salvation in His name. This Israel did.

But there was even more than this and sooner. A Lazarus did proceed from the dead not long after at the call of Jesus; and many of the rich man's brethren came to see him when so raised. But, far from repenting, the chiefs at least, yea the chief priests, consulted together that they might put Lazarus also to death, as well as Him whose resurrection power only provoked their deadly hatred, instead of persuading them to hear Moses and the prophets.

Hence the rich man who had departed, careless o the truth before man during his life, had no doubt received the due reward of his deeds; but those who rejected the testimony of Christ risen from the dead fall into a still greater gulf. Thus all the people were judged. The only light for the benighted soul, the only testimony that brings eternal life to the dead sinner, is the word of God received by faith.

Chapter 155

Notes on Luke 17:1-10

The chapter opens with instruction which follows from what we have already seen. The Jewish system was judged. It was to be left entirely behind. Present favor and earthly prosperity were no tests of God's estimate. That which is unseen will entirely reverse the actual condition of things. Lazarus quits the world for Abraham's bosom, the rich man is afterward tormented in bell; but from both the infinite moment of the word of God is seen for every soul.

Here the Lord lets the disciples know the certainty of stumblingblocks in such a world as this, and the awful doom of those who cause them. “It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and he cast into the sea,” says the Lord about any one so offending others. Hence we have to take heed to ourselves, as His disciples; and while guarding against being stumbled by others, we have to cherish the grace of God which is as essential to Christianity as the law was to the Jews as their rule. “Take heed to yourselves; if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.” It supposes that there is an evil course and current in the world, which may affect every one's brother; but grace is never intended to weaken the moral reprobation of what is evil. “If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.”

Repentance is a great word, altogether contrary to the bent of human will. Man may make efforts, but will never repent. Only grace gives real repentance, which, when used in its proper sense, means simply and invariably the judgment of self. Now this man will never bend to. Amends he may offer, he may endeavor to do good, and repair the evil; but to own self thoroughly wrong without qualification, reserve, or endeavoring to throw the blame on others, is never the nature of man but the result of the working of divine grace, and true therefore of every soul that is truly renewed. It is impossible for a sinner to be brought to God without repentance. Faith no doubt is the spring of all; it alone gives power by the revelation of grace in the person and work of Christ; but repentance is the invariable consequence or concomitant. And so it is in particular cases, as here in trespass, as, “If he repent, forgive him.” This was more especially needful to urge on a Jew, accustomed as he was to severity. And further, grace would hinder one from being wearied any more by ill doing in others, than in well doing on our part. “If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying I repent, thou shalt forgive him.” It is seven times as showing the failure complete and in a day too as adding to the trial. To men's mind this would indicate the hopelessness of any good in forgiveness. But it is so that God deals with us: He is unwearied in His grace. If it were not so, it would be all over with us not only when in our sins but even as believers.

Nevertheless the apostles, (for so it is expressed here for our instruction, “the apostles) said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.” They felt that such a demand was entirely beyond them. “And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you.” Thus faith works what is impossible to man, to nature; and this too, wherever there is a grain of reality, be it ever so small. For whether faith be little or strong, if real, it brings in God; and God is the same God, in

answer to little faith as to great. There may be a great difference as regards the result for sensible enjoyment; but God answers in His grace the feeblest exercise of faith in Him. “If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamore tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea [all entire contrariety to the course of nature], and it should obey you.” We must always hold, as believers, the superiority of God to all circumstances.

At the same time, we have a place of duty here; and the Lord reminds us therefore, not only of the power of faith above every obstacle, but of the tone of conduct that becomes us in doing our duties, or rather when we have done them. “But which of you, having a” servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? and will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trove not.” Grace in no way weakens the duty that we owe. There are certain proprieties which we must never give up, and of which the Lord here reminds His apostles. The master in such a case does not thank the servant; it is but his obligation, the discharge of the service he undertakes, what he cannot therefore forget or omit without wrong. “So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do.”

People are sometimes apt to think that the proper owning of our unprofitable service is when we do not the things commanded; so at least they speak. But the Lord teaches us to feel that we are but unprofitable servants when we have done all the things that are commanded. Not to do our duty is a real wrong to the Master; but when we have done all, it becomes us to say, “We are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.” All we are commanded is short of that which Christ deserves; and we have to do with the Christ of God. When we have done that which was our duty to do, is love satisfied? It would go farther. Christ loved to obey, ever doing what was enjoined, and hence suffered to the utmost in grace to us and to the glory of God. So love is the fulfilling of the law; and in it we are now called to walk as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savor. We are indeed unprofitable servants; yet how rich is the place into which grace brings us even now!

Chapter 156

Notes on Luke 17:11-19

The incident that is here recorded completely falls in with what we have seen. The Spirit of God is indicating not only the break up of Judaism but the introduction of better things, and very particularly of the liberty of grace. By and by we shall have the liberty of glory; but the saints of God are now entitled to the liberty of grace. Creation will never know this; it will be delivered from the bondage of corruption to the liberty of the glory of the children of God. (Rom. 8)

“And it came to pass, as he went to Jerusalem, that he passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.” The scene lay in the despised quarters of the land. “And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off.” This is a remarkable miracle, peculiar to our evangelist, who brings before us several incidents of similar character, that are given nowhere else. The selection of the Spirit of God, to carry forward the object He had in view in so inspiring Luke, is thereby manifest. “And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests.” The Lord thereby exercised the faith of those addressed, while at the same time He maintained the order of the law for those who are under it. It was a requisition under the law that, if a man was cured, without saying how the cure could be, if the plague of leprosy was healed, the man must present himself to the priest and be cleansed. This was laid down with particular care and detail in Lev. 14. It was an important requirement in this way, for it became a testimony to the power of God that now wrought on earth. For the question would naturally arise: how came these lepers to be cured? This would at once draw attention to the fact that Jesus was there, and that He was really the vessel of God's power in grace.

Hence too, the Lord sometimes, as we read elsewhere, touched the leper. But here these men stood afar off. It was not that there was not grace enough in Christ to touch them, but their feeling according to the law was to stand afar off. It was perhaps right in them that it should be so, as it was certainly the grace of His heart that made Him touch the leper who prostrated himself at His feet. So we see in Mark 1. These men, however, standing afar off, lifted up their voices and prayed for His mercy; and His answer was, as with a leper always, “go show yourselves unto the priests.”

But there was another notable feature brought out in the present case, if there was no touch as the sign of the power that removed the leprosy without contracting defilement, which could only therefore be the power of God which was above the law, even while He maintained the law. In this case there was a trial of faith, so much the more, because they were afar off, and they were bidden to go and show themselves to the priests, without such words as “Be ye cleansed.” The Lord did not use that expression in every case, as far as scripture records. Hence it was, as they went, they were cleansed. They had to go first. They felt nothing, the moment they were bidden to go. It was “while they went” that they were cleansed.

“And one of them, when he saw that he was healed” —for this could not be hid— “turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God.” Surely this is highly remarkable though given here only. The lepers were told to go and show themselves to the priests: one of them, and one alone, turns back,

when he saw that he was healed, “and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks. And he was a Samaritan.” We have grace therefore in this place to the worst. But the lowest object of grace is very often the one that enters most into the fullness of grace in God. He may be the neediest among men; but the very depth of his need shows what God is; and hence grace is often seen and enjoyed more simply by a long way than by others who might boast of much better privileges. Certainly it was so here. This Samaritan is far more simple in his thoughts of God, and at once concluded what Jesus must be, not perhaps definitely and distinctly as to His personal glory. At least he was quite sure that Jesus was the best representative of God's power and grace in that land. If therefore be was to show himself to any one, he would go to Him; if he was to glorify God, it must surely be at the feet of Jesus. He, consequently, who was the farthest removed from the formality of the law and ritual, could all the more readily go straight to Jesus.

“And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.” Now this is most worthy of our consideration. The Lord Jesus accepts the thanksgiving of this man as being the peculiar token of his faith. The others had equally received a blessing; it was not that they were not thankful, but this man alone had returned to give glory to God, this stranger. The others might show themselves to the priests, carrying out the letter of the word of Jesus; but this stranger's heart was right and his spiritual instinct was of faith. There is nothing good for the soul without the sense of the glory of God. The Samaritan might not have been able to explain, but his heart was thoroughly true and divinely guided. He was therefore far more bright than others who seemed to reason better. The other nine might plead that he was presumptuous, disobedient, and not, like them, acting on the word of the Lord; for Jesus had distinctly told them they must go and show themselves to the priests; whereas he without any express command had turned back to show himself to Jesus, and give thanks at His feet. And appearances favor unbelief.

But Jesus vindicated him in coming and approved the boldness of his faith which acted at once on what he instinctively felt to be due to the Lord Jesus. What is still more striking, the Lord says to him, “Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.” There is not a word of showing himself to the priest now. He had found God in his soul. He, in the healing of his leprosy, had proved the gracious power of God, he recognized it in Jesus, and so gave Him glory.

When a soul is thus brought to God, there is no question of showing oneself to priests on earth. Priests had their place once for those who were under the law. But when grace delivered from it (in principle only then, for it was not yet the precise time to break down the wall of partition for all), the delivered soul could not possibly be left, still less put under, the law. Therefore says the Lord, “Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.” It is a striking prefiguration of the Gentile who is not under law like the Jew (never was indeed), and who, when brought to God by His grace now and cleansed from all his defilements, is certainly not put under law. As the apostle says, “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law, but under grace.” He was to go his way in liberty of heart. This is the calling of a Christian. Christ does not call to the bondage of law. He makes us His freemen though no doubt also bondmen to Himself. This is a very different thing from being under law, which the Christian is not, even if he had once been a Jew.

Notes on Luke 17:20-25

The kingdom of God was the national hope of Israel. It was before the minds of all who looked for good from God. It was bound up with the Messiah's presence. Such is the way in which the kingdom is presented in the Old Testament. Nor does the New Testament in any way set this aside, but confirms the expectation: only it discloses the kingdom in another shape before it is introduced in power when the Lord returns in glory.

Of this, however, the Pharisees knew nothing. They demanded of Him when the kingdom of God should come, thinking only of that which is to be manifest when the Jews shall be brought back from all their wanderings, and restored in their full nationality to the land under the Messiah, and the new covenant. The Lord, as throughout Luke, shows something more and deeper, something that demanded faith, before the establishment of the kingdom in power. He answers them therefore, “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation.” This was what was morally important to know now. The kingdom would surely come as they looked for it in its own day, and the Lord distinctly lets us see this afterward. But first, of all He insists, as was most according to God, on that which they knew not, and which it most concerned them to know: “The kingdom of God cometh not with observation,” or outward show. “Neither shall they say, See here, or, See there; for behold the kingdom of God is within you.” Of this they were wholly ignorant, and this ignorance is fatal: for it is not to know God's king, when He manifested the true power of the kingdom in victory over Satan, and over all the results of man's subjection to infirmity in this world—when He manifested it positively in righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, the dependent and obedient man, but in the unfailing power of God which wrought by Him. To all this they were blind; they valued it not, because they valued not God. They did desire as a nation that which would elevate them, and overthrow their enemies; they did not desire that which exalts God and humbles man.

The Lord therefore, in this His answer, first meets the moral need of the Pharisees, and shows that in the most important sense now, from the time of His rejection till His return in glory, it is no question of “See here, and See there,” but of faith to own the glory of His person, and to recognize that the power which wrought is God's. “The kingdom of God is within you.” It was in their midst and they saw it not, because they saw not Him. They thought little of Jesus. This is ruin to every soul who hears but refuses the testimony.

It will be observed that it is the kingdom of God, not of heaven. It is never said, while Jesus was here, that the kingdom of heaven was come; but Matthew confirms this report in Luke, were that needed, and represents the Lord as saying (Matt. 12:28), “If I cast out the demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.” The character of the power proclaimed God's kingdom. He was victor of Satan, and cast out his emissaries: none but the Seed of the woman, the son of David could do this. It was reserved for Him. Others might, as God's servants, but He, as the Beloved, in whom His soul delighted. Those who cast the devil out, by God's gracious use of them, were their judges. Satan is not against Satan: else his kingdom would fall. But Messiah

was there then, the king of God's kingdom, yet the Jews recognized it not. They rejected Him and He accepts His own rejection, but is exalted in heaven. Thence the kingdom of heaven begins, the rule of the heavens over the earth, now only known really to faith, the responsibility for those who are baptized to walk accordingly. Indeed thus comes what is commonly called Christendom, the great field where not only wheat but tares grow together. It is, of course, also called the kingdom of God, as always in Luke. Matthew alone speaks of the kingdom of heaven, but he never speaks of the kingdom of heaven save as preached or promised, until the Lord left the earth. In short the kingdom of God was there when Christ was there, the conqueror over Satan, and exhibiting in every direction morally the power of the Spirit. But the kingdom of heaven was not there till from heaven He introduced His rule over the earth. When He returns in glory, it will be still the kingdom of heaven: the rule of the heavens will never be lost, certainly not when the kingdom comes in power and glory.

But the Lord next addresses the disciples, and says, “Days are coming when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.” Here He can speak freely of the future form of the kingdom, of which alone the Pharisees thought. The disciples had received the Lord by faith; and, however little intelligent they might be, they apprehended the kingdom of God among them. Hence the Lord could give them divine light as to the future, when He should establish the kingdom visibly. “Days are coming when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.” He opens His rejection to them, as well as the efforts of Satan, during his rejection. “And they shall say unto you, See here; or See there. Go not nor follow [them].” (Ver. 23.) False Christs should arise; but they were forewarned. “For as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be in his day.” There will be no question of “See here, or See there” when Christ comes again any more than when He was here. It was unbelief to say, See here, and See there, when Christ was present in the power that revealed who He must be and was. It will be unbelief by and by to say, See here, and See there; for the kingdom will be established in power. They were not to follow such rumors but to heed His word. He returns not merely as the rejected Messiah, but as the Son of man, the exalted ruler of all nations, peoples, and tongues. His kingdom shall be manifested under the whole heaven as He comes from heaven.

“But first must he suffer many things and be rejected of this generation.” This was in principle going on then; the cross would be its consummation. The moral order is thoroughly according to God: first must He suffer. So we read in 1 Peter of the sufferings of Christ and the glories that should follow. It must be so in a sinful world for one who seeks not his own glory, but God's, and the real and eternal good of man. It would be impossible to take the kingdom when man is in a state of sin and rebellion. In grace then He accepts the rejection which was inexcusable on their part: and in His rejection He accomplishes atonement. Hence God can righteously introduce the kingdom with many a rebel pardoned. Only this goes on now whilst He is gathering out the church, before the kingdom is set up in visible power. “First must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation.” The Christ-rejecting generation was then and continues right through. In the crisis of the latter day, at the end of the age, this generation will still be there. “This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled.” In the millennial age there will be a new generation who shall praise the Lord and glorify Him for His mercy. But “this generation” is a perverse one, children in whom is no faith. Such were and are the Jews; and such will they abide, till judgment shall have

dealt with the mass, who will have fallen into an apostate state and have accepted the Antichrist, leaving only the true remnant who shall become a strong nation, the “all Israel” who “shall be saved” in that day.

Notes on Luke 17:26-37

The Lord next refers to the days of Noah: so should it be in His own days when He comes as the Son of man. It is no question either of receiving the church or of judging the dead, though the latter will follow at the end, as the former precedes. Here it is distinctly the judgment of the quick on the earth, a truth which has very generally passed out of the mind of Christendom. “They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark and destroyed all.” This cannot refer to any but those alive upon the earth surprised by the deluge. “Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.” There was progress in the world; civilization had advanced, but was it better morally? “But on that day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed all.” Men too easily forget that a judgment incomparably more comprehensive, but after the pattern of these two divine interventions, awaits the world, and more particularly that part of it which has been favored with the testimony of God. There can be no delusion more ruinous than the notion that because there is much good in the midst of Christendom its doom will not come. The Lord lingers in order to save souls. Such is His longsuffering and grace, but He is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness. When His own are gathered out, judgment will proceed so much the more sternly because His grace was seen, its fruits manifested, and His warnings given in vain. As it was then in the days of Noah and in the days of Lot, “even thus shall it be when the Son of man is revealed.” For the Lord speaks only of His revelation from heaven in the judgment of the world, not at all of translating the saints to be with Himself in the Father's house.

“In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not go down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.” (Ver. 31.) It is no question of the destruction of Jerusalem, any more than that of the final judgment; and it is absurd to apply it to death. But the mind of man is fertile in expedients to parry the blows of the truth. It is a testimony which keeps the advent of the Lord Jesus to judge the habitable world ever hanging over the heads of careless men.

“Remember Lot's wife.” This is a moral touch for those who might seem safer than others, but are not saved. It is peculiar to Luke and a most searching word for everyone whose face and heart are not steadily fixed on the Lord, for she was very near to Lot and seemed to have passed out of all reach of judgment. But her heart was in the city to which she looked back, and she heeded not the admonition of God's messengers, but in her destruction proved the truth of the word which she believed not. “Whoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it, and whoever shall lose it shall preserve it.” There is no security any more than real happiness save in faith, and faith is ever obedient to the word of the Lord.

“I tell you, that night there shall be two [men] in one bed, the one shall be taken and the other let go. Two [women] shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken and the other let go.” Here again the proof is complete and palpable, that it is no question of the Romans dealing with

Jerusalem and the Jews, for the conqueror made no such discrimination among the conquered, nor is it any other providential judgment executed by man, for he is incapable of thus distinguishing. But it is not so with the Son of man, who will thus judge between cattle and cattle whether among the Jews or among the Gentiles.

Judged by the witnesses, verse 36 would appear to have no sufficient authority in our Gospel, but seems plainly to have been imported from the Gospel of Matthew, where it finds its just place.

In verse 37, “They answered and said to him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, 'Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.'” The executors of God's judgment will not fail to find themselves where an object demands it in that day. Power and righteousness are then together, and a wisdom adequate even to that great occasion. It is the day of Jehovah for the world. The area of judgment is not limited to Judea as in Matt. 24 where a similar but stronger phrase appears, and indeed much in common between the two passages. That the Jews may be before the Lord here too as the prominent persons warned is very possible. It is always so where the dealings of God with man and the earth are found; for Israel is Jehovah's son, His firstborn. When the church or Christians are in view, it is not so; for there the distinctions of the Jew or Gentile disappear before Him whom we have put on, and in whom is neither Jew nor Greek. The attempt to apply the passages to the Lord's coming for us, or at least not to distinguish between this and His appearing for the judgment of man, Jew or Gentile, is, that people construe “the eagles” as the saints! from Ambrose and Chrysostom, &c., down to Luther, and Calvin, &c., and even to Burgon and Wordsworth in our days. They are still more perplexed as to “the body,” some taking it as “Christ!” others as the “church,” no less than “the eagles;” others as “the Lord's supper;” some as “the judgment;” others as “heaven;” and none really knowing anything rightly about the matter. Most moderns take “the eagles” as “the Romans,” and “the body” as Jerusalem and the Jews. This is nearer the truth, but inadequate when simply applied to the past. M. Henry thinks that the eagles may mean both “the saints” and “the Romans;” and Mr. Ryle thinks it very probable that all the interpretations hitherto proposed will prove at last incorrect! I have given not nearly all the opinions: but my readers will agree that I have given at least enough and that miserable comforters are they all, especially such as think that the truth remains to be discovered only at the second advent. There is not much living faith in such thoughts. What a descent from our Lord's promise, in John 16:13, now fulfilled; “when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all the truth and he will shew you things to come.”

Notes on Luke 18:1-8

Whether the parable of the importunate widow was uttered as the sequel to the preceding discourse, I am not prepared to say; but this at least is plain, that the parable connects itself very naturally with what had just gone before, though there seems to me a more general form of the truth also (as is common with our evangelist) so as to fit in admirably with what follows. It forms therefore a pendant as well as a transition.

But the connection with chapter 17 is of importance if it were only to guard from the unfounded idea that its direct application is ecclesiastical, that the widow is the church, and the judge her God and Father in heaven. Such notions are as far as possible from the context, as well as the contents of the parable; and the error lies incomparably deeper than missing the scope of the scripture before us. It is of the deepest moment to understand as a divine truth, in our estimate of relationship with God, that Israel was in the position of the married wife (Jer. 2; Ezek. 16) with Jehovah; whereas the marriage-supper of the Lamb is not celebrated till after the saints, changed into His likeness, are translated to heaven, and Babylon has been judged under the last vial of God's wrath. (Rev. 19) Hence, whatever the anticipative power of faith in realizing our place as the bride before the consummation, and whatever the closeness of exhortation founded on Christ's relation to the church, the apostle speaks of betrothing us to one man or husband to present as a chaste virgin to Christ. So on the other hand the specific form of Israel's unfaithfulness was adultery, as we hear so often in the prophets. But it is not so in Christendom, where the grievous corruption is designated under the figure of a great harlot, not an adulteress. (Rev. 17) The assumption that we are like Israel, the married wife, falsifies our attitude both toward our Lord Jesus and toward the world. It judaizes the church instead of leaving her in her proper place of waiting for Christ in holy separateness from the world.

Babylon the great, who falsely arrogates this place to herself, naturally follows it up by saying in her heart, I sit a queen and I am no widow (as poor Zion is) and shall see no sorrow; and so she has glorified herself and lives deliciously. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death and mourning and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire, for strong is the Lord God who judges her. But here have we no continuing city, though we seek one to come; and in this world we look for tribulation, and through much tribulation to enter the kingdom, being content, yea joyful, to show Christ's rejection where He was put to shame and death, and assured of appearing with Him when He appears in glory. Hence, though we suffer meanwhile with Christ, and glory in affliction, distress and insult for His name's sake, it is not as orphans or as widowed; for we enjoy the adoption of sons to our God and Father, and are one spirit with the Lord; but for this very reason we, are in the secret of the divine counsels, and await His coming who is on high, not of the world as He is not, till the day arrives for Him to take the world-kingdom and for us to reign with Him. Thus we reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. Refusing to assume the air of the wife in rest and possession of His inheritance, we feel that our sorrow here is joined with the communion of His love before He comes to receive us to Himself and to display us with Himself before the world.

In short then the parable touches the godly Jewish remnant rather than the Christian when we come to the exact application of the widow; and this falls in aptly with those saints involved in the judgment of the quick described just before, where one shall be taken and the other left—an earthly scene, it is plain, without a word implying translation to heaven. Still the Holy Spirit gives the exhortation a more general bearing and with the moral purpose we have so often remarked in our evangelist. Every saint should profit by it.

“And he spoke also a parable to them, to the end that they should always pray, and not faint, saying, There was a judge in a city, not fearing God, and not regarding man. And there was a widow in that city, and she came to him, saying, Avenge me of my adversary; and he would not for a time; but afterward he said in himself, Though I fear not God, and regard not man; yet because this widow annoys me, I will avenge her, in order that she may not by continually coming wear me out.” (Ver. 1-5.)

The reflection which the Lord adds as its second part and application makes all plain to the instructed ear. “And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his elect, that cry to him day and night, and he bears long in their case? I say to you that he will avenge them speedily. But when the Son of man cometh, shall he indeed find faith on the earth?” (Ver. 6-8.) It is an a fortiori analogy, which no more views the unjust judge as God, than the unjust steward in chapter 16 means the disciple. In the two cases it is a powerful or a consolatory appeal. Jesus would encourage one always to pray without fainting if the answer seem to tarry and evil to abound. Even the unrighteous judge would rather see to the right of the most friendless and feeble than be ever stunned with appeals. How much more shall not God interfere on behalf of His elect against their enemies? It is true that He bears long as to His own; but He will avenge them soon, as all will own when the blow falls.

The attentive reader will note that the deliverance as well as the prayers are Jewish in character, not patient grace like the Christian's. It is not by their going up to meet the Lord, but by divine judgment on their foes. Still there is real faith in thus crying day and night to God, who if He delay is not slack concerning His promises, but is bringing souls to repentance that they too might be saved. And there is perseverance till the answer is given. When the Lord comes, there are elect saints already glorified with Him (Rev. 17:14; 19:14); but here they are on earth crying to God till He takes vengeance on those who wronged them. It would seem also from the question which the Lord puts and does not answer, that faith will be rare then as in the days of Noah and Lot, when few were saved and some nearest to the saved were lost—so feeble and fluctuating the faith too that only He could find it.

Chapter 160

Notes on Luke 18:9-34

THE next section of our Gospel sets forth, first by a parable, then by facts, lastly by the words which passed between the Lord and the twelve, the characteristics which suit the kingdom of God. The connection is with this as we know it now, rather than with its display when the Son of man comes in judgment of the quick as in the preceding parable. Indeed the exceeding breadth of the lesson about to be taught we learn in the words with which the evangelist opens: “And also to some that trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and made nothing of others, he spoke this parable.” It is no dispensational picture of the divine ways with Jews and Gentiles; it is a moral delineation which tells us how God regards those who plume themselves on their correctness of ways as a ground of confidence with Him, and what His estimate is of those who are broken before Him because of their conscious—and now to themselves loathsome—sinfulness.

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee, and the other a tax-gatherer. The Pharisee standing prayed thus to himself, O God, I thank thee that I am not as the rest of men, rapacious, unjust, adulterous, or even as this tax-gatherer. I fast twice in the week, I tithe all things that I acquire. And the tax-gatherer, standing afar off, would not lift up even his eyes to heaven, but was striking upon his breast, saying, O God, be merciful to me the sinner. I say to you, this [man] went down to his house justified rather than the other; because every one that exalteth himself shall be humbled, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (Ver. 10-14.) The Pharisee represents the religious world in its most respectable shape; the tax-gatherer, such as had no character to lose, but whatever he may have been, now truly penitent and looking to God's compassion in self-judgment. How different are the thoughts of God from those of men! A delicate difference is implied in the form of the two forms of the word which we translate “standing” in each case. With the Pharisee the form (σταθε■ς) implies a stand taken, a putting himself in position, such as one might naturally do in addressing a speech to an assembly. With the tax-gatherer it is the ordinary expression for standing in contradistinction from sitting.

Again, the essence of the Pharisee's prayer, if prayer it can be called, is not a confession of sin nor an expression of need even, but a thanksgiving; and this not for what God had done and been for him, but for what he himself was. He was not, like the rest of men, violent and corrupt, nor even as the tax-gatherer, of whom be cannot speak without a tinge of contempt— “this tax-gatherer.” He finally displays his owns habits of fasting and of religious punctiliousness. Not that he laid false claims; not that be excluded God, but he trusted, as a ground for acceptance, to his righteousness, and he made nothing of others. He never saw his own sins in the sight of God.

The tax-gatherer on the contrary is filled with shame and contrition. He stands afar off, with not even his eyes raised to heaven, and beats withal on his breast, saying, God be compassionate to me, the sinner if ever there was one. There is no solid reason to infer that he pleads the atonement in the word ■λ■σθητι. No doubt the idea of propitiating is expressed by the verb; but it is used fir more widely, like its kindred word in Matt. 16:22, where no one could suppose such an allusion. Whatever the origin or usage of the word, we are not to suppose that the tax-gatherer in employing

it thought of the day of atonement, or of the mercy-seat in the holiest; still less are we warranted to attribute to him an intelligence of the mighty work of redemption which Jesus was soon about to accomplish. The word might allude to propitiation; but that he did so in his crying to God thus is another matter altogether. We easily transfer to souls before the death of Christ a knowledge which, however simple and clear to us since the cross, could not be possessed before.

And this misapprehension has led to another, that the Lord was here pronouncing the tax-gatherer justified as we are who believe in the Lord Jesus and His blood. But this is not the teaching of the passage. The strong assertion of Archbishop Trench that it is, and the fact that Roman Catholic theologians deny it, need neither allure nor deter. It is in vain to say that the sentence of our Lord is that the publican was justified by faith at the time when he is described as going down to his house. There is a distinct comparison with the Pharisee, and it is affirmed that the tax-gatherer went down justified rather than the former. Had justification by faith been meant as in Rom. 3-5, no such statement could have been made. There are no degrees in the justification of which Paul speaks; the Lord implies that there are in what He speaks of. Besides the form of the word differs. He is said to have gone down, not δικαιωθε■ς absolutely but δεδικαιωμ■νος.…παρ'■κε■νον. The common English version seems quite correct, though founded no doubt on the vulgarly received text, ■ ■κε■ος. The great mass of uncials and cursives join in giving the strange reading ■ γ■ρ ■κε■νος, followed even in his eighth edition by Tischendorf, spite of the Sinai MS. which casts its weight into the scale of the Vatican (B) and Parisian 62 (L), not to speak of D with its not infrequent additions, and some few other authorities. I do not doubt that this is the true text. The late Dean of Canterbury shows us the danger of misapplying the case to justification, which is his own view, by the remark he adds: "Therefore he who would seek justification before God must seek it by humility and not by self-righteousness." It is the more to be regretted that this glaring error should have been made by one who had just confessed that we are not to find any doctrinal meaning in ■λ■σθ. It would have been more consistent not to have pressed δεδικαιωμ■νος similarly.

From the homily on lowliness in view of our sins we are now to receive another, lowliness because of our insignificance. "And they brought to him also their infants that he might touch them; but the disciples when they saw [it] rebuked them. But Jesus called them to [him] and said, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter into it." (Ver. 15-17.) The babes were of great price in the eyes of Jesus, not of the disciples, who, if not rabbis themselves, would have lowered their Master to the level of such an one in contempt of little ones. But this could not be suffered, for it was not the truth. Neither the Son nor the Father so feel toward the weak and evidently dependent. Nor is this all: "of such is the kingdom of God." Those who enter into His kingdom must by grace receive the Savior and His word as a child that of its parents. Self-reliance is excluded and replaced by dependence on God in the sense of our own nothingness.

Next comes the young and rich ruler, who went away sorrowfully from Christ rather than give up the self-importance attached to his manifold possessions. "And a certain ruler asked him, saying, Good Master, doing what shall I inherit eternal life? And Jesus said to him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, honor thy father and thy mother.

And he said, All these have I kept from my youth. And Jesus on hearing [it] said to him, One thing is lacking to thee yet: sell all that thou hast and distribute to poor [men], and thou shalt have treasure in the heavens; and come, follow me. But he on hearing these things became very sorrowful, for he was exceedingly rich. And Jesus having seen him [become very sorrowful] said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to enter through a needle's eye than for a rich [man] to enter into the kingdom of God."

The case is plain. The young ruler had no sense of sin, no faith in Christ as a Savior, still less did he believe that a divine person was there, which indeed He must be to save sinners. He appealed to Jesus as the best expression of goodness in man, the highest in the class in which he counted himself no mean scholar. The Lord answers him on the ground of his question. Did he ask the Lord as the good master or teacher, what thing doing he should inherit eternal life? He took his stand on his own doing; he saw not that he was lost and needed salvation. It had never occurred to him that man as such was out of the way, none good, no, not one. That Jesus was the Son of God and Son of man sent to save was a truth to him unknown. The Lord brings in the commandments of the second table; but his conscience was untouched: "All these have I kept from my youth." "Yet lackest thou one thing," said Jesus to the self-satisfied yet dissatisfied ruler, conscious that he had not eternal life and that he had no solid security for the future: "Sell all that thou Last, and distribute to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." The conscience which had resisted the test of law fell at the first touch of Jesus. "And hearing this he became very sorrowful, for he was exceedingly rich."

Yet how infinitely did the demand fall short of what we know and have in the Master, good indeed, God indeed, who never laid on others a burden which He had not borne, who bore one immeasurably more and under circumstances peculiar to Himself, and for ends redounding to the glory of God, and with the result to every sinful creature on earth of a testimony of grace without limit, and of a blessing without stint where He is received! To the ruler it was overwhelming, impossible, the annihilation of all he valued; for indeed now it was evident that he loved his riches, money, mammon, a thing he had never suspected in himself before; but there it had been all along, discovered now in presence of and by Him who, though He were rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. The ruler valued his position and his property, and could not bear to have nothing and be nothing. O what a contrast with Him who counted it not a matter of robbery to be on equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form, born in likeness of men; and who, when found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself by becoming obedient as far as death, yea death of the cross.

How plain too that worldly prosperity or wealth, fruit of fidelity according to the law, is a danger of the first magnitude for the soul, for eternity And Jesus did not fail to draw the searching moral for the disciples, ever slow, through unjudged selfishness, to learn it. They knew not yet to what Christians are called, even to be imitators of God as dear children, and to walk in love according to the pattern of Christ. It is all but impossible, it is impossible, as far as man is concerned, for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. "And who can be saved?" is the remark of those that heard a sentence so counter to their secret desires. Jesus replied, The things impossible with men are possible with God. There is no other hope of salvation. It is of God, not of man. Yet to save cost God everything, yea His own Son. And if the righteous are with difficulty saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? and why wonder at the danger to a rich man through the

unrighteous mammon? None can serve two masters. Happy he who through grace makes wealth to be only for Christ's service, looking to have the true riches his own in everlasting glory!

“And Peter said, Behold we have left all things and followed thee. And he said to them, Verily I say to you, There is none who has left home, or wife, or brethren, or children for the sake of the kingdom of God who shall not get manifold more at this time, and in the age that is coming life eternal.” (Ver. 28-30.) But if Peter was thus prompt to speak of their losses for Christ, who certainly repays as God only can both now and through eternity according to the riches of His grace, “he taking the twelve to [him] said to them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things written by the prophets for the Son of man shall be accomplished; for he shall be given up to the Gentiles, and mocked, and insulted, and spit upon; and after scourging they will put him to death, and on the third day he will rise again.” (Ver. 31-33.) Again, what a contrast even with the thoughts and hopes of disciples! Alas! “they understood none of these things; and this word [or matter] was hid from them, and they did not know what was said.” (Ver. 34.) So it ever is where the eye is not single. By faith we understand. Where nature is still valued by saints, the plainest words of Jesus are riddles even to such.

Chapter 161

Man's Conscience and God's Revelation

That the providence of God acted sovereignly everywhere, that the confinement of specific relationship to Israel was only because historically men had everywhere departed from God, every Christian owns; and the book of Job is the special witness of it. It is asserted in Psalms and by Prophets a thousand times. Jonah is the public evidence of its subsisting when Israel was fully formed as a people. But what is the meaning of a providence in Jewry comprehending sanctities elsewhere? Is it that the heathen were holy, like God's people Israel, and as really in direct relationship with Him? If so, of course the Old Testament, and Christ's statements, and the apostles, and the whole scheme of scripture is totally false. These do teach that Christianity has broken down the middle wall of partition, but that, before, God had not had His name called on by any other people, but had chosen Israel for Himself out of all nations.

The whole scheme of scripture is on this showing false. Salvation was not of the Jews, as the Lord asserts. The apostate affirms that the religions of India and Arabia, of primaeval Hellas and Latium, appealed to the better side of our nature (!), their essential strength lying in the elements they contained, rather than in any Satanic corruption. So thought not Paul: but let this pass. The infidel has, of course, keener spiritual perception than he! He was in conflict with the evil, saw it around him, would feel its corruption, and could not talk so coolly and philosophically of it as the infidel of our day. Indeed it would have sadly cooled his zeal: his idea of revelation would have widened and deepened! Jupiter, whose ways appealed to the better side of our nature, would have had a part in his sympathies!

Paul, however, could bend himself to human condition and human infirmity in a wonderful way, to seek a point where he could meet those he dealt with, and at Athens meet a weary and wandering conscience with an unknown God; and bring the true One to ignorant and more savage Lystrians, as not having left Himself without witness in that He did good, and gave rain and fruitful seasons, and filled men's hearts with food and gladness. He could lead people to the true God by this, but he could not justify corruption and devils, nor call evil good, and good evil, and put darkness for light, and light for darkness. The true picture of it he gives in Romans 1. There is reason and conscience, and I see Paul meeting (with the utmost earnestness of love, and the delicacy of tact which love gives) the point in man's state accessible to it, in order to draw him, to the goodness and holy grace of the true God, out of the evil he was in: but never seeking to widen the idea of revelation, and lower it to the level of the heathenism it was to draw men out of and thus make them content with their degradation. When Christianity sank morally, Porphyrys and Iamblichus sought to do this by refining on heathenism, and making myths of it, as Julian sought in vain to moralize it to make a stand against Christianity, which, by its fruits, told on the conscience; but never did an apostle, nor any one who had a sense of the excellency of Christ. Paul can quote their own poets, can use all means to win all, but never to sanctify evil, and so degrade the moral judgment of man. This was reserved for the pretenders to higher moral discernment of the nineteenth century.

But a word more on this. We have already spoken on this sanction of heathenism. It is characteristic of the system—this moral leveling of all excellency to make an unwholesome swamp of man's mind, where all stagnates and never rises above its own level. But some particular features of it occur in this paper. It is called widening revelation and deepening it. Widening means giving it so large a meaning that that should be considered a revelation which is no revelation at all. Man's mind works; thoughts are produced. How that is deepening revelation I confess I do not know. I suppose they think men's thoughts are deeper than God's. Less simple they are. All is seen in obscurity, and thought to be profound.

But where are they—these revelations? Is Jupiter a revelation, or Brahm and Siva? I deny all revelation save what revelation means—God's communication to man. Let it be produced. I do not deny shreds of the knowledge of God; but I deny revelation. There is conscience in all, and conscience of God; and there is reason. And there was a knowledge of God from His original revelations of Himself, which men had not discernment to retain; and there was the evidence of nature. This conscience could not be got rid of, nor reason, however fearfully perverted, nor the consciousness of superior power. But this was corrupted. This side of human nature is found in heathenism, as the apostle largely declares; but heathenism itself is a vast system of diabolical corruption and sanctifying of lusts, which was obliged to let this in, for Satan can only act in and by what was in man; and conscience and the sense of superior power was in man.

But it is well known that heathenism was the exclusion of God in unity as far as possible, and the deifying of lusts and powers of nature. It was only the connecting of man, such as man was in sin, with demons; a departure from God without being able to destroy the idea of one, or the conscience which God had taken care should accompany sin; but it in no way sought to maintain the one or to meet the other, but to exclude the one and deaden and pervert the other. It took the character of each distinct nation. In Greece, it was gay, poetic, and corrupt; in India, a wonderful apprehension of the powers of nature, with a tinge of kindness interspersed; in Egypt, wisdom and sobriety of judgment as to man; in Canaan, the filth of inveterate corruption: but in all, without exception, sanctified corruption. In the north, perhaps, the wilder and more warlike passions, but in all passion. It was the devil's revelation of a lie, if it was a revelation, unless Siva, and Jupiter, and Khem be truths. It seized existing facts, but only made a lie of them.

In the truth there is no 'repressive idea of revelation' as regards conscience or reason. There is an authoritative revelation of facts, and teaching of truths by God, which act on conscience and give reason its best light. Reason judges probably, but never more, of the truth and falsehood of anything as a consequence. A revelation gives certain truth, or it is not one. If it be truth, conscience, liable to be misled, is rightly led by it. Reason, as to the direct reception of a revelation, is out of court, because reason draws conclusions, whilst a revelation is received on testimony. To say that reason and conscience are absolute judges, or competent to be so, is palpably and historically false. Reason and conscience received Brahmanism and Buddhism, and Ionism, and the Egyptian system, and Odin King of Men, and Druidism—all false and different in form. Did they judge rightly in this? If not, are they not at least incompetent to hold the balance, and rule above the will and corrupt influences? Why am I to trust them in judging of what is infinite in excellence? They could not secure man's judgment in the grossest cases imaginable of superstition and moral vileness.

I admit conscience, when acted on, recognizes holy truth and divine authority. But when it begins to judge, not good and evil in itself, but to determine the will as competent to judge for itself, as reasoning, it has ceased to be conscience; or rather conscience has ceased to act, and influences and motives are in play. Conscience knows murder, fruit of hatred, is wrong—that stealing is wrong, disobedience to parents wrong. Did a religion come saying “this is good,” as such, conscience could say, “that cannot be from God, for it is not good: that is a lie, not the truth.” But if (not conscience, but) pride begin to say, “God ought not to have done this; miracles do not suit man's better knowledge,” I reply, “! my poor conscience, you are putting on these peacocks' feathers, are you? You are too late. Why did not you judge, all the juggling of oracles, false gods, and priestcraft these four or five thousand years? This is all very fine. Christianity has saved you from all this long-lasting shame, from which you never could save yourself, and never did, with all your fine pretensions now; and you now turn to set up to be competent to judge about what it ought to have been, and reject the very claims of that whose power alone gave you any sense to judge at all. No, no; keep in your place, according to the light which you have got back to. In your own measure call good good and evil evil: this you have only learned really to do through Christianity. Let us see how lively you will be as to this under its influence, and we will applaud you. And do not speak to us—at least by the mouth of those who tell us they stand balancing terror against mutual shame. The eye, though capable of seeing, wants light; but do not fancy because you are the mind's moral eye, that you are therefore God, to know how in His workings and ways He ought to behave. Why did you not judge what man had to do when he was under your care? What did you make of him? Let history tell. If God has graciously used miracles, not against conscience, but to arouse it, and help man against influences tending to incredulity, and to show that there was a power in God above the evil to which you, conscience, had succumbed, do not you complain or set up to judge God for a deliverance which, without this, you never did effect. Do not say it could be done without it. You can tell that, you say. Why did you not then do it in the four thousand years—twenty thousand if you please—which had elapsed? Your pretended competency to judge of means, and reliance on your own power in behalf of man, is an historically proved falsehood. You let man sink into the grossest superstition and corruptions. The Christianity you are calling in question delivered him somehow or another; that is a fact (deep as, conscience and reason and all, he is fallen again in corrupt Christianity and rationalism): you never could.”

Further, I do not talk of kindred reason and conscience. I admit both, and revelation speaks to both; but 1 say that it is an historical fact that with them man fell from the light he had into the pit of degradation. Christianity delivered him, and set reason and conscience in the light, and on their right ground, and nothing else did. I am talking of history. I trust my reason for things of reason, as far as it is reasonable (that is, as to what is subjected to it); I have to act according to my conscience when this is in the light; indeed it is more honest to do so when imperfectly enlightened. But trust to man's pretended competency to judge of revelation by them, and of what a religion ought to be, I cannot, because with them man has received everything as true that is false, base, and wicked to be God, and that is corrupt and abominable to be a duty, until God in power came in to deliver, and has rejected what was excellent and holy.

I have got my senses, now I am in the light, to see that with my senses I fell into the ditch when I had not the light, and that all the eyes in the world could not make a ray of light, though now I have the light I know it is light. And now I have it I have no inclination to put it out, or to say that eyes

without it were competent to see, kindred to light; and widen the sense of light, to make it comprehend men walking, and walking in darkness, and their feeling their way an almost equivalent to having the light—a deepening of the idea of what light is.

I must get rid of history and facts, as well as every moral sentiment of my nature, to receive the theories of these men. Yet they use the name of Christ, while setting conscience above revelation.

Of their speaking of Christ anon, but conscience being above revelation is nonsense upon the face of it. A man may deny revelation; that I understand. I reject his thought as a horror, a moral impossibility, that man should be so left; but it is not nonsense. But if there be a revelation really, that is God. Conscience is man; and a conscience above revelation is man above God.

But must not I judge of a revelation?

It is not the common way of receiving it, because it acts with divine light on the conscience. I cannot say the eye judges light—light makes the eye see. A revelation being holy, convicts of sin, and so proves itself. But when we have to judge of a revelation, if it be one, I am judged by my judgment. If I judge a beautiful picture to be a bad one, and that the painters ought to have distributed the light so and so, what is judged when one knows what really is beautiful? Why I am. Our judgment proves what we are. There is no escaping that, unless finally man is to judge God, not God man. Oh, what a judgment it would be! Yet that is really the question, and in truth we have seen it brought to a trial and issue in Christ. Golgotha can tell that tale.

Our reception or non-reception of the truth is our judgment, and so the New Testament declares. Both analogy and history give us to understand this important principle, wholly overlooked by these unbelieving reasoners, that for the use of a faculty, power outside itself may be needed, so that when the power is not there the faculty is useless. When it is there, it acts rightly and freely; but its action is wholly dependent on a power independent of it. It exists without the power, but it cannot act without it. Conscience is a faculty of the soul, as the power of seeing is of the eye; but conscience without revelation, without light from God, has never judged rightly. Man with this faculty has received all the diabolical horrors and corruptions it is possible to imagine; he walks in darkness, and knows not at what he stumbles. But light is independent of the eye, and the eye judges not light, but everything by the light. Conscience judges not revelation, but by revelation, or perfect divine light—that is, Christ Himself. God is light, and Christ is that light in the world. If men have had it elsewhere, let them say where.

After all, it is only saying there is a God, and that as such He must be above man's judgment and the power of it. It is all confusion to speak of revelation being contrary to conscience, or having reason and conscience for its kindred. God, and God revealing Himself, has His place; and if God does not reveal Himself, we are godless creatures—not without a sense that there is a God, but ignorant of what He is; in the deplorable condition of knowing there is a God, and not knowing Him; with conscience enough to know we are in evil, but ignorant how to get out of it. History, the complaints of a Socrates, the puny efforts of others skew and tell—the world by wisdom knew not God.

And the sense of excellency gives the sense of wretchedness; of excellency (blessed be His name!) in God; of wretchedness in man; but then of infinite love towards us. If the world by wisdom knew God, it did not know love; if it did, where is the knowledge to be found? I defy the skeptic,

conscience and reason and all, to tell me. If God does reveal Himself, He reveals Himself as God. Man is not a judge of the way. He has received every kind of lie as God, then laughed at it in the end, in the mockery of despair, without finding out it was his wretched self he was laughing at. But His revelation does not exclude but awaken conscience, makes it for the first time see good, which it in this light can recognize. For God, who is light, is goodness or love manifested in the midst of men.

Conscience is not the instrumentality of revelation, as these skeptical reasoners say: such a statement is nonsense. A revelation is God's making something known which was not otherwise apprehended—perhaps could not have been. Conscience is no instrumentality in revealing. It is a positive essential faculty in man, knowing or discerning good and evil: but it is not an instrument of revelation. It is a proper independent faculty, which the believer knows to have been acquired in the fall. But it must have its object before it, to say it is good or evil: that is, it has nothing to do with revealing. Its object must be there and then; when not perverted, it says, if good be before it, That is good; if evil, That is evil.

Again, reason discerns cause and effect, and as reasoning draws consequences; in moral things it runs closely into conscience. But it is never an instrument of revelation, unless in the sense that the Holy Spirit uses a man as an instrument in revealing; but in itself it never is. It must have its object to reason about.

On the other hand, revelation gives objects otherwise unknown, or fresh truth about known objects, or it is not a revelation. This neither conscience nor reason can do in their very nature. I may figuratively say: It really was a revelation—that is, the perception of reason was so quick, that it was, in comparison with other minds, like one. But this only proves the difference I have stated. In a word, conscience and reason must have objects to judge of. A revelation communicates objects which men have not. There is no contrast with revelation; they are no parts of its instrumentality. Reason and conscience have their own proper power in their place, needing, in order to act in divine things, a light wholly independent of them—that is, a revelation. In their place they are like every other faculty, and, as the most important ones, blessed. As I have said, when conscience has got light, it can say, Jupiter and Saturn cannot be gods; and reason can say, when it has got the idea of God, there cannot be two.

Reason can never say “is” or “is not,” but “must” and “cannot.” Ideas, and not facts, are its sphere. Revelation says “is” —another most important difference. I believe the idea of God is, in spite of Locke, at the bottom of every heart—corrupted and dimmed, but in every heart; and so, of course, are conscience and reason, though blind and corrupted, till light comes, and through passions, interests, and Satanic power, losing the light and being blinded when men have had it. They did not discern to retain God in their knowledge.

I have been, I am conscious, long in my lucubrations on this subject, but hope I have not lost your attention. Those who have followed the phases of the new school, and particularly abroad in its French forms (for it uses, but is not, the old rationalism), know that their battle-horse is this point of conscience. All their statements are, however, error and confusion, and, like everything they say, as superficial as it is pretentious.

Happily, history is there to refute man's pretensions; and the proof it gives of the need of light—that is, of revelation—to give conscience its power is all-important. Whatever the cause—I do not doubt the fall, and Satan's power, man's utter alienation from God, is—but whatever the cause is, the fact is so. By the Christian revelation, partially by the Jewish one, man had light to judge the absurdities and corruptions of paganism; without that, in point of fact, he never did. Conscience, one may see, existed, but was religiously incompetent—incompetent to judge of a revelation (that is, of its truth or falsehood). I might question whether the skeptic's conscience and reason be much better or sounder in his judgment of the matter. I doubt it very much; but this we may leave: I refer to his attempted justification of heathenism in presence of Christianity, and while favoring those horrible corruptions, questioning the divine character of both Christianity and its testimony. It seems to me as perverted as the heathenism it defends. I judge more so, as it comes after the light.

Chapter 162

Thoughts on Mark 7

It is said that the Lord is the truth, “I am the way, the truth, and the life;” and He does bring out everything in a remarkable way. He shows out what God is in Himself, and what man is; and God's grace has come with Him, “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.”

In this chapter we find truth first, truth as to man's condition; but there is also the grace of God's heart. It is a great thing to have the two together. If truth had come without grace, we could not have borne it a moment. Man is a sinner utterly unfit for heaven; but it is immense comfort that grace and truth have come together. God's two essential names are Love and Light. If we had not love with light, it would have condemned us; but we have perfect light in presence of perfect love. Our comfort is that light does come and reveal everything. Being in God's very nature, we cannot separate the two things, light and love. Just the same things appear in the details of the Christian's life.

In many instances in scripture we see how light penetrates; but there is an attractive power along with it. There is never real working in man's soul without attractive power. The Christian stands “accepted in the Beloved;” but the light of God comes in on all his ways. Take the prodigal: the light shines in and shows that he is a lost sinner, but there is attractive power too: “I will arise and go to my father.” Take the woman that was a sinner. There was a sense of sinfulness because light comes in; but the measure in which light shone into her soul cannot be separated from the love that came with it. Take Peter, falling at Jesus' feet, and saying at the same time, “Depart from me.” Wherever the blessed God reveals Himself to our souls, nothing is left in the dark. If anything is not completely revealed, it may come out in the day of judgment; but all is revealed. We have a perfect revelation of God as light and as love; and both are working in the soul.

If you have an idea of God's love without the conscience being reached, it may pass away as the morning dew. It is a blessed thing that we are brought to God, and that everything is fully out. The blessed Lord bore our sin; there was full light and full love at the cross. There are two parts in the gospel; one is the revelation of God; the other is the work done by the Lord standing as Man for us on the cross. First, we find the revelation of God Himself, then the work of the Lord. In the chapter I have read it is rather the character of the Lord as thus revealing God than the work which He has done. Here you see first, religious, very religious, man; the authority of the elders, the cleansing of the outside. It is much easier to wash one's hands than to wash one's heart. Man hides the state of his heart by all these outward things. The Lord comes in, searching and judging all the religion of man. Where the heart has not been purified, where the soul is not right with God, religion only hardens. Cain was just the expression of this; he was just as religious as Abel, and his religion cost him more than Abel's.

“Ought” is not the question now; there is another: what we have done and what we are. The question is not whether the law is right, but whether I am right. Abel recognized that he was wrong, a sinner out of paradise, and without hope, unless God would save the lost. Cain's offering was nothing but perfect hardness of heart. If the light of God shines into my soul, and finds nothing but

sin and impurity, my conviction is that I cannot go to God in myself, unless He has found and given a blessed way. The real question for people's souls is, not what they ought to do, but what they have done and what they are. Think of the audacity of people coming to God as they are! Man is doing all he can; his thought is, trying a way to satisfy God and purify himself outwardly—he feels he cannot inwardly. Here it is not professed religiousness, but the heart of man detected. The Lord goes right through this veil that is over the heart of man to the heart itself, and He tells what proceeds from it. What about the good? He says nothing of it whatever. In us dwells “no good thing.” Man is a judged creature. He will set up man in a thousand ways; but God has judged him. There are the natural faculties of man—all true; but what has that to do with the soul? “When his breath goeth forth, all his thoughts perish.”

When God was not dealing in a special way with man, he became so bad that God had to bring in the flood. Then, when He did deal in a special way, the golden calf was made as soon as the law was given. Last of all He sent His Son. We are now living in a world where man has rejected God in grace.

The first thing we read of man was that he departed from God, as Adam. We see the same in Noah before, in Solomon after, as in the Israelites when they made the golden calf. When the priesthood was instituted, Nadab and Abihu offered strange fire. There was the patience of God going on saving souls all the time: I do not deny this. Man was lawless when he had no law; he broke the law when he got the law: he was God-hating when the Lord Jesus came into the world. It is better that the light should come in and show me what I am. God has since set out a meeting-place with man—the one way, the altar of the tabernacle. This is God's one meeting-point with man. If you do not come as a sinner, you do not come in truth, and you do not come for grace. Having ripped up the veil with which man tries to cover himself, the Lord showed what the heart of man is—a terrible picture, and terrible because true. He whose love spoke it comes as light into the world. When light comes, I do not say man is a sinner, but I am a sinner; “And we indeed justly.” There is truth. So far we have it told, but grace had come to tell it. Then all dispensations are set aside, and God comes out as sovereign. There are two things in the gospel: God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, and the revelation of God. Here it is God coming into a world of sinners.

People know there is a judgment coming, and they hope to get into some kind of preparation for that judgment. In contrast with this thought we have, “Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men.” Those who are Christians ought to judge everything by the judgment-seat of Christ. It is very fruitful to the Christian, but is not in itself Christianity. The grace of the gospel is the very opposite to judgment. God comes into a world of sinners not imputing their sins. The gospel is this blessed truth, that God is dealing with men above all their sins. He comes into this world to show holiness itself—a holiness that never could be contaminated, and to bear love into a world of sinners. The Syrophenician had no title to promises. Being of a doomed race, as to dispensation, she had only curses, the very opposite to promises. The Lord first deals with her on this ground: “It is not meet to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs;” He brings her to her true place as He always does. You may try and spare the soul, but it must be in truth before it learns grace. Would you all say, “Yes, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table?” She had not a word to say for herself; but she had a word to say for God. The publicans and harlots justified Him, and He justified them. So it always is where He works in grace

and truth. I believe there is overflowing goodness for the children; but there is something for the dogs too. Could Jesus say there was not? It was real knowledge of God and herself. The heart must be brought to this, “I have no righteousness, I have no promises, but I have got God come into the world to us as sinners, and because we are sinners.” He never said “Come to me” till He had first come Himself. There was perfect light to convict, but the convicted sinner finds himself in the presence of perfect love. Have you ever said “Yes, Lord,” owning that you had no righteousness and no promises? only that you trust the perfect love that brought Christ into the world? Then the thought of what God is towards you, takes the place of what you are towards God. Here I am, just as I am, in the presence of perfect love—love that cannot deny itself. The sinner finds he has a title in God's heart when he can find none in his own. The woman that was a sinner loved much because much was forgiven her. It was a broken heart that met the heart of God, and the heart of God met a broken heart. It is wonderful when the heart of man really meets the heart of God. The moment I am brought through grace into full distinct consciousness that there is no good in me, I find this; I find the perfect blessed love of God which has met me where I am in His presence.

At the cross you see sin meeting God, Christ being made sin for us, and the nature of God glorified—far more than merely sin being put away. While the Lord puts away sin, He prepares the way to the accomplishment of all the counsels of God. At the cross I find man made sin in the presence of God—a divine Person too of course; and this not to screen but to sustain Him. There is love that has met me in my sins, and now there is righteousness in the presence of God, our forerunner being there. The truth is there; but there is also the perfect love of God to put away sin. The heart is then free to trust the love unhinderedly.

Remember this, beloved friends: I am not my own at all now; I am in a new place altogether—a place into which I have been brought in perfect love, in divine righteousness, in the presence of God Himself. We have power now—the power of the Holy Ghost. The Christian is in this world to show what Christ is. If you call yourselves Christians, you are the epistle of Christ: it is not merely said you ought to be, but you are. He sends you back to the world to witness what God is. You have responsibility as a Christian now, not as a man. All responsibility flows from the place we are in. If Christian responsibility is measured, as a child of God, nothing that does not suit the blood of Christ suits you. Is Christ the motive of everything you do, and this in things of every-day life? For you are not all heroes and heroines. Is Christ all and in all? “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.” Walk as children of the Father.

Chapter 163

“Peace. . . My Peace”

John 14:27.

There are two characters of peace presented to us in this verse. “Peace I leave with you” is not the same thing as “My peace I give unto you.” Peace we need in every form. Peace we need first of all for the conscience, and the Lord would set the consciences of His disciples happy and free before God. Now this was one, and indeed we may say the main object of our Lord's coming here—specially of His death. As we are told elsewhere, “He made peace through the blood of his cross.” And so in the fullness of this peace, when He rises from the dead, first He says, “Peace be unto you,” a peace that so suffices, so overflows, that our Lord repeats it a second time in connection with the mission on which He was sending them out. “Peace be unto you. As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.”

The first blessed peace is between God and our souls, peace as regards the old war which we kept up against God when we were enemies. But this is not everything. When we have found it, know it, rest in it, it is absolutely necessary for the well-being of our souls that we should know Christ's peace. This at once shows the difference. Christ never needed the peace which we did as having been at enmity with God; and yet was it His to enjoy peace, after a sort, which had never been before. Therefore He adds, not merely, “Peace I leave with you,” but, “My peace I give unto you,” the peace which He ever enjoyed, which reigned within Him and lit up all around Him.

And it is remarkable as confirming this that in Col. 3, where you have the expression, “Let the peace of God rule in your hearts,” it really is “the peace of Christ.” “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body.” He, the Head of the body, was always in the perfect and unbroken enjoyment of this peace: not as if He had ever been out of it, or needing to have it made for Him, but as One whom nothing ever agitated. He might suffer, sorrow, groan, weep—all these He knew: but yet in all these His peace abode. No doubt at the cross there was a wholly different experience. We cannot speak of peace there. But that which He tasted there we are never called to know in the slightest degree. We could not even approach that furnace heated seventy times seven, where every question was solved between God and His beloved Son as to our sins. There was a suffering there which was altogether peculiar to itself, before which all others must be silent at God's word; the great and solemn judgment of sin was to take its course between God and Christ, and that hour abides isolated and alone forever. But, excepting such a scene and season which thus stood apart from all others, as respected Christ in His ordinary dealings with God (whatever might be the zeal of His heart which ate Him up), there was one thing which never changed. That zeal was not always in exercise, but was always surely there so as to meet whatever required it to be called out. But all was in its just place, because there was One that waited upon God and that drew on the infinite resources of God for each moment. “I live,” as He said, because of “the Father.” Thus, whatever the zeal that might occasionally burn with indignation against those that defiled the house of His Father, whatever the tender compassion

that yearned over sorrow, whatever the rebuke that convicted His disciples of their unbelief, and whatever the righteous displeasure of His soul that tore off witheringly the pride and hypocrisy of men who put on a cloak of religion, there was one thing that never failed, for it never was absent but was in full mighty flow in His soul; and this was His peace. What a thought that such is the peace which He gives to us!

Jesus “leaves” peace with us as a last legacy that comes to us from His death, peace the righteously won portion for the soul that believes in His name.

But “My peace” seems to be a deeper and more personal boon, not procured by His work only, but fresh from His own heart which was ever filled with it to over-flowing. It supposes the peace that He has made for us by the blood of His cross and left to us; but it follows on and puts us wondrously in communion with Himself, enjoying now the peace He Himself enjoyed, although it were of all things as marked and characteristic as any other perhaps which could be named. Let the peace of Christ (not here of “God”) rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. He gives to us His peace, He the Lord of peace, who walked in it as none else ever did, tried as only He was or could be. O may we treasure His peace!

There is another scripture to which I would briefly advert—2 Thess. 3:16, “Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means.”

We hear repeatedly God giving Himself the title of the God of peace. “The Lord of peace” is a much more unusual expression. I do not think they mean exactly the same thing, however closely. connected. “The God of peace,” points to Him as the source of it. He alone could be. Peace is what a sinful creature least of all knows. How could he who is at war with God? The wretched pleasure of a fallen being is change. To this he has recourse as his miserable diversion from facing the true condition of his soul, his past life, his present state, and all that lies before him. He is afraid to look at things as they are; he dreads to search too closely into himself; and he shrinks back from the God that he knows he has despised, and for whose presence he is unfit. What a change when that God is known to that soul as the God of peace! And yet it is not that God is changed, but the soul. For God is the God of peace, but that soul only knows Him to have become so to himself by a new creation and by redemption. He is delivered from his former self and hence is placed in Christ—the one who has banished all his evil and brought him into His own good. It is impossible that God could be other than the God of peace, for He has through Christ's redemption on the cross completely put away all with which otherwise He must be at war for the one to whom He displays Himself and has given the very life of Christ to be his life. God could not but love and value and delight in what is of Christ. What can be simpler? And it is God who effects this great change—not by His own changing, as if the Creator were a creature variable like ourselves—but Christ, and no longer self, makes all the difference. Let us hold this fast, rejoicing that we have nothing to put forward before our God—nothing to boast in for our soul—but that now we have Christ whom once we despised and abhorred.

But then “the Lord of peace” is another phase of the truth which has its own blessed importance. It is not God who has made peace through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, and who can therefore afford to be the God of peace to him that has Christ. But “the Lord of peace” directs us to Christ Himself. It is not that He is our peace only, which is very true, and the Epistle to the Ephesians tells us that Christ Himself is our peace. An astonishing manifestation of what grace

has given us in Him. He is the Lord of peace also. By that I understand that He is not only the Lord of us and of all, but that He is the one who knows how to bring about peace—the one who is above all the circumstances that tend to disturb. Elsewhere we read of this peace. In the very chapter that was read to us, the Lord Jesus says, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you” —that is, He has left peace as the fruit of His death. But then He gives us the same character of peace which He enjoyed Himself. The peace that He has “left” is the peace that we receive by the faith of Him. The peace that Christ gives is peace in communion with Him after that we have received peace through His death. And a wonderful thing it is that such hearts as ours should be capable of such communion with Him in that which is naturally so contrasted with our own condition. And the reason is this, that we know that God now has replaced the first man by the Second, and the more simply we apply this to our own souls, the more calm we are amid things that tend to trouble. We can count upon Him. If they are things quite outside our control, in whose hands are they? We know that they are in the hands of God, and our God is the God of peace. What we have to guard against is our own will, our own nature being acted upon, for we ought not to be governed by circumstances; we are brought into the light of the presence of God, it is there that we walk, and the believing this and resting upon it as the truth of our God for which we have nothing to show but His word is precisely the point of faith for us day by day. What a deliverance from everything like deceit or from crooked, or unlovely, or ungenerous, or unchristian-like ways, which we shall be sure to fall into if we lose sight of Him. We are never so if we are consciously walking in the light; but when we are not, then self is sure to show itself in the various forms of fallen Adam. We have the Lord of peace to look to, who is at the helm and not only preserves the ship but controls the elements. “The Lord of peace himself,” for we count not upon circumstances, not upon people; for those we count most upon we often have the deepest sorrow from. And it is well for us to learn this profitable lesson, that God will not allow us to make an idol of anything or any one. We have God above everything; and not only that, but we have a man above everything—a man who loves us perfectly—a man at the head of the universe, glorified and set over all the works of God's hands. That man is our Lord, and our Lord is the Lord of peace. “Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace always by all means.” What a blessing Surely it is in His power, and faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it.

Numbers

This book is as distinctly devoted to the progress of Israel through the wilderness, before they entered Canaan, as Exodus with their redemption from Egypt for God to dwell in their midst, and Leviticus with the provision for their approach to God, whose meeting-place was the appointed tent of the congregation or tabernacle.

The people are numbered, with the exception of the Levites, who were to be for tabernacle service and so exempted from this, the census of Israel from twenty years old and upward, all the males able to go to war (chap. 1.); they are then (chap. 2.) duly arranged according to Jehovah's will, every one by his own standard, with their family ensign about the tabernacle but at a distance from it: on the east Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun; on the west Ephraim, Benjamin, Manasseh; on the south Reuben, Simeon, and Gad; and on the north Dan, Asher, and Naphtali. And thus they were respectively to set forth on their march: the camp of Judah first; then of Reuben; then the tabernacle with the camp of the Levites; next the camp of Ephraim, and lastly of Dan, in full tale as before. “But the Levites were not numbered among the children of Israel, as Jehovah commanded Moses.” After the house of Aaron are described, the tribe of Levi are brought near and given to Aaron and his sons for sanctuary service, substituted for the firstborn of Israel, and numbered apart, every male from a month upward, with their several charges assigned. Chapter 4 enters into details of Levite work, after a new numbering from thirty years of age, the Kohathites carrying the vessels duly covered, the Gershonites the hangings, &c., and the Merarites the boards. In chapter 5 we hear of the purifying of the camp, and the test of jealousy; as in chapter 6 the special separation of the Nazarite.

Next, in chapter 7 the presents of the chiefs of Israel are recounted, part of which was devoted to aiding the Gershonites and Merarites. Chapter 8 opens with the sanctuary lights in Aaron's charge, and the Levites consecrated from twenty-five years of age.

In chapter 9 we see the provision of grace where circumstances hindered an Israelite's taking the passover, with the cloud directing their rest or march; to which the silver trumpets (chap. 10) are joined for purposes more varied.

Then (chap. 10:11) they start on their journey according to the movement of the cloud, but with a strong appeal from Moses and Hobab to guide them, and suited formulas for the march and the halt. In chapter 11 we see the signs of unbelief as to the way, and then in Miriam and Aaron (chap. 12.) as well as the spies (13.) and then as to the land (15.); next offerings of sweet savor, and a heave offering prescribed for the land; with provisions for sins of ignorance and judgment of presumptuous sins, and a ribband of blue to put in remembrance (15.), followed by the rebellion of Korah against the rights of Jehovah in Moses and Aaron (16.), and the value of the high priest proved not then only but by Jehovah's choice expressed in his rod alone, once dead, now living and fruit bearing. (17.) Then the Levites are joined to Aaron and his sons (i.e., ministry to priesthood) with Aaron's charge over heave offerings, wave offerings, and first fruits, even the Levites being bound to offer a tithe of the tithes given them by Israel. (18.) Next the ordinance of

the red heifer for purifying from the defilements of the wilderness (19.), the failure of Moses and Aaron at Meribah, the opposition of Edom, and death of Aaron (20.); the defeat of the Canaanite king, the fiery serpents met by the serpent of brass, the wells dug by the princes' staves; and Sihon and Og smitten. (21.) Then comes the effort of the enemy through a false prophet to frustrate Israel's entrance into Canaan; but the curse is turned into a blessing and God through the hireling affirms His right to separate and justify His people, to render them fair and refreshed and glorious on the earth, judging their enemies. (22. - 24.) Corruption succeeded better, but Phinehas vindicated God in Israel (25.); the people are numbered afresh for going into the land (26.); the title of the daughters of Zelophehad is made good (27.); the law of oblation follows, with the new moons and feasts (28., 29.); then vows when valid or not (30.); next on the defeat of the Midianites, the regulation of war and spoil (31.); then, on the desire of two tribes and a half to enjoy the land taken on the east of Jordan, the condition laid down of joining in the putting down of the Canaanites (32.); the rehearsal of their journeys (33.); the borders of the promised land, and those charged with dividing it (34.); the cities of the Levites and among them those for refuge (35.); and the order insisted on for such as had their title to inheritance allowed. (36.)

Chapter 165

Our Exodus: 1. They Are Not of the World, Even As I Am Not of the World

Our Exodus. “They Are Not of the World, Even as I Am Not of the World.”

The disciple who has accompanied his Lord through the various scenes which served to call out His personal glories both by words and works in the first twelve chapters of John's Gospel, must have been prepared in some measure for His departure “out of this world to the Father.” Nor is this rupture to be accounted for because of what men were when brought into the presence of the Word made flesh, though an early intimation reveals the secret that “Jesus did not commit himself unto them because he knew all men;” and a later one declares “they loved the praise of men, more than the praise of God.” But other reasons are at hand.

The group of men and women who had been attracted out of the world by what He was, and gathered round Him with true-hearted affection, had to learn that they could not follow Him. “Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.” But further, that little enclosure at Bethany where Jesus was at home with Martha and Mary and Lazarus whom He loved, and which shone out in such heavenly light and grace, would not satisfy the heart of the Lord: He must have them with Himself, in His own life and likeness and glory. All was at its very best— “there they made him a supper and Martha served.” Lazarus too, who had been dead “was one of them that sat at the table with him.” And Mary took her ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. Moreover, “the house was filled with the odor of the ointment,” and He who brought His glory into it, was there as “the resurrection and the life.” Measuring themselves by themselves, why was the house at Bethany broken up? and why did the Lord give that strange character to Mary's act, “against the day of my burying hath she kept this?” The glory of God had been the rule and object of Christ's action at the grave when He cried with a loud voice “Lazarus, come forth;” and so now, in His renewed intimacy with them in Bethany, He accepts no other measure. Lazarus, though raised from the dead, was still in the image of the first man earthy.

The Son of the Father passes beyond all their thoughts into the depths of His own love about them, and is as truly in intercourse with “the voice from the excellent glory” in this chapter xii. as when upon the mount of transfiguration about the matters of the kingdom and its glories, and His own personal majesty. “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. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again.” In John we may remark the entire absence of the holy mount, of which Luke and Peter give the account. They were occupied with “the Son of man coming in his kingdom,” when His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light: though at the mount of transfiguration, as in the house at Bethany, He accepted the decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem, as His appointed pathway into the kingdom and His personal glory. John's occupations are different, and have other objects, though there is this point of similarity, that the house of Bethany, where Jesus was anointed for His

burying, is transferred to another day; just as the transfiguration scene was folded up for the millennium, when Jesus accepted “his decease” from that mount.

John's Gospel introduces us to the Father, and the “Father's house,” during this dispensation, while the kingdom glory is in abeyance, and its king rejected and seated at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven. It is therefore with these new relations, as one with Him who has left this world and gone to the Father to prepare a place for us, that chapter 13 begins, though founded upon His decease and the day of His burying— “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.” The home of Bethany has given place to the Father's house and its many mansions. The hour has come and gone, that the Son of man should be thus glorified. The voice from heaven has verified itself by glorifying the Father's name, and glorifying it again in the resurrection of Him who was “lifted up from the earth,” that He might draw all men unto Him. Other and new associations have been formed between the risen One and His own by redemption through His blood, never to be broken up—with those who are not in the flesh, nor of the world, but born of the Spirit, and in life, and in union with Christ. Himself said, “Go tell my brethren I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; to my God, and your God.” Lazarus was dead and risen, but in the likeness of Adam. The redeemed are dead with Christ, and risen in Christ, and new creatures in Him. In Christ we have passed out of the judgment that man in the flesh, and the world, and Satan are judicially under and are going into. “Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out.” A parting word was uttered by the Lord in John 12 before all was closed up in darkness, “while ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children alight. These words spake Jesus and departed and did hide himself from them.” They have lost Him: the light of the world has gone down in obscurity. Israel is in thick darkness; the life that was the light of men has been refused; and the Anointed One of Bethany has passed through His “burying,” and become the glorified Son of man at the right hand of God.

It is in this position, where man never was before, that we who now believe in Christ are called out to know Him, and by grace to take a portion with Him; and this fact amongst others necessitates the new ministry of the water and the towel and the basin between the Lord and ourselves that we “may have part with him.” From chapter 13 onward we shall find our heavenly relations opened out consequent upon the break-up and the break-down of the earthly ones, proposed to Israel by Him who rode into the city of Jerusalem upon a colt, the foal of an ass. Before we leave the first twelve chapters of this Gospel we shall do well to remember that “the Word made flesh” had presented “himself to his own, and his own received him not.” As a worshipping people He went up with them to the appointed feasts of the first and the seventh months; and then in His own person took the place of the Passover and of the feast of Tabernacles. He had visited their temple which should have been the house of prayer for all nations, but found it a den of thieves; and been compelled to challenge a ruler of the Jews, the one who owned Him as a teacher come from God— “if I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?” After this He publicly convicted the nation, or at least the two tribes, “I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you,” and prophetically adds, “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.” Israel after the flesh had set itself aside, “ye will not come to me that ye might have life.”

The Lord has become glorious in other eyes by departing out of this world to the Father—He has made us one with Himself where He is. The revelation of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost had

been made in the ministry of our Lord when on earth, and especially in the Gospel of John; but it is by the anticipated departure of Jesus in the chapters we are now about to consider, that we are put into relation with the Father by the Son through the Holy Ghost. That which constitutes Christianity, three persons in the Godhead, a trinity in unity, would be repugnant to the mind of a Jew, for he seemed instructed otherwise, “the Lord thy God is one Jehovah.” These chapters therefore become the basis, and declare the character of the present dispensation: that is, if the Church can be said to be in any. Moreover this period between the ascension of the Lord and His second coming, and our gathering together unto Him, is not only marked by this full revelation of the Trinity, and our relations with the Father's house; but by the descent of the Holy Ghost consequent upon the departure and ascent of the Son. Nothing can be so important as this, if we would rightly understand the peculiarity of our dispensation—one that is marked, and indeed constituted by the Father's glory in the heavens—the Son's departure from this world to the right hand of God—and the Holy Ghost's descent to this earth as the Comforter, and the Spirit of truth during the Lord's absence. This revelation of the unity in trinity, and this change of places as regards the Son and the Holy Ghost, is characteristic of our new position and standing, consequent upon the world's rejection of Christ. He beheld the Person in heaven, in whom the counsels and purposes which were hid in God from before the foundation of the world are now connected; just as when the Lord was upon the earth Jewish promises and prophecies and types found their yea and Amen in Him.

The Holy Ghost by the apostles has made known to the Church since Pentecost, that hidden wisdom which God ordained before the world unto our glory. Another book has also been written, “the Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass,” and which tells us of the marriage of the Lamb, in the coming day of His espousals when His Bride shall have made herself ready. But the Church soon lost consciousness of the fact “that she was espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ,” as well as of her portion with her Head and Lord in heaven, and her place of testimony on earth. It is this forgetfulness of what the Church of God really is to Him and to His Son and to the Holy Ghost, that makes it so difficult to recover the members of Christ, from the Babylon and harlotry of these many centuries.

Enough has been said perhaps to lead some to the discovery of the peculiarity of the Christian, which these precious chapters of John's Gospel so abundantly and plainly declare. Indeed so entirely is our calling and portion with the departed One in heaven, that He must needs say, “I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you I will come again and receive you unto myself that where I am, there ye may be also.” There was really no place anywhere “for his own which were in the world:” only they were confident in His love, who loved them to the end. From the river to the ends of the earth had been given by covenant to Abraham and his seed in the earliest times; and moreover the Seed and Heir of the world had them in possession by incarnation and righteous title. The kingdom and its glories were also His, as we have seen at the Mount of transfiguration; but neither His kingship, nor His heirship, nor His sonship with Abraham and David, would He enjoy alone. No, the love He bore to the earthly people led Him to talk of His decease with the men in glory, just as He interpreted Mary's anointing for the day of His burial; that so He might at a future time take His place as the true Boaz, and lead His redeemed people into the inheritance.

In the meanwhile He forms an entirely new dispensation with the Father, according to the hidden wisdom and secret counsels which were hinted at by the Lord to His disciples; but which became the glorious subjects of Holy Ghost revelation and testimony, when the earthly order and course of Jehovah with His nation and people were set aside, for the millennial age. There was thus no place on earth for the followers of a rejected Lord, and certainly no place in the heavens, for Christ was not as yet ascended, though all was perfect in counsel and in purpose, but a mystery hidden in God. Nor does the peculiarity of the Christian's position apply to place merely; for it was equally so as regarded any relation to God Himself. In truth we were orphans, without a father, and without a house or home—outside of the dispensation to Israel, of which as Gentiles we never formed a part: and not yet introduced into this new dispensation or economy which was about to be opened in heaven.

It was that we might not be left in this state that these chapters from 13 to the end were written, and which open up to us the new sources of life and love which the departure of Jesus to the Father, formed for Himself and us. We were orphans; but new revelations and heavenly relations were at hand, and thus Jesus said, “I will not leave you orphans [comfortless], I will come to you.” “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you” —blessed portion! Two abodes for those who have part and place with the departed One are opened out in these scriptures: the first is in the Father's house for the orphans but the children of His adopting love; and the second is on earth, and in ourselves— “if a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” The intercession and communion are thus maintained between the Father and the Son and the children, by the descended Holy Ghost in the power of life in our inner man; and in a known understood fellowship, which makes us partakers of Christ and with Christ, in love and joy and peace. For instance, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” He puts us also into the same place that He held with the Father. “Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” So in reference to love, His own love, “having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end,” and as regards His Father's love, “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 was indeed this hidden communication, so real and yet so unintelligible at that time, which led one of the disciples to ask, “Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?” How entirely different was this kind of intercourse from What they had known with their Messiah on the earth, in the days of His flesh, and which was closed up at Bethany! He who was once seen with their eyes and heard and looked upon and which their hands had handled is now the invisible and departed One—the absent and the missing One—but nevertheless to be known and enjoyed in a new way, and in such a manner as would surpass all they had ever felt or understood before, even when their hearts burned within them, as He talked with them on the Emmaus journey! “We have the mind of Christ” —they had the opened understanding.

In a certain sense the general acknowledgment of Christians is a true one, and most important when intelligently made, that this period in which we are living is “the dispensation of the Spirit.” The Holy Spirit has come down consequent on the Son of man's glorification, “I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter that he may abide with you forever” —fruit of the

intercession of Christ above. Besides this, the Holy Ghost has descended in virtue of the title and right of the ascended Lord in His own person, “when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness,” &c. But further, as to ourselves, “howbeit when he the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth, for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear that shall he speak, and he will show you things to come.” Proceeding from the Father, sent by the Son, and dwelling with us and about to be in us, He is the glorifier of Christ, the Son of man in power and glory on high; “he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you.” Finally, and to complete this full statement of blessedness during our Lord's absence, and that we might not be left orphans, it is added, “all things that the Father hath are mine; therefore, said I, that he shall take of mine and show it unto you.” This is what the apostles in their varied epistles bring out to us, under the anointing and teaching of the Holy Ghost.

The descended Spirit, thus standing in relation to Christ's own which are in the world as the Comforter, takes a place of convicter towards all who are not His: “when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment.” He is the evidence and witness, from the departed One who is with the Father, of the world's sin, which cast out righteousness in the glorified Man, and of the coming judgment of God upon those who did it, and of the casting out of its prince. The presence of the Holy Ghost upon earth is all this, whether men accept the conviction and receive their forgiveness through faith in the blood of the Lamb, or not. These chapters contain the great characteristics of this parenthesis (so to speak) in which we are living, and which bring out the requisite revelation of the purposes of God respecting us; and unfold the relations with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, till the Lord comes again to receive us to Himself, and to present us in the Father's sight, holy and unblameable and unreproveable.

The Church of God does not properly form the subject of the Son's ministry, and is therefore not found in this gospel; but the Father, whom He came to reveal, and the Father's house which He is gone to prepare for us, and the joint manifestation of the Father and the Son making their abode with us while unmanifested to the world, are the prominent features of these chapters. Some details which they present, as the Lord was teaching these mysteries to His disciples, may now be examined. Two things in the beginning of chapter 13 which refer to the Lord alone need be stated, that we may understand the ground on which He personally acted in their midst. The first is, “Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, and having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end,” so that go where He may His own are one with Him. The second thing to notice is, “Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel and girded himself; after that he poureth water into a basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet,” &c., and this ministry of love connects the Lord with us where we still are. “If I wash thee not [as he said to Peter], thou hast no part with me,” explains and accounts for the object of this loving service to “his own which were in the world,” though because they were no longer of it.

Strange and contradictory powers are brought into view in this chapter: on the one hand, Jesus in the activity of love, which has girded Him afresh for new ministry; and, on the other, the devil corrupting the mind of Judas Iscariot, and putting it into his heart to destroy his Lord and Master. The devil and man are together, but as they never were before, nor ever can be again; “and after

the sop Satan entered into him. He then having received the sop went immediately out and it was night," and a long and dreary night it has been from that hour to this, save as divine grace has broken into it, to "turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." But let us return to Jesus, and witness the self-sacrificing devotedness of His heart to His disciples. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His own whom Jesus loved, and this place of confiding rest for the head of a disciple is as necessary, in order to have part with Jesus where He now is, as that He should gird Himself and wash and wipe a disciple's feet in order to maintain the character by a walk on earth, with the departed One in heaven.

Besides this devotedness of heart and hand to His disciples in the active services of His living love, the hour was come, when by His dying love He reached the point where the Son of man found His glory, and where God was glorified in Him. Connected with this—yea growing out of it—Jesus adds, "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." His perfect obedience in life, and by laying down His life, His decease at Jerusalem, and His burial, were the steps by which He reached these glories for Himself and His Father, till lower He could not go. He had secured everything for God against the full power of Satan by going down into "the lowest parts of the earth." In His own thoughts with the Father, as to the causes that brought Him to this hour, and the consequences in glory both now and hereafter which were about to be declared by His death and resurrection, He must of necessity be alone: and this leads Him to say to the disciples, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you, ye shall seek me, and, as I said to the Jews, whither I go ye cannot come, so now I say to you." His departure out of this world raised the inquiry in Peter, "whither goest thou, and why cannot I follow thee now?"

The present One was soon to be the absent One, and thus a new trouble filled their hearts; nor was their faith able to understand the fact, how He would become the object of their confidence and hope, in the place where ascension would soon carry Him. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Yea, every further word that Jesus spoke was a trouble of heart to those that were to be left behind Him, and when He said to them, "Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know," Thomas replied at once, "Lord we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" Difficulties thicken, as they necessarily must, between Him and them, nor are they lessened when He adds, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also; and from henceforth ye know him and have seen him." This declaration of the identity of the Father and the Son leads Philip to say, "Lord show us the Father, and it sufficeth us." What does this strange but blessed intercourse between our Lord and His own which were in the world prove to us; but the love which was thus giving them "a part with himself" for communion and joy with the Father, and the Father's house, that they might not be orphans when He was gone? The last question, and one of equal importance perhaps, arises as to the required and adequate link between the Father and the Son in heaven, and His own upon the earth, by which this living communication should be maintained in an existing relationship. Fruitful in loving affection to Jesus from whom such blessedness flows, Judas said, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" These four questions from Peter, Thomas, Philip, and Judas, served to reveal and lay the basis, or at least to bring out all that was needful for them and ourselves, as regards our intercourse with the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, in a known peace, "my peace," which the world could neither give nor take away.

Moreover this intimacy is maintained by the Comforter “who dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” upon the footing of an obedience in which love delights: so that Jesus declares, “he that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him and will manifest myself to him.”

All is thus formed and complete that is requisite for a heavenly people to have part with the Son in the Father's house, till He comes again to receive us to Himself. He has girded Himself for our feet, and displayed Himself in a love which draws the disciple's head to His breast. He stands revealed as the way, the truth, and the life, by whom we come unto the Father, and declares, “he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;” adding, “believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me, or else believe me for the very works' sake.” What remains, but that this same love should bring Him back, and crown itself by receiving His own to Himself, “that where he is, there we may be also.”

(To be continued.)

Chapter 166

Our Exodus: 2

In this interval, and while the Holy Ghost is dwelling with us, chapter 15 shows the Vine and its branches, with the clusters of fruit whereby the Father is glorified. The producing powers are in the two preceding chapters which have mainly occupied us; and plants of such planting, branches in such a vine, cannot but yield fruit of the quality which is to the eye and heart of the husbandman. Indeed this chapter of responsibility naturally follows the others which declare our portion with the Son in the Father's habitation, and stands in relation to us as the Book of Deuteronomy did to Israel and their Exodus—a book which, though given by Moses on this side Jordan, has much to do with the other side, when the people had come into the land and had crossed over, to whom he taught the manners and customs and behavior that suited the nation, when in the midst of idolatrous countries that knew not the God of Israel, as His people were called out to know and to obey Him. This John 15 is really a continuation of that same love which, having carried His own upward, when Jesus departed out of this world, desires to associate us with Himself as the true Vine on the earth, and that we may have part with Him in bringing forth fruit whereby His Father may be glorified, down here in the place of true discipleship. What can be plainer or more inviting than the ground He states? “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.” The Lord only knows one path for Himself as for us, and with the same result to both. “These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.” Part, and place, and position, with Him everywhere and in everything, in heaven and on earth, are His only rule towards us, and He has planted us with Himself in life and blessing above, where He is gone, that we may bring forth fruit below, where He is not!

Again, in chapter 16 He spake of His absence to them: “A little while and ye shall not see me; and again a little while and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.” But this little while was as much a parable to them as when He spoke in chapter 14 and said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life,” by whom they could alone come to the Father. Indeed Jesus Himself said, “These things have I spoken to you in proverbs, but the time cometh when I shall no more speak to you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.” What a time was this for the disciples! The Father revealed, but not known; the Holy Ghost not yet given, because the Son of man was not yet glorified; and the Lord whom they had known and loved and who loved them, separated from them first by His death, and then by resurrection from the dead. “Sorrow had filled their hearts.” Was this what He had chosen them for? Was it for this they had left all and followed Him? to be carried outside the fold of Israel and left homeless in a world which was about to cast Him out, and in which they would be houseless and fatherless, orphans and without a hope! They said, therefore, “What is this that he saith, A little while? We cannot tell what he saith.” Jesus knew they were desirous to ask Him, and said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.” But all this was a darkening parable to their minds, till the womb of death gave forth the dawn of the third day.

They would then rejoice “that a man was born into the world” by resurrection, and remember no more the anguish. Ye now therefore have sorrow, “but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you, and in that day ye shall ask me nothing.” This day-time, bright with their risen Lord, chased away the shadows, and turned their night into day. In “that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.” He now reveals Himself to them, in the light of His own personal glory, a light inscrutable to the natural mind and in language unintelligible to the human understanding, but nevertheless received and held by the simplest faith, in the confidence of a love which does not doubt Him, in word or deed. “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee,” &c.

It seems at first sight disappointing, when their thoughts are at rest about Him and themselves, and just beginning to embrace Him in the light of that day of resurrection which was to follow this night of sorrow, to be thrown into yet deeper darkness and distress by their own failure. Hitherto He had spoken of His leaving them but now He says “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.” It is this unchanging and unbroken link which is now to be manifested and to take the place of every other, for all else had gone or were about to give way, and “leave him alone.” In view of this, and to take their own thoughts away from themselves, He said, “These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace.” This is what He was to them; and they would prove all creature-cisterns to be just what they were to Him. If they could receive it, the associations which He had formed for them with Himself and His Father were of such a nature as to have completely changed their relations to all former things, and even to the world itself. “In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world;” and is with Himself and upon His own ground of victory and triumph that He puts them, that His own may have part with Him everywhere and in everything. His work is complete, His path trodden, the next step is before Him, and the very last: and having to do with Him who sees the end from the beginning, and who calls things that are not as though they were, He passes into His own solitudes with His Father.

The wonderful chapter 17 opens this intercourse to us, and lets us in where angels' feet had never stood. It is as the overcomer of the world, that He enters it, and “lifted up his eyes to heaven, And said, Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.” He holds His place too, as “the glorifier of the Father upon the earth,” and the finisher of “the work that was given him to do.” Power had also been given him over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as had been given him; “and this is life eternal that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.” It is such an One, in righteousness upon the earth, and in righteous title as the fulfiller of all that had been entrusted to Him, who can lay claim to His own essential glory; “and now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” God hears man upon the earth speaking these words: righteousness is with this Second man, and joined with perfect obedience, so that God can come back again into the habitable parts of the world and begin His delight with the sons of men. “The glory which thou hast

given me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one."

The Word made flesh has prepared this earth for God by redemption, and God has found a place for the Son of man in heaven by resurrection; nor have these changes, mighty as they are, either shut us out, or left us orphans; for Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Blessed portion, one with the departed where He now is, in the unseen but well-known fellowship with the Father; sealed by the Spirit of adoption—part with the coming One, in all the glory of which this unparalleled chapter witnesses. "That the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Nor is this blessedness known only as the fruit to us of accomplished redemption while unmanifested to the world, nor of glory and power by resurrection to the Son of man, who is to be manifested in the glory of the Father, and in His own glory, and the glory of the holy angels, when He sits upon the throne of His glory; but witnessed as perfectly before God, when in the veiled perfection of His incarnation. "Being in the form of God, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." As the anti-type of the Hebrew servant, who loved his master, and his wife, and his children, and would not go out free; faithful to Him that appointed Him, with the ear bored, or the ear digged, as in the Psalms; as the ear opened, morning by morning as in the Prophet Isaiah; till, passing all that the type could betoken, He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair, and hid not His face from shame and spitting; "Made sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed; and He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death, because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. By such steps as these has God been glorified by the Son of man. Finally, by the perfectness of His loving obedience unto death, He brought back the righteousness of God in company with Himself into the same descending path in which lay our deliverance; till at the grave's mouth the glory waited on Him who lay there to vindicate and claim Him on the third day by taking Him up, "Raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." The Second man began another history, as seated in the heavens, after that God had been first brought back into the earth, through the intrinsic righteousness of the righteous One, on whom the Spirit of God rested in the form of a dove, and who was anointed by the Holy Ghost. The heavens were first drawn aside as a curtain to look down upon this Man whom they have since received, and who now sits there on the right hand of God.

John 18; 19 give us in fact and in detail what we have been considering in full accomplishment. Led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before His shearers, dumb, so He opened not His mouth. Judas, who dipped his hand with his master in the dish, betrayed Him with a kiss. Caiaphas the high priest condemned Him, and Caesar crucified Him. Collective and concentrated human enmity, instigated by Satan, got their vent on the person of the Lord, and found their complete outlet at the cross where He was hung—nailed to the accursed tree by wicked hands.

The descent of the Holy Ghost as the glorifier of Christ, the teaching of the apostles in the various Epistles, and our own anointing and unction from the Holy One, have made this Gospel (and

especially the part which is so peculiarly characteristic of this present period since the departure of Jesus) plain and intelligible to us who have part and place with Him where He is. It is on this account perhaps that we are so little able to understand, much less to enter into, the difficulties and disappointments that filled the disciples' hearts.

Trouble and fear took possession of them at the announcement of Jesus “departing out of this world to the Father,” as we have seen; but an additional fact or two may serve to make their dilemma plain and intelligible to us who were never in it. The example of Mary in chapter 20 shows the bewilderment of mind in which she stood at the sepulcher weeping, and said to the angels, “they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.” What was she for the moment, but a disappointed, homeless, forlorn woman, in truth an orphan in her destitution? But He who said to them, “I will not leave you comfortless [orphans]; I will come to you,” appeared to her, though she supposed Him to be the gardener, and knew not that it was Jesus.

As the risen One, alive again from the dead, He made Himself known to her, first of all, and then bade her, go tell my brethren, “I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.” He has made true His own promise by coming to Mary, and thus He put them into relationship with Himself in life and union, and as sons with the Father in heaven. Moreover “He breathed on them and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” bringing them thus into closer association with Himself in the power of life, as the risen man, the Son of God, and Lord.

The two disciples on their road to Emmaus who talked together, not of His decease or burial but of the empty sepulcher, were in the same perplexity and sorrow as to their Lord as was Mary when she found Him not. The narrative in Luke shows their disappointment and how to their own thoughts they were cast upon the world, friendless and fatherless, orphans in very deed. “We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and beside all this to-day is the third day since these things were done.” The words of the women too, who told the apostles of the empty sepulcher and of the missing body of the Lord Jesus, “seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not.” In fact, if Christ in resurrection was not their hope nor even upon their minds as bound up with His own testimony to them before His betrayal, what must have been their desolation? They had lost Him, and were in this sense of all men most miserable. Personally He had attached Mary to Himself in resurrection, and in this same character He joined these disciples who communed together and were sad. Mary mistook Him for the gardener, and these suppose Him to be a stranger in Israel: yea, so little had the third day brought the light of His resurrection-morn to their thoughts, that they only mention the fact to Himself as the then measure of their desertion by His death. “To-day, is the third day since these things were done.” Then He said unto them, “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning himself.”

Thus by personal intercourse with one and another, and by opening the scriptures and opening their understandings at one time, or else by coming into their midst when the doors were shut, and saying, Peace be unto you, and showing them His hands and His side, He re-established their confidence. “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.”

But neither this redemption nor His own reappearance in their midst and intercourse for forty days had served to disconnect their minds from the world, so as to have part and portion with Him in His

departure to the Father; and what the Holy Ghost would come down to bring to their remembrance or to reveal. When they were come together in Acts 1, they asked of Him, “Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” And He said unto them, “It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power.” Perplexity, if not disappointment, had still hold of them, and especially now that the resurrection which had just given Him back to them must be superseded by an ascension that would take Him away again where He was before. What were these hundred and twenty disciples to do, shut out from the world in an upper room where they continued in prayer and supplication; no longer any hopes of the kingdom glory, or of the nation's blessing as a present thing; shut up to the heavens in the new-born expectations of what “the promise of the Father” should mean, and “the baptism of the Holy Ghost” could be, which they had heard from their again departed Lord?

Further, He had said, “Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses to me both in Jerusalem,” &c. And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. But these were the necessary paths for Him to take, that they might pass out of their orphanage into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to the Father, according to the good pleasure of His will. Their confidence was restored and unshaken, as they saw the cloud receive Him, and angels waiting on Him, and the heavens claiming the rejected One of the earth.

Judas and a band of soldiers had come out against Him with lanterns and torches, as against a thief—the high priest had condemned Him as a blasphemer—Pilate had crucified Him—and the grave had shut its mouth upon Him. It was this dark and dreary path downward into the lowest parts of the earth that had awakened their fears. He was in the region and shadow of death and dead! But now “they look steadfastly into heaven,” and see the risen One, the glorified Son of man by ascension, going up to God in the power of life to be crowned with glory and honor, and to be set over all the works of His hands. And behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus whom ye have seen taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner,” &c. Then returned they to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, “and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, there was a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting.” They are no longer forlorn or destitute. All fear of being left orphans is at an end, for there appeared to them cloven tongues, like as of fire, which sat upon each of them; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. By this baptism of the Holy Ghost the disciples were united to the risen Lord and Head of His body, the Church, and had part and portion with Him in all that the Father hath made Him to be and put into his hands. We are heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. “All things are yours,” the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all things are yours, for ye are Christ's and Christ is God's. And whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

(To be continued)

Our Exodus: 3

But to return. The object and character of the Son's ministry on earth was to declare the Father, and to lay the foundation for this intercourse with the children of His adopting grace: the Holy Ghost as the Comforter came down to dwell with them and to be in them, of which these chapters treat. He had glorified the Father on earth and finished the work that was given Him to do. Founded on this fact Jesus said in John 17 “Now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” As to His own, He adds, “I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world;” and again, “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.” Further, He says, “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them.” He stood between us and God, upon the question of our sins, confessing them and putting them away by the sacrifice of Himself. Here He stands as intercessor between us and the Father, touching His own glory; and the glory which had been given Him as Son of man—bringing us before the Father in love, upon the same ground He took for Himself in righteousness. Yea, more than this, He puts us into the Father's care, because He is about to leave the world: “Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” The circles of the Father's glory through the Son—of the Son's glory with the Father—of the Holy Ghost's glory, as proceeding from the Father and the Son—and of the church's glory as the body and bride of Christ; the pillar and ground of the truth; the church of the living God (though not brought out in this gospel, yet consequent upon the Holy Ghost's presence on earth) are all complete. These describe the peculiarity and blessedness which is our portion, who are called out to take part and place with the departed One, while hidden in the heavens, till He comes to receive us to Himself.

Chapter 21 is another proof of the incapacity of the disciples, previous to the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, to connect themselves with Christ in resurrection—and the last one. They put themselves in relation to their former pursuits, as deserted and forsaken—left to their own resources as comfortless. “Peter saith to them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.” But He who had said “I will not leave you orphans, I will come to you,” appeared on the shore to take part with them, in their unsuccessful fishing; and to leave another proof behind Him, that as the risen Son of man (who had put them, in chapter 20, into relationship with His Father, and His God, and was Head over all things) He had also all things put under His feet, “all sheep and oxen, yea, and the beast of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the sea.” In the exercise of this title He said unto them, “Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it, for the multitude of fishes.”

They no longer ask of the “little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me, and because I go to the Father,” for the Lord had rejoined them, “having loved his own

which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.” They have passed out of their trouble and fear, though as yet, not at home with the risen one, who had afresh charged Himself with the care of His own, and all that concerned them; so when they were “come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.” He has girded Himself anew and come forth from death and the grave to show Himself to them, and to serve them, in these new titles by resurrection, on his way up to the Father; and to His place on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. The sorrow that filled their hearts when He left them has given place to satisfaction, though none of the disciples are at ease with Him, in these new ministries of His love, any more than when He girded Himself with the towel, to wash their feet; yet they “durst not ask him Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.” As the risen Son of man, Jesus has proved to them, that He is the Lord of the seas as well as of the earth on which He stood, and then “cometh and taketh bread and giveth them, and fish likewise.” This is now the third time that Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after that He was risen from the dead. They have seen the Lord and He has made Himself known to them in breaking of bread, and by the net full of great fishes, a hundred and fifty and three. “Part with me,” as Jesus said in chapter 13, was the object before Him, in regard to His own, when leaving the world to go to the Father; and the ways by which this fellowship has been formed and secured till He comes again to receive us to Himself (by the descent of the Holy Ghost, and His abiding presence as the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, and the glorifier of the Son, both by indwelling power for our communion, and by outward testimony to the world), have been the subjects of the intervening chapters. But there remained in chapter 21, for the Lord to take His place with Peter, as the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, by restoring that disciple who had denied Him, to the confidence of that love which was stronger than death, and which no denial could turn aside. Subjected to this searching care of the soul, piercing even to the dividing and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart; another sorrow takes hold of this disciple, and he judges himself for not taking part with his Lord when blasphemously accused and condemned. Conscience and heart do their work, when Jesus said the third time, “Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?” “Peter was grieved because be said unto him the third time Lovest thou me? and he said, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.” It is in this character of “the shepherd and bishop of souls” that the departing Lord thus established Himself in grace; and it is this disciple, whose feet had been washed at the beginning, and whose soul had been restored at the close, who consistently speaks to us, in his epistles, of our Lord in these two offices. The confidence of Jesus in Peter, by this recovery under the Bishop's care of his soul, received an immediate proof by the Lord's saying to him, “Feed my lambs.” As the great Shepherd of the sheep, brought again from the dead by the God of peace, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, He said again, “Feed my sheep:” and the last chapter of Peter's first epistle is very full and complete, in the recognition of our Lord and himself in this responsibility as an under-shepherd, in view “of the crown of glory that fadeth not away.”

In every fresh relation in heaven with the Father, and on earth, as caring and feeding these “other sheep which are not of this fold” (see John 10:16), these disciples have part and place with their Lord; and these positions and their corresponding services, form the peculiarity (as we are tracing) of this present period marked by Christ's absence, and the descent of the Holy Ghost.

But there was yet one more proof, by which a disciple might have part with his Lord; and of this Jesus speaks to Peter, before He finally leaves the world for the Father's presence. “Verily, verily, I

say unto thee, When thou wast 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 whither thou wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me." What could unjealous love do, but set "His own" in the road He had Himself trodden down to death, as the new pathway by which a disciple could have part with his Lord—and in which glory on earth was to be reached, and God glorified by the laying down of life? Another disciple was standing by, whom Jesus loved, who also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, Which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter, seeing him, saith to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith to him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Here also is a last and crowning instance of the love of the Lord to "His own, which were in the world," and of the character of the love, in which "He loved them unto the end." He sets John in the ways of His own steps to wait for His coming—just as He had put Peter to follow Him in death—a death by which he should glorify God. Love, divine love, Christ's most perfect love, had identified His own with Himself in all that His departure out of the world to the Father would carry Him up to; and this love had set us to have part with Himself there in the springhead of life, everlasting life, and at the fountain of all blessing, the only source of righteousness, and joy, and peace. Himself is now the unfailing and untainted channel of supply to us, through whom these living waters flow, Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith and this same Christ too the hope of glory, the glory for which we wait. The Holy Ghost, the Paraclete, who dwelleth with us and is now in us, has become the living power in the new man, for this fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ into which we are thus called. Moreover this ministry is known and understood by us, inasmuch as it is we who are strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man and according to the riches of His glory. Under such operations of the Holy Ghost in us, what could be the corresponding effects in a disciple so inwrought but what we have just seen the Lord introduced Peter to by death—a death by which he should glorify God, and John by the patience and suffering in continuous life till the Lord came, a life by which he would tarry, if needs be for the glory of Christ? Peter knowing and calmly telling the church of God, "that shortly he must put off his tabernacle, as the Lord had shewed him," and John writing to us as a "brother and companion in the tribulation and kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ."

If we go on in our thoughts beyond the relation to disciples, in which the Holy Ghost thus works to bring out the resemblance to Christ in death, or in life; and consider the church and what we are, as members of Christ's body, of His flesh, and of His bones—such meditations would carry us beyond this Gospel, or even the Apostle John's writings, and beyond the subject of this paper.

There are three distinct ministries in the New Testament; one is the blessed ministry of the Son when on earth, which made known the Father and brought us into the place of adopted children that we might not be left below as orphans; the Son Himself going away to the Father's house, and the many mansions, to prepare a place for us; that we should not be left destitute and homeless.

The next ministry is that of the Holy Ghost by the apostles, gathering out the members of Christ into living union with the ascended Lord, and forming them into a body with the risen Head by the baptism of the Spirit, thus constituting the Church of the living God, the body and bride of Christ, the Lamb's wife.

The other ministry is “the revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave unto him to show unto his servants the things which must shortly come to pass,” and has to do with the kingdom, and with the holy Jerusalem, the city coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, “having the glory of God.” It was with the first of these three glorious ministries and revelations we have had to do, as children with the Father, and what the Father's love in counsel and the loving and perfect work of the Son in death and resurrection opened out for us during a period like the present, when the world which cast Him out, if either sees Him, nor knows Him. May the Lord give us individually to prove how real and true an abode the Father and the Son have with us now, and with the family, by an obedience which is the element in which divine love lives and dwells! “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.”

In conclusion, if these chapters in the Gospel of John, from chapter 13 onward, open out to “His own who are in the world” our new connections and relations with the Father, through the departed One, and by the living fellowship of the Holy Ghost, as the abiding Comforter, till the Lord comes to receive us to Himself, how immense must be their value!

If Satan's blinding power can be brought in anywhere, so as to obscure the light which so brightly shines; or close the eye against the knowledge of this glory, in the saints, we may surely expect his wiles and artifices would be directed here: and so they have been, and alas with too much success. Else how can it be accounted for, that the blessed hope of the Lord's coming and our gathering together unto Him, should have been for ages lost to His people? How else can it be understood that His own descent from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, should almost by common consent be postponed to the last day; and that consequently our being caught up to meet Him (which depends upon His own descent into the air) should be also put off to the remotest point of time? The newborn hopes and expectations of His own were no longer to rest on the restoration of the kingdom to Israel according to Old Testament prophecy; but upon His departure to prepare a place for them in the Father's house; leaving them this assurance, “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.” “If I will that he tarry till I come” is the only measure that a disciple who estimates everything respecting time and place by Christ, will consent to adopt as the rule of his faith, or the guide to his hope. But, thank God, the fact of the Lord's second coming as a present hope to the souls of His own, that they might not be left orphans, has been recovered to the church in this century—but how revived or restored, if it had not been lost? Many thousands, in various parts of christendom and the world, have also been awakened by the cry: “Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him:” but how aroused, if they had not all slumbered and slept?

The withering power of Satan's craft has likewise settled upon and blighted as an understood and present fact, the descent of the Holy Ghost to dwell with the saints and to be in them.

His presence as a divine Person, has been reduced to a mere influence, and thus the great and distinguishing peculiarity of “the promise of the Father,” by the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost upon the disciples, as the abiding Comforter, is as much out of mind as a fact, as the coming of the Lord has been as a hope. It is the Holy Ghost who has taken the place of Christ upon the earth in the midst of His own; and occupies the interval between the departure of the Son

to the Father, and His coming again to receive us to Himself.

What a master-piece of the devil's policy was it, to wrest these facts and hopes which the love of Christ to His own had provided, that they should not be comfortless, and, by stripping the Lord's people of their unfailing resources in the heavens, and the Paraclete on earth, put them back into the very place of orphans How else can it be explained, that such multitudes of Christians are found praying for the Holy Ghost, in the forgetfulness that their responsibility is, “not to grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed to the day of redemption?”

Certain consequences must follow these grave denials of the coming of the Lord as a present hope to His saints; and the personal presence of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, during the absence of Christ, to dwell with us, and be in us; yea, and to carry out the counsels and purposes of God upon earth, respecting Christ and the church. These consequences have followed, and are equally a matter of confession and for a lamentation as when Jeremiah wept and said, “Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us, and consider, and behold our reproach. We are orphans and fatherless. We labor, and have no rest. We have given the band to the Egyptians, and to the Assyrians, to be satisfied with bread. Princes are hanged up by their hand, and the faces of elders were not honored. The crown is fallen from our head: woe unto us that we have sinned. Her Nazarites were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk; their visage is blacker than a coal, they are not known in the streets. The precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, how are they esteemed as earthen pitchers, the work of the hands of a potter!”

Besides the personal state which these quotations from Jeremiah so plainly and affectingly describe as suited to the present day; the particular revelation which was opened in the ministry of the Son, as we have seen, and continued by the Holy Ghost through the apostles, when the departed One took His place as the glorified Son of man, at the right hand of God in heaven has been obscured, if not lost to the Church. For example, a rejected Christ, rejected and cast out by the world, is not followed in the pathway that caused His rejection; nor is the departed One any longer the missing One, any more than the absent Lord, the expected One. On the contrary, “my Lord delayeth his coming” not only characterizes Christendom as the Lord prophesied; but the evil consequences have followed thickly amongst the fellow servants. In the lamentable forgetfulness or ignorance of their proper relations with the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and to one another as the body and bride of Christ—as waiting for His coming, and the marriage of the Lamb: the enemy and the “evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” have turned the thoughts back again to Egypt, and the providential mercies of God to be enjoyed in this world. How else can it be accounted for, that such multitudes have turned aside to ordinances and ritualistic observances; and the distance from God in which a worshipper must consciously find himself who is so employed?

Nor indeed is there any other alternative for a believer, a man in Christ, but to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,” or else fall back on a previous economy and its religion, and become Judaistic, or in modern language a Ritualist. Though evangelicalism may escape this condemnation, by accepting Christ for worship and faith, and by a refusal of the shadows which served till He really came; yet the retrograde steps are equally plain, and for a lamentation upon another ground. How else can the practice of such be understood, in their organizations for the conversion of the world, and the restoration of the Church upon this earth;

when they unhesitatingly turn back upon the Old Testament scriptures and the prophets to prove a good time coming, and find a warrant for their work? Solomon and his prosperity as a center on the earth, with all his might and glory, is accepted as the type for this corrupted Christianity; instead of Christ and the cross, and a present crucifixion to the world by it, in true loyalty of heart to the rejected Lord, and in a willing allegiance with the departed One, till His shout announces Him!

“I have given them thy word, and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world even as I am not of the world:” —what word was this?

It is of the greatest moment, for our communion and fellowship with the Father and the Son, as well as for our true guidance in service for to-day, to give the place and authority to the words of our Lord over us, to which He refers in John 17, “I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee:” —what words were these? And again as to the truth which came by Him, both as regards His present position to us, and ours to the Father, “Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth: and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.” No, we are not left orphans, to eat the crumbs that fall from another's table; nor to, steal the earthly promises that belong to the people of Israel; on the contrary, it was said to the Hebrews, that “God had provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.”

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us; unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages.”

J. E. B.

Chapter 168

Our Separating Brethren: 1

The above is the title of a leading comment of the “Christian Journal.” It is painful to be drawn from the simplicity and fullness of Christian enjoyment to contend with those who would reproach us for following our consciences. We do not doubt the editor of the “Christian Journal” is both wise and prudent; but, though he knows the world in all ages and the church in all ages, there are often things which the simple are taught, which are hid from the wise and prudent. That the evils of a depraved nature are attached to and to be contended with by the “separating brethren” is certainly not new; that they have to contend with the snare of the enemy, who would take advantage of their ignorance and weakness but for One who helps them is equally true, and they are in a measure conscious of it.

Of this part of the subject the editor of the “Christian Journal” in all his writings seems to be profoundly ignorant; and it is not to be wondered at, as he continues in a system of which he has seen the evil, which he has rejoiced at being shaken to the foundations, as a heretical system inconsistent with the progress of the gospel. The “separating brethren” believe this, and therefore they are dissociated from it. The editor of the “Christian Journal” believes it, and he is not dissociated from it. It cannot therefore be a matter of surprise to them, if his eyes are dim to other and greater evils. Acting on what we know is the real power of faith. Could the editor of the “Christian Journal” condemn any one for not being subject to that which he declares to be “inconsistent with the progress of the gospel?” One might suppose the answer would be easy; to a simple Christian it would be easy; he would not condemn them. The answer is, that he does condemn them, and approves of those who remain connected with it, and supports that which he says is so. What can his “separating brethren” see in this, but the spirit of the world? Nor is it anything else.

And since the editor cast off so distinctly his “separating brethren,” from whom he was not always so alienated, to throw himself into the hands of the worldly party in the church, it has been quite manifest to a discerning eye, that the spirit and character of the “Christian Journal” has quite changed; that it has become less spiritual and more worldly, less pressing separation from the world, and more sanctioning continuance in known evil; that it has ceased, comparatively, to press conformity to Christ in order to press conformity to the English Establishment. The latter purpose it may do well; and we will not compete with him in the pursuit of it. We would desire in peace to seek the former: to this the “Christian Journal” has ceased to be available. We should not have had formerly (as we have in the number, on the leading article of which I am now commenting) a sermon on the text, “Be ye conformed to this world” (signed “A Clergyman”). I do not deny that occasional articles of measured difference from the world may be introduced to suit the taste of all; but the character and tendency of the journal is in this respect wholly changed, and the reason is obvious. The editor, or others with whom he is associated, found that he could not press thorough nonconformity to the world without its producing nonconformity to the English Establishment, because the spirit of the world was in it. Not having faith to get over human support of circumstances, he chose to hold by the Establishment, and resume the spirit of the world it carried

with it, rather than give up the world and the church that had identified itself with it. The article alluded to is adequately illustrative of this, and is very aptly signed “A Clergyman.” It is the expression of the claim of conformity to the world, and worldly station, which is implied in the maintenance of the system, symbolized by the signature of the paper; and I cannot but think that the pressing of that point in such a way would not at one time have met the approbation of the editor of the “Christian Journal.” But descent is gradual. I have but little hope of his present emerging from the system. When “Ephraim is joined to idols,” the word is, “Let him alone.” But I do think if the editor read the paragraph in that article “Our Gracious Savior,” his conscience would smite him on recurring to former thoughts; if not, I should grieve. The “separating brethren” have felt differently as to the question, and acted differently; they have felt, and sorrowfully felt, that they must (the necessity was not of their own making) leave the system the clergy sought to maintain, if they wished to leave the spirit of the world and to walk as Christians. They did so at cost and sorrow to themselves, the loss of friends and fortune, often of situations in life, and in many instances of home, and always at the cost of bitter and cutting reproach, none of which but wisdom and prudence is the character of those who remain. So long as “thou doest well to thyself, all men will speak well of thee.”

I know it will be answered, the church (so-called) is abused on all sides; but that is a far different thing from personal reproach, and merely produces esprit du corps. The Lord's denouncements of Jerusalem were far different from the reproach which He suffered because He was a stranger to their ways, of which He says (how little we bear of it now, I well know!) “reproach hath broken my heart:” may we abound in it, if it is for His sake! Sufferings the Establishment is undergoing; but the question remains to be asked, are they suffering for righteousness' sake? Is it for the abundance of her labors, her bold testimony, her separation from the world, her intolerance of its evil? We may suffer for evil; and the hatred of the nations accrue, I read, against a corrupt church, for other reasons, than for its righteousness. “These shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire; for God hath put it in their hearts.” The clergy have suffered in Ireland; they have also suffered in France; they are suffering in Spain and Portugal. Is it for righteousness sake? I do not believe it is for righteousness' sake, but for unrighteousness' sake. The exertions of those who violate their own system and break through its authorities (in which exertions we may in a great measure rejoice, for every way Christ is preached) are not the cause of its sufferings, but quite the contrary; nor have they at all arisen from the order on which the system is based, but from an entire violation of it, as they will surely end in its destruction.

But I would advert as a passing service to the article, whose title is at the head of the present paper and the fairest way would be to give it in full. I cannot but remark that the style of our judges is very much altered. Heretofore we were “schismatics” and “enthusiasts,” and the Epistle of Jude applied to us and the like. Now we are “separating brethren,” and though there are some hints, in italics, about mental derangement, yet the great point to be pressed is, that holiness of life is not a sure preservative against error in judgment—a statement of most ambiguous and doubtful character.

But surely the editor of the “Christian Journal” wise and prudent as he may be, should at least, hesitate before “pride and peevishness,” if not pretended purity, be taken as the causes of the separation of those, of whom he declares the great majority are “Israelites indeed, in whom is no

guile," "more than ordinarily engaged in doing good." We would have supposed there must have been something of the Spirit of Christ; not a "proud or peevish spirit" surely, though full of heaviness and scarce bearing the evil around Him, in those who are of such a character and activities. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile, and He went about doing good; and He, too, was "separate from His brethren," and blessings descended upon His head. He was not, indeed, approved by the wise and prudent; none of the rulers nor of the Pharisees believed on Him, only the foolish people who, through grace, would not call evil good and good evil, nor put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter; to whom fellowship with guileless Israelites who went about doing good was more valuable, though wise and prudent people thought it error, than the charge of error from worldly-minded people was the occasion of fear. The rest saw that if they let Him thus alone, the Romans would come and take away both their place and nation. Little, little indeed, have we of His Spirit; hut if we are of this character, surely it is from His Spirit, and they who condemn should be cautious where the fruits are such, lest, where the Spirit of Christ so dwells, the separation may not come from the same cause. It is a circumstance singular and fatal to the established system, that those who separate from it should be habitually such.

But the editor of the "Christian Journal" seems habitually (I do not mean intentionally) to neglect the idea of the Spirit of Christ on the one hand, and the power of Satan on the other, and thus, while prudent as to circumstances, to be very little informed of God's estimate of the causes of things and of their real character. Thus, in any selected articles in the present number, you will find "Divisions of Parishes," "Man Contemplated," "The Power of the Press," "The Calls are Many," "Sales in a Great City," "Hints to Clever People," and "A Caution to Clergymen not to let Poor People to their Table," but not one, save a feeble allusion of Coleridge's, of the selected articles, in which there is the smallest allusion to the Spirit of God or of Christ. Here is the real source of the difference between us. He looks to means of mending the world of human devisement, declaring it to be a "false fact," that it is not actually getting better. We, foolishly no doubt, would desire to be "Israelites indeed, in whom is no guile, more than ordinarily engaged in doing good;" and are content if our Lord finds us so, and seek for His Spirit to enable us to be so, while we cannot help thinking that the world is, as it ever was, an evil and ungodly one, which is judged because it rejected Christ, crucified the Lamb of God. But smooth as the article may appear and kindly wise, it is indeed very bitter, and, I regret to add, very ignorant, or else full of what must be called chicanery; I do not doubt the former.

I shall merely comment, I trust very calmly, on some of its statements. It disclaims the charge of pretended purity, but does charge real pride and peevishness. This his "separating brethren" must leave to God, conscious that there is everything in them which would lead to it. But, thinking it probable that in the abounding of evil they may have been sometimes guiltily weary in spirit, we will take courage from the warning and be bolder and more decided—more cheerful in our opposition for the future.

But there is a remarkable confession contained in the account. "In the majority of instances they are Israelites in whom is no guile, and, like the beginners of all other Christian sects, they are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good." The character given them I pass by here, though we might fancy there was a little of that sort of peevishness, which is hard to please, in the characteristics of proud Israelites in whom is no guile, who are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good. Neither can we say that the "Christian Journal" (while hard to please, if such Christians as these he

describes do not satisfy it) is empty of expressions of discontent at the “separating brethren,” though it may live more in expressions of self-satisfaction and at the world which denied Christ around it. But it is not this I would dwell on, but that the beginners of all other Christian sects are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good. Now this is surely an extraordinary circumstance, that invariably those who left the Establishment are more assimilated to Christ than others, than those who do not. Is not this an appalling circumstance in the character of the English Establishment, that those who are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good are somehow or other driven out of it—in other words, beginners of sects? Is the selfishness of the system insensible to the fact, that, as men become in all ages animated by the Spirit of Christ, they cannot remain in it? They may have failed in continuing their system in the same character it began. So did the apostles, because their work hung on the presence of the Spirit of God, and the spirit of the world came in and the church sank. So did not popery, so did not the English Establishment, because in various degrees they joined the world and were of its spirit, and the world owned them; and they went with the world, and continued as long as the world bore them and was satisfied with them. Hence, when the Spirit of God wrought, discontent arose because it would not bear with the spirit of the world; men became more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, and the church would not bear this; it was irregular, and they would not give it up, because the Spirit of Christ and the love of Christ constrained them, and they were the beginners of sects. The same platform soon held them again when they became worldly together. But, indeed, it was very evil that they separated from the established system; they troubled the ease of worldliness. This could be the only reason, for “they were Israelites in whom was no guile, more than ordinarily engaged in doing good,” and therefore not, it is to be supposed, worse Christians. They were better Christians but worse churchmen, and that was a very great evil. But, indeed, they were like to be reduced to atoms; if so, the “Christian Journal” should have in the use of its motto turned unto old Gamaliel, and taken his advice, and (after quoting kindly Swedenborgians and Quakers and Irvingites as the parallel cases of those Israelites in whom is no guile) have refrained from these men and let them alone. For if they are going to atoms by themselves, it is foolish to bind them by external compression and immortalize the ephemeral existence of the “separating brethren” in the “Christian Journal” when they will be so soon gone to atoms. I trust that, when they cease to be Israelites indeed in whom is no guile, more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, they will be remembered nowhere else and by no other testimony and go into atoms heard of no more, even as two together. Such is my earnest wish and sincere prayer to God, save as their portion is with Him, who coming shall not reject such as He finds so doing. Whom He would estimate, we would be; and not say, “My Lord delayeth his coming:” let us go on and live with the world.

But I repeat that it is a remarkable fact for the “Christian Journal” to attest that such has been the spirit of all separated from the English Establishment; and what does she care? We agree entirely “they went out from” her because they were not of her; but of the instances let us now inquire.

And we must confess, besides the spirit which would associate the “separating brethren” with Swedenborgians, there is not only no reference to God's Spirit in this article but a very fearful trifling with scripture.

As to Thomas Fuller, I will not question his piety, though much more remarkable for a very tenacious memory, and a strong adherence to all the corruptions which the editor of the “Christian Journal” would reform. His acuteness in the paper in question at any rate entirely failed him; for,

having resisted all reformation such as the editor would seek, he was deprived; and, when the gross corruptions were entirely restored, he got his share of them again, and was only prevented by death from being one of the hierarchical system (inconsistent with the progress of the gospel), on account of his staunch support of the corruptions. A reformation, however, of the Church of England took place, such as the editor desires, and it lasted about ten years. When it ceased to exist, which it did soon after their close, the atomic separatists remained on the restoration of Charles II. a widely extended body, to which the remnants of the reformed Church of England of the day (being turned out by the new Church of England, under the monarchy, by the Bartholomew Act of 1666) attached themselves, and were lost amongst them under the general title of Nonconformists, those who were distinctly such having for the most part in late years turned Socinians, the ultimate result of the improved Church of England. On Thomas Fuller's character I do not think it necessary to comment. But it is beyond controversy that the reformed or improved Church of England was lost or remains in Socinian deputies, and the atoms of separatists form the active extended bodies of Independents and Baptists, a result I have no desire the “separating brethren” should ever arrive at. Thomas Fuller's sentiments may be excellent, and none can read them without perceiving their applicability; but unfortunately, though they may serve the editor of the “Christian Journal” as a prophecy, they have been sadly falsified. At any rate it is too bad to be blamed for studying divine prophecy, which is surely true and given us to study, and to bring out human prophecy which has proved all false and helps only to prove the present editor's prophecies false with it, which I pray the readers of the “Christian Journal” to note.

And now of the other instances. First of the Swedenborgians, to which the editor so kindly compares his “separating brethren;” he has reason to believe Baron Swedenborg was an eminently devoted man. “His tenets are drawn from the scriptures, and supported by quotations from them.” What does the editor mean? The Swedenborgians deny the Trinity, the atonement, and almost every sound Christian doctrine, and draw their notions from a vision of Baron Swedenborg in a coffee-house in London, and subsequent revelations. Was the editor aware of these things, when he said his tenets are drawn from scripture and supported by quotations from them? Surely his jealousy of his “separating brethren” has carried him beyond the bounds of prudence, when he asserts that the tenets of those who deny the Trinity, the atonement and the like Christian doctrines, and who hold Swedenborg's revelations exclusively as to the other world, are drawn from scripture and supported by quotations from them. Probably he was quite ignorant of what he spoke; but scripture ought not to be thus trifled with, however his “separating brethren” may.

As to George Fox, I do not doubt he was a pious man, wrong as I think the system he founded; but here we are told again, “drawing his doctrine from the pure source of religious truth, the New Testament,” &c. Does the editor believe this? Does he know that the Quakers, though the Lord is now working very extensively amongst them, would not as a regular thing read the New Testament; and trusted to everything spoken as they supposed by the Spirit as of equal authority, looking to the living word and the inward light and not simply to the New Testament for guidance; though they thought that might be uttered or written from the same inward light, and therefore so far had authority with them, but, in fact, was very little attended to by them as the shell of the letter: the disregarding of the letter of scripture being a distinguishing mark of old Quaker habits? But, wild as many of them ran, as surely they did, when following this supposed light, as separating

from and testifying against the English Establishment, very few of their testimonies failed to take effect. The system they might afterward set up might be very defective, as it undoubtedly was, and their doctrine most defective as not founded on scripture, but their open testimony against the English Establishment was often with much serious power, and the things took place. No one can read George Fox's Journal but must see that he was remarkably sustained before the persecuting magistrates of the day, who sought to support the Church of England against them; and that it is in their great declension which has kept the Quakers together. They might be without a rudder, but the shore they had left behind them was in a ruin from which they had escaped.

(To be continued)

Chapter 169

Our Separating Brethren: 2

As to Mr. Irving, he is too much present as it were amongst us to say much. I believe their great defect to be (as it is of the editor and of all he has quoted) that he does not take scripture as his guide, but modern utterances as equivalent to it, as with the Quakers; and my experience of Irvingites is, that though full of particular passages there used, and interpretations upon them current among themselves, there is very little unborrowed study of scripture, very little reading of it for themselves, looking for the guidance of the Spirit. The peculiar characteristic of the system to my mind is the withdrawing people from this, and I never find them give simple heed to scripture.

On the other hand I think the editor treats holiness with very little ceremony—holiness, real holiness and subjection of heart according to the word can proceed only from God's Spirit; and that is not what will lead into darkness and mistake. The form of it may I admit, but spiritual subdual of evil is not the way of error, but a single eye the way of much light; and I do not think the editor is doing much service to Christianity in so carefully separating real holiness and truth. I believe there are many Christians amongst the Irvingites; I do not believe they are a holy people, but a deceived people.

Fuller, the editor tells us, complained in his day, and Baxter in his day, wise and holy men no doubt, and in every day along with the editor they have to complain of the same thing; but perhaps the editor would have the kindness in his next Journal to tell us what the different days were in which Baxter and Fuller lived. It is hardly honest to make a parade of names at different eras if the editor be ignorant whether they lived at the same or not; nor to state that the tenets of Swedenborgians are drawn from scripture if he does not know what they are; nor to make the scriptures an uncertain source of truth, that the infallibility of the Church of England (just going to be reformed) may be the restingplace of some weary Tostatus.

As to what he urges on the score of Dissent producing pride, it is very likely. The editor must settle that with his dissenting brethren: wherever the Spirit of the Lord is not there will be pride, be it in the Church of England or in Dissent. His “separating brethren” have nothing to do with either. I believe his dissenting brethren think for the most part worse of them than he does; for as for this sect it is everywhere spoken against; and may it ever remain so, and if they are called Nazarenes, be found to be Nazarites indeed!

“The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their house in the rock.”

With regard however to raising some to importance, we will not affirm that either adequate wisdom, or (we would add) adequate humility, is shown in those of this world's honor, who have separated from an evil state of things; but as to exalting the importance of individuals, they do not deny or shrink from the charge. Some are exalted and some brought low. If as the church and the clergyman in this Journal would have it, the high are to keep their place in the world, we grant it may often do so; but if they mind not high things, but walk with men of low estate in the simplicity of Christ, great blessing follows. We read, “let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is

exalted, and the rich in that he is made low, because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.” They do not say that there is not trial of grace in these things; but they believe, when done in grace, the approximation of these to each other is accompanied with great blessing.

The use, as to us, the Lord made of His glory was to empty Himself, give it up, become poor, that we by His poverty might become rich. He could not but be superior and different after all from those to whom He came; but He hid it, showed it only in the glory of continued and more abounding service, and knowing that all things were delivered unto Him of His Father, and that He came from God and went to God, He took a towel and girded Himself, and washed His disciples' feet, showing us that if He, our Lord and Master, washed their feet, we ought also to wash one another's feet, for He had given them an example that they should do as He had done to them. In a word, He took the privilege of His glory to be among them as one that serveth. May we be like Him! The only advantage I know of earthly glory is the privilege of giving it up. The poor man's grace will be shown in a wholly unassuming spirit, giving the other double honor because of his willing lowliness; but the principle our Lord gives is, “He that is great among you, let him be your servant.” The real secret is to give its value to Christ's grace. If it be the value of adding to numbers without the power of grace, it is purely evil.

But the great sin, the peevishness of the “separating brethren,” this hardness to please, seems to consist in their not thinking that the “Christian Journal” and the like are mending the world. This is a terrible thing, this “false fact.” But the editor seems to forget that the great body of godly clergy in this country believe in this “false fact” too; while his dissenting brethren quite agree with the editor that their Lord delayeth His coming.

But indeed it comes out a little after that there is a general agreement to set common sense and stubborn facts at the most open defiance, and that too in spite of all the pains of the editor of the “Christian Journal.”

“If there is one fact more indisputable than another, we think it is this, that within the last twenty years there has been an extraordinary spread of true religion throughout this country—so much so, as to produce a great and beneficial influence over those who are not ravingly influenced thereby,” &c. If any deny this, he asks pardon for not attempting to prove the same.

I do not think it a good thing continually to seek to make people pleased with themselves: it argues a low and a falling standard; but this, of course, must mend the country and improve it, and give reason to think prospects are indeed brightening. We will not listen to these Micaiahs that are always prophesying evil concerning us and not good. And now, gentle reader, what is the blessed result of this amazing improvement which proves that the world is growing better and not worse and worse, as these foreboders would say, who determine in their own minds that the wicked times prophesied of are our own times?

The “Christian Journal” shall tell.

(To be continued)

Chapter 170

Our Separating Brethren: 3

“Party violence, we are sorry to say, appears not to have diminished since we last wrote; on the contrary, the tendency of things at present is evidently towards a more decided separation between the two great bodies into which the population of Ireland is divided. This is a melancholy fact; we only state it without entering into the question of its immediate cause. We can hardly conceive any country worse circumstanced in this respect than Ireland. The frame of society is just kept from coming to pieces, and that merely by the action of an external force. Such is our view of the subject, that we do not know what is to keep any person who loves peace in Ireland, except utter necessity or a sense of duty.” What! when such immense improvement has taken place in twenty years? These are stubborn facts. As to the common sense, which would argue from it, that the amazing influential spread of religion which has taken place will mend the world, I leave it to the editor of the “Christian Journal.” It seems to me very uncommon sense. I have but turned the journal round; both are its statements as to this country: one side “stubborn facts,” the other the “editor's arguments,” or “common sense,” I suppose I should call it, who thinks the improvement immense and progressive. We are apt to think that the ripening of the wheat may be accompanied by the ripening of the tares, and will not turn them into wheat, but leave the field just what it was, only more manifested and ready to be cut down (but perhaps we are very foolish and the editor very wise); and that the frame of society, being only kept from coming to pieces merely by the action of an external force, is a very plain sign of the universal and happy effect of religion in the country at present. Perhaps it is wrong to say it is growing worse and worse, as the editor of the last page can hardly conceive any country worse circumstanced. We fear he has much sorrow to learn, and we doubt not much joy, for we trust the church may be as much improved as the evil of the world will be magnified; but the closing page of the Journal is a sufficient answer to all the words of the leading article on the subject. This country, at least, which has been so much blessed, is growing worse; just as we expect, just so it has happened.

The fact is that the effect of the “Christian Journal,” and of all who hold its views and seek to put off the consideration of the growing evil and sorrow of the world and approaching judgments, is to daub up hollow walls and corrupt systems with untempered mortar, and they cannot bear to have it detected; the “Christian Journal” is merely an effort and an instrument to do this. It is taken in hand by those who know that things are not getting better, but who would wish to hide the fact that they are getting worse, who, to keep the place they have clung to, and the value of their judgment for a moment, are seeking to hide from others the impending ruin they see well themselves. But their “separating brethren” have no hostility to them, though they see the evil coming; they are guided by moral reasons, and not by that reason, which must be therefore everlastingly stable, when all that may be attempted to be supported by the efforts of man shall have passed away frittered in his hand. They believe that the “Christian Journal” is doing great sin in beguiling souls, and alienating them, through ignorance, from very important truths, amusing them with toys and plans, while judgment is crowding around them, and filled often with as much nonsense and what is merely human as any other thing going. They believe indeed (though they give little credit to much

of the religion that is going) that the saints are ripening for separation to God; they believe for the same reason the tares are doing so too, and the hope of turning tares into wheat they believe to be just the folly of the editor of the “Christian Journal.” When many were called in the days of the apostles, how would modern calculators of results have concluded, that the nation would have been blessed and brought in! What did it prove to those who knew the truth? That the nation was going to be judged! The judgment of human experience is the judgment of folly, but human experience is the wisdom of man set up as an idol by the name of common sense. This it is the editor of the “Christian Journal” worships. The abounding of testimony and evil together are the sure sign of judgment, if scripture wisdom is to be taken as guide.

The last point I shall notice is that which brings the question to issue.

“If we were asked to state the cause which operates more generally perhaps than any other in producing divisions in the present day, we would say it arose from a diseased mind, or a certain morbid sensitiveness of the conscience in one speck, to the exhaustion of all sensibility in a far larger portion—sensitiveness about corruptions to be deplored, doubtless, and remedied, and insensibility to the great dishonor done to God, and the widely extended injury done to souls, by divisions among Christians. Yes, I say unaccountable insensibility of conscience to such passages as that to the Corinthians, I beseech you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment;' or as that to the Philippians, ‘Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.'“

We shall have to see where the unaccountable insensibility lies—where the guilt of division. In the first place, as to morbid conscience, the editor is simply sanctioning sin against Christ in sanctioning sin against a weak conscience. That there are many things that affect weak consciences, worse than eating herbs, is confessed; nay, it is now the fashion to confess that there are gross corruptions in the system of the Establishment—. abominations is the usual word. Now morbid consciences are ill at ease about these. Well, of course they are removed, and the weak conscience is left unoffended; “straight paths made for their feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way,” but that it rather might be healed, and these strong wise men bear their infirmities and remove the difficulties? Not the least. The morbid consciences may go and get comfort where they can, not with these; they may be shocked if they stay, and reproached if they go: what do the strong ones care for that? They have got the world with them, and morbid consciences may comfort themselves where they can. They are Christ's sheep; but what do these shepherds care for that? They have disabled themselves from, or are unwilling to seek, their good, and they may go and get comfort by the road side. Who would trouble themselves with morbid consciences, save to reproach them, if they act on them, which they are bound to do unless they commit sin? In thus doing what offends the weak conscience, they are confessedly sinning against Christ; and in order to gain the world's help, they have sold or given up to the world the deposit of Christ with them, of acting upon the necessary exigencies of the church; they confess they have done so; they have petitioned the State to get leave to amend themselves—the open confession that they have sold their Christian power of fulfilling a direct known duty in the church of God. The “separating brethren” feel this, and they leave the evil, which the clergy confess they cannot amend; but these things which morbid consciences are uneasy about were the subject of the greatest uneasiness, and were entirely objected to by the English Reformers at the Reformation,

and were imposed by the Queen against their wishes, and in spite of the earnest entreaty and remonstrance of many, I might almost say all, of them. The Queen wished to win the Papists, and loved her supremacy, and she insisted on them.

It is often said, can you not acquiesce in what these saints shed their blood for? My answer is, they shed their blood for no such thing, but remonstrated against these things, and secular authority alone enforced them. It is but an example, how the piety of good men becomes continuing sanction for any evil they continue in, and so the snare of Satan; as the piety of Fenelon, Pascal, Arnauld, and De Sacy, is used as authority for continuance in the Roman Catholic Church system. And, what is more, the editor's friend, Baxter, in his day (having in vain endeavored to get them altered, much as he disliked separation and thought it an evil to separate), did separate, when these things were enforced by an Act of Parliament, and with him between 1,500 and 2,000 godly ministers, who all left their cures rather than acquiesce in the things, dissatisfaction at which is now sneered at as the sign of a morbid conscience. I do not doubt that the editor and his friends are much better and wiser than these men, these separatists, whose piety however they are generally content to feed on and to minister to the present food of the church. But how comes it, if this same Baxter was so averse to separation, he felt it necessary to separate, when these things which constitute the uniformity of the English Establishment were imposed?

Or will the editor allow me to ask, is it honest to adduce Baxter as an enemy to separation in his day, when Baxter did actually separate because the things objected to now were insisted on? The editor should remember that the English Establishment had ceased to be “a hierarchy inconsistent with the progress of the gospel” when Baxter objected to separation; but when it was, he separated from it—got (I suppose) a morbid conscience, along with the hundreds of fellow-ministers for which they were fools enough, many of them, to beg their bread with their families. Morbid consciences are very troublesome things sometimes—easy consciences very seldom: there is a day coming in which they may be more occasion of sorrow.

The editor is probably also ignorant, that the imposition of the same things in Scotland produced sadder effects even in many morbid consciences there. These, morbid as they were, were more constant and more valuable to many there than their lives; and the beauties of the English Establishment liturgy were enlivened and exalted by the blood of martyrs, and the torment of the iron boot, on those whose consciences preferred temporal death to the imposition of that they believed to be evil. The prayer book has been the occasion, and its ministers the instruments, of other blood of martyrs than it is perhaps aware of, or accustomed to boast. But what is that to the editor, or the rest of the body here? They have not morbid consciences; they acknowledge it is full of abominations, but no giving up livings, or iron boots for them; they will protest and stay in them, and blame those who leave them for making divisions. No wonder their consciences are really ill at ease, and they dread a testimony to it, and the editor knows it.

I cannot help thinking, and my experience has led me to the same conclusion, that if there were a little more morbidness or (if I may be allowed to change the expression) activity in the consciences of some brethren who do not separate, it would have been no harm. And I cannot help thinking, that the force the State put on the consciences of all the early reformers, and the surrender of beloved flocks by 1500 and upwards of the godliest ministers that ever breathed, and the surrender of their lives, and the endurance of torments by the saints of Scotland, might have called

for something more than the reproach of morbid conscience from anything but the English Establishment. “But the unjust knoweth no shame.” The infection has certainly not reached them. But perhaps some modern Baxter may reform all this, and it shall shine in spotless purity, such as shall satisfy his mind, if not God's; and some pious and acute prebendary, who can give good thoughts in bad times in these days, acquiesce in the reformation and its arrangements, results which he may regret, but which he cannot control. We would only hint, for we do not judge (we acknowledge) of the future from the past, of which we are very ignorant, but from the word of God, which is very sure but only remind (as an argumentum ad hominem) Christians that do, that this reformation of Baxter's of old, godly though he was and disliking separation, lasted ten years, and then everything became worse than before, and he was obliged to separate; nor could in these days (we would suggest) any modern prebendary, when the ten years were closed, feel so sure of recovering his prebend, as the pious and acute Thomas Fuller. For they are, we will agree, evil days; they will hardly afford (may we prophesy?) in any such sense mixed contemplations in better times: we did once to such an one, and the things have not been untrue, though despised.

But widely extended divisions amongst Christians are caused by it. Now let me ask, if there are divisions between “Israelites indeed in whom is no guile, who are more than ordinarily engaged in doing good,” and others who are continuing in connection with, and support of, “gross corruptions,” how is the division to be healed? by those who are not in the corruptions returning to them, or by those who are leaving them? But there is no need of the corruptionists joining their “separating brethren:” let them get rid of these corruptions, and division would immediately cease. Will they forgive one proposing such a remedy, or think it “proud or peevish?” They know they cannot, and therefore they rail at their “separating brethren,” as proud and peevish, and promise that at some future time they may state the grounds on which the duty of adherence to the English Establishment rests in spite of the gross corruptions. In the meanwhile prejudice has been excited against the guileless Israelites, and people maintained in connection with the corruptions, and the point is gained—it is a very hardening system.

The closing paragraph speaks with the most perfect coldness of whole districts not within the reach of a Christian minister by virtue of the system! and those who in such places, led by God's Spirit, may labor and suffer reproach, and gather out souls to Christ, and if any be wicked enough to watch over them, or seek their continued good, are to be branded as schismatics, and proud and peevish. There is certainly no morbidness in the conscience of a modern corruptionist, save that which may consist in having lost its feeling altogether—a mind, I suppose, as diseased in God's eye, as one which would refrain from eating herbs, if it thought it were a sin.

As to “unaccountable insensibility of conscience to such passages, as 'I beseech you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment,' or as that to the Philippians, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.'“ —as to the first we say, the English Establishment has made it impossible. She is bound up in positive error, and so most of her active ministers think: they do not believe for example in baptismal regeneration, though they sign their consent to it. As to no divisions among you—divisions among whom? among believing disciples? Does the editor of the “Christian Journal” mean at present to persuade us that the English Establishment is a body of believing disciples, among whom we make divisions by leaving it? We leave it because it is no company of

believing disciples at all, but a very wicked and nefarious union between the church and the world, because its essence and essential distinction is the chief of all iniquities, the mixing the church in the world, the holding of apostate principles if not a ripened apostate state. The editor of the “Christian Journal” must know the majority of Christians in the world think the English Establishment a system of great abominations; and are apt to charge upon men, such as the editor himself, the sin of division, because they force upon the morbid consciences of weak brethren that which, by the apostle's rule, it would be a sin for them to do. The editor too knows, as to divisions, there was a time when many were willing and desirous to work with and be servants in the activities of godly members of the English Establishment, though they could not sign what they did not believe. They were all cast out as an unclean thing: what could there be but division? and who made it, unless we are to quench the Spirit of God for the fancies of the assumed functionaries of Christ?

At this time, and the writer is not unacquainted with Ireland, I do not know scarcely a single active devoted Christian layman in the English Establishment. There may be a few readers in parishes paid by clergymen, and I trust God will bless their labors, and there may be a few gentlemen patrons of religion in their neighborhood; but otherwise I do not know such a thing in existence. I did know one, as an active devoted laboring Christian layman in the English Establishment. Such as began so, and were more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, speedily left it. Of those, not in it, there are multitudes: but I suppose they are beneath the notice of those with whom it would be wrong to have them at the same table. But I can tell the editor, there was a time when many a mechanic was ordained because he would conform, and the ablest ministers in England shut out because they would not. The clergy delight, I do not doubt, the rest in their solitary self-sufficiency, and maintain their dignified association with the world; and they are welcome.

As to “whereto we have already attained walking by the same rule.” As regards other Christians, we would subject ourselves to brotherly judgment as to our failure.

As for my part, though the progress of Christians who have separated from the English Establishment has, speaking of the mass, been very marked and decided in principle and practice, certainly not less acquainted with scripture, as indeed seems to be implied in the comparison of them with the Irvingites, and confessedly more than ordinarily engaged in doing good, yet compared with the standard that is before them, they know nothing—yea, ever will it be so; and as to doing, I suppose the most of them would confess with sorrow of heart that they come altogether short. They see a standard in every sense in Jesus, and even in early Christianity, but especially in Him, which humbles them and keeps them in the dust at every step. They only pray for more of the Spirit of God to conform them as one body to Him; and may it be so with them and with others!

But, as regards the English Establishment, they confess the attainment is beyond them; they have not reached to this point in practical conduct—to wait for reasons in future to adhere to a thing, in spite of gross corruptions, where God has said “withdraw thyself from every brother that walketh disorderly.” They have not so learned Christ, and they confess that they cannot walk by this rule. It may be their weakness, but the strong should have compassion upon them and remove the difficulty. No, they have not attained to this; they have not attained to cast their conscience and the testimony of the Spirit behind their back. They know that the Lord will judge His people, and they fear His judgment more than the reproach of a morbid conscience, when they cannot do this great

wickedness and sin against God. The Spirit of the living God urges them not to abide in or to bear with evil; and they do not, taking scripture as their guide, understand a Christian's adhering, it may be their folly, to gross corruptions. They leave the palm of prudence to the editor of the “Christian Journal.”

Attainment in knowledge they know little about, only that, if a man thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know it. But they count a good conscience a thing for a Christian to keep, and they have been accustomed to apply the passage in Philippians to humbleness of mind as to knowledge, and not, as the editor of the “Christian Journal” has done, to a question of continuance in what they account the greatest moral evil under the sun—a system calling itself a church, but really “inconsistent with the progress of the gospel,” the continuance of the church in the world grieving the Spirit of God. If the editor does not apply his quotations to this, he is talking beside the question. His separating brethren do not separate because of attainment in knowledge, but because the light has broken in upon their souls that the system he belongs to is a system of ungodliness—to use other words, if he please, though very inadequate words, of “gross corruptions.” I say inadequate words, because corruption implies the spoiling of something good: and the English Establishment was never something good, but a modification of Popery, brought about under providence by Henry viii., and good men who held justifying truths for their own souls, and got rid of as much of Popery as the sovereign of the day allowed them.

“The Protestant church system is nothing but a continuation of the Catholic church system on a less extensive scale,” I would add, with more thorough subjection to the world. I have spoken of this upon the ground that the conscience of those who are drawn out of the English Establishment is morbid and weak, in which case it is manifest that the sin is with the English Establishment entirely; and the editor of the “Christian Journal” partaker of it, if the rule of scripture and the apostles be heeded.

But are the objections to the system merely those of weak consciences? We admit the palm of strong consciences belongs entirely to the clergy of the Established body. But there are grounds of objection, which might strike an indifferent observer of a Christian spirit, and without evil weakness of conscience, may be accounted objects of the Lord's judgment.

The first great objection I would urge against the English Establishment is that (instead of being in any sort the gathering of the children of God upon the foundation of a heavenly calling, sitting in spirit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus; being filled with His Spirit; and by the supply of His Spirit manifesting the life of Christ, and the power of His grace and presence, in the unity of His sanctified members) it is essentially, as the English Establishment, the opposite of all this: and that is, the union of the church and the world. This makes it the English Establishment: for that is the church, not which God owns, but which the world own, and of that world Satan is the prince; and the consequence is that, if men be all that God owns but not what the world owns, they are accounted schismatics and evildoers, not because they separate from Christians, but from the world presumptuously calling itself the church, and the Spirit of God and the path of Christ is blasphemed.

The English Establishment is not the church of God; but the merging of disciples—of the church in its members—in a great worldly system. It is that peculiar sin, which pollutes, nullifies, and renders void the last great witness of the holiness of the Lord, previous to the coming glory: and therefore

along with other similar bodies, constitutes the great final sin of the church—the substitution of the power of the world for the support of the church, in lieu of the power, presence, and Spirit of God, the consequent necessary desecration of the church, the grieving of the Spirit of God, making the church of God the sport of its enemies, and causing the weak sheep of Christ, whom the presence of the Spirit in the grace of the Lord alone could comfort and feed, to be scattered to the winds and to wander on every mountain. But they have the world, and that is the point. And here is the grand sin of the godly clergy: they are using their godliness to sustain this, and let them not say the church has not the world. I repeat it is written, “these shall hate the whore.” The system means, its name means, the union of the church and the world; that is, the union in sin of what God, has separated, the putting the church into the world which God had taken out of it, and the grieving, in consequence, of the Holy Spirit of God. And He gave Himself for our sins, as of the world, that He might deliver us out of this present evil world. The English Establishment is the putting the saints into the world again, the sanction of an unholy meretricious union with it. It buries the sanctified ones in the world and takes unsanctified ones, and alike calls them Christians, and the life and distinctive character of Christ is lost. I do not say that God's Spirit does not act in spite of it; I know it does often in the necessity of His love. I do not say that infidelity, the wickedness of the world, may not seek to pull down and deprive of its temporal goods the wickedness of the church. I do not doubt, and the word of God teaches us that such things will be: one need not be a prophet to discern it now, but the word of God teaches us the character of that which is so wronged. The spirit of the saints of God has nothing to do with either. It may wonder at, nay, be bowed in spirit at the thought that whatever had the name of the church or form it should be in such case; but it can have nothing to say to either.

The objection of the saints to the English Establishment is, that it is the union of the church and the world: that is what constitutes it the English Establishment. The necessary consequence of union with the world is grieving, resisting, and denying the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God cannot bear with the world, and the world cannot bear the Spirit of God, cannot receive it, for it seeth Him not, neither knoweth. The Spirit of God may be in individuals in the English Establishment, because in fact it is no church at all, and so far as they act from the individual indwelling of the Spirit, they may be blessed (and may they be abundantly so!), but the system is nothing else (it may sustain the flesh and so be not thought to be so) but a hindrance to them and every one else in whom the Spirit dwells, so far as it constitutes the English Establishment. It is a system which the world has prescribed to prevent hurting the feelings of the world, and disallowing all that would and must do so while on regular terms of alliance with it. Oh! it is a great sin. Hence wherever the Spirit of God acts, it is discountenanced, or, if this be feared from its power, attempted to be confined to the channel of entire dependence on the world. Its energies thus cramped and crippled within the bounds of the system, the next consequence is that, when men are not tied up in the system, they do not yield to this effect to connect them with the world and receive its sanction, and they still continue to work, and, though blessed and laboring hard in the Lord's cause by the strength and help of the Spirit of God, they are counted separatists and dividers of the church. Then Satan raises up some scheme of his own, perhaps of active labor with pretense of the word, and not connected with the church nominally, and those who have been working simply, as Christians not connected with it, are identified with this by the jealousy of those who are, and every pains taken to discredit them, and thus, by virtue of the system of the English Establishment, the Spirit of God is hindered, polluted, and mixed with the world; crippled on one side, discredited and dishonored

on the other, and the sole cause and doer of all this is the English Establishment. Satan gains his point and laughs at them doing his work. It is impossible that those who are united with the world can love the unhindered working of the Spirit of God.

The editor of the “Christian Journal” has recently united himself to the worldly part of the church in hopes of doing more good, or being sustained by them, and hence these articles; for I do not doubt, nor ought I, that his original purpose was to do the Lord's work. Union with the world, the grand distinctive sin and the power of apostasy in the church, and that which is identified with it, the blaspheming and denying the Spirit of God, and refusing the word as the simple guide, is that which we object to the English Establishment: and let it leave this, all difficulty will cease. Dissenters will quarrel little (I suspect) about episcopacy, and the separatists will be forgotten, for all the saints will be separatists from the world; but while the nominal church is in it, it may be persuaded that there will be separatists from it. It however is the necessary cause of the division, and this must be while the Spirit of God is grieved and the character of Christ lost by its worldliness.

The truth is, the power of Christ's resurrection, and the presence of the Comforter is lost and unowned, and hence the evil, and thence the separation. Now it is quite true that every believer may not attain to the same apprehension of heavenly things; but originally the church held the place suited to them; and it, being heavenly, led onward the less full-grown saints, and the church as a body held the position. The stronger were a guard and help to the weak, and the Spirit was ungrieved in the church, (though individuals might be in feebleness,) and found His resting place there and the church, its comfort in His presence. Now Satan having beguiled the church, the church is in the position of earthliness, and united in system with the world; he has got it while it was in its low state, tied down by its own will first, then by actual bonds, into the unhallowed union which makes it a bar and a hindrance to the Spirit of God; and, the bonds being on it, whoever becomes really spiritual and heavenly-minded, and holds his course on, becomes a separatist from it; and it is grieved and complains of division. But this arises, not from the evil of the saint pursuing heavenly mindedness, but the helpless union of the church with the world.

Chapter 171

Our Separating Brethren: 4

I will freely make a further admission. The leaving many saints behind tied by ten thousand bonds which Satan and circumstances have formed around them, and the feebleness of faith, which long bondage in Egypt has occasioned, weaken the ranks of those who are out, make gaps in their spiritual advantages which they fully feel, and leaves them more liable to the inroads of Satan—their labor more abundant than it would otherwise be. The question is, Are they to go back to those who are thus behind, or to march on looking for them to follow? It may be, their want of courage for war has caused them a more toilsome journey through the wilderness; but they are learning faith in God who supplies every need there, which their long worldly supply in Egypt (since they left their strangeness in a promised land) had taught them almost to forget entirely. Leeks and onions were there, but there was not the supply and the care of their own God, and they were in bondage under hard and cruel masters, whose enmity was against their first-born. They trust that if journeying through the wilderness to the Canaan left of old, it is now not to be as strangers without so much as to set their foot on, but to the rest and to the inheritance which God has prepared for them. They prefer indeed the path of faith, feeble though they be; they are sorry for their brethren behind.

There are other things in which these, which constitute the great principle, are shown in practical detail. The whole arrangement of ministry is from the world, and not from God. All the chief pastors of the church, and a great body of the inferior (but it is sufficient here to note the chief as the fountain), are appointed by the world in its worst form—a perfectly monstrous notion, under which the godly men are themselves groaning, but which is much more important, as sheaving the practical dependence on it, and the identity of the whole system with the world. The letters patent of the king (that is, the fiat of a worldly minister, perhaps an infidel) are the credentials and appointment of all the bishops in Ireland—all the parochial cures or non-cures are secular livings incident to a profession, and a large portion of them not even in the gift of men who have the moral control of the church, however they got it, but come directly from the world. It is perfectly ridiculous to talk of godly-appointed ministers, or of this being ministry.

Mr. Simeon of Cambridge, and others, used to buy up livings in order to get godly men into them: has this the smallest resemblance to spiritual pastorship in the church of Christ? The result is, that in the very best of times a large majority of the pastors, so called, are not Christians at all, but serve only to make everything but themselves schismatical; and the best comfort one can get is, that there are often no Christians under them; and where a godly man has been, in the majority of instances, the effect of the system is, that the person who follows shall have his only business in sedulously rooting up the principles taught, and scattering the flock. We have a promise in this number, of instruction what Christians are to do when a Christian ministry is not within reach, although there are plenty of pastors brought there by the system of the English Establishment.

If it is not the fault of the English Establishment, whose fault is it? I shall be told the bishops; the bishops are to take care. And who appoints the bishops? Are they appointed according to God's

order? No, but according to the system of the English Establishment, which as to church matters, however to be obeyed in civil, we must say is the world. All this then is the system of the English Establishment, and is destructive of the nature and possibility of a Christian ministry. People may talk of books and regulations in the prayer book. They do not let out the great secret of the whole: The source of the ministry is in the world, with the government of the country, and not with God, by the system of the English Establishment. There can be no regular Christian ministry in it. It is impossible that any order or discipline should be in it. The Spirit of God may be too strong for the system. So it is; and therefore there are both godly individuals and separatists; and such is the case partly by virtue of their being separatists. But the system is irreclaimably destructive of the being of a church. In the same way there is, and can be, no legislation, no provision for the emergencies of the church, by any meeting assembled as a Christian one for the purpose. They have signed that they have no right to meet unless by the king's calling them together—not the Lord's. They had to do with the world, which jealous of their doing anything without the prerogative authority of the world; they belong to it, and therefore are regulated by it. In lieu thereof, they are legislated for by Infidels, Dissenters, Socinians, Roman Catholics, and everybody else that may be. And to such extent is this, that at one time half the chief pastors of the country were cut off, when the leader of the Commons had considered the circumstances of the church, and the arrangement of their pastoral care settled by him! And there is not a pastor in the country but derives his authority from them, and there is now a commission in the country to examine the inferior ones. How ridiculous to talk of the divinely ordained ministry of the church! And are the sheep of Christ to be subjected to this—to own such a system at all This then is another objection to the English Establishment, that its ministry is entirely the appointment and arrangement of the world, because it is of the world.

I have here spoken, not of the monstrous and horrible abuses which are the consequences, but of the principles of the whole system. It was an ominous circumstance when the image of Christ, which was always in the rood-loft of the church, was taken down at the Reformation and the king's arms were set up there instead. This is the symbol of the English Establishment—the sign of what it is. It is not formed then to act as a church, but to obey and be arranged by the king and the parliament. They could not legislate for the spiritual welfare of the church of Christ; they are the only legislature for the English Establishment. Why? Because it is of the world, not of God. These are not abuses—not corruptions; they are its principles—its system. The Home-mission is a disorder, a corruption like the separatists; the system is orderly subservience to the king and parliament, generally not Christians, and never acting as such. This is an object moreover, which acts upon the circumstances of almost every private Christian, and it is felt in the grieving of the Spirit to the utmost corner to which it reaches, or where it precludes another from going who might be a blessing.

And hence another deadly evil in the English Establishment: the ministry itself becomes a worldly ordinance—a clergyman is a clergyman, without reference to grace or gift in him. There is an entire separation between gift and nominal office in the church. Nominal office is not founded on the exercise of gift, as it was in the primitive church, and hence becomes, and is, an authority entirely independent of gift, and necessarily hence apart from, and independent of, God, whose part in the office is conferring the gift. It becomes simply derivative from man, and thus the nominal authority of God's offices attached to every error, unbelief, and evil-doing that can be in the

church; and this is the church's apostasy in office, and this is the meaning of the English Establishment, as to its offices. They are derivative without grace; not the recognition of gift in any case, but the conferring of authority with or without it. A man has them because of his humanly derived authority, and what is merely human becomes an exclusion of God's Spirit, and a divine warrant attached to evil. The authority is derived from the appointment, and is as good in the English Establishment without grace as with it. And yet there is the awful assumption of actually conferring the Holy Ghost; and this is so entirely and avowedly the case in its worst form, that a clergyman of the church of Rome, ipso facto on his coming over, is a clergyman of the English Establishment, without any reference to gift or office at all, for then gift and office cannot be, and proves the whole force to be in the humanly derived authority. Their orders are identical in their source. Whence then is the mission and authority of the church of Rome? Thence are the boasted orders of the English Establishment. They are the human substitute for divine grace, and thus the constant security of mischief and evil in the church—the seal of apostasy.

Hence a man with less grace, less of God's Spirit, less knowledge, less holiness, would be received and trusted to, because he was a clergyman—because the world owned his fleshly order, while he who had all of them would be slighted. It is the denial of the exercise of all gifts, and the substitution of a clergyman, be he even no Christian at all, in their place. He and no other may speak, though he may be totally incompetent to edify the church, and God may have specially qualified some one else to do it; and there is no remedy in the system for this, no provision for the exercise of any gifts; for were he even ordained, he must go elsewhere. The clergyman is the person to give his half-hour's instruction, bad or good, and no one else can be allowed to speak. Let one be an apostle, it would make no difference: let God send him expressly, it is no matter. It is irregular for the Spirit of God to act in the English Establishment. It would not suit the world, and therefore it does not suit the English Establishment: unless therefore the Spirit of God be quenched, there must be divisions. While the system of the English Establishment remains, it is the grand bar to the operations of the Spirit of God; and so I have ever found it in this poor benighted land. Oh! the loads of guilt it will have upon its head in this country.

The next thing, showing its connection with the world, and rejection of the Spirit of God, is indiscriminate communion: thus it becomes the positive witness of the compatibility of unholiness and all Christian privileges. Sacramental communion is the seal and symbol of the participation of all Christian privileges. We are identified with every person who partakes there, not as to his being a child of God as known to God, but as to his being one as known to us with all due spiritual investigation. “Looking diligently,” says the apostle, “lest there be among you, &c.” “Inasmuch then as ye are partakers of that one loaf, ye are all one body.” (1 Cor. 10:17.) It becomes then the solemn sanction of unholiness, making Christ the minister of sin. This is the universal practice of the English Establishment. It makes her, the national church, no church at all—discipline in it is simply ridiculous. The moment it is exercised, it ceases to embrace the nation: the king and the bishops must be the first persons excommunicated; and then where is the English Establishment? So in the colleges, the education for the church, all the fellows and students (Christians or no Christians, is no matter) are canonically, and by the regulations, bound to receive, at least, three times a year. Thus it becomes, by embracing the world, the grand sanction for ungodliness in the church of God, the nursery of apostasy. It makes no difference in godliness as to the privileges of Christianity. It is essentially and practically antinomian; assurance without discipline must be

antinomian.

The next thing that may be mentioned is entire unsoundness of doctrine; the want of liberty which flows from this association with the world; and next the ascribing to ordinances an efficacy which makes the world without faith on the same ground as the believer, thus putting the ordinance in lieu of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

As to doctrine, we read in the second Article “That Christ died to reconcile His Father to us” —a statement quite inconsistent with the gospel on its fundamental principle, which flows from the Father sending the Son out of His own voluntary and uncaused love. This mission of the Father from His own mind is of the very essence of the gospel. The error is an abuse of one part of the gospel, in which Christ made satisfaction for sin, to destroy another, the fountain from which it flowed in which God gave Him so to make the satisfaction. It strikes at the root of all the liberty and settledness of peace of the people of God. It is false doctrine, and all the liturgy is founded on this bondage.

The litany especially, much as people admire it, is what no simple holy Christian could use. Can a body of Christian worshippers continually be saying, “Spare thy people; and be not angry with us forever?” If these are joint supplications, is the church always to be under the sense of God's anger? There is a continual confusion in these supplications between God's people and the people of England or Ireland as being a Christian nation, and they treat the world even in a Christian state, and are no prayers of the Spirit of Christ and for the church at all. The fact is, it is a relic (as any one may see in the treatises on the common prayer) of superstitious processions, begun about the seventh century to arrest evils, but is not a Christian supplication at all, though there may be Christian things in it.

I do not think any part of the common prayerbook recognizes the church in the place in which God has set it, of redeemed liberty in Christ; and because it is identified with the world, and therefore always labors and tends to keep down the church to the level of its association with the world. In the assertion of provision for everything, there is the assertion of fitness for nothing. If I make the common supplication of the congregation to say, “be not angry with us forever,” it is foolish to say before hand, “let us rejoice in the strength of our salvation.”

The fact is, the church is laboring under kingly prohibition to the Reformers to act upon the light which had opened upon their consciences. We have this statement in the Homily for Whit Sunday, “The true church is a universal congregation or fellowship of God's faithful and elect people, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. And it hath always three notes or marks whereby it is known: pure and sound doctrine; the sacraments ministered according to Christ's holy institution; and the right use of ecclesiastical discipline.” Will any man, will the editor, say that there is the right use of ecclesiastical discipline in the English Establishment? If not, it is not the church of God at all; and for the plain reason that holiness ceases to be a characteristic of it. Truth, fellowship, and holiness constitute the church: take away either, and the church is gone. The two latter the English Establishment has not at all; the former, defectively.

I have noticed one point: I shall mention another in which they are mixed up.

In the Homily on “Common Prayer and Sacraments,” we read, “And as for the number of them, if they should be considered according to the exact signification of a sacrament, namely, for visible signs, expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sins, and of our holiness, and joining in Christ, there be but two; namely, baptism and the supper of the Lord. For although absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sin, yet by the express word of the New Testament it hath not this promise annexed and tied to the visible sign (I mean laying on of hands); is not expressly commanded in the New Testament to be used in absolution, as the visible signs in baptism and the Lord's supper are: and therefore absolution is no such sacrament as baptism and the communion are. And though the ordering of ministers hath this visible sign and promise; yet it lacks the promise of remission of sin, as all other sacraments besides the two above named do. Therefore, neither it, nor any other sacrament else, be such sacraments as baptism and the communion are.”

Now here we have the annexing and tying of promised forgiveness to the visible sign, and this is habitual in the minds of most, as to the eucharist, where a man ought not to come except in full forgiveness. It is taught in the most objectionable way as to baptism. Thus, “it is certain that children baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.”

Now I am not here questioning the point of infants' salvation, but adduce it to show that salvation is annexed to baptism by its own efficacy under all circumstances. Children who are baptized are undoubtedly saved. No wonder if they are regenerate and have their sins forgiven them. As to both then we have the prayer, and the assertion, “Dearly beloved, ye have brought this child here to be baptized, ye have prayed that our Lord Jesus Christ would vouchsafe to receive him, to release him of his sins, to sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, to give him the kingdom of heaven, and everlasting life. Ye have heard also that our Lord Jesus Christ hath promised in His gospel to grant all these things that ye have prayed for which promise, He for His part, will most surely keep and perform:” and then: “Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate, &c.” and afterward, “we yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit; to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church.” And he is asserted thereby to be made partaker of the death of God's Son, though not of His resurrection.

And in the catechism the statement is made broadly that the child was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven; which last indeed is made a matter of hope in the baptismal service. So in confirmation, “Almighty and ever-living God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants by water, and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins.” And so much is this the case that in the 16th article we read, “not every deadly sin willingly committed after baptism is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable.” Why after baptism, but that baptism was regeneration and the forgiveness of sins? The whole statement is utter confusion, but it shows the place baptism had in the system. The prayer in the eucharist service is equally strange “Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us.”

Now these things really involve most important points of doctrine; they show a continuous system, by which though Christ has died “to reconcile His Father to us,” the church is still praying God may not be angry with it forever, and seeking by the use of ordinances to make daily available to itself the security of averted wrath. I do not believe this is a correct view of the gospel, but puts the gospel and the church in a false, an unchristian, position. It arises from the necessary sense of unknown and unascertained love and craving of mercy, which its identification with the unbelief of the world imposes on it. Let it have as much love towards the world as it pleases, but let it have the joy of forgiveness for itself. I repeat it, it is but the systematic perpetuation of unbelief; I do not say intentionally but in fact. By asserting everyone to be regenerate and in a state of salvation, it has lost for itself what it is to be regenerate and saved.

The next point is the want of spirituality of worship. This must be the case in its utter mixture with the world, because of the grieving of the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is not looked for in worship; but instead of it prayers which must suppose the thoughts of the Spirit of God in the church, and the wants of the saints to be invariable every Sunday in the year and all years, and capable of being appointed beforehand; and the incongruity of which to the real expression of spiritual wants is proved by their never being by any chance used by men of the English Establishment at any other time than that in which they are prescribed by law. As a matter of fact, the worship of the English Establishment is not the worship of the church of God, not therefore spiritual worship, and consequently unacceptable to God. They do not reckon on the presence of the Spirit of God to enable them to worship, but have substituted the liturgy in its stead; in which there are many holy things doubtless, but which are not the Spirit of God, nor are they necessarily the wants of those who may be there, nor are they gathered together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. They meet as the parishioners of a parish, not as Christians. The service goes on just the same whether there be a single person who knows the Lord or not, whether they are Christians or not; and if there be such there, they have not been gathered together in His name. Whatever the form of piety, no stranger, nor any spiritual Christian going in. could feel that there was dependence there on the Spirit of God, nor consequently His presence there, because two or three were gathered together in Christ's name, unless for judgment on the form of it; and the general answer is, they go for communion between themselves and God. They confess that the communion of the saints is lost, but for the other home is a better place. But think of the whole congregation (taking them in their best light) getting publicly absolved every Lord's day! and I say it now, not in reproach but as showing the character of the service, and again, as a whole congregation of Christians, saying, “Be not angry with us forever!” Where is the peace and liberty of saints in this?

But the great point is, they do not meet as Christians leaning on the Spirit of God, but as men trusting to a form. It is vain to attempt to bring it to one's self, as the spiritual worship of believing people, the joint spiritual worship in whatever feebleness of believing people. Is there such a thing called for in the church of God? Is it not its special character? The Establishment destroys any such thing. Hence the whole inquiry is, Is the gospel preached there? I want spiritual worship with the saints. I believe it the supply of God's goodness for our weakness, and the especial privilege and comfort of the church. The other is a form of godliness for the world, but indeed denying the power of it. Extempore prayers need not be spiritual, but the leading of the Spirit is the power of prayer and spiritual worship, expressing thereby its necessities; and daily reiterated forms cannot

be assumed to be the expression of the Spirit's mind, though they may serve for the world who do not want it. They serve perfectly to prevent the ascertainment whether men are spiritual or not—the great object where the church is joined to the world.

I would ask godly men of the English Establishment, why on every other occasion they make use of what is called extempore prayer? Is the meeting of the saints, the church, the only place where such guidance and assistance of the Spirit could not be? Or is it that indeed there is such mixture of the church with the world that it cannot be; that is, that it is no meeting of the saints at all, and that dependence on the Spirit of God is given up, as in a place unsuited for His presence and help? The truth is, it is framed for meeting the world, and hence it is public worship (i.e. of the world and of the saints in the world) not the gathering into one, in any sort, the children of God which were scattered abroad.

And here while I acknowledge that there are many saints in the English Establishment, as we find Jonathan the beloved of David mixed up with Saul, I would notice what appears to me a very fatal consequence as to them of this state of things, and of the whole position of the clergy—an habitual disregard to convictions of mind. The system being inevitably and infallibly tied to all these things, they meet every conviction with the feeling, “If I give way to this, I must leave the whole system.” The consequence is, they endeavor somehow or other to repress or else to quiet the conviction by some subtle reasoning or general comforting persuasion. “I shall do more good by being here:". but the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and the honesty of their conscience and judgment impaired in its principles. If we suppress our conscientious convictions in one thing, it is not in that alone we suppress it, but we suppress the conscience itself, and we weaken the godly spring of judgment in it. There is not the same nearness to God of our conscience, the surface of it is hardened by the resisted conviction, and nothing tells upon it as it did. It does not tell so speedily, as by the presence of the grieved Spirit of God, the presence of good or evil. It is not in the healthful discernment of the Spirit of God, God's index to the soul. The man ceases comparatively to be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord. I have known a clergyman tell me “he had no conscience;” another, “things were true, but he had no faith;” another, “that he thought he did more good by preaching against the principles of seine of the services, than harm by using them;” and multitudes, “that though they did not agree with everything,” though they signed that they did, “they thought they did more good by staying where they were than by leaving it:” some that the sixth article neutralized their signature to all the rest. I never found any one (any believer that is) but a clergyman say such things. I have known persons stay where a measure of actual evil was, which they had not signed, which they opposed in the hope of getting rid of it; but I have not known any but clergymen sign what they did not agree to, or twist their consciences and judgment together in some way, so as to let their consciences slip through the difficulty for the sake of gaining an end. It seems to a simple Christian “doing evil that good may come” (for I am putting the best case for the clergy, and that no temporal motive actuates them in the least). I do not believe that one godly clergyman in the country, until lately (for this wrenching of conscience has now, I believe, obscured many a spiritual thought) believed in baptismal regeneration—at least they preached against it. I do not believe, if left to themselves, ten Christian Clergymen in the country, until it became a matter of partisanship, would have used the public baptismal service as it stands; but they signed the approval of it, and used it, thereby not only grieving God's Spirit in their conscience, but wronging the people by an untruth. They taught continually and repeatedly in their

black gown, contrary to what they used and declared continually in their white; and this has had a most fatal effect upon the conscientiousness of the whole body, and a most visible one to those who are free. And they may be assured that the perception of this is not confined to separating brethren. Acting upon conscience they are pleased to call a morbid conscience. The tendency this will have in bringing in popery, I believe they are very little aware of. Dulling the conscience is the great secret of that system, and in connection with the necessary value and power of formal ordinances. Dark as they may be, the high church clergy are more honest in this. How deep a sin it is against the people, they must answer in that day.

But the editor of the “Christian Journal” has established us in the conviction of the rightness of our principle. If he tells us that we are weak and feeble, we acknowledge it altogether as thrown upon the Lord, but not without His guidance. He tells us we are “separatists,” “Israelites indeed in whom is no guile, more than ordinarily engaged in doing good.” I read that Christ the Lord “gave himself for us, that be might purify to himself a peculiar people zealous of good works.” We accept the designation, and crave the power of His presence and Spirit, that we may abound more and more, that we may be more nothing and His presence everything among us. We are not satisfied, nor shall we be, till the resurrection, if we are saints; but apart from evil we seek to be every day more, preparing to meet the Lord; and we would remind the editor that to continue in gross corruptions may be human wisdom, but we read “The fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; to depart from evil, that is understanding.”

We believe that the editor of the “Christian Journal” has signed many things which he does not believe, and is what he is by virtue of doing so; we cannot think that is right. I have refrained from entering into actual abuses; but when we look around, we see the effect of the English Establishment system to be the destruction of pastorship as to the great body of Christians, and the large majority of those called so, not Christians at all; the abuse of ordinance to a frightful degree; the destruction of spiritual worship; the sanction of abounding iniquity, and the casting the reproach of schism and disorder upon the saints of God who labor in His name, or seek to keep a good conscience. And we do not think it requires a morbid conscience to have done with this.

As to ourselves we are feeble and weak, but we are not careful to answer them in the matter: our God is able to deliver us through the fire we may be brought into, and He will deliver us; but if not, we will not serve their gods, nor worship the golden image which they have set up. They have taken the graving tools, and got the gold (while our Mediator has gone on high, receiving the commandments of His grace for us), and put it into the fire, and fashioned it with the tools; and when we would ask, with the broken word in our hand, What did the people, or what the king, that thou didst do this? We are answered, Providence, providence. “There came out this calf.” The principles of the church are gone in it. The spirit of obedience is gone in it. They know not what is become of Him who guided them, and they have left the principle of obedience, the only guide meanwhile, and they have formed a guide for themselves and called it a feast to Jehovah. They may be saved (indeed we would intercede for them), but their idol must go to the ground—it must be made dust of, not by man's hand (save the wicked “the men of God's hand”), but by God's. “They have not continued in God's goodness” —the church has not; and the word runs, “otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”

And now I have only to add, what perhaps may seem an odd conclusion, that I look for no effect merely from these reasonings. If there be not spirituality enough to give up the Establishment on the highest principles, it is of little avail that reasonings convince; though as a positive hindrance to truth, and for the opening out of real spirituality in the soul, I do sincerely desire every Christian to be out of it. I have only to add, that the reforms in the “Christian Journal” lead, as we have seen, to no real result. I do not believe the editor would now insert articles he did some months ago, while they plunge at present persons who act on his provisional plans into the worst principles of dissent. Thus in this “Journal” — “on hearing sermons” —we have this recommendation as “excellent advice:” “As the gifts and talents of ministers are different, I advise you to choose for your stated pastor and teacher one whom you find most suitable upon the whole to your own taste, and from whom you are likely to learn with the most pleasure and advantage.”

Now this is merely passing from the confessed ruin which the church system presents of efficient worship and ministry, into the very worst principle of dissent, and that upon which more of dissenting and real evil is founded in the church of God than perhaps any other, choosing teachers suited to our taste. It is in fact, much as the English Establishment dislikes dissent, the only real principle of conduct it has left, but such a one as from one end of scripture to the other shall be hard to be found—unless in “I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas.” Unity I believe to be the most desirable of all things, but unity founded on godliness, the unity of the faith, the unity of the Spirit in a good conscience, and as the apostle describes, “the wisdom from above, first pure, then peaceable.” But Jehu's reformations will not save Israel from the judgment that is to come—no getting rid of mere abuses, though it may protract awhile in the patience of God. But the temple of God is lost: it is not Judah, nor ruling with God, nor faithful with the saints. May the Lord grant us to know our own feebleness, and purge us from all evil!

Before the above could be printed (for the November number was seen late in the month), the December number with an additional article appeared on the subject. It will not require many words. The early part of it, it strikes us, is low, but so timid of the prophecies of the last proving true, that it convinces us rather of the uneasiness of the writer's mind on the subject than anything else. In the close of it he recommends us (by a simile, if possible, more kind than even the early Quakers or Swedenborg) to be prayed for as “apes.” All this I would pass by: only hinting in all friendliness, that as to the English Establishment, wherever it has been brought—it is his nurse-child, not our's—we hope he may get safe down without killing himself or his nursling. We simply disclaim all care of it. I am not aware of any dying Tostatus among his separating brethren. But he has now ventured in scripture, and I cannot help feeling that as, in the former part, he must have been ignorant of the facts he spoke of, so here there is very great ignorance of the mind of scripture; but when it is quoted, it must always be met. The first part is so little to the purpose, from the character of the worship of the time, that it is difficult to deal with it; but the evidence it does afford is conclusive against the editor. It is perfectly clear that separation from the public worship of Israel was a bounden duty, and there is express commendation of it in scripture. Does the editor mean to say that it was right for Israelites to continue in the worship of the golden calves, the sin of Israel? or to make the English Establishment the answering analogy to the sin of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin?

The commendation of the seven thousand is that they had refused to join in the national worship, because it was corrupted with worldly practices. There were no such things as religious

communities then; it could not be; it was not the form of divine worship to have churches. But they separated from the public worship of the country when it was corrupted, and were commended for doing so. And when even much less corruption than Baalim was practiced; when the golden calves were set up in Bethel and Dan, pretended to be the worship of Jehovah, but mixing for worldly reasons Egyptian practices with it, it is mentioned with honor that out of all the tribes of Israel such as set their hearts to seek the Lord God of Israel separated from them and left the country. And if the editor had ever read the Prophets, he would have known that their testimony was incessant against having any such worship. As to Jerusalem, no person could have gone from the temple, or he would have had no sacrifice at all. When it was corrupted, they were bound not to join. As to Ezekiel, he prophesied in Babylon, and the people of whom he speaks were shut up in the city of Jerusalem besieged, but they were to be marked, because they sighed over the abominations. But the editor seems not to be aware that they were commanded by the prophet Jeremiah to separate themselves and leave it, because the judgment of the Lord was coming on Jerusalem, and that so their lives would be spared, and that all the princes and the king, &c., were very angry because thereby they said Jeremiah was weakening the hands of all those who were striving to save Jerusalem and resist the Chaldeans. There is indeed nothing new under the sun; so that, so far from there not being in a single instance anything like separation, it was commended or commanded in both the instances to which the editor alludes, when religion had become corrupt, and that even at the risk, nay the certainty (for they could be performed nowhere else, which is not at all our case), of losing the ordained and regularly necessary sacrifices of God. Thus we see, in the case when we might least expect it from the nature of the worship, it is exactly the opposite to the editor's statement.

Does he seriously mean to tell us that the Israelites ought to have worshipped the calves in Bethel and Dan? It is quite clear they ought not, and sinned if they did. Ought they not to have owned therefore any god? ought they not to have owned, thanked, and worshipped Jehovah? It is clear it was their very point of faithfulness to do so; and they were separatists from corrupt national worship for the Lord's sake, and worshipped as well as they could by themselves—evil having got possession of public worship. They were hated just as much as, or more than modern separating brethren—hid perhaps by fifty in a cave, where of course it would have been a sin to worship Jehovah, or they would have been separating brethren. I protest I cannot see what the editor means, but that Baal and the calves were like the English Establishment, and that people ought to have worshipped them. The former part may be true for aught I know; but certainly the scripture totally condemns the latter, and makes it the very point of faithfulness that it had been refused, in spite of acts of uniformity by kings and queens; and this makes a wide breach in his argument. He says, “in their several places in the church, protest” —what church? Were they to worship the calves and protest against them? They did not worship with the nation at all, and could not. This was their protest, and the whole point in question, as it is now; and the Lord specially owned them, because they would not, but did form a separate communion, and there were worshippers of Baal, and worshippers of Jehovah; so that Jehu could separate them for the slaughter of the former. So it is now. It is not I who have drawn the comparison; but the conclusion is manifest—the protest of refusing to worship with them, and worshipping Jehovah by themselves at all cost, constituted the point of Israelitish faithfulness.

Now as to the New Testament; and, first, the Jewish church in our Lord's time. It is a mere subtlety to call it a church. It was no church, but an outward prescribed form of legal sacrifices and ceremonies ordained by God Himself, from which no one could willfully deviate without sinning, as our Lord says, “not a jot or tittle should pass from the law till all were fulfilled;” and our Lord being made under the law, having graciously humbled Himself to this, was bound to be, and would not have conformed to all righteousness, had He not conformed himself to it. Was a Jewish Messiah (as such—though much more—He then came) to have been the first to break the law God had given to the people He was of and came to?

Who ordained the pattern of the English Establishment? On what mount was it shown unto a mediatorial Moses? We are getting into popery in earnest now. The church of Judaism, if He will call it so—for church it was not—was not corrupt; but the people were who ministered in it. The state of things in the ordinances was exactly what God had ordained, even to the tything of mint, rue, and cummin: and therefore the Lord says, “these ye ought to have done.” Conformity therefore was a plain duty; therefore the Lord says, “the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat.” They were prescribing Moses' enactment by Moses' authority, and therefore what they commanded was to be observed; but their works were not to be followed. There is no such seat, unless we come to popery or legal prescriptive ordinances, in the Christian dispensation.

The confessed inventions of man we do not feel it necessary to follow; the works of those who assume the place we would for the most part avoid; but the simple answer to this is, that the temple was a divinely ordained system, and that the structure of the English Establishment is not. Our Lord Himself therefore, could not separate Himself from it. “He came to be the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God,” to confirm the promises made to the fathers,” and of course came in connection with them—would not go to a Gentile, and commanded His disciples not. But, consistently with this, He was as separate as He could be, living in despised Galilee, and choosing His disciples thence, from whom Jews were a distinct designation, as is manifest to any one well acquainted with the Gospels: but the moment our Lord died and rose again, the whole thing changed. The church became partakers of “the heavenly calling,” and the character of His priesthood, and consequently of worshippers under it, was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, made higher than the heavens. He was to be known in the church “not after the flesh,” in which He was connected with Judaism according to the faithfulness of God, but “the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead.” It was then, not Messiah walking blameless under the law, but “what communion hath light with darkness, Christ with Belial, or a believer with an unbeliever?” The world was a condemned world, having rejected Christ; wherefore, “come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.”

The English Establishment and the editor of the “Christian Journal” will not obey this primary command, constituting the spiritual character of the church as one with Christ. They will not “come out, and be separate,” but say, under the sanction of the Irvingites whom they despise, “that Christ can have communion with Belial. Be it ever so corrupt, people ought to stay there.” They have destroyed and corrupted the foundation principle of the church of God stated in that passage, that a believer cannot have communion with an unbeliever, that it is Christ and Belial. They would rather justify the worship of the golden calves, or Baalim, or Ashtoreth the abomination of the

Sidonians, than have the trial of losing the support and comfort of the world. For my own part, I have no hesitation in saying that, were it to come to this, I would rather worship with two or three in a house separate from evil, though it were in every street of—, than be deliberately mixed with evil, which the Lord must judge and set aside when He shall appear.

Such a state of things may be an evil and sorrowful state, but it is not the deliberate and haughty sanction of wickedness. They might have been destitute of the order and beauty of worship, and bidden in their caves on bread and water, but not sanctioning a system in which, whomsoever would, people that were not priests at all, the king consecrates to minister to the calves which are called Jehovah, in departure from the covenant of God. But I trust that the readers of the “Christian Journal” will remember that the principle on which the editor calls on them to continue in the English Establishment is avowedly that which is built upon the sanction and continuance in the worship of the golden calves of Bethel and Dan. I desire no other evidence of what the principle really is.

(To be continued.)

Chapter 172

Our Separating Brethren: 5

As to the principle of Jerusalem worship, it is simply this: the Lord had recorded His name there, according to His promise in Deut. 12 and other places, and there He had promised to meet them, and there to bless them. The place where He has promised now to meet them is, wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there He is in the midst of them. (Matt. 18) This is the constituent difference of the dispensation, the Lord taking care first to show the order of discipline, by which a wrong-doer is to be regarded as a heathen man and a publican. This then is the promise of the dispensation, that on which it hangs—the presence of the Lord “wherever two or three are gathered in his name.” So, even while the temple was standing, the apostles went up there to teach, and broke bread (Acts 2:46) from house to house, or at home. The Lord has provided comfort for His poor saints, seeking holiness in these promises against the haughty scorn of the sanctioners of corruption, of wickedness in the place of judgment: they know that however weak, yea, or failing in particular instances, it may be through their foolishness, gracious as the Lord is, adversaries, upon the corruption of its principle and there they rest upon the basis of the whole dispensation; alliance with evil and the world, which the Lord will judge. We would meet then in the Lord's name, and hail every one, even though not perfectly one in opinion, who loved the Lord Jesus and was led by grace in truth and righteousness, resting in His atonement and resurrection, and subject to His will.

I do not believe that in any church of the English Establishment, although I freely admit there are individual worshippers, they meet as two or three gathered in the Lord's name at all, or that His name consequently is recorded there to bless. The sermon may be blessed, or the individual may very humbly intend to worship God, but there is no blessed common spiritual worship. They are not met at all according to the Lord's commandment as Christian believers, nor are they addressed as such when the clergyman speaks for himself, though he may do so when the prayer-book speaks for him, thus making the whole thing a sort of mockery, in which the Spirit of Christ speaks one thing in the minister, and the form he reads another thing in the congregation.

And now to turn to the parts of scripture which do apply, that is, subsequent to our Lord's ascension.

“We find,” the editor says, “the apostles and all the Christian Jews observing them with scrupulous exactness.” I do not see any such thing. I see considerable and natural slowness in dropping what had ceased to be obligatory on those who had been brought up amongst them, and difficulties arising in the Church in consequence of their adherence to them—the attempt to maintain what had nothing to do with Christianity, and impose it, as the editor and his friends would now, but strenuously and steadfastly resisted by the apostle of the Gentiles, as marring the progress of the gospel, with one exception, which we shall see just now. First, Peter did not observe them, though he dissembled evilly about it, just showing the effect of such things. Let us turn to Galatians: “But when some sought to spy out our liberty,” says the apostle, “which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage: to whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour, that

the truth of the gospel might continue with you.”

This was the apostle's way of dealing with what was sought to be imposed, and we say, We cannot be subject to nor worship your golden calves, though you may call it Bethel, and it may be set up where the pilgrim of God once was, with his staff in his hand, and God the portion of his inheritance, a wanderer for the sake of the inheritance and promise; yea, though it be the king's chapel and the king's court. Again, “when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself” [here is another sort of separation—separation from saints, not from evil] “fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him, insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.”

Well it was for the church of God that there was one even then to stand out against these imposers of Jewish observances, that the truth of the gospel might continue with them. But what a picture of the effect of this continuance in the church ceremonies; dissimulation that jeoparded the truth of the gospel. But where was all the exactness of their observance? Not at all, till the fear of man and dissimulation came in; the two things which ever go together, and of which human ordinances, assumed to be divine or obligatory, are ever the instrument. Are there no Peters at Antioch now? Paul was a foolish man not to conform to harmless ceremonies! He knew they were the parent of dissimulation and the destruction of the truth of the gospel the moment they were made obligatory. And he withstood it to the face, and would not be in subjection for an hour. But it is clear that the Christian Jews did not observe them with a scrupulous exactness. Hear the bold apostle: “But when I saw that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?”

What does the editor mean by scrupulous exactness, except in the way of dissimulation? But let him hear the same Peter again, and he might learn a wise lesson about what creates separation. In the chapter be has referred us to I read this: “God,” says the apostle, now unburdened by his fears, “which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness giving them the Holy Ghost even as to us: and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? But we believe that, through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall be saved even as they.” And it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to them to lay no greater burthen than certain necessary things, from which I suppose few separating brethren, led of God, would be anxious to be free. Would (but God is wise) it had seemed good to others to observe the apostolic rule! To us indeed, save in love, it matters little, but we should have heard little of separating brethren.

The editor states it was decided that the Jewish ceremonies were obligatory on Jewish Christians. This is quite untrue: there was no such decision whatever; if so, Peter was wrong at Antioch in eating with Gentiles, and Paul and Barnabas, and all. Indeed, so far from being true, it would have been destructive of the whole order and unity of the church, and is merely ignorance of the progressive actual freedom to say so, as it is contrary to the matter of fact in the scriptures.

But there is an instance of Paul's acquiescence in their prejudices, which the editor refers to. Not acting from the guidance of God's Spirit to himself, he takes counsel with flesh and blood. James and the elders advise him to volunteer in spewing conformity to the customs of the Jews, who were all zealous of the law of which, it is clear, Christ had been the end as to this. However (whatever Paul's full concurrence was with their counsel, which does not appear) he acted on it, acted on conference with flesh and blood deliberately for the first time. But what was the consequence? It brought him into all the difficulties from which he had been praying and begging the church's prayers to be delivered. If Rom. 15:30, 31 be compared with Acts 21, it will be found that this very act was the source of all the difficulties which he had foreseen and deprecated, and besought them to deprecate so earnestly. God in His overruling mercy might turn it to good, as ever He will with His children. But it is a remarkable instance of the danger of temporizing with fleshly conformity to prejudices, and not acting from the simple guidance of God's Spirit and word. They caught him in the temple where he, the apostle Paul, went to purify himself with the men, as if God had hot accomplished these things, building again the things destroyed, tending to make Christ the minister of sin. Two year's removal from all ministry, and deliverance to the will of the Gentiles, under God, was the fruit of his acquiescence in the advice of conformity to the Jews. It is wonderful, while they so often deny Jewish hopes, how fond churchmen are of Jewish manners and the rudiments of this world, which is all their ways are now. The apostle teaches in Gal. 4:8-10 that for Gentiles to return to Jewish ordinances, habits and observances (now that God's sanction has been removed from that system, and it is consequently merely the world), is to go back to heathen idolatry and evil. They were desiring to be again in bondage to the weak and beggarly elements, from which, as idolatrous Gentiles, they had been delivered; for Jewish ordinances without divine sanction were the same thing, human inventions sought out and the principle of heathenism and idolatry in the sight of God. For the rest, we have seen, it clearly was not Paul's habit among Jews; for it was Peter's dissembling led to it in Antioch, and to it Paul would not yield. As to “imposed to the time of reformation,” we shall see its use just now. Only meanwhile we would recommend the editor's reading Col. 2.

Now as to the Corinthians: the apostle's command was to come out from the midst of evil in the world; our word is the same now to Christians mixed with the world in what is called the Church of England; because there can be no communion between Christ and Belial, and till the church had proved itself clear in this matter, the apostle would not go at all, but sent Titus to see how it was, and—when he proved their entire subjection in the matter, and that they were clear—went then, for he wished to spare them; but he would not hear of what the editor now defends, nor go to the place till it was remedied. This is the instruction we have from the Corinthians—the instruction expressly that we are never to bear the mixture of known evil in the church (which is the horrible lie of the possibility of the communion of Christ and Belial), that they must separate from the world, and not touch the unclean thing, and then God would receive them, and they should be His sons and daughters. “He would walk in them and dwell in them.” “The old leaven being purged out,” the apostle separated between the guilty and not guilty, and kept the church pure. He did make separation, but it was by turning out the evil which the Establishment keeps and clings to. “If one bear holy flesh in the skirt of his garment, and with his skirt do touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, or any meat shall it be holy? And the priests answered and said No:— “If one that is unclean by a dead body, touch any of them shall it be unclean? And the priests answered and said, It shall be unclean. So, saith the Lord, is this nation, and so is this people before me and so is every work of

their hands, and that which they offer there is unclean." As to the Galatians there was nothing corrupt in the church at all, they received false doctrine from others teachers which the apostle corrected; so of the other evils which arose in the churches. The apostle corrected them, and so held them together—an example in the matter of course. When corrected, they had no need to separate. It would have been sheer madness to have corrected the evil, and told them to separate at the same time: a provision for separation, while the church was planting in holiness, would have been simply denying His apostolic work, which was to form the churches on those principles which they have now departed from, so that what is called the church is nothing but another aspect of the state.

But the seven churches "furnish cases exactly in point." They do no such thing. The seven churches exhibited churches formed thoroughly on sound principles—principles of not allowing evil; and because they did not act upon them, they were to be judicially removed out of their place, which they were accordingly. They formed the step in church history next to the epistles of the apostles—the parting warning from the Lord. The epistles afford the example of apostolic energy, in maintaining churches rightly planted in their right position of separation from evil (the apostle warning that he knew that after his decease things would go wrong, and evil arise). The seven churches' epistles are the judgment of Christ on this subsequent state of things—the Son of man, but judging in the midst of the candlesticks—churches rightly founded, having generally ceased to be rightly ordered, and therefore removed out of their place by the Lord's judgment, making way for the apostacy as "things that should be." Removal for practical corruption of a holy thing is the tenor of these epistles, the setting aside the church as standing in its first planting. But they were "things that are." As prophecies, if such, they have nothing to do with this question.

The English Establishment never stood on such ground at all—never was the subject of such judgment; it never was planted as a colony of believers in the midst of the world—removed when it ceased to act on the principles of separate holiness. It was the result of the union of the church and the world in the outset; or rather the church never came out of the apostate world at all, and therefore there were no principles on which to judge it, except general professed principles in Christendom. It never reached the point, nor sought it, nor understood it, in which these churches began, and on which therefore Christ judged them for their departure from them. It never stood on their ground as to moral position at all. It is a perverted attempt to apply "things that are," as if they applied to "the things that shall be," which is a perversion of scripture. Christ's judgment was on "the things that are:" His prophecy of "the things that should be." If the churches be taken prophetically, I may apply the Philadelphian to the separate saints, and Laodicean to those who are not. On the other hand, if this be set aside, on which I do not now rest, then I say it was the Lord's judgment on the things that were, and the removal of them, because they did not conform to the principles on which the Spirit of God in the apostles &c. had founded them, and which thereupon ceased to exist and made room for the apostacy: and that no subsisting church rests, or can pretend to rest, on the ground on which this judgment rests at all, for they are founded on the union of the church and the world, which is the moral principle of apostacy, which resulted from the failure of the judged churches to maintain the principles on which they were founded. It was the warning of what led to the consequences which follow since, under which we are now suffering. In the Acts of the Apostles we have the founding of the church on the principles on which Christ established it; in the epistles, the sustaining it by the apostolic energy of the Spirit; in the epistles

to the seven churches, the judgment of Christ upon their subsisting state, as not continuing upon the ground on which they were planted; and, consequent upon that, the apostacy out of which we are commanded to come, from which it is our clear business to keep separate. Separation from evil—a peculiar people—the gathering together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad, are the meaning and purpose of God in the church: in its institution, separated from evil, and secured by the energy of that preached; and death, or immediate rejection for inconsistency by the presence of the instantaneously detecting power of the Holy Ghost, that its meaning and character might be adequately exhibited as a pattern in the outset; then the apostles, watching, guarding, preserving, judging, and calling them effectually to correct themselves, as we see in the epistles. Thus evil was separate from them, when manifested among them. Then, this being inadequately performed, the judgment of the Son of man rejecting the churches, and threatening their removal if not corrected, which happened; and then the whole being in a fallen evil state, in which it was not only evil, but in the world (during which God has ever maintained a separating witnessing people, that it might be seen He gave no sanction to evil); and, when fully discovered, the actual command, “come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and receive not of her plagues.” Separation then is so far from wrong, that it becomes the test of obedience and faithfulness. And now as to separating from the Jewish system, and the adherence of Christian Jews to it, we have seen the practice not to have been at all what the editor states it; but this is not all.

There is, upon the very ground of the church being of a heavenly character, and having no portion in this world, a direct summons to go forth out of its now unacknowledged sanctity. “Christ, therefore,” “(as the sin-offering was burnt without the camp of God) that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate” —of what?—the world? nay, of the holy city. “Let us therefore go forth to him without the camp bearing his reproach.” It is, when the church thus is worldly and not heavenly, bearing Christ's reproach to go forth without the camp. The camp was not Egypt nor the city the world in form, but it was in character; and they, being heavenly, “partakers of the heavenly calling,” could have no more to say to it. This then was the positive direction to the Hebrews. Separation from evil—separation from the world, both which are “enmity against God” (but we “reconciled to God”)—is the essential character and meaning of the church. It was for this Jesus suffered. “For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.” It is in this character He is our risen head and priest, “separate from sinners, no more in the world.” It is in this His people walk, for this the martyrs suffered—it was for this John Huss was burned and Wickliffe was persecuted. When it was removed by apostolic discipline, the church was kept separate from evil; when not, it was judged. When the church coalesced with the world, it ceased to have any such character, and separation from it was separation from the world and, where this is not, righteousness cannot be. It must be maintained at all cost.

As to Jude, the editor's professed love to his separating brethren proves that he does not himself believe in its application to them; but our answer is this—separation from the church of God we admit to be not only an evil, but a totally ruinous evil. It is a leaving the only holy sanctuary of God in the world; and it is the reckless doing and blasphemy of this of which Jude speaks. Does the editor really believe that the passages in Jude or Peter apply to his “separating brethren"? If he does not, why does he quote them? If he does, let him fairly state so. Either we are not Christians but totally lost persons; or Jude and Peter do not apply at all. These are the passages he quotes to

condemn separation. They condemn separation from the church of God to mock and walk after their own ungodly lusts and speak hard words against Christ. Does this apply to the guileless active Israelites? If not, another conclusion entirely must be drawn from it; that the English Establishment is not the church of God at all: if it were, the consequences in Jude would follow; but if not, separation from it, so far from being evil, is but a bounden testimony against the pretense to be such by which the saints of God are so deceived. The editor has spoken a bold word in saying that all who separate from the English Establishment “are sensual, not having the Spirit.” Is this his opinion of many of them? If not, is he not blaspheming them? much rather, incurring the charge of hard things spoken against Christ and His people? I count him much more a separatist in truth, who, when saints are trying to walk orderly, devotedly, and in grace, separates himself from them or them from him, because of lying and worldly ceremonies, most of which had long had the sanction of Satan in an evil world, but never, that I could learn, of God.

As to the only remaining passage which he could cull from all scripture against his separating brethren, (besides these, which do but fully ascertain that the English Establishment is not the church of God at all, and which he knows are not applicable,) to that from 1 John 2:19 they plead or I plead entirely guilty. “They went out from” the English Establishment, because they were not of it—they have not left off being Christians, but, though once many of them were in the English Establishment, they were not of it. They did not really in spirit belong to “a hierarchical system, inconsistent with the progress of the gospel,” and consequently sooner or later they went out of it—a system where practical abuses (as the editor has taught us in a previous number) flow not from casualty, but from the source of all its appointments being corrupt and worldly. I repeat, they have agreed with him, and they have acted on it in humble trial and sorrow; he has not—he, perhaps, may be of what he has thus designated, and therefore has not gone out from it—they were not and consequently have. Whether they are “sensual, not having the Spirit,” God and not the editor must judge. If not, the editor has not a single text of scripture to plead against it, nor could be (while the holiness of God remains) find from. His word a sanction for continuance in known evil. The editor may speak of remedies, and mend the church in connection with the world. His separating brethren will seek by grace to have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward man, and to keep themselves, waiting for His appearing, unspotted from the world. They rejoice that in all the word of God the anxious care of the editor can find nothing to charge them with but these passages in Jude and Peter, the application of which may prove apostacy in the church, but not in those who separate from it. We would recommend to the editor 1 Sam. 22 and he may see, though unowned, where God's king, God's prophet, and God's priest may sometimes be found, and what sort of people are around the king. What a judgment would have been formed of David's cause by the world then!

As to things imposed till the time of reformation, it is hardly worth while for any Christian acquainted with scripture to refer to it. But I need only remark that, instead of sanctioning the Jewish Christians in the exact observance of their ordinances, the apostle (as is the tenor of the whole epistle) is pressing on them that they had no obligation on them at all, now Christ was come, their calling being heavenly, in union with Him; as their High Priest not in this world at all: that they were merely carnal ordinances imposed on them till the time of reformation, figures for the time then present, and that they were identified with the way into the holiest not being yet manifested, but that, Christ being come, they had passed away. He having entered not into holy

places made with hands, figures of the true, but into heaven, they had no longer anything to say to Him. The English Establishment, by the editor's confession, just returns to and imposes them, witnessing that to her the holiest is not made manifest, and that, in lieu thereof, she is imposing carnal ordinances, not having come to that “time of reformation,” in which the glory and high priesthood of Christ took the place in the church of these things. This is exactly our complaint against her; and we do not wish to be bound down in this confessedly evil bondage. It is exactly the editor's confession; she has not entered into the heavenly calling, and priesthood of Christ. Her services are bondage her ordinances carnal; the time of reformation in a heavenly calling has not reached her soul; she is still seeking a priesthood on earth, not a portion in heaven; she was founded on what was earthly, and never got out of it.

As to the degeneracy of the age which is noticed and denied in this number, we believe the editor is most awfully and guiltily misleading the church. As to Ireland; We have noticed the inconsistency of his statements, and (while it is against the direct testimony of scripture, declaring that things shall go on, as in Noah's days and Lot's days till the Son of man come—days in which men despised warnings as much as the editor does now) nothing but the grossest ignorance of the state of England could lead him to such a statement. He confesses that crime is largely increased, but he says it is among the rabble. But how comes wickedness to have increased so much among them? But, in truth, this is the least part of the evil: the universal degeneracy of principle with much profession, and the great progress of infidelity, of atheistical principles, and the spirit of rebellion against lawful power, which is identified with these principles, and the slight of testimony and judgment, the “where is the promise of his coming,” in which the editor takes his part, are far worse signs of apostacy and judgment than the petty acts of evil which are but accompanying results.

The editor makes it his business to prove the world better—the world that rejected Christ. In this we believe he is most ruinously and desperately deceiving the church of God; it is this which would make us decided. He rejoices in the increasing circulation of his “Journal;” I fear, and I say so sincerely, in proportion as it is of the world, the world will love its own. The editor rejects and slights (in ignorance we are assured) the warnings and judgments of the Lord, and therefore recommends continuance in evil. He denies, as a thing in which the church of Christ has any present concern, the coming of the Lord, and therefore must be the instrument of darkness and of error. I do not doubt his desire to serve the Lord generally. In this point he is surely in utter and mischief-working blindness; and his labors can but serve to bind the blind in the error they are in.

Separation from godly persons I deprecate as much as he; I desire union with them as earnestly, perhaps more earnestly than any one I know; but to go into ungodliness to be one with them is impossible for the saints of God.

I look for better things for Ireland than I do for England as to its state, but not by the saints continuing to sanction and be mixed with evil, as he would advise.

If they do not discern “this time,” let them at least of their own selves judge the things that are right. We would just refer those who have the “Christian Journal” to the “Ten Bishoprics,” in No. 14 of the “Christian Journal:” leading article on Church Reform in No. 6; the two leading articles in No. 10; and compare the petition with the “Ten Bishoprics” in No. 14.

Chapter 173

The Narrative of Passion Week

I apprehend that the consideration of the different structure of the days makes the last supper and passover quite intelligible.

Thursday evening was their Friday. Thus our Lord ate the passover on Friday, and yet was offered up on Friday. We know that it was late. It was night when He was betrayed, just after the supper. (John 13) This was on their Friday night (preceding the day). The blessed Lamb of God was offered, being crucified the third hour; and the scene closed just after the ninth hour, about three hours within the Friday.

Learned men say between the two evenings means between three and six; but why? What is their authority? It is remarkable that the unleavened bread was to begin at even (i.e., at 6 o'clock on Thursday, or their Friday), but the paschal lamb to be slain between the two evenings. Query whether it be not between the beginning of Friday (our Thursday evening) and the beginning of Saturday (our Friday evening)? It was strictly fulfilled in our Lord; and upon this supposition every statement in the scriptural account is consistent.

The order would then stand thus:-

Our Thursday Evening =Their Friday, Last Supper

Friday =Friday, the Crucifixion

Our Friday Evening =Their Saturday

Saturday =Saturday, the Sabbath

Our Saturday Evening =Their Sunday, or First day

Sunday =First day of the week

Thus our Thursday night, their Friday, was spent in the judgment-hall, though they would not go into Pilate's that they might eat the passover.

Chapter 174

On the Positive Evidences of Christianity

I cannot here, of course, write a book on the positive evidences of Christianity. But no one is ignorant that there are such, and that the positive proofs of it—proofs such as no event, no system, no person on earth has for itself—have been detailed in the language of every civilized people. Now particular objections leave this all out of sight; yet, where anything has been largely, positively proved, the dwelling on the objections that may be saved, without estimating the positive proofs of the whole system, is a totally unsound mental process. It is a way of judging of the truth of anything which would be admitted in no other case whatever. I do not object to the examination of every difficulty in detail. In the case of scripture, the positive proof is that of the divinity of the system as a whole. If the system at large is positively proved, a difficulty attached to it which I cannot solve is a demonstration not of the falseness of the system, but of my incompetency to deal with the difficulty. In such a case a sound-minded man is content to say, “I do not know.” The historical facts and documents of Christianity are proved with an evidence such as no other universally-believed event or acknowledged book has any evidence to be compared with, and if proved show that it is divine. It has met with an opposition which made every document and fact to be scrutinized with a closeness which left only what was incontestable uncontested. This was to be expected, because it presented the claims of a holy God, to which the antagonist will of man never would submit. Hostile heathens, philosophical adversaries, heretical corrupters, foolish advocates, elaborate historians, voluminous commentators, every kind of author and character has been occupied with it from the time of its promulgation, and authenticated its history and its doctrines even when opposing them; and this in the presence of the hostility of religions divinely established or nationally and deeply enracinated on the one side, and skeptical scorn on the other. On the books on which the smallest doubt could be cast, doubts were cast; and their authenticity made a subject of question as they are by objectors now.

The internal difficulties by which the skeptic seeks to invalidate the inspiration of the New Testament, or at any rate the greater part of them, were noticed already in the second century, and answered. The Jews were as desirous to prove Jesus was not the Messiah, as the skeptic could be now. In a word we are on ground traveled over for eighteen centuries—old infidelity dressed up in a new form, to be met by increasing light and increasing proofs which God in His goodness affords both internal and external.

The history of Christianity no one attempted to deny, when any denial of it would have been of the smallest value. They hated it, opposed it, sought to destroy it by force, and to subvert it by argument and ridicule; but it was there to be hated. No man thought of denying that. The documents were reasoned against, and objections made to them; but they, and they only, were received as the authentic documents of the religion professed by Christians, by friends and foes. This is beyond all question. The Jews exist to this day the living witnesses of the truth of this history. They possess the books of the Old Testament, which we do. Their state confirms the Christianity they deny. It is well known that the Talmudists' confirm the history of Christ's death, His flight into Egypt, and His miracles, though attributing it to sorcery He had learned when there,

or, as some say, He wrought there by the means of God's ineffable name which He stole.

If we turn to the internal testimony, there is no book in existence to be compared to the New Testament scriptures. Nothing in the least degree approaches its simplicity, power, moral depth and moral purity, profound knowledge of God, adaptation of His love to the heart of man; none that displays God so much, brings Him forward so constantly, without ever committing itself by anything unworthy of Him, brings Him down so near man, and yet only more fully to show Him always to be God reveals Him in person, in doctrine, in precept, in His ways, in prophecy; and, by the skeptic's own testimony, it alone has produced the sense of the sympathy of a pure and perfect God with the sincere worshipper. It has done more, it has manifested Him as the friend of publicans and sinners, a way of which the skeptic has no idea. For them (and how many are there) He has no God; and yet He is never more evidently God than when we see Him thus.

If with a God of law, the unclean leper must stand off from man as well as God; Jesus will touch the defiled one with a holy power that dispels the evil by which it cannot be contaminated, while perfect suited love is revealed in the act.

Take again the account given of this manifestation of God in flesh. There is a divine infinite in the relationships revealed and developed. We can feel, if indeed we can discern God, that we are occupied with what is infinite. Yet He who speaks is so at home in what is infinite, that the expression of it is simple, as God is to Himself—as everything is to Him. There is no bombastical effort to elevate His expressions to what one's heart does not reach; no enlarged and labored periods to unfold what remains secret and unknown after all, if indeed all be not in expression. What produces the inexpressible feeling is stated; but the statement has the simplicity of known and perfect truth. When Paul would sometimes express his feelings as to it, you may see him laboring beyond the bounds of human language, to give vent to the thoughts of a heart which possesses what is too great for it to contain; yet this is only feeling produced by it.

Take the revelation of the facts, and all is simple. Read the scene with the shepherds, when that great event is announced which brought in reconciliation and the bringing together of a fallen world and God by the incarnation. Can anything exceed its simplicity? Yet what thoughts are unfolded in a few words: “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, goodwill towards men!” What accomplishment of promises—what revelation of grace—what an untold and ineffable mystery—what a God is revealed in love! Men, angels, Israel, the world are all concerned. Where is there a word that is not characteristic of simple divine revelation? where is there an epithet seeking to elevate what such working of the human mind can only lower? Read all through the New Testament, never will you find an epithet attached to the name of Jesus. He carries His own beauty: others may talk about it—express their feelings about it; it is very right; it has its just and holy place. But Jesus is to be the thing revealed, if it be a revelation, not the expression of man's feelings about Him. What a testimony is this, that the Holy Ghost, and not Luke, or John, or Mark, or Matthew, was the real writer of these histories of Jesus! There is a divine stamp on the whole history, the not discerning of which proves (not the failure of the evidence, but) the incompetency of him who is insensible to it to perceive that which is of God.

Again take the whole body of scripture, a collection of books written by various persons during a period of fifteen hundred years—of about eight hundred, by the skeptic's admission. All these develop an immense system. The sacrifices of the old are far the fullest development of every

moral truth contained in the historical fact and doctrine of the new, yet comparatively without meaning, till that fact appeared and that doctrine developed its bearing—circumstances and histories full of instruction for our present walk, which in themselves are simple histories of patriarchs or of Israel (the application of them being totally unknown to those who wrote)—a unity of design, a completeness of structure (yet written when the connection of the subsequent part with the former was impossible to be known to man), which proves the unity of the mind of the Being, whose revealing power and controlling thought and knowledge runs through it all from beginning to end.

It may be said that this is natural, where one people has been the scene of the development. But the fact is not so. This people rejected, and has been totally set aside by this development. The law in its own proper nature does not admit the gospel; and the gospel sets aside as a system in tote the law, and yet confirms it all as divine, as the law and the prophets all prove the gospel when it arrives.

The doctrine of the church is brought out, of which there is no mention in the Old Testament whatever, yet it alone fills up the gap, and satisfies what these prophecies have revealed. Without it the world would have remained without any direct revealed association with God; for it is heavenly, which the world and Jewish government cannot be; yet these were to be set aside for a long while, and nothing earthly could fill up the gap. It was hidden from ages. It is revealed when the time is come and not before, because it sets aside the whole previous system of Jew and Gentile, a revelation which, if made before, would have destroyed all the authority of what existed. Yet it is necessary, when it does come, to the whole order of God's ways, as revealed in the system it sets aside.

Now it is alleged that there are difficulties in detail to a vast and wonderful system, externally authenticated as nothing else in the world is, which has internally the impress of its divine authorship in its whole character, morals, doctrine, and structure. If I lose the effect of the positive evidence, I prove my incapacity of estimating the value of the revelation of God, instead of simply my incompetency to solve the objection, as is the case if I accept the whole thus proved, and avow I cannot explain the difficulty, supposing such to be the case; as a man who reasoned what the sun was from an eclipse, and could not see when it shone. Suppose some phenomenon in nature which I cannot explain: that there are such, and even monsters, every one knows. I find around me (the skeptic will not deny it) proofs of divine operation, and of a constant law (which is the strongest proof of divine operation) and power,—a vast universe bearing (as a whole and in the minutest part) the proof of the power of God as having created and sustaining it. If it be indeed God, nothing can be hid from this power, the very proof it is His is its universality, infallibility, and constancy, and that what grasps the whole cannot let the minutest part escape its attentions. It is not an outward show: that man could produce in his little measure. Go search within: see the springs, the details. Man's work is but the scene of a theater, a fair show by dim light, and it is moved by what may fail at any moment: follow God's into detail; see all His works in scrutinizing light. Does He fail anywhere? Has anything escaped Him? How came the monster there then? Is there some Arimanes, some evil Demiurge, that has had at least his share in the work? One failure proves that God is not there! Such is logic; at least the logic of objectors. I find some inexplicable phenomenon, some lusus nature as it is called, some monstrous birth. It is a proof that there is no God, no perfect Creator and sustainer of the universe! Is this sound reasoning with the proofs I

have of it? No, the wise man, sure of the former by irrefragable proofs, says, I do not know why this is. He knows indeed, if taught of God, that evil is come in, and that sorrow and confusion is the fruit of it—evil which he does not attribute to God, save as permitting it externally for correction.

It is in vain to say, I can show by the order of physical laws how it must have happened. What made physical laws necessarily producing monstrosities? The sense that it is a monstrosity, moreover, is proof of the conscience of a universal order. Why then is a particular inexplicable difficulty adduced as an objection to revelation, and urged as a proof that the whole is false? There is but one reason. Revelation controls the passions which creation does not. A judgment to come, sin having to answer to God—these are what revelation treats of. And they are what man does not like. A God of providence he will have and reason about, because he wants Him, and he prides himself on having to say to the Almighty as he (man) likes it; but to be judged by Him, or even to own himself a sinner, and to be in so humbled a condition as to be loved by Him and to need it—ah that is another matter.

The principle then, on which the reasoning drawn from objections goes, is an utterly false and hollow one. Still, as they trouble the mind, I shall refer to them without pretending to solve every difficulty that can be raised. That is merely a question of my competency, not of the truth of scripture. To judge of these we must advert to another principle which affects directly the whole force of any objection to any writing whatever, and that is the object of the writer. If my object is to show the spirit and bearing of a course of action in which many isolated facts have the same moral force, I may neglect chronological order without anything being changed by it. If I were showing the progress of an individual mind in them, chronological order would be everything. Again, if I am showing that a person's public life had a given aim or object, I select the facts proving it, and neglect a multitude of others, without which, as a personal history, it would be necessarily imperfect and disconnected. But it is not incomplete in the view in which I have written it. If I were showing the filial piety of the same person, and the way he kept up the ties of family to the end, only such parts of his public life would be related as might show that, in spite of its importance and activity, this tie was always felt and acted on. And so on.

Take again, as an example, the Code Napoleon. Did I speak of it as a monument of his genius, I might select particular parts in which the bearing of law on society, an intuitive perception of just results in details, and the vast scope of design were manifest, and show that these originated in his mind. Did another history seek to show his power in employing instruments, it might show the very same parts drawn up by men able in their vocation; and a caviler might find difficulty to reconcile the drawing up of all by these instruments, with the originating mind which had set all a-going and directed it throughout. Were I showing the progress of legislation in the world, I might allege these very same parts as the necessary consequences of the progress of society, and that they flowed as the evident consequences from the preceding steps in this process, as one idea leads on to another; and, in appearance, Napoleon's originality would disappear. All these histories might be true—nay, we way suppose absolutely true—yet impossible for one who had only these to reconcile them in everything, because he has not the additional elements and a knowledge which would be really divine of the whole order of man's mind and history, which would be absolutely necessary to put them together. Is God's history of His Son in the world less vast in conception, less multifarious in the relationships it speaks of, than Napoleon and a code of laws?

Take again a scriptural example: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” If I quote this desiring to rest His claim to be heard on His being Son in contrast, say, with Moses or Elias, I may quote it. “This is my beloved Son, hear him.” If I were showing the delight of God in Him, I might quote the former part, leaving out “hear him.” If I refer to His Father's perfect approbation of Him as a reason why He should be the expression of His mind, I should quote the whole passage. These different citations, instead of being contradictions or mistakes, are proofs of the intention with which the statement is quoted.

Now, if God gives us a history, He must have an object. He cannot write a history even of His blessed Son, merely to amuse man with a history of true facts. Hence He will, in a revelation, give what may be quite disconnected as a history. Thus if God be unfolding the character of Christ as Son of man, He will select what does reveal Him in that character, not what presents Him simply as Messiah come on earth among the Jews. Consequently, in selecting the facts, large gaps may be found in the history. The connection will be the character of Son of man and facts really connected together historically in moral consequence, which are not in mere chronological order.

So of other great principles developed in the history of Christ. Many facts may be common to different features of His character, or necessary to the whole history. Thus grace in every case will shine forth; but not perhaps in the mine application. No one can, in fact, read the gospels, without seeing that Jesus is presented in different characters in them. Matthew gives us His connection with Israel in His coming; that is, with the promise made to Israel: hence the constant quotation of prophecy. In John He is God Himself come down from heaven. In the beginning He was with God, and was God; then the Word was made flesh. There is no manger of Bethlehem here. His genealogy is divine, so far as there is any. The Abrahams, the Davids, and the Adams have no place here, save as far as Christ takes one among their posterity by being a man. The Jews are treated as rejecting Him in this character from the first. Luke has this point. The Son of Adam is at once on the scene, though His connection with the Jewish people be historically given. Mark gives us the gospel-service of Christ, and we have nothing before John Baptist's ministry.

Now I say not that God has given a revelation, however truly I believe it; but that if God does give a revelation, He must have an object, and hence that the revelation must have a character suited to that object, or it would be imperfect and inefficient, the work would be that of an incompetent workman. The objection must lie, if valid, against such a work as pursues thus its object; for God must surely accomplish His purpose in this manner, if He does give revelation; and hence to prove He has not, the objection must show that the passage objected to is contrary to a purpose so pursued. God's revelation will not seek the satisfaction of man's curiosity in another way, nor to satisfy man at all (save so far as, in grace, not to turn him aside), but to instruct him. Did it do so, it would prove that it was not God who wrote it.

Chapter 175

The Power That Works in Us

Eph. 3:16-21

The subject of prayer here is that there might be an inward power put forth by the Holy Ghost. Paul's heart was desiring to see these saints in a deepening enjoyment of Christ, and this by an operation of the Spirit unlimited in its measure.

They had the inner man, the divine nature communicated to them. God had looked upon them in His great love, not quickened only but given them out of His fullness. They were in a family every member of which is purged from sin. “I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you.” The incorruptible seed is not the word of God, but that which is communicated by the word of God. The Christian is thus put into a position in which the creature does not stand. Adam first was innocent but corruptible. The Second Adam was pure and incorruptible. The believer now (in spite of that which is corruptible in him) has received this incorruptible seed, and that by the word of God. This they had; yet the heart of the apostle was not satisfied, but must go forth with energy that God the Holy Ghost might act in them according to their individual need, and that “according to the riches of his glory,” not only eventually to be enjoyed, but a spring of power now to be given, and that without measure. It is the same Spirit to quicken and to strengthen now as will fill the whole bride. Paul put no limit short of this.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith.” (Ver. 17.) This is not having happy feelings, a suavity of character, &c. It is one thing to be safe in the ark on the Ararat of God, and another thing for Christ to dwell in the heart by faith. Oh what a quantity of care goes out when Christ is there! If Christ is the master of the house, and dwelling in it, He does not let the dust and cobwebs accumulate, but He fills it altogether; and should a sudden start come to the heart, there will be found not fear but Christ.

Some people make love among believers into a commandment. This is not the secret. If Christ is master of heart and conscience, He will teach brotherly love, and then will be comprehended “with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.” (Ver. 18.) See the connection of understanding with being rooted, &c., here and in Col. 2:2. I shall not understand, save as divine (not human) affections are in exercise. Breadth, &c., of what? Soon after Christianity was launched, philosophy came in with progression. Paul knew no length, breadth, &c., save what was in Christ; Satan knows many, but they are only his depths and can be detected.

Next, we are set in the fullness of God. Thus we have had first the inward strengthening by the Spirit; next, this is shown in Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, rooted and grounded in love, that they might comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; thirdly, by that they might be filled with all the fullness of God; and fourthly, this is described as the power that works “in us.” This fullness of God calls for something back. All that God gives Christ is yours: then I must praise Him. Can I be silent? Why not lift your voice to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think? We cannot expect too much.

Observe the distinct superscriptions of the prayers. The first is to God the Father of glory, the second is to the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of Christ as the servant of God and the glory of the only begotten of the Father are quite separate. It is very different for Christ to say, “My Father and your Father,” and “My God and your God.” When Christ took the servant's place, God was the Father of glory to Him.

Christ's sympathy flows out according to need down here. We have His sympathies. If we knew more of Christ's sympathies, the children of God might have more for one another. If full of sorrow yourself, go and sympathize with another, and your own will be gone.

Many a saint, if they knew what Christ's sympathy was, would wish to be left alone. Christ does not sympathize with my flesh by thoughts, but what He does is for the glory of God. He may have to break my will, and bring it to His. He will take up all the good, and He can make the face to shine; but it is of no use for us to ask for sympathy, if not set on the glory of God.

Our sympathy with Him is another thing; but He cares for it. John 14.

Let me ask (as exhortation) whether you pray for the acting of the Spirit as prayed for here. One of the reasons why the light and knowledge given connected with God and His Christ is so little entered into is connected with lack of prayer for the operation of the Spirit in this way. Christ is in heaven now. He was the center of the thoughts of the little company who followed Him in Galilee. Why should not you and I have Him practically as the center of our minds and hearts? All with them was simply done in the light and at the word of their Master. Had they boats to launch, nets to let down, all was at His word. This is a challenge to our hearts as to every-day circumstances. His presence in our hearts changes everything. It is very hard to be discontented when He is in the heart. How the thoughts of one's mind change with the company one is in! God has put us into a place where we may be sounding the unsoundable depths of the motives that have acted on Christ.

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Chapter 177

A Glance at the Prophecies of Isaiah

Of the four greater prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, the first named is the only one who labored before the deportation of the ten tribes to Halah and Habor, by the river of Gozan and to the cities of the Medes. This gives a character to the book of his prophecies wanting of necessity to the other three. To him the invasion, and subjection of the land west of Jordan by the king of Assyria was still future when he was first called to the prophetic office; so by him the Spirit of God has given a bird's eye view, as it were, of the nation's condition and trials, from his own day to the final attempt of the northern power (Isa. 33) to disturb the prosperity and security of Israel. Beginning with the reign of Uzziah, and going on to that of his great grandson Hezekiah, Isaiah must have labored for half a century or perhaps more, learning, as one living in the circumstances alone could, the thoughts and hopes of his countrymen, who witnessed the temporary revival of power under Uzziah and Jo-tham, and the decay and revival of the outward forms of religion under Ahaz and his son Hezekiah. Uzziah's victories and Jotham's might must have been topics with which he was familiar, as well as the invasion of Judah, and her humiliation by Pekah during the reign of the idolatrous king Ahaz. In his day was witnessed the presence of the Assyrians in the land of Israel, invited there by the king who reigned at Jerusalem, and the welcome accorded in the city of David to the friendly advances of Merodach king of Babylon, by Hezekiah after he was recovered from his sickness; these two powers, destined to play such important parts in the history of Judah, then first became acquainted with the occupants of David's throne.

Thus the Assyrian, his attempt, and his failure against the house of David, the enemy whom the people had to dread when Isaiah was witnessing for Jehovah, are prominent subjects in this book. With Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, the case was different. Jeremiah, God's prophet in the land from the days of Josiah to the overthrow of the kingdom under Zedekiah, warns the rebellious Jews of the captivity at Babylon which awaited them; and, since Babylon was the scourge God was employing wherewith to chastise them, its overthrow, after accomplishing God's purpose at Jerusalem, the prophet announced. But of the Assyrian, or the king of the north, Jeremiah says not a word. Babylon was the power that the Jews had to dread in his day, so what concerned that power, as bearing on the history of Judah, is for the most part the field of prophetic truth through which the prophet of Anathoth ranges. Ezekiel was God's prophet to the captives by the river Chebar, before the taking of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar. Captivity he already knew, as did those amongst whom he labored, the future fortunes of the whole nation therefore he was led to predict, and the final re-union of Joseph and Judah under their king David he was allowed to foretell. Daniel was God's prophet at the court of the king of kings Nebuchadnezzar: so the times of the Gentiles is his great theme, and the course of the four great empires, till the rise and complete triumph of the kingdom of Messiah, it was given him to trace out; and he stops not in his work, till he can tell of the end of the king of the north, who will perish in his attempt to blot out the name of Israel as that of a living nation upon earth. (Chap. 11:45.) Jeremiah predicts the overthrow of Babylon of his day; Ezekiel tells us of what Jeremiah is silent, the invasion and complete discomfiture of Gog and all his armies; Daniel announces what Ezekiel did not, the overthrow of

the king of the north, whilst Isaiah embraces in the subjects of which he treats all these events. (Chaps, 13, 14, 33.)

Of his personal history we know but little. His father's name we learn was Amoz, but of what tribe he formed a member we are ignorant. That Isaiah was married and had two children he has informed us; and the great lesson which he learned as to the uncleanness of his nature he has recorded for our instruction; but the date of his birth and the year of his death are facts shrouded in the darkness of the past. For three years, in obedience to God's word, he walked naked and barefoot (chap, 20.), and at times during his ministry in Judah he saw visions and burdens. Outside of Judah we never meet with him. This need not surprise us, for during a part of his prophetic labors Hosea was witnessing for God in Israel. Against individuals he rarely speaks. Ahaz the king, and Shebna the scribe, and Hezekiah, after his failure, are of this the only examples that we have. Long as is his book, (being exceeded in quantity only by Genesis, Jeremiah, perhaps Ezekiel, and of course the Psalms,) we have not all that he wrote, as 2 Chron. 26:22, bears witness; but doubtless we have all that it pleased God should survive to our day. Of dates we have but few, so different from the habit of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, the death of Uzziah (chap, 6.) and of Ahaz (chap. 14:28), the invasion of Judah by Pekah and Rezin (chap, 7.), and subsequently by Sennacherib (chap, 36.), and the capture of Ashdod by Tartan, sent thither by Sargon king of Assyria (chap, 20.), are all that the prophet has noticed.

To turn now to the book, a cursory glance at it shows us that it is divided into two great parts, separated by the historical chapters which recount events of Hezekiah's reign. The first part, chapters 1 -35, gives us the prophetical outline of events, in connection with Judah and Jerusalem, to take place from the days of the prophet to those of the Lord Jesus. The second part, chapters 40-66, describes the moral dealings of God with the nation, to form the remnant, that will inherit the promises, and dwell in the land under the rule of the righteous king.

These two great parts of the book are farther subdivided into sections, chapters 1-3, 13-17, 28-35, each portion of which ends with gladness or praise; and chapters 40-48, 49-57, 58-66, each of which ends with warnings about the wicked. This feature we can understand. For, where it is a question of what Jehovah will do on earth for His people, a scene of brightness will be witnessed, and praise will be the fitting utterance of the heart; but, where the moral condition of the people forms the subject of the prophecy, since all will not be converted, words of warning about the wicked form the suited conclusion. God warns the ungodly in the latter part, the praises of His people are provided for in the former part.

Chapter 1 forms a preface to the book, announcing the reason of God to speak; namely, the then condition of Israel and Judah, which must draw down judgment on the capital of the land, to be followed in God's own time by the final redemption of Zion and her converts, but with judgment and in righteousness, and the common destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners. This is yet future, so in chapters 2-4., the prophet is led on to the day of the Lord, first telling that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, forming the center to which all nations shall flow, and Gentiles as well as Jews there find an object of interest for their hearts, the prelude to that time of universal and enduring peace to which as yet earth, since the fall of man, has been a stranger. In view of this the house of Jacob is exhorted to walk in the light of the Lord; to them the wide spreading judgment of the day of the Lord is graphically described

(chap. 2; 3.) ending with the presence of the cloud of glory, familiar to the people in the wilderness, resting over the earthly Jerusalem," "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof, by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." (Chap. 4: 4, 5.)

To dwell further on such a prospect might have been a pleasant occupation, but the prophet has to turn to that which will edify the people of his day. So he next proceeds to produce the indictment, and a heavy one it was, which God had drawn up against those on whose behalf He had done so much. (Chap. 5.) That stated, which concerns the whole nation, Isaiah turns aside for a time to what more directly concerns Judah, and the house of David. (Chaps. 6-9: 7.) The vision which he beheld in the year that king Uzziah died, brought home to him the condition of the people amongst whom he dwelt, besides God's judgment of what he himself a fallen creature was, with the divinely appointed method of cleansing marked out, namely, by association with the sacrifice on the altar of burnt-offering. Cleansed himself, set free in the presence of God from all thoughts of his vileness, after that the live coal had touched his lips, he can offer himself for Jehovah's service, and volunteer to be His messenger to the people, an offer immediately accepted. Chapter v. had demonstrated by the indictment to which there was no good defense, what the people had been in the past, now the prophet has to show, what the appearance of Jehovah's glory had demonstrated to his own soul, the moral condition of Judah and Jerusalem, as unfit to behold the glory, which historically was proved by the presence of the Lord Jesus upon earth. (John 12:39-41.) God's people, redeemed to be His own forever, unfit for His presence, what could follow, but judicial action against them? Thus the prophet declares blindness would fall upon them, and desolation roll over their land, but only for a season. This directly concerned the throne; so commencing with the attempt in his day by Pekah and Rezin to supplant the house of David (chap. 7: 6), Isaiah sketches out the result of that attempt, disastrous to the confederate kings, the invasion of the land by the Assyrian, and the final triumph of the Lord Jesus, the Messiah, born of the virgin. Judicial action must take place, but God's purposes cannot fail, so all attempts to subvert finally the house of David, as the royal house of Israel, must end in confusion to those, whoever they might be, who should undertake it. Syria, Samaria, and Assyria of that day found this to be true, as the northern enemy of the future will be a standing witness of it likewise. Distress, straitness, want, awaited the people for their sins; but the faithful, sanctifying the Lord of hosts, making Him their fear and dread, are to be delivered, and the never ending reign of Messiah upon the throne of David shall one day commence. "The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this." Then (chaps, 9:8-ch. 11.) resuming the subject of chapter 5, the grievous behavior of the people in the past and the then present, the rod of God's chastisement is predicted, the king of Assyria of that day, and the king of Assyria of the future, whose fall will be brought about after the Lord shall have performed his whole work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem (chap. 10: 12), when the indignation shall cease, and God's anger in his destruction (chap. 25) by the Lord Jesus, the Branch from the stem of Jesse, under whom Judah and Ephraim shall be united, just the opposite of what they were when Isaiah lived. (Compare 9:21 with 11:13.) All enemies overthrown, and the nations subject to Israel's king, peace shall be enjoyed, and Israel again dwell all of them in their land. In view of this happy consummation thus to be effected, the song that Israel will in that day sing we read of in chapter 12.

This slight sketch of the first section of the book suggests to our mind, how pregnant with important consequences was the Assyrian invasion of the land and attack on Jerusalem in the prophet's day. And, reading these prophecies, we are taught the connection between the attempt of the stout-hearted king of Assyria in that day, and the assault that will be made by one ruling over that very country against the people's existence in a future day. The invasion of the land of Canaan at that now distant date was the commencement of the nation's punishment, which will only end by the utter rout of the northern army, when the Lord Jesus shall appear on earth in power and great glory. So the prophet passes, from what took place when he was alive, to what will be witnessed after the Church shall have been caught up. Syria and Israel, who were leagued against the house of David, were shortly to fall, and the Assyrian should overflow all his banks, and all but overrun Immanuel's land, reaching even to the neck. (Chaps, 7, 8.) These events have been witnessed, but the introduction in power of the king, who will overthrow the northern invader, has not yet been accomplished, though, as having been on earth in humiliation, that light of which Isaiah speaks (Chap. 9: 1, 2), the presence of the Lord, has been seen in Galilee. These two events then, the first and the last invasion by the Assyrian of Immanuel's land, are brought before us, events so fruitful in results to the people and the house of David, the two ends as it were of a rolled volume, the one connected with the commencement, the other with the close of these days of national humiliation and trial to which they were doomed, after which rest and blessing in their land they are to know, and those who here rejoiced at their calamities shall personally smart under their triumph. Antichrist visited with direct divine judgment (9: 4,) from the Lord, Israel and Judah united in heart, and assembled in their land from all quarters of the earth, brought home by the Gentiles, “shall fly or pounce upon the shoulders of the Philistines toward the west, and spoil them of the east together, they shall lay their hands upon Edom, and Moab, and the children of Ammon shall obey them.” (Verse 14.) When Assyria invaded that land few of the other nations of the earth felt themselves concerned by the result. When the Assyrian of the latter day shall be overthrown by the power of the Lord present in Israel, what nation in the world will remain unaffected by the event? So the song which Israel will then sing celebrates their salvation, the proclamation of Jehovah's doings among the nations, [redacted]. From chapters 13-28 we have another section of the book, revealing God's dealings with all the nations connected with the territory of His people. Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Egypt, Ethiopia, Edom, Arabia, Tire, all are judged, the burden upon each of them, Assyria and Ethiopia excepted, being pronounced by the prophet. Their past judgment, as well as their future condition Isaiah declares. Universal is the punishment that is to be meted out. “I will punish the world [redacted] for their evil, and the wicked for their iniquity.” “And I will shake the heavens, and the earth shall remove out of her place in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, in the day of his fierce anger,” (chap. 13: 11, 13,) are statements, which tell of the general and grievous judgment about to be poured out, of which that, which each nation mentioned has undergone, is but the precursor and the solemn witness of the Creator's right thus to act, whenever He shall see fit to enforce it. And, as this section commences with the announcement of God's judgment of the world, it goes on till we read of His judgment of the universe, “And it shall come to pass in that day that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones on high (i.e. the principalities and powers of Col. 2:15; Eph. 6:12), and the kings of the earth upon the earth.” So all are brought under judgment—Jerusalem, and His people, (chap, 17, 18, 22.), as well as the nations around them. But here should be noticed the order of events as given by the prophet, just the contrary to what has been witnessed as yet. The judgment of Babylon in its

completeness is treated of before the final overthrow of the Assyrian (chap. 14: 1 - 24, 25 - 27); and the prophet's vision of the chariot, which told of her overthrow, brought a cry of distress from his lips as he thought of the country he loved (chap. 21: 10), for immediately afterward he was led to predict the last successful attempt of the northern power to gain a footing in Jerusalem. (Chap. 22: 1 - 6.) History reverses the order of these events. Assyria fell before Babylon, and Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans. Prophecy warns us this order will be changed, the fall of Babylon of the last days will open the way for the attack on Jerusalem, and the final overthrow of the Assyrian on the mountains of the Lord of hosts. (Chap. 14:25.)

Thus carrying his readers on to the scenes of these days, the prophet teaches us that most of the burdens look forward to the day of the Lord (chaps, 14: 32, 16: 5, 17, 19: 18 - 25, 21: 12, 23: 18); for prophecy does not stop short of the fulfillment of God's counsel about earth. Of the past, not recorded in any profane history which has come down to us, we learn from the prophecy of Isaiah (chap, 20.), and the future, which no man can anticipate, we have clearly mapped out. For with Him, who sees the end from the beginning, what are years or centuries? The distant future is as clear to God as the events of the next few years; so Isaiah, by walking barefoot for three years, pointed out the humiliation of Egypt and Ethiopia by the king of Assyria, which must have happened not long afterward; and Eliakim's entrance on the office Shebna had filled, prefigures the entrance in power on His kingly office of the Lord Jesus, after the cutting off of the Antichrist, the nail referred to in chapter 22: 25.

Embracing such a range of subjects as this section does, we are prepared for the character of the songs with which it concludes. In chapter 12 the nation in its joy would tell far and wide what Jehovah has done for it. Here we learn the results of the Lord's actions on the nations, when He rises up on behalf of His people (chap. 25: 7, 11; 26: 9). The national resurrection too of Israel is celebrated (chap, 26: 19), as well as the discomfiture of Satan, when the poor, despised, hunted, proscribed, persecuted people shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit. (Chap, 27: 1 - 6.)

Erom chapters xxviii. - xxxv. we find ourselves in the third section of the prophecy of this book, nearly all the subjects of which are introduced by the expressive interjection “Woe” ■■■, as we had in the previous section the term burden ■■■■ frequently made use of, and confined by the prophet exclusively, in the sense there intended, to that portion of his writings. In the chapters before us we are introduced to events of the last days without any intermixture of what took place in the prophet's day. Ten burdens we have mentioned in chapters xiii. - xxiii., and five woes in chapters xxviii. - xxxiv. With the fulfillment in part of many of those burdens, Babylon was concerned; with the events of which these woes treat the Assyrian of the future is closely connected. The land invaded (chap, xxviii.) and the consternation of the people described, their plans are detailed by the prophet, and the remnant is warned against falling in with them. To turn to the political head of the Roman earth, with whom Antichrist will be allied, will be the plan proposed to ward off the threatened invasion of the great northern power, a plan, the wisdom of which is graphically portrayed in the significant words employed: “Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, then ye shall be trodden down by it.” (Chap, 28: 18.) The success of the invading army over Jerusalem, Ariel, i.e. lion of God, or perhaps better 'hearth of God,' = ■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■■ (Ezek. 43:15), is then recounted, to be subsequently signally reversed

(chap. 29: 1 - 8). Next the turning to help from Egypt in that day (the kingdom of the south of Dan. 11) is predicted, and the wrongness of such a step is declared (chaps, 30, 31.), followed by an account of the moral changes to be effected, and spiritual blessings to be enjoyed, when the king shall be reigning in righteousness. (Chap, 32.) After that we have the woe addressed to the last disturber of the peace in the land of Israel at the commencement of the millennium, the Gog probably of Ezekiel (chaps, 38, 39.), who will spoil though he was not spoiled. The great leaders against Israel of that day having been severally dealt with, the Assyrian (chap, 30.) and Gog (chap, 33.), the prophet goes back in the order of time to predict the end of the northern army in Edom, led against Jerusalem by the Assyrian, whose own end has already been narrated (chap, 34.), and concludes this section with the description of the quiet enjoyment of blessing, and permanent security of God's people under the protecting wing of the Lord Jesus when seated on His throne. “The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Chap. 35: 10.)

Besides the final overthrow of the two great enemies of the nation —the Assyrian and Gog, of which we read in this section, we learn some more particulars of the end of the king, or Antichrist, the false prophet of Rev. 13; 19 In chapter 11: 4, we are told that the Lord will with the breath of His mouth slay the wicked, which, taken in connection with 2 Thess. 2:8, can leave no doubt on our minds of whom the prophet writes, nor the appropriateness of alluding in that chapter, which gives us the characteristic of the rule of the Lord as Israel's king, to the final end of the Antichrist, the miserable personator of Him who is to come. Now in chapter 30: 33, we learn where the execution of the judgment will take place. “For Tophet is ordained of old, for the king moreover it is prepared; he hath made it deep and large, the pile thereof is fire, and much wood, the breath of the Lord like a stream of brimstone doth kindle it.” In the valley of the son of Hinnom will that divine vengeance overtake him, of which men on earth can be spectators; but Rev. 19:20 acquaints us with his immediate and irrevocable doom, “cast alive into the lake of fire,” which those will not be able to behold, whose vision, as in flesh, is bounded by the horizon of this world. Thus judgment on the Assyrian and on the king, and the overthrow of all the schemes of conquest cherished by Gog, are taught us in this section as awaiting Israel's enemies, whilst on them instead of judgment will be poured out the Holy Ghost, (chap, 32: 15); and then shall be illustrated most fully, what John the Baptist foretold, “He shall baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire.” (Matt. 3:10, 11.) We know now the former, baptism with the Holy Ghost. By and by both will be witnessed, when the Holy Ghost, having gone with the Church from earth, shall be poured out on Israel, and on all flesh, according to Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel, and the fire of judgment shall be seen overtaking the bold and hardened enemies of God and His people.

After tracing out the historical order of events which this earth will yet witness, we have four chapters which refer exclusively to what took place when Isaiah was alive (chaps, 36-39), narrating the invasion of the Assyrian of that day, his success, and his discomfiture, then the sickness and recovery of Hezekiah, and the embassy of Merodach king of Babylon which followed after it. Three lessons the king learns: the land is Jehovah's, and He will defend it; his life is from Him, and He will restore it; his wealth and family are His, and He will dispose of them. That Hezekiah was not the king of chapter 32 was apparent; nevertheless, many of the circumstances of that day will be found analogous to those of the future; so, whilst the prophet was writing about

the future, Hezekiah and his men could receive instruction from it for the time then present. Alliance with Egypt, and a means of defense from the overflowing scourge by a confederacy, were topics which occupied men's thoughts then, as they will at a future day. There was enough of resemblance in the circumstances to afford present light and counsel for the king and the nation; but there was enough of difference in what the prophet disclosed, to show men that he spoke of a time which earth had not then witnessed. But this incorporation of the history of his own time with prophecy served another purpose, namely, to furnish his readers with an introduction to the second part of the book, explaining the connection between Jerusalem and Babylon, from which the captives must return, ere God's judgment on the Assyrian can take place.

Judgment, and the way of its execution, formed the chief burdens of the first part; return from Babylon, and final rest in their land for the remnant, with God’s dealings with them is brought out in the second. Divided into three sections as noticed above, the first (chaps, 40-48.) is chiefly taken up with God's purposes toward Israel of blessing, and His judgment on Babylon carried out by Cyrus. In chapter 40 as is so common, we have a glance at the future, looking on from the day of John the Baptist to the full development of God's plans, when Jerusalem shall know peace, because her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity is pardoned; for, in fulfillment of God's word by Jeremiah (chap. 16: 18), she will have received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins. (Chap. 40: 2.) To execute judgment in the land of Israel is God's strange work (chap, 28: 21), to bless His people is indeed the joy of His heart. How clearly this is exemplified in the language and spirit of the predictions, which announce God's goodness to His people: “Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.” Surely to the people these words will come with peculiar sweetness, “comfort ye, comfort ye.” Their trouble and distress then He had known, and would now comfort them. “My people” He here calls them. Then He has reinstated them into His favor, who had to disown them for their sins. (Hos. 1; 2.) Addressed thus by their God, who He is set before them, the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, who fainteth not neither is weary, there is no searching of His understanding. (Chap. 40: 28.) How different is He from all the idols of human device!

With this introduction, turning the eyes of the people thus addressed to Jehovah, two persons are mentioned, by whom God's purposes about His people shall be carried out—Cyrus and the Lord Jesus, God's servant (chap. 12-13: 16), the former would begin the work of their restoration, the latter would definitely complete it. To this announcement all people are called to be attentive: God would raise up a man from the east, righteousness would call him to its foot, give nations before him, and make him rule over kings. The effect on the nation is seen at once. They turn to their idols for help, whilst Israel is exhorted to put confidence in Jehovah. (Chap. 41: 5 -14.) But this announcement regarding Cyrus, before Babylon had reached the acme of its glory, evidenced that the Lord who made it was indeed the true God, for He it is who “first said to Zion, Behold, behold them.” Cyrus thus introduced, the servant of Jehovah, the Lord Jesus, is also announced, by whom all God's mind will be effected as regards Israel and the Gentiles, hence praise and joyfulness is called for. (Chap. 13: 10 - 12.) But what was Israel on whose behalf such mighty intervention would take place? The prophet tells them. (Chaps, 13: 13 - 44: 28.) Their past ways are recounted, and God's goodness and grace to be enjoyed at a future time are predicted. Blind and deaf when they ought to have been obedient and hearkening to His word, forgiveness of sins they shall know through His grace, (chap, 43: 25), and the outpouring of the Holy Ghost Jacob's

seed shall enjoy (chap. 44: 3); for Israel is God's servant, whom He will never forget. Hence praise is again called for, but this time from both heaven and earth, for creation has a deep interest in the fulfillment of the promises to Israel. (Chap. 44: 23.) Edom speaking of Cyrus the prophet turns to address him directly, and that by name, though yet unborn. A Gentile should be God's instrument for letting go from captivity His people Israel. By His own arm had the Lord brought them up out of Egypt; by the decree of Cyrus should they be at liberty to return to Jerusalem from Babylon. That predicted, just before God's judgment on the idols of Babylon is announced, and their inanity set forth, (chap, 46.), and the humiliation of the haughty capital described (chap, 47.), we learn that Gentiles can and shall be blessed, when all God's word about Israel shall be fulfilled. (Chap, 45: 22 - 24.) But this coming in at the tail of the list of blessings Israel will enjoy, is in character by its place in this section, with the subordinate position of Gentiles to the favored people at that time, so different to that which believers from the nations now know is theirs through grace. With a word of warning to Israel, for there is no peace, saith the Lord, for the wicked, the section closes. (Chap, 48.)

Thus the return from Babylon has a place in God's dealings with His people, little perhaps understood. It was the first break in the trouble which had enveloped them on account of their sins. The presence of the Assyrian in the land in the prophet's day attested the commencement of that time of trouble, which shall not terminate till the Lord returns in power to earth. The return from Babylon, under Cyrus, was the first link in that chain of events, which will culminate in their final deliverance, when Jerusalem shall become a praise in the earth. This explains the apparently abrupt introduction of the Lord as God's servant in chapter xiii., following so close after the mention of Cyrus, and his work on Israel's behalf. It explains too the fact, that nowhere else in this section have we the Lord Jesus borne witness of; for the prophet, led by the Spirit of God, would point out the connection between the first and the final restoration, and thus brings them into juxtaposition, as one writing before the Babylonish captivity could best do, an abiding witness that prophecy is a vast scheme in the mind of Him, who sees the end from the beginning, and from ancient time was marshalling events with special reference to the ultimate development of His counsels. We are to look on therefore from Cyrus to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to understand the part in God's counsels which the former had to play, or he was not a conqueror relenting, and letting go the captives he had made; but a conqueror overcoming the captor, and setting free the prisoners carried away, an action akin somewhat in character to that which the Lord Jesus will perform. But Cyrus could only commence the work. He issued the decree about the rebuilding of the house, which Darius was destined to see completed. The Lord Jesus will Himself accomplish God's counsels. He has no successor on the throne, by whom the finishing stroke can be given to the work which He has to do.

From chapters 49-57 a new scene presents itself. The birth of Messiah and the character of His reign we have read of in chapters 7-9 and 11. Between those two dates a great space intervenes, which in part is now to be filled up with the description of the Messiah's walk on earth as God's servant, His death by which all that we have read of can be established, and the blessings which will flow out far and wide, when God deals with Jews and Gentiles in grace. Israel, God's servant, by whom He will be glorified having failed in obedience, another comes on the scene who is perfect, and is obedient even to death, the death of the cross, the arm of Jehovah, bared on Israel's behalf in Egypt, but crucified in weakness, having been first rejected by His own. Like

chapters 1 and 40 we have in 49 an outline to be filled up afterward in detail. The Lord's presence on earth witnessed of Israel's past failure, and tested their spiritual condition. He labored in vain, and spent His strength for naught and in vain as far as the nation was concerned. Results then of worldwide importance, and of everlasting significance should be produced. Gentiles should be blest during the day of Israel's unbelief, and finally Israel brought in, Jerusalem be seen in her glory, and the shame of her widowhood be forever put away. The results of His work, stated in chapter 49., His behavior and the treatment He received, we learn about in chapter 1. His presence in Israel separated the remnant from the rest of the nation, the earnest of that which will be yet found amongst them. (Chap. 1. 10.) These latter are addressed in chapter 51, and Jerusalem is addressed in answer to their cry to the arm of Jehovah in terms of gladness and promise. (Chaps, 51 - 52: 12.) Then follows the mention of the Lord's return to the astonishment of the kings of the earth, (chap. 52: 13 - 15), which will draw forth from the remnant of the future day their confession about His humiliation and death (chap, 53), so productive of grace to Jerusalem (chap, 54.), and grace to all (chap, 5.), even to those who under the law were made to feel keenly their position, the eunuch and the stranger. (Chap. 56: 1 - 8.) Thus carried on to the day of Jerusalem's joy, we read of God's charge against the wicked portion of the nation. Their sin in worshipping idols is stated, their alienation of heart from Him in going to the king—Antichrist is brought out to them, and the class of people who will dwell with God is pointed out. For them, the humble and contrite ones, the Gentiles shall make plain their way, (chap. 57: 14), but for the wicked, ever restless in wickedness, like the troubled sea, there will be no peace. (Chaps, 56: 9 - 57: 21.)

Two or three points in this section (chaps, 49-57.), should be more particularly noticed. The Lord's life in humiliation is brought prominently and somewhat in detail before us, and results which affect the nations are disclosed to us, both illustrative of the orderly arrangement of the book such as a master mind might be expected to ensure. For, as in the first section of part 1, we had predicted the commencement of God's judgment against the house of David, and in the first section of part 2, we could trace the first rays of light as regards Israel's position, the harbinger of the dawn of that day of coming full deliverance for the nation; so in the second section of part 1, we read of judgments which were to fall upon the nations around and in the land, and here in the second section of part 2, we learn how grace will flow out to those who are not of the seed of Abraham according to the flesh. Carrying on the thoughts of an orderly arrangement of the different portion of the book we may remark, that, as the third section of part 1, is concerned with the political condition of the remnant of the last days, so the corresponding section of part 2, tells of their moral condition, during the closing days of divine forbearance with the national apostasy.

In this section, however, the existence of a godly remnant is distinctly notified (chaps. 50:10,11; 51:l - 8, 53; 57: 15), in the midst of their own kindred, but morally separated from them, thus marking off the subject of which this section speaks from that which the previous section took up. There God's purposes about the nation are set fully, here the remnant is met with, in whose persons those purposes will be fulfilled; and as a remnant was first separated from their brethren historically by the labors of John and the Lord Jesus (for it is the testimony about Christ which attracts the sheep to the shepherd of the flock) we have them as distinct from the rest of the nation in this section, which sets forth the Lord as personally present in Israel, though the means used to gather them in the last days is described to us elsewhere. Now the remnant of Israel form part of

the church, then they will be a separated class morally in Israel. This explains the difference of language in chapter 57: 21, from that in chapter 48: 22. In the latter addressing the people in words of warning, the nation in covenant relationship with God, the term “Jehovah” which expresses that is used; but in chapter 57: 21, where the ungodly part of the nation is denounced, the worshipping of idols and adherents of Antichrist, the term “God” not “Jehovah” is employed by the prophet. To them God could speak of no covenanted blessings, who had deliberately turned their backs upon Him. Besides the existence of the remnant we learn what will be the position of the godly Gentiles, enjoying blessing at the same time as Israel, subordinate to the people of God, but sharing in the favors which will be dispensed by the Lord Jesus then present on earth.

To the closing section of the book (chaps. 58-66.) we must now turn. The thoughts of the latter day remnant about the cross mentioned in chapter 53, we read now of the means employed to call out the remnant from the mass of the nation. (Chap. 58-59.) The nation's sins pointed out, their consciences are touched, and they confess that the indictment is true, their then condition is the result of national unfaithfulness. Thus responding to God's dealings with them, the Redeemer's return to Zion, and the Lord's Spirit to be with the faithful in Israel, are promised. (Chap. 59: 20, 21.) Then as the consequence of the Redeemer's return we have a description of the glory of Jerusalem (chap. 60.), and the connection between the heavenly and earthly city is hinted at, providing for an undimmed and constant light to shine on the city below through the jasper walls of the city above. (Compare chap. 60: 19, 20, with Rev. 21:11 - 24.) But how can this consummation ever be effected? Was not the description of Jerusalem in chapter 1: 21, a true one? It was. But the ministry of Christ personally, and by His servants, will be found to have produced fruit, so that the people of Jerusalem shall be all righteous. (Chap. 60: 21.) That ministry is next described. It began when the Lord was on earth, but ends not in spirit till He can proclaim the day of vengeance of our God. Absent personally from earth, He will intercede for Zion, and will set watchmen on her walls, with hearts, full of longing for the fulfillment of Israel's hopes, constantly poured out in prayer before God. (Chap. 61-62.) When on earth He sent out a mission to Israel, which will not have finished its work, till He returns a conqueror to proclaim God's day of vengeance, and the year of recompences for the controversy of Zion. This explains the mention of the Lord's personal ministry in Israel in this section rather than in the former one. Had we been permitted to arrange the book according to man's thoughts, should we not have inserted the opening verses of chapter 61 either in chapter 49 or in chapter 50? But the Holy Ghost has inserted them in the former place, to point out the connection between His ministry in humiliation and the future grand results, after that the remnant, repentant and converted, shall desire His return to earth, who is the Jehovah, whose mighty works their fathers had witnessed, and God's word has recorded. (Chaps, 63: 15 - 64: 12.) Historically the cry of the remnant in chapter 64 will precede the Lord's return of chapter 63, when (none of the nations being with Him) He will act alone on Israel's behalf; but His victory and Israel's prayer both flow from the intercession of chapter 62.

But why this long interval between the day when those words of chapter 61 were declared in the synagogue at Nazareth to be fulfilled, and the gathering out of the remnant of the latter day? Was the truth so difficult of comprehension, or could it need such an age to germinate? Ah no. Hardness of heart, not obscurity of the truth, hindered their reception of it, for Gentiles during this interval have heard and received with gladness what the nation generally has rejected. “I am sought of them that asked not for me, I am found of them that sought me not. I said, Behold me,

behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name. I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people, which walketh in a way that was not good, after their own thoughts." (Chap. 65:1, 2.) These are the words of the Lord, telling of the Gentiles receiving Him, and of His patience toward the nation that He redeemed out of Egypt. What remains then for them who reject such grace but judgment, and that final? So the book ends with the destruction of the ungodly, and the blessing of the faithful remnant in Israel, the pleading with all flesh by fire and sword, the assembling of all nations to see Jehovah's glory, declared, as displayed in judgment, by those of the nations who escape His wrath, and the final doom of the transgressors. (Chap, 66.)

Thus we are led on to the day of the Lord of which other prophets have also written; but Isaiah, differing from all his Old Testament compeers, not only speaks of its dawn, but looks on also to its close, as he mentions the new heavens and the new earth which God will make, after that the Lord shall have vindicated by judgment, executed on the wicked dead, God's authority, so long and so openly set at naught in this scene through which we are moving. (Chap. 66: 22.) A condition of happiness and a righteous rule, unenjoyed, and unknown since man first trod this earth, will, when the Lord reigns, be the portion of Jerusalem and of her people. (Chap. 65: 17 - 19.) A moral change will be effected when the Lord appears on His people's behalf, and a physical change after the close of the millennium: the former (65.) speaks of, the latter (66.) just notices. That the former refers to millennial days the context makes plain (chap. 65: 14 - 25), and hence as a moral change, introducing an era of blessing never yet witnessed, we find the term create applied to it. Whereas, where the physical change is noticed, for 2 Peter 3:13 affirms it had been previously predicted (and nowhere else in the Old Testament certainly is there any mention of it), we meet with the word make, in perfect harmony with Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11; Rev. 21:5, where physical changes on this globe and its circumambient atmosphere, both past and future, are similarly described.

Looking on then to the new heavens and the new earth, we cast our eyes across all the changes this universe will witness, till the changeless state shall begin, that time of which God alone has spoken, when the restless activity of men shall cease, and the calming quiet of a settled and everlasting order of things shall commence. Blessed, unspeakably blessed, is this prospect for all who shall share in it, landed, as they will be then, from the troubled sea of shifting circumstances upon the terra firma of an immutable and holy condition. "As the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, so shall your seed and your name remain," is God's last promise by Isaiah to His people Israel. The assembling of all flesh from month to month, and week to week, to worship before Jehovah, is the prophet's last statement about men on earth, whilst the carcases of transgressors unburied, to be seen by those who are obedient to God's word, tells its tale of God's holiness and judgment upon sinners, of which the day of the Lord will bear witness. But the prophet stops not here, for lifting up just the corner, as it were, of the curtain, which hides the other world from our view, he tells us of the eternal condition in misery of those, whose carcases shall lie unburied upon earth; "for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." (Chap. 66: 24.)

Thus, starting from the Assyrian of his own day, when the throne of David was standing, Isaiah predicted the judgments to fall on his people and on the nations around them, announced the name of the sovereign by whose decree the Babylonish captivity should terminate, and told of the ministry of John the Baptist, and of the miraculous birth, and the life, labors, and death of the Lord,

of all of which we know the fulfillment. Passing on beyond the interval of time, when the church is present on earth, just touching it as it were with the point of his pen (chap. 65:1, 2), he looks on to the nation's restoration to Canaan, and the trials to which the Jews will be subjected, to be terminated by the personal presence of the rejected Lord in power, when the believing remnant shall have been called out to desire His return. Then going on to the day of the Lord, he sings of Jerusalem's glory, discriminates between the portion of Israel and that of the Gentiles in the millennium, tells of the punishment of the wicked, and of God's purpose about heaven and earth, and, with his closing words, would impress on all his readers the permanent nature of that judgment, which awaits the transgressors against the Lord.

Chapter 178

A Few Words on Psalm 45 and 68

In the Second Book of Psalms we see the remnant entirely cast out of Judaea; this gives a different character to their state. In the First Book we have seen it was the exercise of patience in the midst of evil that characterized them. That is now over, and they are as a whole cast out, with the exception of a few. The woman flies when the abomination is set up. The extremity of evil has arrived and they are looking for judgment to work out deliverance for them.

As a general thing, we find more connection with the person of Christ in the First Book. When in the world, He remained in Jerusalem for a time, then He went out; and when He went back, it was to be crucified and slain. Thomas dreaded this when he said, “They sought of late to stone thee, and goest thou thither again?” Christ had been declaring God's righteousness in the great congregation, not “refraining his lips.” They rejected Him for it; but before man was allowed to lay his lawless hands upon Him, God gives a public testimony to every part of His glory. In the raising of Lazarus there was testimony to Him as Son of God. Riding into Jerusalem on an ass, there was testimony to Him as Son of David; and then when the Greeks come up, there is testimony to Him as Son of man. All this led to His crucifixion, and, in the end, to the judgment of the Jews.

Psa. 42 is the utterance of those cast out of Jerusalem. (Compare ver. 5, 9, &c.)

Joel 2:17 skews they have got back again after this, and after the destruction of the beast. Those in Zion are calling for a fast, but the putting down of enemies is not finished. In Ezekiel we read of the Western armies coming up, and they find the Lord there.

Sennacherib represents the northern army, not the beast.

Joel 2:20. “His stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up, because he hath done great things.” “Fear not, O land, for the Lord will do great things.” There is not only apostasy judged in the beast, but there is the government of the Lord Jesus coming in over the rebellious nations. Thus there are two characters of judgment. He overcomes the beast (that which was antagonistic to what was in heaven) making “war with the Lamb:” that which is apostate from what is heavenly goes in rebellion against what is heavenly. Christ comes from heaven and breaks that. Then there is the great northern army; Gog comes up and finds Him there. There are those feeble Jews there, and what are they to do? The man of the earth has all in his hand; but God is going to prove He is God of the earth as well as of heaven. It seems to the tried remnant as if God had forgotten them; but no! He is there to destroy this army as well as the apostate king. The Lord comes and says, “Here I am,” and the enemies are destroyed on the mountains. But the same feeling has come out in this case as in the other: they say” —where is thy God?”

There is more historically brought out in this book of the Psalms, and not so much of Christ's sufferings (there is that too in Psa. 69), and more of His sitting in judgment over them. There is the entire dominion of evil allowed, and then the coming in of power to set it aside. Here you have God more than Jehovah. The link is broken, for they are out of the land. See the difference between Psa. 14 and 53. In the one it is Jehovah, in the other it is God: contrast also Psa. 14:5; 53:5—the

“righteous” and “him that encamped against thee.” Psa. 43 refers to the apostate Jews, and the 42 to the rebellious Gentiles, from whom they are suffering. Psa. 44 “We have heard with our ears,” &c. They did not see, because driven out; but they hear. Verse 9 is their condition; 11, “sheep appointed for meat;” 17, sense of integrity; 23, not Jehovah but Adonai.

In Psa. 45 Messiah comes in; 46 all is entirely changed.

Psa. 48 is descriptive of how it comes about that the King is there. What they said in Psa. 42-44 you get the answer to in Psa. 48 All they have heard of they now see. It comes to pass again, and they see it. “We have thought of thy lovingkindness, O God, in the midst of thy temple” —just what they are longing for in Psa. 42 “According to thy name.” They praise according to what they know He is—they can trust. “Thy right hand is full of righteousness.”

These titles of God, Almighty, Most High, and Jehovah, are connected with God's government on the earth. The first is connected with Abraham; the second with Melchizedec coming to Abraham. It is a picture of God's taking possession of heaven and earth in Christ, Christ being King and Priest—Priest on His throne. He will gather together in one all things in Christ in heaven and earth. We know God as Father, who hath “blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” We shall reign with Him; we are associated with Him in suffering (little though we have), and we shall be in the glory. Christ is to inherit all things, and we with Him; but the best part is to be with Himself, being children of the Father. Now Christ is sitting within the vail in heavenly places, we in Him, and we shall be associated with Him when He comes to take possession—we shall come out with the Great Heir of all things.

In Nebuchadnezzar's history we find God spoken of as the “Most High.” In Psa. 91 whoever dwells in the secret of the Most High (not Father) is safe. Then Christ addresses Jehovah, and in verse 9 the remnant speak and Jehovah answers. All this is when God takes the government of the earth; but He is our Father. Now we may be put to death, and yet not a hair perish. Now is the time to suffer. He is not yet taking to Himself His great power and reigning. Blessed that it is so, because now is the time of His long-suffering; the joint-heirs are being gathered. He will reign, the Prince of peace. Melchizedec was praising from the Most High God and praising for Him. So it will be in Christ.

As Jehovah He will be faithful to His promises.

In 2 Cor. 6 He who is Jehovah says, “You shall be my sons and daughters” —I will take a new character towards you. When we have the Father's name as now, we have the Father's house also in prospect.

In Psa. 45 Christ is making good His title as God's King. In Col. 1 we see His rights as Creator to be heir of all, and as Son of man in Heb. 2 Here it is the King. In Deut. 32 the Most High, in dividing the lands, makes Israel the center for the government of the earth. As the Church is the center of blessing in heaven, Jerusalem is the center on earth.

There are two things to remark in connection with this: first, it is part of Christ's glory; and, next, God wills that this world is to be made, under Christ's rule, a place of peace. It is not so now, though “the powers that be are ordained of God.” When there is power, there is God. Christ Himself said, “Thou hast no power against me, except it be given thee from above;” and there was

no worse use of power than Pilate's, when he washed his hands of Christ's blood.

When the Lord was rejected, the world was not set right. It was more wrong than ever. When Christ went on high, the Holy Ghost came down. Does He set the world to rights? No! He does not interfere with the evil, but says, “be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Grace comes in, but God does not take His great power and reign. Christ granted the request of the Syrophenician woman, but that was an exceptional case of going beyond the children.

It is not an exception when the Holy Ghost comes down—grace is the character of His acting. The proving of man has been closed; Christ accepted in heaven, and, by the Holy Ghost's coming down, the barriers (confusion of tongues occasioned) are not broken down, but grace overrides those barriers in the gift of tongues. Christ will take to Himself His great power and reign, and He will set things to rights. Some think to set things to rights now, some with Christ and some without; but they will not do it either one way or the other. Christ Himself will do it. If I stop at redemption truth, I am as it were making Christ to act on the world, but He is not; He is in heaven, and links saints with Him up there.

All Christians are saints, not sinners. In ourselves we are all sin; in the flesh is no good thing; but we are not in flesh, but in Christ. When we come in by that door, Christ—we come to sit down in heavenly places. If not come in there, we must remain on earth. Heaven is opened; 1st, the Holy Ghost testified of the Son of God on earth; 2ndly, angels ministered to Him as Son of man; 3rdly, to let Him forth in judgment on the white horse (Rev. 19.); 4thly, as a man, full of the Holy Ghost, Stephen looks straight up into heaven: and so should we.

Psa. 45 is earthly: Christ is judging enemies. The King, Messiah, is God; but He is man also. “Thou lovest righteousness and hatest wickedness,” applies to His humanity. Heb. 1 quotes it, where He says He “makes his angels spirits.” He makes them such; but unto the Son He saith (He does not make Him anything) “O God, thy God anointed thee above thy fellows.” Directly there is His manhood, He has fellows. A poor remnant is there ready to suffer with Him. Zech. 13. See contrast there: God calls Christ His fellow in His humiliation. Verse 5. “I am no prophet,” but I was man's slave from my youth. He came to be our servant as man. Verse 6. The Jews—He was wounded by them. Then (ver. 7) Jehovah speaks, and, passing over His humanity, calls Him His fellow.

The kingdom is founded and is taken in a man. All the figures of Oriental splendor are used in speaking of it. It is Jerusalem on earth that is meant in the Psalms. The Lamb's wife is the heavenly Jerusalem. The king's wife is the earthly Jerusalem.

Verse 10. “Forget also thine own people, and thy father’s house.” That is what the Jews would not do in the time of grace. It was what Christ Himself did when on earth. “Who is my mother, and my brethren? and he looked round about them that were about him, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren.” Under the old covenant they will get nothing. They cannot take the blessings even on the ground of promise—all has failed. They must come in as a Ruth to take shelter under the shadow of the God of Israel. They have no more title than a Gentile. Christ came as a minister of the circumcision, and they rejected Him, so that they have no claim to anything. God will accomplish all on His own account, but they must give it up entirely, and come in on the ground of grace.

Verse 9. “King's daughters” —companies of Judah.

Verse 16. “Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children.” If you look to your fathers, you have no claim—you must break with all the old thing. You must come in not as the mother of the Messiah, but as the daughter. As to the old, you have lost everything. God in His faithfulness must do it. In Rom. 3:7 “God's faithfulness glorified by my lie” is the true interpretation of that passage.

Psa. 46 is a strain of great confidence, spite of threats and danger. In God is their refuge and deliverer. God is there, whatever men say; Jehovah Sabaoth is with us.

Psa. 47 anticipates Jehovah's reign as a great king over the earth, but withal Israel's king specially.

In Psa. 48 Zion is celebrated as His city and the answer is triumphant to the distress of Psa. 44 and to the circumstances of Psa. 42, Psa. 48 is “an improvement” of all.

Psa. 49 closes the little series from 42. (not the book, which does not close till 72.).

Psa. 50 and 51 are distinct in their character.

Psa. 50 is God summoning all the world—pleading with His people on the ground of wickedness. He will not accept their ceremonial offerings, but the ground of His controversy is their not keeping the law.

Psa. 51 is confession of sin, and goes a great deal farther than David's confession, when Nathan went to him and charged him. It is the nation's confession of their guilt in the death of Christ, not only their breach of the law. You have the same thing in Isa. 40—the people, grass, &c. There is failure; and He takes them on the ground of their being distinct from those worshipping idols.

From chapter 44 onwards it is controversy concerning Christ.

There is a difference between the Jews and the ten tribes, which are Israel. Israel were never guilty of rejecting Christ. They have been cast out for their guilt; Zech. 13:9, Jews; Ezek. 20, ten tribes.

In Psa. 51-68 we have the thoughts and feelings of the remnant—the expression of their cry to God and their confidence in Him. In Psa. 63 they are able to find blessing when cast out. When there are no dispensed blessings, they look to God through all the tribulation, longing to go up to the sanctuary. All dispensed blessings fail, but the source cannot dry. In Psa. 64 the crafty enemy is brought before a God of judgment, and then the righteous rejoice in Him.

Psa. 65 shows praise waiting there. When He has accomplished the victory, praise will flow out. All nations shall be blessed. Their faith had reached the point—trusting, when in circumstances which are against us, is real faith. But once the great deliverance is achieved there is no stint of praise.

Psa. 68 Here we have Christ in glory, as Psa. 69 is Christ in suffering, upon which the glory is founded.

There is a remarkable connection between the beginning of Psa. 68, with Num. 10. The ark going before, instead of being in the midst to be guarded and honored by the people, God bends to their need by going before them to find out a place in grace, and He meets all their enemies, verse 21.

Israel's enemies are scattered by Him. The Lord is coming at their head when there is no help.

It may be well to notice the character of judgment here. There are two kinds of judgment, sessional and warlike judgment. In the end of Revelation we have the two kinds. In chapter 18 we have the destruction of Babylon by God; in chapter 19 Christ executes warlike judgment; in chapter 20 sessional judgment. “I saw thrones and they sat on them.” In sessional judgment we are with Him, as indeed the saints are seen on high from chapter iv.

The Messiah that appears is Jehovah and then they not only mourn for sins that they have done, but they mourn for Him, &c. “They shall look on him whom they have pierced,” &c., and say, “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of Jehovah.” They never see Him till then. They call on Jehovah about all the sorrow, and when the Messiah comes, they find it is Himself. With us it is the same. The deepest sorrow is not that we have sinned, but for Him. It is the consciousness of what we have done to Him that grieves us most. When we have received Him, repentance has lost its legal character. It is for love to Him, and all the sweetness of His love poured into the heart makes it see what sin is, and detest itself for not having received Him fully. Then the soul is free to understand the real relationship that exists between us and Him. There is not merely the consciousness of deserving righteous judgment, but self-loathing, and sense of His judgment more and more. They crave His interference, and it comes.

Dan. 7:21 war with the saints, and prevailed against them until the “Ancient of days,” Christ, shall come.

God cannot let evil be paramount. “As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.” He comes in the character of judgment. “Through the voice of the Lord shall the Assyrian be beaten down and in every place where the grounded staff shall pass,” &c. (Isa. 30:31, 32.) It is for the deliverance of the poor despised remnant, and it is the proper character of judgment when He will come to be glorified in His saints, &c. It will be the execution of judgment, not the distinguishing character of it, which goes on now. There is to be a judgment of the quick, as well as the dead. “The wicked perish at the presence of God.”

Verse 9. “Plentiful rain whereby thou dost confirm thine inheritance when it is weary.” We are not the inheritance, we are heirs. Israel is the inheritance. We have the same He (Christ) has Himself—peace love, glory. He has the pre-eminence. “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” We see this Psalm is prophetic of His taking His place in power, not only in title.

The Lord gave the word—great was the company of those that published it. This is a company of women [feminine noun] publishing victory like Miriam, not proclaiming glad tidings. (Ver. 11.)

Verse 12. Warlike judgment, “though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove,” &c. He is coming to take His place in Zion.

Verse 14-17. God has magnified Himself: it is no use for you to magnify yourselves, God has done it, and there is an end of you.

Verse 18 is the deliverance of Israel in that day by Christ who ascended on high— “received up into glory.” (1 Tim. 3:16.) Wonderful to say of Him who is going to execute judgment, He is “received up.” “He that ascended is the same that descended,” &c. It is Christ Himself. The law set up the middle wall of partition. Christ broke it down by His death. It could not be broken down in

any other way.

We see first, the incarnation of Christ; then we see a man rejected, spit upon, who could say, “before Abraham was, I am;” and then He goes up on high.

In Phil. 2 this blessed one comes down in the form of a man—this was the first way of His emptying Himself. He proved He had power in the man to deliver this world of all its misery, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils; but He did it all as a servant; and then, lastly, became obedient to death—the death of the cross.

It is “received gifts in the man.” Part of this is quoted in Eph. 4, showing its application to the Church. The last part, “for the rebellious also,” refers to what will be the portion of the remnant when Jehovah God will dwell among them. These delivered ones, the fruit of the travail of His soul, became the vessels of His power against Satan. It is only after the cross that Satan is called the god of this world, but the Church is now the vessel of the agency of God against Satan, by the Holy Ghost sent down, the witness of grace, not judgment (there was judgment within, e.g., Ananias and Sapphira). We are all (believers) the living witnesses of Christ's victory, while Satan is going about in the world. How far do we realize this?

Verse 21. “Enemies” are to be destroyed; the Church does not call for judgment on enemies, but the Jews look for the destruction of enemies, because they are to remain here. There is to be glory recognized—complete deliverance for them. Christ is gone on high as Son of Man. He is set in a divine place at the right hand of God, and we are made partakers of the divine nature, and sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. So too we are to be caught up to meet Him above instead of being delivered by the execution of those who despise us here below.

Here it is the joy and deliverance of Israel on earth. The beautiness of holiness reappears on better and more enduring ground—Messiah's grace and the new covenant, not their own vain pledge to the old. The tribes come up to the sanctuary, kings bring presents, princes come from Egypt, Ethiopia stretches her hands to God. “Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord; Selah: To him that rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places: the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Blessed be God.”

Verse 34. He has taken His place in the “cloud” again. The “cloud” is indicative of His presence, the shechinah and the pillar of cloud by day. And on the mount of transfiguration they “feared as they entered the cloud.” Christ will come in the clouds.

Chapter 179

Brief Words on Psalm 63

God wants every thought and desire of our hearts. That is the effect of His coming down to us, and is very blessed. There is another thing, and even a better, that is, His lifting us up to Him where He is. When God meets our thoughts, wants, and feelings, it is His answering according to the measure of our need; in the other He surpasses all the desires of our hearts and minds. See it in Psa. 132 when certain blessings are asked, and each desire is surpassed. See verses 8 and 13; verse 9 answered in verse 16, verse 10 in verse 17. There is trial of faith: He suffers His people to hunger, &c., that they may know the value of being fed by Him as He will. There is personal relationship between the saint and God— “mine and thine,” in John 17, which connects itself with what He is for us.

To Abram God said (Gen. 15), “I am thy shield,” because he wanted protection, “thy exceeding great reward.” It did not go beyond Abram's want—he wished an heir. This is different from his delighting in God. What God is bringing us to is to delight in Himself. See Abraham in Gen. 17:17: “I am the Almighty God.” This is quite another thing. It was God's revelation of Himself to Abraham. True, all kinds of blessing are connected with it; but it is a higher thing, because it revealed God, and led him up to communion with Him, while the other threw him back on his own need and wishes.

It is a different thing to have the joy of the relationship, and to have the fruits of it. “Oh my God, early will I seek thee.” There is activity of soul thus seeking God. The soul athirst for God seeks—there is diligence in seeking God for Himself—the mouth is open for everything. The Psalm does not speak of seeking for water; when a man is thirsty, he seeks for water; but here it is more thirsting for Him who gives the water.

The conscious relationship was founded. “O God, thou art my God.” The more he enjoyed God, the more it was felt to be a dry and thirsty land—not dry because of the weariness of the way. What does it matter, the dry and thirsty land, if I have the living water in my soul? I do not think about the dryness then. It is not being at home yet either. It is the wilderness in Rom. 8. If I know I am to be in the same glory with Christ, what will affect me here! What! people going to be with the Lord in glory; and yet the slightest thing can upset me now! I feel the wretchedness, because I have got the glory—I am not acquiring it, but seeking it because I have it. Think of a person who had seen heaven—knowing all the blessedness of it—going through such a world as this! That is what it was to Christ. What made Him feel it was the joy? “Because thy loving-kindness is better than life,” this world is a wilderness.

“Thy loving-kindness is better than life;” but it brings death upon one. No matter: “In everything give thanks.” What! in sorrow? Yes, to be sure, we have the key to the joy in having Himself. “Thy loving-kindness is better than life; therefore will I praise thee while I live.” “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.” What! in the desert? Yes, that is the very place, because God Himself is His portion. “My mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.” Now we often praise, when we are not very joyful (there is a certain pressure on the heart), and it is right to do it at all

times; but here the heart is so full of the blessing that it is pressed out of him. We learn from Psa. 42 that the health of my countenance is the effect of the light of thy countenance. The heart is lifted up above the sorrow because occupied with God Himself.

In Psa. 63 the soul is in the state in which Psa. 42 ends. It is not an oppressed heart looking out for what would make him joyful, but rejoicing because the spring is there. “Therefore I will bless thee while I live.”

There is help in God (see verse 7) for the difficulties of the way. It is not here the enjoyment of God Himself, but His protection. Do I look forward to my life to come? I defy anyone to know anything but that His window is open. God, then, is the only certain thing. I have no certainty that there will be a tomorrow, but there is God. Because the heart is in heaven, we can rejoice in the thing itself we have got for all times. “Jehovah is my Shepherd: I shall not want.” It is not, He has put me in certain circumstances, and I shall be happy there; but it is something to depend on to know He is my Shepherd. Then there is earnestness of purpose in following after (verse 8). So Paul: “I press toward the mark,” following hard after Him in a dry and thirsty land.” Paul in prison was pressing on toward Christ, and rejoicing in the Lord; he had nothing else to rejoice in. In nothing too should we be terrified by adversaries, which is to them an evident token of perdition (verses 9, 10); as on the other hand Christ and they that are His alone shall be exalted forever. (Verse 11.)

New Translation Psalms 1-8: Psalm 1

Chap. 1

1 Blessed [is] the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked, and hath not stood in the way of sinners, and hath not sat in the seat of scorners.

2 But in the law of Jehovah [is] his delight, and in his law doth he meditate by day and by night.

3 And he is as a tree planted by the waterbrooks, which yieldeth its fruit in its season, and its leaf fadeth not; and all that he doeth prospereth.

4 The wicked [are] not so, but [are] like the chaff which the wind scattereth.

5 Therefore the wicked shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

6 For Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked shall perish.

New Translation Psalms 1-8: Psalm 2

Chap. 2

1 Why have the heathen raged, and do the people meditate a vain thing?

2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the princes have consulted together, against Jehovah and against his anointed:

3 “Let us break their bands, and cast away their cords from us.”

4 He who sitteth in the heavens laugheth: the Lord derideth them.

5 Then he speaketh unto them in his anger, and in his wrath he confoundeth them:

6 “Yet have I anointed my king upon Zion the mountain of my holiness.”

7 “Let me declare the decree; Jehovah said unto me, ‘Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.’

8 Ask of me, and I will give nations [for] thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth [for] thy possession.

9 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; as a potter's vessel shalt thou dash them in pieces.‘“

10 And now, O ye kings, be wise; be admonished, ye judges of the earth;

11 Serve Jehovah with fear and rejoice with trembling;

12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry and ye perish in the way when his anger consumeth but a little: blessed [are] all who trust in him.

Chapter 182

New Translation Psalms 16-18

1 MICHTAM of David. Preserve me, O God, for I have trusted in thee.

2 Thou hast said unto Jehovah, Thou [art] the. Lord: my goodness [is] not to thee;

3 Unto the saints which are upon the earth, [even] them, and the excellent, All my delight [is] in them.

4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied; they have hastened [after] another; I will not pour out their drinkofferings of blood, and I will not take their names upon my lips.

5 Jehovah [is] the portion of mine inheritance and my cup; thou maintainest my lot.

6 The lines have fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, the portion hath been fair to me.

7 I will bless Jehovah who hath counseled me; also by night my reins have admonished me.

8 I have set Jehovah before me always; because [he is] at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

9 Therefore my heart hath been glad, and my soul rejoiceth; my flesh also shall lie down in confidence.

10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in Sheol; thou wilt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.

11 Thou wilt show me the path of life, fullness of joys in thy presence, pleasures at thy right hand forever.

New Translation Psalms 19-24

Chap. 19

1 To the chief musician; a Psalm of David.

2 The heavens [are] telling the glory of God, and the expanse [is] shelving the work of his hands.

3 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.

4 [There is] no speech and [there are] no words; their voice is not heard.

5 In all the earth their line has gone forth, and their speech unto the end of the world; in them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun;

6 And it [is] as a bridegroom going forth from his bridal chamber; it rejoiceth as a mighty man to run a course.

7 From the end of the heavens [is] its going forth, and its circuit unto their ends, and nothing is hidden from its heat.

8 The law of Jehovah [is] perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of Jehovah [is] true, making wise the simple.

9 The precepts of Jehovah [are] right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of Jehovah [is] clear, enlightening the eyes.

10 The fear of Jehovah [is] pure, enduring forever; the judgments of Jehovah [are] truth, they [are] righteous altogether,

11 To be desired more than gold, and more than much pure gold; and sweeter than honey and the dropping of the honeycomb.

12 Also thy servant is admonished by them, in keeping them [is] great reward.

13 Errors—who discerneth them? cleanse thou me from secret [ones].

14 Also from presumptuous [ones] keep back thy servant; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and be clear from much transgression.

15 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before thee, O Jehovah, my rock and my redeemer.

New Translation Psalms 25-31

Book1

Chap. 25

1 Of David. Unto thee, O Jehovah, do I lift up my soul.

2 My God, in thee have I trusted; let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.

3 Yea, all those who wait on thee shall not be ashamed; they shall be ashamed who deal falsely without a cause.

4 Make me to know thy ways, O Jehovah; teach me thy paths.

5 Lead me in thy truth and teach me, for thou [art] the God of my salvation; for thee have I waited all the day.

6 Remember thy tender mercies, O Jehovah, and thy kindness, for they [are] from everlasting.

7 The sins of my youth and my transgressions remember thou not; according to thy mercy remember thou me, for thy goodness sake, O Jehovah.

8 Good and upright [is] Jehovah; therefore he teacheth sinners in the way.

9 He guideth the meek in judgment and he teacheth the meek his way.

10 All the paths of Jehovah [are] mercy and truth to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

11 For thy name's sake, O Jehovah, thou hast even pardoned mine iniquity, for it [is] great.

12 Who [is] this, the man that feareth Jehovah? He teacheth him in the way he chooseth.

13 His soul abideth in goodness, and his seed shall inherit the earth.

14 The secret of Jehovah [is] for those who fear him, and his covenant, to instruct them.

15 Mine eyes [are] continually unto Jehovah, for he bringeth forth my feet from a net.

16 Turn thyself unto me and be gracious to me, for I [am] desolate and afflicted.

17 The troubles of my heart have been enlarged; bring me out of mine afflictions.

18 Look upon mine affliction and my sorrow, and forgive all my sins.

19 Look upon mine enemies, for they are many; and [with] a hatred of violence they have hated me.

20 Keep my soul and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I have trusted in thee.

21 Integrity and uprightness shall preserve me, for I have waited for thee.

22 Redeem Israel, O God, from all his distresses.

New Translation Psalms 35-36

Book First

Chap. 35

1 Of David. Strive, O Jehovah, with mine adversaries; fight with those that fight against me.

2 Take hold of shield and buckler and arise for my help,

3 And draw out the spear, and shut [the way] against my pursuers; say unto my soul, I [am] thy salvation.

4 They shall be ashamed and put to shame who seek after my soul; they shall be driven backward and confounded who devise my hurt.

5 They shall be as chaff before the wind, and the angel of Jehovah overthrowing [them].

6 Their way shall be darkness and slippery places; and the angel of Jehovah pursuing them.

7 For without cause they have hidden a pit for me, their net; without cause they have dug a pit for my soul.

8 Destruction shall come upon him, he shall not know; and his net which he hid shall catch him; into destruction shall be fall in it.

9 And my soul shall rejoice in Jehovah, and shall be joyful in his salvation.

10 All my bones shall say, O Jehovah, who is like unto thee? delivering the poor from him that is stronger than he, and the poor and needy from him that spoileth him.

11 False witnesses rise up; they ask me that which I have not known.

12 They requite me evil instead of good [to the] bereaving of my soul.

13 But as for me, when they were sick, my garment [was] sackcloth: I humbled my soul with fasting; and my prayer returneth into my bosom.

14 As if [he were] a neighbor, as if a brother to me, I have acted; like the mourning of a mother, mourning, I bowed down.

15 But in my halting they rejoiced and were gathered together; the slanderers were gathered together against me, and I knew it not; they reviled and were not silent,

16 With profane mockers [in] a feast, gnashing upon me [with] their teeth.

17 O Lord, how long wilt thou behold? restore my soul from their destructions, mine only one from the young lions.

18 I will praise thee in the great congregation; among a strong people I will sing praise unto thee.

19 Let not mine enemies rejoice over me falsely; my haters without cause wink the eye.

20 For they speak not peace, but they devise deceitful words against the quiet ones of the earth.

21 And they open wide their mouth upon me; they have said, Aha, aim, our eye hath seen.

22 Thou hast seen, O Jehovah; keep not silent, O Lord, be not far from me.

23 Awake up and arise for my judgment, my God and my Lord, for my cause.

24 Judge me according to thy righteousness, O Jehovah my God, and let them not rejoice over me.

25 Let them not say in their heart, Aha, our soul! Let them not say, We have swallowed him up.

26 They shall be ashamed and confounded together who rejoice at my hurt; they shall be clothed with shame and reproach who magnify themselves against me.

27 They shall shout for joy and rejoice who delight in my righteousness, and they shall say continually, Let Jehovah be magnified, who delighteth in the peace of his servant.

28 And my tongue shall celebrate thy righteousness, thy praise, all the day.

New Translation Psalms 37

1 Or David. Fret not thyself because of the evildoers; be not envious at the workers of iniquity.

2 For like grass they are speedily cut off, and like the greenness of the tender herb they do fade.

3 Trust in Jehovah and do good, inhabit the land and feed upon truth.

4 Delight thyself also in Jehovah, and he will give thee the requests of thy heart.

5 Roll thy way upon Jehovah; trust also in him, and he will do [it].

6 And he will bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noon-day.

7 Be silent to Jehovah and wait for him; fret not thyself because of him who maketh his way to prosper, because of the man who doeth wicked devices.

8 Cease from anger and forsake wrath; fret not thyself only to do evil.

9 For evil-doers shall be cut off, but those who wait for Jehovah, they shall inherit the earth.

10 And yet a little and the wicked [man] is not, and thou considerest his place, and he is no more.

11 But the meek shall inherit the earth and delight themselves in abundance of peace.

12 The wicked [man] deviseth evil against the righteous [man] and gnasheth his teeth upon him.

13 The Lord laugheth at him, for he hath seen that his day is come.

14 A sword have the wicked drawn, and they have bent their bow, to cause the poor and needy to fall, to slay the upright in way.

15 Their sword shall come into their own heart and their bows shall be broken.

16 Better [is] a little to the righteous [man] than the abundance of many wicked.

17 For the arms of the wicked shall be broken, but Jehovah upholdeth the righteous.

18 Jehovah knoweth the days of the upright, and their inheritance shall be forever.

19 They shall not be ashamed in the time of evil, and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

20 For the wicked shall perish and the enemies of Jehovah as the precious part of lambs: they have vanished, into smoke they have vanished.

21 The wicked [man] borroweth and payeth not, but the righteous [man] hath compassion and giveth.

22 For his blest ones shall inherit the earth, but his accursed ones shall be cut off.

23 By Jehovah the steps of a man are established, and he delighteth in his way.

24 If he falleth, he is not cast down; for Jehovah upholdeth his hand.

25 I have been a youth, I have also become old: yet have I not seen the righteous [man] forsaken, nor his seed begging for bread.

26 All the day [is he] being gracious and lending; and his seed [is] for a blessing.

27 Depart from evil and do good, and dwell forever.

28 For Jehovah loveth justice and forsaketh not his holy ones; they are preserved forever, but the seed of the wicked is cut off.

29 The righteous shall inherit the earth and shall dwell forever upon it.

30 The mouth of the righteous uttereth wisdom and his tongue speaketh justice.

31 The law of his God [is] in his heart; none of his steps slip.

32 The wicked [man] lieth in wait for the righteous [one] and seeketh to kill him.

33 Jehovah will not leave him in his hand, and will not condemn him when he is judged.

34 Wait for Jehovah and keep his ways, and he will exalt thee to inherit the land; when the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see [it].

35 I have seen the wicked [man] strong and spreading himself like a green tree in its native soil.

36 And he passeth away and behold he is not; and I seek him, and he is not found.

37 Mark the perfect [man] and behold the upright [man], for the end to [that] man [is] peace.

38 But those who transgress are destroyed together; the end of the wicked has been cut off.

39 And the salvation of the righteous [is] from Jehovah, [he is] their refuge in the time of trouble.

40 And Jehovah helped: them and delivereth them; he will deliver them and save them because they have trusted in him.

New Translation Psalm 38

Book First

1. A Psalm of David; to bring to remembrance.

2. O Jehovah, rebuke me not in thine anger, nor chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

3. For thine arrows have entered into me, and thy hand hath come down upon me.

4. There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; there is no peace in my bones because of my sin.

5. For mine iniquities have passed over my head; as a heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

6. My wounds have stunk; they have consumed away because of my folly.

7. I have been bowed down, I have been brought low to the utmost, all the day have I walked mourning.

8. For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh.

9. I have been feeble and broken to the uttermost; I have groaned because of the groaning of my heart.

10. O Lord, before thee [is] all my desire, and my sighing hath not been hidden from thee.

11 My heart hath panted; my strength hath forsaken me, and the light of mine eyes—even they are not with me.

12 My lovers and my neighbors stand aloof from my calamity, and my kinsmen have stood afar off.

13 And those who seek after my soul have laid snares, and those who seek my hurt have spoken mischievous things, and all the day do they meditate deceits.

14 And I as a deaf [man] hear not, and as a dumb [man] he openeth not his mouth.

15 And I am as a man who heareth not and in whose mouth there are no reproofs.

16 Because for thee, O Jehovah, have I waited; thou wilt answer, O Lord my God.

17 For I said, Lest they rejoice over me! at the moving of my foot they magnified themselves against me.

18 For I am prepared for halting, and my pain [is] continually before me.

19 For I will declare mine iniquity, I am afflicted because of my sin.

20 But mine enemies have been strong in life, and those who hate me without cause are multiplied.

21 And those who recompense me evil for good will oppose me because of my pursuing good.

22 Forsake me not, O Jehovah; O my God, be not far from me.

23 Make haste to my help, O Lord, my salvation.

Chapter 188

New Translation Psalms 39-41

Book First

1 To the chief musician, to Jeduthun; a psalm of David.

2 I said, I will keep my ways, from sinning with my tongue; I will keep a muzzle for my mouth, while the wicked one is before me.

3 I was dumb in silence, I held my peace from good, and my sorrow was stirred.

4 My heart glowed in my inwards; in my meditation the fire will burn: I spoke with my tongue,

5 Make me to know, O Jehovah, my end, and the measure of my days, what it is; let me know when I shall cease.

6 Behold, spans hast thou given my days, and my duration [is] as nothing before thee: only all vanity is every man established before thee. Selah.

7 Only in an image does a man walk; only a breath do they make a noise: he hoardeth, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

8 And now what wait I for, O Lord? My hope [is] in thee.

9 From all my transgressions deliver me; the reproach of the fool do not put me.

10 I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because thou didst [it].

11 Remove from me thy stroke; from the strife of thy hand I am consumed.

12 With chastisement for iniquity thou correctest man, and consumest like the moth what he desireth: only vanity is every man. Selah.

13 Hear my prayer, O Jehovah, and to my cry give ear; at my tears be not silent; for a stranger [am] I with thee, a sojourner like all my fathers.

14 Look away from me, and let me comfort myself before I go and am not.

The Psalms: Psalm 3

Chap. 3

1 A Psalm of David, on his fleeing from the face of Absalom his son.

2 Jehovah, how have my persecutors multiplied! Many are rising up against me.

3 Many are saying concerning my soul, “There is no deliverance for him in God.” Selah.

4 But thou, Jehovah, [art] a shield round about me; my glory and the lifter up of my head.

5 I cry [with] my voice unto Jehovah, and he answereth me from the mountain of his holiness. Selah.

6 I have lain down and slept; I have awaked, for Jehovah sustaineth me.

7 I will not be afraid of myriads of people which round about have set themselves in array against me.

8 Arise, O Jehovah, save me, O my God; for thou hast smitten all mine enemies [on] the cheek: thou hast broken in pieces the teeth of the wicked.

9 To Jehovah [belongeth] salvation: thy blessing [is] upon thy people. Selah.

The Psalms: Psalm 4

Chap. 4

1 To the chief musician upon stringed instruments: a Psalm of David.

2 When I call, answer thou me, O God of my righteousness; in adversity thou hast made room for me: be merciful to me and hear my prayer.

3 Ye sons of men, how long [shall] my glory [be] for a shame? ye love vanity, ye seek a lie. Selah.

4 But know ye that Jehovah hath set apart him that is godly for himself: Jehovah heareth when I call unto him.

5 Tremble and sin not; commune in your heart upon your bed and be still. Selah.

6 Sacrifice the sacrifices of righteousness, and trust in Jehovah.

7 Many are saying, “Who will show us good?” Lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us, O Jehovah.

8 Thou hast put joy into my heart more than at the time their corn and their wine were increased.

9 In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for thou alone, O Jehovah, causest me to dwell safely.

The Psalms: Psalm 5

Chap. 5

1 To the chief musician upon Nehiloth; a Psalm of David.

2 Give ear unto my words, O Jehovah; consider my meditation.

3 Hearken unto the voice of my cry for help, my King and my God; for unto thee will I pray.

4 O Jehovah, in the morning thou shalt hear my voice, in the morning will I set in order [my prayer] before thee and will look out [for help].

5 For thou art not a God delighting in wickedness: evil dwelleth not with thee.

6 The proud shall not stand before thine eyes: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

7 Thou wilt destroy those that speak lies: a man of blood and deceit Jehovah abhorreth.

8 But as for me, in the greatness of thy mercy I will come into thy house, I will worship towards the temple of thy holiness in thy fear.

9 Lead me, O Jehovah, in thy righteousness, on account of mine enemies, make thy way straight before me.

10 For there is nothing certain in his mouth; their inward part [is] wickedness; an opened sepulcher [is] their throat; they make smooth their tongue.

11 Treat them as guilty, O God; they shall fall from their counsels; in the multitude of their transgressions cast them down; for they have rebelled against thee.

12 But all those who trust in thee shall rejoice; forever shall they shout for joy, and thou wilt protect them, and those who love thy name shall exult in thee.

13 For thou, O Jehovah, wilt bless the righteous; like the shield with favor thou wilt encompass him.

The Psalms: Psalm 6

Chap. 6

1 To the chief musician on stringed instruments, upon Sheminith; a Psalm of David.

2 O Jehovah, rebuke me not in thine anger, and chasten me not in thy hot displeasure.

3 Be merciful unto me, O Jehovah, for I am languishing; heal me, O Jehovah, for my bones are terrified.

4 And my soul is greatly terrified; and thou, O Jehovah, how long?

5 Return, O Jehovah, deliver my soul; save me for thy mercy's sake.

6 For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in Sheol who shall praise thee?

7 I am weary with my sighing; all the night make I my bed to swim; I cause my couch to flow down with my tears.

8 Mine eye is consumed through grief, it has grown old because of all mine adversaries.

9 Depart from me, all workers of iniquity; for Jehovah hath heard the voice of my weeping.

10 Jehovah hath heard my supplication, Jehovah will receive my prayer.

11 All mine enemies shall be greatly ashamed and terrified; they shall turn back, they shall be ashamed suddenly.

The Psalms: Psalm 7

VII.

1 A Shiggayon of David which he sang unto Jehovah because of the words of Cush, the Benjamite.

2 O Jehovah, my God, in thee have I trusted; save me from all those who persecute me, and deliver me.

3 Lest like a lion he tear my soul, tearing it in pieces, and there is none to deliver.

4 O Jehovah, my God, if I have done this; if there be iniquity in my hands;

5 If I have recompensed with evil him that is at peace with me; if I have spoiled mine adversary without a cause;

6 Let the enemy pursue my soul and overtake it, and let him tread down my life to the ground, and let him cause mine honor to lie in the dust. Selah.

7 Arise, O Jehovah, in thine anger, lift up thyself because of the wrath of mine enemies, and wake up for me the judgment which thou hast commanded.

8 And the congregation of nations shall encompass thee; because of it return thou to the height.

9 Jehovah will govern the people: judge me, O Jehovah, according to my righteousness and according to mine integrity [that is] upon me.

10 Let now the evil of the wicked come to an end, but establish thou the righteous [man]: and one who trieth hearts and reins [art thou], O righteous God.

11 My shield [is] upon God who saveth the upright in heart.

12 God judgeth righteously, and God is angry every day.

13 If he turn not, he will whet his sword; he hath bent his bow and made it ready.

14 And at him he hath aimed the weapons of death; he maketh his arrows to be burning.

15 Behold he travaileth [with] iniquity, and he hath conceived mischief and brought forth falsehood.

16 He hath dug a pit, and enlarged it, and he falleth into the pit which he maketh.

17 His mischief shall return upon his own head, and upon the crown of his head shall his violence come down.

18 I will praise Jehovah according to his righteousness, and I will sing praises unto the name of Jehovah, Most High.

The Psalms: Psalm 8

VIII.

1 To the chief musician upon Gittith; a Psalm of David.

2 O Jehovah our Lord, how glorious [is] thy name in all the earth! Thou who hast set thy majesty above the heavens.

3 From the mouth of children and sucklings hast thou ordained praise because of thine adversaries, to still the enemy and the revenger.

4 When I behold thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast established,

5 What [is] man that thou rememberest him, and the son of man that thou visitest him?

6 And thou makest him a little lower than the angels and [with] glory and honor thou crownest him.

7 Thou makest him to rule over the works of thy hands; thou hast put everything under his feet.

8 All sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field.

9 Birds of heaven and fishes of the sea, [that which] passes through the paths of the sea.

10 O Jehovah, our Lord, how glorious [is] thy name in all the earth!

The Psalms: Psalm 9

Psalm 9

1 To the chief musician upon Muth-labben, a Psalm of David.

2 I will praise Jehovah with all my heart, I will tell all thy marvelous works.

3 I will be glad and exult in thee, I will sing praises to thy name, O most High.

4 When mine enemies turn back, they stumble and perish from before thee.

5 For thou hast maintained my cause and my right; thou satest upon the throne, judging righteously.

6 Thou hast rebuked the Gentiles, thou hast destroyed the wicked, their name hast thou blotted out forever and ever.

7 O enemy, the desolations are completed forever, and thou hast destroyed cities; the remembrance of them hath perished.

8 But Jehovah sitteth forever; he hath established his throne for judgment.

9 And he, even he, will judge the world in righteousness; he will judge nations in righteousness

10 And Jehovah will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of distress.

11 And they who know thy name will trust in thee; for thou hast not forsaken those who seek thee, O Jehovah.

12 Sing praises unto Jehovah, who inhabiteth Zion; declare ye among the people his deeds.

13 For he who inquireth after bloodshed hath remembered them; he hath not forgotten the cry of the afflicted.

14 Be merciful unto me, O Jehovah; look upon mine affliction from those who hate me, lifting me up from the gates of death;

15 In order that I may recount all thy praises in the gates of the daughter of Zion, [that] I may rejoice in thy salvation.

16 The Gentiles have sunk into the pit [which] they made; in the very net [which] they hid is their foot taken.

17 Jehovah is become known; he hath executed judgment: in the work of his own hands the wicked [man] is ensnared. Higgayon. Selah.

18 The wicked shall turn back into Sheol all [the] nations [that are] forgetful of God.

19 For not forever shall the poor be forgotten, nor shall the expectation of the humble perish everlastingly.

20 Arise, O Jehovah: let not man become strong; let Gentiles be judged before thy face.

21 Put thou fear into them, O Jehovah; the Gentiles shall know that they are but men. Selah.

The Psalms: Psalm 10

Psalm 10

1 Wherefore, O Jehovah, standest thou afar off? hidest thou thyself in times of distress?

2 In the pride of the wicked he doth hotly pursue the poor; they are taken in the very devices they devised.

3 For the wicked [man] boasteth of his soul's desire; he blesseth the plunderer, he despiseth Jehovah.

4 The wicked [man] according to the pride of his anger seeketh not; all his thoughts [are], There is no God.

5 His ways are firm at every time; thy judgments [are] a height away from him; all his adversaries—he puffeth at them.

6 He hath said in his heart, I shall not be moved; to generation and generation [I am] he which shall not [be] in any evil.

7 Of cursing his mouth is full, and of deceits and violence; under his tongue [is] mischief and iniquity.

8 He sitteth in the place of ambush of the villages; in the lurking places he slayeth the innocent; his eyes lurk for the wretched.

9 He lieth in wait in the secret place like a lion in his covert; he lieth in wait to catch the afflicted; he catcheth the afflicted when he draweth him into his net.

10 And he is crushed, he is brought low, the wretched hath fallen by his might.

11 He hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten, he hath hidden his face; he will not see forever.

12 Arise, O Jehovah; O God, lift up thy hand; forget not the afflicted.

13 Wherefore hath the wicked [man] despised God? He hath said in his heart, Thou wilt not require

14 Thou hast seen; thou beholdest mischief and provocation to requite it with thy hand; the wretched committeth himself to thee; [of] the orphan thou hast been the helper.

15 Break thou the arm of the wicked [man] and the evil [man]: thou shall search out his wickedness, [till] thou shalt find nothing.

16 Jehovah is king forever and ever; the Gentiles have perished from his land.

17 The desire of the afflicted thou hast heard, O Jehovah; thou strengthenest their heart, thou causest thine ear to hearken,

18 To judge the orphan and the oppressed: he shall continue no more to terrify man from the earth.

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The Psalms: Psalm 11

Psalm 11

1 To the chief musician, [a Psalm] of David. In Jehovah have I trusted: how say ye to my soul, Flee to your mountain [as] a bird?

2 For, lo, the wicked bend the bow; they have fixed their arrows upon the string to shoot in darkness at the upright in heart.

3 For the foundations are broken down. What hath the righteous [man] done?

4 Jehovah [is] in the temple of his holiness; Jehovah, his throne is in the heavens; his eyes behold, his eyelids prove, the sons of men.

5 Jehovah proveth the righteous [man]; and the wicked [man] and him who loveth violence his soul hateth.

6 He will rain upon the wicked snares, fire and brimstone and a burning tempest—the portion of their cup.

7 For righteous [is] Jehovah; he loveth righteousness; his face beholdeth the upright.

The Psalms: Psalms 12-14

Psalm 12 - 14

1 To the chief musician upon Sheminith, a Psalm of David.

2 Save, O Jehovah, for the godly [man] hath ceased, for the faithful have failed from the sons of men.

3 They speak falsehood, every one with his neighbor; [with] a flattering lip, with a double heart do they speak.

4 Jehovah will cut off all flattering lips, [the] tongue speaking great things.

5 Which have said, With our tongue will we be mighty; our lips are our own: who is Lord to us?

6 Because of the oppression of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, now will I arise, saith Jehovah; I will place in safety [from] him that puffeth at him.

7 The words of Jehovah [are] pure words, silver refined in a crucible of earth, sevenfold purified.

8 Thou, O Jehovah, wilt keep them; thou wilt preserve him from this generation forever.

9 The wicked walk round about when vileness is exalted among the sons of men.

Chap. 13

1 To the chief musician, a Psalm of David.

2 Until when, O Jehovah? Wilt thou forget me forever? Until when wilt thou bide thy face from me?

3 Until when shall I lay up counsels in my soul, grief in my heart daily? Until when shall mine enemy be lifted up above me?

4 Behold, answer me, O Jehovah, my God; enlighten mine eyes lest I sleep the [sleep of] death.

5 Lest mine enemies say, I have overcome him, [and] mine adversaries exult when I am moved.

6 But I in thy mercy have trusted; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation; I will sing to Jehovah, for he hath dealt well with me.

Chap. 14

1 To the chief musician, by David. The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They have acted corruptly, they have acted abominably [in] work; there is none doing good.

2 Jehovah hath looked down from heaven upon the sons of men to see if there were [one] acting wisely, seeking God.

3 They all have turned aside, they have together been corrupted; there is none doing good, there is not even one.

4 Have they not known, all [the] workers of iniquity, eating my people [as] they have eaten bread? Jehovah they have not called upon.

5 There have they greatly feared; for God [is] in the generation of the righteous.

6 Ye put to shame the counsel of the afflicted, because Jehovah [is] his refuge.

7 Who shall give out of Zion the salvation of Israel? When Jehovah bringeth back the captivity of his people, Jacob shall rejoice, Israel shall be glad.

The Psalms: Psalm 15

Psalm 15

1 A Psalm of David. O Jehovah, who shall sojourn in thy tent? who shall dwell in the hill of thy holiness?

2 He who walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness and speaketh truth in his heart.

3 [Who] hath not slandered with his tongue, hath not done evil to his neighbor, and hath not taken up a reproach against his neighbor.

4 Despised in his eyes [is] the contemned [one], and the fearers of Jehovah he honoureth; that hath sworn to the injury of [himself] and hath not changed.

5 His silver he hath not given for usury, and a bribe against an innocent [person] he hath not taken. He who doeth these things shall not be moved forever.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 17

Psalm 17

1 A prayer of David. Hear, O Jehovah, righteousness; attend unto my cry; give ear unto my prayer [which is] not from lips of deceit.

2 My judgment goeth forth from thy presence; thine eyes behold that which is right.

3 Thou host proved my heart, thou host visited [me] by night; thou host refined me; thou shalt find nothing; I have purposed, my mouth shall not transgress.

4 As to the works of man, by the words of thy lips I have watched the paths of the violent,

5 To hold fast my feet in thy paths; my footsteps were not moved.

6 I have called upon thee, for thou answerest me, O God; incline thine ear unto me, hear my speech.

7 Distinguish thy mercies, [O thou] who by thy right hand savest those who trust from those rising up against them.

8 Keep me as the apple of the eye; under the shadow of thy wings thou wilt bide me,

9 From the face of the wicked who have oppressed me: mine enemies in soul will surround me.

10 Their fat they have closed; [with] their mouth they have spoken in pride.

11 [In] our steps they have now surrounded us; their eyes they set to stretch out over the earth.

12 His likeness [is] as a lion; he longeth to tear in pieces, and as a young lion sitting in secret places.

13 Arise, O Jehovah, go before his face, cause him to bow down; deliver my soul from the wicked [man], thy sword:

14 From men, thy hand, O Jehovah, from men of the world: their portion is in this life and [with] thy treasure thou fillest their belly; they are satisfied with sons, and they leave their abundance to their children.

15 As for me, in righteousness I shall behold thy face; I shall be satisfied in awaking [with] thy likeness.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 18

Chap. 18

1 To the chief musician, by a servant of Jehovah, by David, who spoke unto Jehovah the words of this song in the day Jehovah delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.

2 And he said, I love thee, O Jehovah, my strength.

3 Jehovah [is] my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my rock, I will trust in him; my shield and horn of my salvation, my refuge.

4 Worthy to be praised will I call Jehovah, and from mine enemies shall I be delivered.

5 Pains of death encompassed me, and streams of wickedness terrify me.

6 Pains of Sheol surrounded me, snares of death fell upon me.

7 In my distress I call upon Jehovah, and unto my God do I cry for help; from his temple heareth he my voice, and my supplication before him cometh into his ears.

8 Then the earth shaketh and trembleth, and the foundations of mountains are moved; they are shaken because he was angry.

9 There went up a smoke in his anger, and fire from his mouth devoureth; coals were kindled by it.

10 And he boweth the heavens and cometh down, and darkness [is] under his feet.

11 And he rideth upon a cherub and flieth, yea, be flieth upon the wings of the wind.

12 He maketh darkness his covering, his tent round about him, darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.

13 From the brightness before him his thick clouds passed away: hail, and coals of fire.

14 And Jehovah thundereth in the heavens, and the Most High giveth his voice; hail and coals of fire.

15 And be sendeth his arrows and scattereth them, and lightnings in abundance, and discomfiteth them.

16 And the channels of waters are seen, and the foundations of the world are made bare through thy rebuke, O Jehovah, through the breath of the wind of thy wrath,

17 He sendeth from on high, he taketh me, he draweth me out of great waters.

18 He delivereth me from my strong enemies and from my haters, for they were stronger than I.

19 They fell upon me in the day of my trouble; but Jehovah was for a stay to me.

20 And he bringeth me forth into the wide place; he delivereth me because he delighted in me.

21 Jehovah recompenseth me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he requiteth me.

22 For I have kept the ways of Jehovah and have not acted wickedly against my God.

23 For all his judgments [are] before me, and his statutes I will not put away from me.

24 And I am upright before him and keep myself from mine iniquity.

25 And Jehovah requiteth me according to my righteousness, according to the cleanness of my hands before his eyes.

26 With the merciful thou showest thyself merciful, with the upright man thou showest thyself upright.

27 With the pure thou showest thyself pure, and with the perverse thou showest thyself perverse.

28 For thou savest an afflicted people, and lofty eyes thou bringest down.

29 For thou lightest my lamp; Jehovah my God enlighteneth my darkness.

30 For by thee I run [through] a troop, and by my God I leap [over] a wall.

31. [As for] God, his way [is] perfect; the word of Jehovah [is] tried; a shield [is] he to all those who trust in him.

32 For who [is] God besides Jehovah? and who [is] a rock except our God?

33 [It is] God that girdeth me with strength, and he maketh my way perfect.

34 He maketh my feet like hinds; and upon my high places he causeth me to stand,

35 Instructing my hands for the war; and a bow of brass is bent [by] mine arms.

36 And thou givest unto me a shield, thy salvation; and thy right hand upholdeth me, and thy meekness maketh me great.

37 Thou enlargest my steps under me, and my ancles have not slipped.

38 I pursue mine enemies and overtake them, and I turn not back until they are destroyed.

39 I break them in pieces and they are not able to rise; they fall under my feet.

40 And thou girdest me with strength for the battle, thou causest to bow down under me those that rise up against me.

41 And mine enemies, thou turnest their back to me; and my haters—I will destroy them.

42 They cry for help, but there is no deliverer—unto Jehovah, but be answereth them not.

43 And I bruise them as dust before the wind, and as mire of the streets I pour them out.

44 Thou deliverest me from the strivings of the people; thou placest me at the head of Gentiles: a people that I have not known serve me.

45 At the hearing of the ear they show themselves obedient to me; sons of a stranger feign submission to me.

46 Sons of a stranger fade away, and they tremble out of their enclosed places.

47 Jehovah liveth, and blessed [is] my rock and exalted the God of my salvation,

48 The God who giveth revenges unto me and subdueth peoples under me,

49 My deliverer from mine enemies yea, thou liftest me up from among those who rise up against me, from a man of violence thou deliverest me.

50 Therefore I give thanks to thee among the Gentiles, O Jehovah, and to thy name I sing praises,

51 That maketh great the deliverances of his king and showeth kindness to his anointed, to David and to his seed forever.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 20

Chap. 20

1 To the chief musician; a Psalm of David.

2 Jehovah hear thee in the day of trouble: the name of the God of Jacob protect thee.

3 Send thee help from the sanctuary and sustain thee from Zion;

4 Remember all thine offerings and accept thy burnt sacrifices. Selah.

5 Give unto thee according, to thy heart and fulfill all thy counsels.

6 May we rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God set up a banner: Jehovah fulfill all thy petitions.

7 Now I know that Jehovah saveth his anointed; he answereth him from the heavens of his holiness with the mighty deeds of salvation of his right hand.

8 These of chariots and these of horses, but we of the name of Jehovah our God make mention,

9 They have bent and have fallen; but we have risen and keep ourselves upright.

10 Save, O Jehovah may the king hear us in the day of our calling.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 21

Book 1

Chap. 21

1 To the chief musician; a Psalm of David.

2 O Jehovah, in thy strength the king rejoiceth, and in thy salvation how exceedingly doth he exalt!

3 Thou hast given unto him the desire of his heart, and the request of his lips thou hast not withholden. Selah.

4 For thou meetest him [with] blessings of goodness, thou settest upon his head a crown of pure gold.

5 He asked life from thee; thou gavest [it] him - length of days forever and ever.

6 Great [is] his glory in thy salvation; majesty and honor thou puttest upon him.

7 For thou givest him blessings forever; thou makest him glad with joy by thy countenance.

8 For the king trusteth in Jehovah, and through the mercy of the Most High he is not moved.

9 Thy hand shall find out all thine enemies, thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.

10 Thou wilt make them as a furnace of fire at the time of thy presence; Jehovah in his anger will consume them, and fire shall devour them.

11 Thou wilt destroy their fruit from the earth and their seed from among the sons of men.

12 For they stretched out evil over thee, they have devised a wicked device; they are not able.

13 For thou makest them to turn their back, when thou preparest thy strings against their face.

14 Lift thyself up, O Jehovah, in thy might; we will sing and praise thy power.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 22

Book 1

Chap. 22.

1 To the chief musician, upon the hind of the dawn; a Psalm of David.

2 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? far off from my deliverance, the words of my roaring?

3 My God, I call by day, and thou answerest not, and by night, and there is no silence for me.

4 And thou art holy, inhabiting the praises of Israel.

5 In thee our fathers trusted; they trusted, and thou dolt deliver them.

6 Unto thee they cried and they were delivered; in thee they trusted and they were not ashamed.

7 But I am a worm and not a man, a reproach of men and despised of the people.

8 All those who see me mock me, they open wide with the lip, they shake the head.

9 Commit [thyself] unto Jehovah; let him deliver him; he will deliver him because he hath delighted in him.

10 For thou [art] he that didst bring me forth from the womb, causing me to trust upon the breasts of my mother.

11 Upon thee was I cast from the womb; from the belly of my mother thou [art] my God.

12 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, for there is no helper.

13 Many bulls have surrounded me; strong ones of Bashan have encompassed me.

14 They opened their mouth upon me, [like] a lion tearing in pieces and roaring.

15 I have been poured out like water, and all my bones have been separated; my heart has become like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

16 My strength has been dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue is cleaving to my jaws; and in the dust of death thou settest me.

17 For dogs have surrounded me, the congregation of evil-doers have encompassed me, piercing my hands and my feet.

18 I number all my bones; they behold, they look upon me.

19 They divide my garments amongst themselves and upon my vestment they cast lots.

20 But thou, O Jehovah, be not far off; O my strength, make haste to my help.

21 Deliver my soul from the sword, mine only one from the power of the dog.

22 Save me from the mouth of the lion, and from the horns of the buffaloes thou hast answered me.

23 I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.

24 Ye who fear Jehovah, praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

25 For he hath not despised nor hath he abhorred the affliction of the poor, and he hath not hidden his face from him, and when he cried for help unto him, he heard.

26 Of thee [is] my praise in the great congregation; I will perform my vows before those who fear him.

27 The humble eat and are satisfied; they praise Jehovah, who seek him; your heart shall live forever.

28 All the ends of the earth shall remember and shall turn unto Jehovah, and all tribes of the Gentiles shall bow down before thee.

29 For the kingdom is Jehovah's; and he ruleth among the Gentiles.

30 All the fat ones of the earth have eaten and shall bow down; before him shall bend all those who go down to the dust, and he [who] hath not kept alive his soul.

31 A seed shall serve him; it shall be declared by the Lord to the generation;

32 They shall come and shall tell his righteousness to a people that shall be born, that he hath done [it].

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 23

Book 1

Chap. 23.

1 A Psalm of David. Jehovah [is] my shepherd; I shall not want.

2 In pastures of tender grass lie causeth me to lie down, he leadeth me by the waters of rest.

3 He restoreth my soul; He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

4 Yea when I shall walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou [art] with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

5 Thou preparest before me a table in the presence of mine adversaries; thou hast anointed my head with oil, my cup [is] overflowing.

6 Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my; and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah to length of days.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 24

Book 1

Chap. 24

1 A Psalm of David. To Jehovah [belongeth] the earth and its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it.

2 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and upon the rivers he establisheth it.

3 Who shall ascend into the mountain of Jehovah, and who shall stand in the place of his holiness?

4 The clean of hands and pure of heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto falsehood and hath not sworn to deceit.

5 He shall receive a blessing from Jehovah and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

6 This [is] the generation of those who seek him, who seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah.

7 Lift up, O gates, your heads, and be lifted up, O doors of eternity, and the king of glory shall come in.

8 Who [is] this king of glory? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle.

9 Lift up, O gates, your heads, and lift up yourselves, O doors of eternity, and the king of glory shall come in.

10 Who [is] he, this king of glory? Jehovah of hosts, he [is] the king of glory. Selah.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 26

Book First

Chap. 26

1 Of David. Judge me, O Jehovah, for I have walked in mine integrity, and in Jehovah have I trusted; I shall not be moved.

2 Prove me, O Jehovah, and try me; purify my reins and my heart.

3 For thy mercy [is] before mine eyes, and I have walked in thy truth.

4 I have not sat with vain men, and with dissemblers I go not in.

5 I have hated the congregation of evil doers, and with the wicked I sit not.

6 I wash my hands in innocency, and I surround thine altar, O Jehovah,

7 To proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving and to tell all thy marvelous deeds.

8 O Jehovah, I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the dwelling place of thy glory.

9 Gather not my soul with sinners, and my life with bloody men.

10 In whose hands [is] an evil device, and their right hand is filled with a bribe.

11. But I walk in mine integrity; redeem me and be gracious to me.

12 My foot hath stood in righteousness; in congregations will I bless Jehovah.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 27

Book First

Chap. 27

1 Jehovah [is] my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? Jehovah is the fortress of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evil doers drew near unto me to eat my flesh, mine adversaries and mine enemies against me, they stumbled and fell.

3 Though a host encamp against me, my heart doth not fear; though war rise up against me, in this I [am] confident.

4 One [thing] have I asked from Jehovah, that will I seek after; to dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of Jehovah and to consider in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his tabernacle in the day of evil; in the secret place of his tent will he hide me; be will set me upon a rock.

6 And now shall my head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me, and I will sacrifice in his tent sacrifices of joyful noise, I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto Jehovah.

7 Hear, O Jehovah, my voice: I call, and be thou merciful unto me, and answer me.

8 Unto thee my heart said, Seek ye my face: thy face, O Jehovah, I seek;

9 Hide not thy face from me, turn not away in anger thy servant; thou hast been my help; leave me not and forsake me not, O God of my salvation.

10 For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but Jehovah gathereth me.

11 Teach me thy way, O Jehovah, and lead me in a path of righteousness because of those who watch for me.

12 Give me not unto the will of mine adversaries, for witnesses of falsehood have risen up against me and he that breatheth out violence.

13 If I had not trusted to look upon the goodness of Jehovah in the land of the living!

14 Wait for Jehovah; be strong, and he shall strengthen thy heart; yea, wait for Jehovah.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 28

Book First

Chap. 28

1 Of David. Unto thee, O Jehovah, do I call; O my rock, be not silent to me, lest thou be silent to me and I become like unto those that go down to the pit.

2 Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry for help, unto thee, when I lift up my hands towards thy holy oracle.

3 Take me not away with the wicked and with the doers of iniquity, who speak peace with their neighbors and evil is in their hearts.

4 Give unto them according to their deed and according to the evil of their works; according to the work of their hands give thou to them; return their recompense unto them.

5 For they attend not unto the deeds of Jehovah and unto the work of his hands; he will destroy them and will not build them.

6 Blessed [be] Jehovah, for he hath heard the voice of my supplications.

7 Jehovah [is] my strength and my shield, in him hath my heart trusted, and I have been helped; my heart also exulteth, and with my song do I praise him.

8 Jehovah [is] strength to him, yea, a stronghold of the salvation of his anointed [is] he.

9 Save thy people and bless thine inheritance, and feed them and lift them up forever.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 29

Book First

Chap. 29

1 A Psalm of David. Give unto Jehovah, ye sons of the mighty, give unto Jehovah glory and strength.

2 Give unto Jehovah the glory of his name; bow down to Jehovah in the beauty of holiness.

3 The voice of Jehovah [is] upon the waters; the God of glory hath thundered; Jehovah [is] upon many waters.

4 The voice of Jehovah [is] in strength, the voice of Jehovah [is] in majesty.

5 The voice of Jehovah breaketh cedars in pieces; Jehovah even breaketh the cedars of Lebanon in pieces.

6 And he causeth them to skip like a calf, Lebanon and Sirion like a young buffalo.

7 The voice of Jehovah heweth out flames of fire.

8 The voice of Jehovah shaketh a wilderness, Jehovah shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

9 The voice of Jehovah causeth the hinds to bring forth and maketh bare the forests; and in his temple every one saith glory.

10 Jehovah hath sat upon the flood, yea, Jehovah sitteth king forever.

11 Jehovah giveth strength unto his people, Jehovah blesseth his people with peace.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 30

Book 1

XXX.

1 A Psalm; a song of the dedication of the house of David.

2 I extol thee, O Jehovah, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not caused mine enemies to rejoice over me.

3 O Jehovah, my God, I have cried for help unto thee, and thou healest me.

4 Thou, O Jehovah, hast brought up my soul from Sheol; thou hast kept me alive from going down to the pit.

5 Sing praises unto Jehovah, ye his holy ones, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

6 For a moment [is] in his anger, a life [is] in his favor; weeping remaineth in the evening, but in the morning rejoicing.

7 And I, I said in my prosperity I shall not be moved forever.

8 O Jehovah, in thy favor thou hast established strength for my mountain; thou hast hidden thy face: I have been confounded.

9 Unto thee, O Jehovah, I call, and unto Jehovah do I supplicate.

10 What gain [is] in my blood, in my going down to the pit? Shall dust praise thee? shall it declare thy truth?

11 Hear, O Jehovah, and be gracious to me; O Jehovah, be a helper unto me.

12 Thou hast turned my lamentation into a dance; thou hast loosed for me my sackcloth, and thou girdest me with joy:

13 So that glory may sing praise to thee and not be silent. O Jehovah, my God, I will give thee thanks forever.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 31

Book First

Chap. 30

1 To the chief musician; a Psalm of David.

2 In thee, O Jehovah, have I trusted; let me not be ashamed forever; in thy righteousness deliver me.

3 Incline thine ear unto me, deliver me speedily; be to me for a rock of strength, for a house of defense to save me.

4 For thou [art] my rock and my fortress, and for thy name's sake thou guidest and lewdest me.

5 Thou bringest me forth from the net which they hid for me, for thou [art] my fortress.

6 Into thy hand I commit my spirit; thou hast redeemed me, O Jehovah, God of truth.

7 I have hated those who observe lying vanities; but I have trusted in Jehovah.

8 I will exalt and rejoice in thy mercy, thou who hast seen my affliction; thou hast known my soul in distresses.

9 And thou hast not delivered me up into the hand of the enemy; thou hast made my feet to stand in the wide place.

10 Be gracious unto me, O Jehovah, for I am distressed; consumed with grief [is] mine eye, my soul and my belly.

11 For my life hath been spent in sorrow, and my years in sighing; my strength hath been feeble through mine iniquity, and my bones have been consumed.

12 I have been a reproach among all mine adversaries, and especially to my neighbors; and a fear to mine acquaintances who see me without; they fled from me.

13 I have been forgotten, as a dead man from the heart; I have been as a perishing vessel.

14 For I have heard the slander of many; fear [is] round about when they consult together against me; they have devised to take my life.

15 But I have trusted in thee, O Jehovah; I have said, Thou art my God.

16 My times [are] in thy hand; deliver me from the hand of mine enemies and from my persecutors.

17 Cause thy face to shine upon thy servant; in thy mercy save me.

18 O Jehovah, I shall not be ashamed, for I have called on thee; the wicked shall be ashamed, they shall be silent in Sheol.

19 The lips of falsehood shall be dumb, which speak against the righteous one insolently, with pride and contempt.

20 How great [is] thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for those who fear thee, thou hast wrought for those who trust in thee before the sons of men.

21 Thou hidest them in the secret place of thy presence from the plots of man, thou concealest them in a tabernacle from the strife of tongues.

22 Blessed [be] Jehovah, for he hath made his mercy wonderful to me in a city of defense.

23 As for me, I said in my haste, I have been cut off from before thine eyes; surely thou hast heard the voice of my supplication when I cried for help unto thee.

24 Love Jehovah, all ye his saints: Jehovah preserveth the faithful and abundantly requiteth the proud doer.

25 Be strong, and he will strengthen your heart; all ye who wait for Jehovah,

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 32

Book First

Chap. 32.

1 Of David: Maschil. Blessed [is] the one forgiven [as to] transgression, covered [as to] sin.

2 Blessed [is] the man to whom Jehovah imputeth not iniquity, and in his spirit [there is] no guile.

3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day.

4 For by day and by night thy hand is heavy upon me; my moisture hath been changed into the droughts of summer. Selah.

5 I make known my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not covered; I said I will confess concerning my transgressions unto Jehovah, and thou hast taken away the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

6 Because of this shall every godly one pray unto thee at a time for finding [thee]; surely in a flood of many waters they shall not come unto him.

7 Thou [art] a hiding-place for me; thou preservest me from distress, thou surroundest me with shouts of deliverance. Selah.

8 I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will fix mine eye upon thee.

9 Be ye not as a horse [or] as a mule, without understanding: with a bit and bridle his mouth is to be curbed lest he come near unto thee.

10 Many sorrows [are there] to the wicked; but he that trusteth in Jehovah, mercy shall encompass him.

11 Be glad in Jehovah and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye upright of heart.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 33

Book First

Chap. 33.

1 Shout for joy, ye righteous, in Jehovah; praise is comely for the upright.

2 Give ye thanks unto Jehovah upon the harp; upon a psaltery of ten strings sing ye praises unto him.

3 Sing ye unto him a new song; be ye skilful to play with shouting.

4 For the word of Jehovah [is] upright, and all his works [are] in truth.

5 He loveth righteousness and judgment; the earth is full of the mercy of Jehovah.

6 By the word of Jehovah the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth;

7 Gathering together as a heap the waters of the sea, putting the depths in storehouses.

8 All the earth shall fear before Jehovah, all the inhabitants of the world shall be afraid before him.

9 For he spake and it was; he commanded and it stood.

10 Jehovah hath made void the counsel of the Gentiles; he hath frustrated the devices of the nations.

11 The counsel of Jehovah shall stand forever, the devices of his heart to all generations.

12 Happy [is] the nation whose God is Jehovah, the people he hath chosen to himself for an inheritance.

13 From the heavens Jehovah looked; he saw all the sons of men.

14 From the place of his dwelling he looked upon all the inhabitants of the earth,

15 He who formeth their heart together, who considereth all their works.

16 The king is not saved by the multitude of a host; a mighty man is not delivered by much strength.

17 The horse [is] a vain thing for salvation, and by the greatness of his strength will be not deliver.

18 Behold, the eye of Jehovah [is] towards those who fear him, to those who hope in his mercy,

19 To deliver their soul from death and to keep them alive in famine.

20 Our soul hath waited for Jehovah; he [is] our help and our shield.

21 For in him our heart rejoiceth; for in his holy name have we trusted.

22 Thy mercy, O Jehovah, shall be upon us, according as we have hoped in thee.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 34

Book First

Chap. 34

1 Of David, when he changeth his judgment before Abimelech; and he driveth him away, and he departeth.

2 I will bless Jehovah at all times: his praise [shall be] continually in my mouth.

3 My soul shall glory in Jehovah; the afflicted shall hear and be glad.

4 Exalt ye Jehovah with me, and let us extol his name together.

5 I sought Jehovah, and he answered me, and he delivered me from all my fears.

6 They looked unto him and they shone; and their faces shall not be ashamed.

7 This afflicted one called and Jehovah heard and saved him out of all his distresses.

8 The angel of Jehovah encampeth round about those who fear him and delivereth them.

9 Taste ye and see that Jehovah [is] good; blessed [is] the man that trusteth in him.

10 Fear ye Jehovah, ye his holy ones; for there is no want to those who fear him.

11 Young lions have been in want and have suffered hunger; but those who seek Jehovah shall not lack any good thing.

12 Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of Jehovah.

13 Who [is] the man that desireth life, loving days that he may see good?

14 Keep thy tongue from evil and thy lips from speaking deceit.

15 Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it.

16 The eyes of Jehovah [are] upon the righteous and his ears toward their cry.

17 The face of Jehovah [is] against those that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.

18 They cried, and Jehovah heard and he delivered them from all their distresses.

19 Jehovah [is] nigh unto the broken in heart and he saveth the contrite in spirit.

20 Many [are] the troubles of the righteous [one]; but out of them all Jehovah delivereth him,

21 Keeping all his bones: not one of them hath been broken.

22 Evil shall slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous shall incur guilt.

23 Jehovah redeemeth the soul of his servants, and all those who trust in him shall not incur guilt.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 36

Book First

Chap. 36

1 To the chief musician; of the servant of Jehovah, of David.

2 The transgression of the wicked saith in the innermost part of my heart, There is no fear of God before his eyes.

3 For he hath flattered himself in his own eyes, until that his iniquity is found out and hated.

4 The words of his mouth [are] falsehood and deceit; he hath left off to be wise, to do well.

5 He deviseth falsehood upon his bed, he setteth himself upon a way [that is] not good, he rejecteth not evil.

6 O Jehovah, thy mercy [is] in the heavens, thy truth [is] unto the clouds.

7 Thy righteousness is like [the] mountains of God, thy judgments [are] a great deep; thou savest man and beast, O Jehovah.

8 How precious [is] thy mercy, O God! and the sons of men shall trust in the shadow of thy wings.

9 They shall be abundantly satisfied with drink from the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink the stream of thy pleasures.

10 For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

11 Continue thy mercy to those who know thee and thy righteousness to the upright in heart.

12 The foot of pride shall not come to me, and let not the hand of the wicked move me.

13 There the workers of iniquity have fallen; they have been thrust down and are not able to rise.

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 40

Book First

Chap. 40

1 To the chief musician; a psalm of David.

2 Waiting I waited for Jehovah, and he bowed to me and heard my cry.

3 And he brought me up from a pit of noise, and from the miry clay, and set my feet on a rock; he fixed my steps.

4 And he put in my mouth a new song, praise to our God: many shall see and fear, and trust in Jehovah.

5 Blessed the man who hath made Jehovah his trust, and hath not turned round to [men] proud and swerving to falsehood.

6 Many things hast thou done, O Jehovah my God; thy wonderful deeds and thy thoughts to us none can set in order to thee: I would declare and speak—they are too many to be numbered.

7 Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears didst thou dig; burnt-offering and sin-offering thou didst not ask.

8 Then I said, Behold, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me:

9 To do thy will, my God, I delight; and thy law [is] in the midst of my bowels.

10 I announced righteousness in the great congregation; behold, I will not refrain my lips, O Jehovah, thou knowest.

11 Thy righteousness I hid not in the midst of my heart; thy faithfulness and thy salvation I declared; I concealed not thy mercy and thy truth from the great congregation.

12 Thou, O Jehovah, wilt not withhold thy compassion from me; thy mercy and thy truth will always preserve me.

13 For evils till there is no number compassed upon me; my sins have overtaken me, and I am not able to see; they are more than the hairs of my head, and my heart has left me.

14 Be pleased, O Jehovah, to deliver me; O Jehovah, make haste to my help.

15 Ashamed and confounded be [those] that seek my soul to destroy it; driven back and disgraced be [those] that wish my hurt.

16 Desolate on account of their shame be [those that] say to me, Aha, aha.

17 Let all that seek rejoice and be glad in thee; let those that love thy salvation say always, Jehovah be magnified.

18 And I poor and needy—Jehovah thinketh of me. My help and deliverer [art] thou; O my God, delay not.

Chapter 218

The Psalms: Book 1, Psalm 41

Book First

Chap. 41

1 To the chief musician; a psalm of David.

2 Blessed he that payeth attention to the poor; in the day of evil Jehovah will deliver him.

3 Jehovah will preserve him and keep him alive: he shall be prospered in the land; and do not thou give him up to the will of his enemies.

4 Jehovah will hold him up on the bed of languishing: all his bed thou hast turned in his sickness.

5 I said, O Jehovah, be merciful to me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee.

6 Mine enemies speak evil as to me, When shall he die and his name perish?

7 And if he come to see, falsehood he will speak; his heart gathereth iniquity to itself, he goeth out, he speaketh outside.

8 Together against me all that hate me whisper; against me they meditate evil to me.

9 A word of Belial is poured into him; and he that lieth [there] shall rise no more.

10 Even the man of my peace in whom I confided, eating my bread, lifted the heel against me.

11 And thou, O Jehovah, be merciful to me, and raise me up, and I will requite them.

12 By this I know that thou hast delighted in me, because mine enemy shall not exult over me.

13 And as for me, thou upholdest me in my integrity and settest me before thy face forever.

14 Blessed Jehovah the God of Israel from everlasting and to everlasting. Amen, and amen.

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Chapter 220

Scripture Queries and Answers: Distinction in the Names for God

Q. What Is the True Distinction in the Names for God, Lord, Lord, &C.? A. B

A. As to the divine names, Elohim, ■■■■■■■! is the common name for God, Him with whom we have to do; hence for all who are viewed in this place by man, or represent Him who is rightly so viewed, as judges in Israel (Ex. 21), or angels. (Psa. 8) Of course there is but one true God, but gods many amongst men. But hence, in Elijah's history, Jehovah is the Elohim, Jehovah He is the Elohim. It is the word in universal use for God as such.

But constantly, when Elohim is distinctly used for the one true God, the article is added Ha Elohim. Eloah is the singular of Elohim.

El (■■■) is the strong or mighty one, who stands, so to speak, by His own power. Hence we have El-Elohe-Israel, El (God, the mighty one) ■■■, the God of Israel. El and Eloah are constantly used in Job. (■■■, chap. 5:8; 8:13, 20; 9:2; 12:6; 13:3, 7, 8; 15:4, 13, 25; 16:11, &c. ■■■■ 2:22, 23; 4:9; 5:17; 6:4, 8 9; 9:13; 10:2; 11:5, 6, 7; 12:6; 15:8, &c.) It is said to be Aramean. So we have in Dan. 11 El Elion.

I can say nothing satisfactory to my own mind as to Jah. That it is used as an ancient poetic name for Jehovah is clear, as in Hallelujah. So in Ex. 15 “my strength and my song is Jah.” If you look into most dictionaries, you will find it stated to be a shortening of Jehovah. But then I find them used together as Isa. 16:4, “In Jah Jehovah is everlasting strength.” So Isa. 12:2, “My strength and my song is Jah Jehovah.” It is found in Psa. 68 where a ■■■ precedes, translated by His name Jah in English but which may be doubted, though a name of holy song and praise at any rate.

Jehovah is God's name of dealing and relationship with men, specially with Israel, derived (I suppose) from ■■■■■, to exist; and practically translated “who is and was and is to come,” not, “who was, and is,” which is true, but “is” (exists i.e., in Himself eternally) “and was and will be” in past and future true. Hence He is One who having spoken makes good. “Thou art the same and thy years shall not fail.” Hence we have in Gen. 1, “Elohim,” the Creator; in Gen. 2, “Jehovah Elohim,” because the relationship of God with men is spoken of; for there it is not His place simply over creatures as such connected with God, but all His various relationships: how Adam was placed, warned, and dealt with, his wife's place with him, creatures' subjection, &e. These words, Elohim and Jehovah, are never confounded in scripture. The senseless scissors' distinction of rationalists shows only their want of looking intelligently into the written word of God. God is God as such; Jehovah, One who enters into relationship with His people and with men.

There is another name ■■■■■ ■■■ by which God revealed Himself, that is to Abraham and the patriarchs El Shaddai. See Ex. 6:3, where Elohim takes specially the name of Jehovah as the God of Israel. These two names are beautifully brought out in 2 Cor. 6:18 to take the name of Father with us. “I will be a Father and ye shall be my sons and daughters,” says Jehovah Shaddai, the God who was the one to Israel, the other to Abraham. In Gen. 2:3 it was of all importance to connect Jehovah, Israel's national God, with the one only creator God. So in Ex. 9:30 the God of

the Hebrews, whose name was Jehovah, is declared to be Elohim: Pharaoh would not yet fear Him. Otherwise Jehovah is a name, Elohim a being: only Jehovah is Elohim, but the former a personal name. ■■■■■■ ■■■ El Olam is the everlasting God. See Gen. 21:33.

Elion (■■■■■■■■ ■■■) is the Most High God. This is a fourth name God takes in connection with men; His millennial name above all idolatrous gods and demons and all power, and then said to be “possessor of heaven and earth.” Hence, when Nebuchadnezzar is humbled after being a beast till seven times had passed over him, he owns the God of the Jews to be the Most High God. So in Dan. 7 but not when connected with saints: there it is plural (Elionin) and refers, I believe, to the high or heavenly places.

■■■■■■■ Ehejeh in Ex. 3 is merely the abstract tense in Hebrew, and “I am that I am” I believe to be right enough. [Some take it as “I will be that I will be."]

Adonai (■■■■■■) is simply “Lord” (in the plural of majesty as is said), but hence, I believe, is used for Christ, exalted as man, but Jehovah withal, as Psalm 110: 5. It is also Adonai in Psa. 2:4; Isa. 6:1, 8; Dan. 9:17.

There is another word which, though it may be used as an attributive, can hardly be excluded from being a name of God. ■■■ Hu, Atta Hu, “thou art the same,” the unchangeable One (see Deut. 32:39); I am He, the same and besides me no god: I am He, ■■■. Psa. 44:4; Isa. 12:4; 43:10, 13; Jer. 5:12. It is in the sense of the immutable existing One, which is true of God only as Psa. 102:27 cited in Heb. 1 ■ α■τ■ς.

Though the Psalms afford in the most interesting way the difference of the use of God and LORD, I just refer to Gen. 7:16. God commanded him, it was Elohim's order; and Jehovah the personal God that cared for him, not merely the divine being, shut him in. The scissors must be very small and fine that cut this into two documents, while the Lord's mind shines out with the deepest beauty and interest to those that have eyes to see. So in 8:21 we have Jehovah smelled a sweet savor, because it was a personal relationship and dealing with men. All the rest of this part is Elohim, God as God dealing with a subject world in the flood, and sparing, as such, Noah and his family. In 9:26 Jehovah comes in again in evident relationship. As to all these, readers have only to take an “Englishman's Hebrew Concordance” and seek the passages where these various names occur, generic, personal, official, or compound. It will not be lost labor, nor anything which is an inlet to the divine mind—God's revelation of Himself.

Chapter 221

The Narrative of the Resurrection

The words ■γ■ρασαν in Mark and ■πιφωσκο■ση in Matthew have led me to new apprehensions as to the visits of the women to the sepulcher.

In the first place it is to me beyond controversy that several things supposed to happen in the morning really happened on (to us) Saturday evening. The sabbath closed at 6 in the evening as is known, and from Saturday at 6 in the evening, the women were free to buy their spices or to do anything else. Επ■φωσκε (as in Luke 23:54) does not mean solely nor properly “dawning.” Here the Friday evening of our reckoning is σ■ββατον ■π■φωσκε(translated “draw on”). It was the evening of the day that preceded Saturday, the dusk of the commencing Sabbath.

Hence, secondly, in Matt. 28:1, ■ψε τ■ν σαββ■των τ■ ■π■φωσκο■ση ε■ς μ■αν σαββ■των is properly what we call Saturday; but this being sabbath it was only at the close of it, i.e., when it was over that they went. However ■ψε and ■σπ■ρα differ, ■ψε meaning “after” and even “a good while after.” See Wetstein on Matt. 28:1; but it is given as βραδ■ον, i.e., late. We learn also from Marsh (whose reasonings on the passage are unfounded) that the Syriac has translated Luke 23:54 and John 19:31 (which is certainly the evening) by the same word, i.e., for ■πε■ παρασκευ■ the same word as Luke; and this word has the natural signification of ■πιφ■σκω, Syriac being the apostles' language.

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses, &c. saw where they laid Him. (Mark 15:47.) The sabbath over, the two Marys and Salome buy spices. That is, on Saturday evening they “bought"(■γ■ρασαν, not “had bought”) them; and Mary Magdalene and the other Mary after this, ■ψε τ■ν σαββ■των, go and see the sepulcher. It was thus λate, βραδ■ον, after buying the spices. But Mary Magdalene was absorbed with thoughts of Jesus and not resting at all while it was yet dark, she comes to the sepulcher (i.e., on Sunday morning before day), runs and tells Peter and John who come and examine the sepulcher and return home. Mary remains and sees Jesus, and then goes and tells the disciples in general (not to go to Galilee; that was not her message, but) that she had seen Jesus and that He had told her He was to ascend to His Father and their Father, to His God and their God their new divine heavenly relationship according to i.e., is own through His person and work.

Mark, who relates the message of the angels to the women as to Galilee, states also that He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, of which John gives the detail. Mary Magdalene's occupation of mind is evident all through, and John to whom she went gives the detail of this part in accordance with the subject of all his gospel. She did not wait to see anything else at the sepulcher. Seeing the stone rolled away, she set off at once to Peter and John then specially attached to Jesus to tell them the sepulcher was empty. The risen Savior appears to her with the message cited. Jesus Himself drew her as an object of affection.

The women in general came to anoint Him. It was all well. It was the manner of the Jews to bury, and they would pay their crucified Lord honor thus. But there is no such hurry with them. They did

not set off early but are there only at sunrise. The scene with Mary Magdalene was all over. To them angels appear, a gracious but ordinary Jewish intervention on God's part, and Jesus is associated with Galilee—His place of connection with the poor Jewish remnant. There they would see Him, as indeed they did. They are rejoiced and alarmed at the same time, and go off from the sepulcher; and as they go, they meet Jesus who also tells them to say that they will meet Him in Galilee—the same association. And they touch Him: to Mary Magdalene this was not permitted; for He was not returned to take the kingdom and be bodily present there. The close of Matthew connects itself with the Galilean position.

The only passage here which presents any difficulty is “they said nothing to any man,” Mark 16:8; from verse 7 it is evident that in result they told the disciples: only in going (fleeing) they said nothing to any one on the road till they reached the disciples. Matthew, indeed, does not say they executed their commission. Christ met them in Galilee on a mountain where He had ordered them to meet Him. The last words of this gospel take up distinctly this Galilean place and show that He had now authority given Him for more extension, sending them out to all the nations with a new mission; but the point of contact with the old mission was Galilee, the seat of the poor remnant according to Isa. 8

I have here omitted Luke because always in his gospel he gives the general broad facts without occupying himself with their order or connection in time. This is universally his character. He is perfectly exact and gives much additional moral light on many points in this way. But occupied with this, it is not the purpose of the Spirit in this gospel to narrate historically. He will take from many periods what will bring out in common the same truth; or single out one fact which shows it forth without heeding the other accompanying ones, or name them without reference to their order in time, if their moral order be different, as in the temptation in the wilderness. So he passes over the flight into Egypt; and shows how, things being accomplished in the temple, they went to Nazareth, because He was not to take up the Jewish character of Christ but the contrary. And hence, when obedience to the law was personally accomplished, Jesus gets at once into His Nazarene character.

It is the same in principle in the history of the resurrection. The women who had accompanied Him from Galilee (that is their character), having followed, beheld the sepulcher and how His body was laid; and having returned they prepared spices and ointments. He does not say, they bought, nor when they prepared. Perhaps they did on Friday night as well as Saturday I doubt it however; for at six o'clock sabbath began, and it must have been about that, if not quite, when they returned. They rested the sabbath, but the κα■ τ■ μεν gives it a moral character and not the date after the buying.

So, in chapter 14:8-10, we have merely the general fact as to all the women that came from Galilee without any detail; and to the eleven and all the rest Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the others with them told these things to the apostles. It was the affair of the women—where, and when, or who, to each or to several or collectively, is passed over entirely. It was not the object here of the Spirit of God. What He does tell us is the fact, and He gives it a moral character and some additional particulars which are not elsewhere, but no details. It is very possible that more than one party of women went to the sepulcher, that hearing from the first party or through their means they went down. However, I have no object in supposing it:

verses 22, 23 would rather say otherwise, as also verse 1. I do not speak here of Mary Magdalene. But this the scripture was not concerned to tell us. Each word of what it does tells us bears truth in it for the soul. So verses 23, 24. It is all put generally together; for we may well suppose that verse 24 refers to Peter and John, though most likely the two that went to Emmaus only heard this as a general report. Verse 12 also is thus given as a confirming fact after the very vague general statement of all the women—telling the apostles and all the rest. They were about one hundred and twenty, men and women. These preparatory facts are really introductory almost to the account of the journey to Emmaus, which is also alluded to in Mark. The general effect of the women's statement is given, verse 11. However there was exception. For instance, Peter (it is not “then Peter” as in the English; it should be “but Peter”) arose and Went and saw and departed wondering at what had happened; but, as John tells us, he had no scriptural understanding or faith in the resurrection.

See the remarkable confirmation of this character at the close of this account of Luke, where verses 43, 44, 50 seem all continuous; and they are so morally. An infidel might say, Luke clearly did not know that there were forty days, but supposed He went up to heaven at once. Now Luke is the person who tells us in Acts 1 that there were forty days.

Chapter 222

Romanism: an Answer to the Pamphlet of a Romish Priest, Entitled “the Law and the Testimony": Part 1

OR AN ANSWER TO THE PAMPHLET OF A ROMISH PRIEST, ENTITLED, “THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY.”

And you have not one word, then, to say for the Mass, the very center and distinguishing feature of the whole Romanist system!

The omission is intelligible, but remarkable. The pretension to offer Christ still, as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the living and the dead, is so subversive of Christianity, so contrary to the express testimony of the word of God, that it is natural for one who seeks to conciliate Protestants to Romish doctrines to pass it over in silence, if he can. The best way to win to these doctrines is to conceal them, to direct the attention from them. You cannot deny that the Mass is the center of your whole system. “He goes to Mass,” is the very term familiarly used to designate a Romanist; “He goes to church,” to mark out a Protestant. Why have you omitted this subject in your effort to enlighten poor Roman Catholics and disabused prejudiced Protestants? The pretense to have a sacrifice still offered up on earth, when the word of God declares, that “by one offering Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified;” that “there is no more offering for sin, where remission of sins is;” that a continual offering was a memorial of sins, proving they were not put away; the declaration that you have an unbloody sacrifice, when the word of God declares, that “without shedding of blood there is no remission,” and that consequently, if the oblation of Christ was to be repeated, He must often have suffered;—such a plain distinct testimony of God's word on the very point, makes it natural you should omit all mention of it. The sacrifice of the Mass is the proof that, in what calls itself the church of Rome, there is no true remission of sins; for, “where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin.”

This is a very solemn point, dear reader. If the word of God be true, there is no remission of sins in the so-called church of Rome. Hence, those belonging to it are continually, as the poor Jews were, “offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;” for they are unbloody sacrifices, and WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO REMISSION. Romanism has a form of piety, but it denies the substance. God forbid that I should use a hard word as to souls as precious as my own, and who believe they are in the right; whom, I trust and believe, I love with unfeigned charity; such as I have lived amongst for years, and loved and served, as well as I knew how. It is not want of love to speak plainly in what concerns the salvation of souls. I would not use an abusive or hard word that could offend them; but I say plainly, that that is not the Church of God, nor is the true remission of sins to be found, where a sacrifice is still pretended to be offered— “For where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin.” The Church of God enjoys the perfect remission of sins by one perfect sacrifice, in which the precious blood of Christ was shed, offered once for all, and which never can be repeated; for Christ can die no more, can never suffer again, nor need He, for He has by one offering perfected forever them that are sanctified. The Mass is but a return to the weakness of Judaism.

Hence this one capital point is sufficient for every one taught of God, and must lead every one who bows to the word of God to reject the Romish system as an entire departure from Christianity as revealed of God. Yet I will take up briefly the different points the author of “Law and Testimony” has touched upon. And, first, some general observations which I would address to the writer.

You lean much upon the fathers. Forgive me if I think you have not much read them. You tell us, that you have taken from the authenticated work of every author you have quoted, as may be ascertained by reference to their writings. Now, that you are not personally acquainted with them, you have afforded most unequivocal proof in your pamphlet, in this: that you have supposed the Clement who wrote the Stromata to be the Clement who was, as you say, a “fellow-laborer of the Apostles, who was Pope of Rome, third after Peter, and is often mentioned by Paul, in his epistles.” “The Church, he writes,” you say, “which is one,” &c., and you quote “St. Clem. 7 Stromat.” Now, the very smallest acquaintance with the fathers would have saved you so glaring a mistake as you have here made. There was a Clement, companion of Paul, who wrote a letter to the church of Corinth, and who (though there is the greatest confusion and contradiction as to the succession of the first bishops of Rome) is stated by respectable historians to have been the third bishop of Rome. Two letters have been attributed to him; one is believed to be authentic—a pious effort to compose the strifes of the church of Corinth. But (must I say so? As my readers may be peasants of the North of Ireland, it may be necessary) Clement of Alexandria, who never was a bishop at all, was the author of the Stromata. He flourished from 192 A.D. to the beginning of the third century. He was president of the school of Alexandria. He was a great philosopher as well as a Christian, but of doubtful soundness enough on some points, and full of philosophical speculations. However, whatever the value of Clement's opinions, one thing is quite clear, that you did not consult him yourself; whether you did the other Fathers, which you quote, every one must judge by this example for himself. One thing is certain, you must be an utter stranger to the Fathers, to have taken Clement of Alexandria for Clement of Rome.

Your definition of the Church introduces another point in which the flagrant departure of Romanism from the Christianity taught by the Apostles, betrays itself in a remarkable manner. It is, you say, an assembly of Christians, united by the profession of the same true faith, and communion of the same sacraments, under the government of lawful pastors, whose head is the Pope. Now, scripture is as explicit as possible in saying, that Christ is its head—and it cannot have two. The statement of the Catechism of the Council of Trent is curious enough on this point, It says—it could not say otherwise—this Church has also but one ruler and governor, the invisible one, Christ, whom the Eternal Father hath made head over all the Church, which is His body; the visible one, him, who as legitimate successor of Peter, the prince of the apostles, fills the apostolic chair—one would have thought that made two. God “gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body;” or, if you prefer the Rhemish translation, “hath made him head over all, to the church, which is his body” —Eph. 1:22, 23; and again, chap. 5:23, “the husband is head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church.” Now, this is practically very important, because the glorious Head, living in heaven, gives the true Church, His body, a heavenly character, though its members may be despised on earth; whereas a glorious head on earth, greater than emperors and princes in the eyes, of men, gives it a worldly glory and character which neither Christ nor the true Church ever had; besides, Christ, as the Head, is a source of grace, which it is impossible the pope or any man can be. But the grand point is, Christ is the one sole Head of the true Church; the

Pope is the head of yours; therefore yours is certainly not the true.

One little word in addition, as to your definition. You tell us, it is an assembly of Christians, united by the profession of the same true faith. Hence, as there are millions in the Greek Church who say they are the true Church, and millions of Protestants who say they are, and millions of Catholics who say they are; and you tell me that their being united in the same true faith is part of the definition by which I shall know which is the true one, I must find out what the true faith is, before I know which Christ's Church is, or if any of them are; for each of them tells me they are. Of course, they honestly think themselves so; and you tell me that profession of the true faith marks the true Church. Well, then, I must necessarily know what is the true faith, to know who professes it; that is, I find the true faith before I find the Church. And so it always was; for it was on receiving the true faith from the apostles, or other servants of Christ, that people at the first became members of the Church; and they did not, and could not, become so otherwise.

But, again, you give us the usual marks of unity—sanctity, catholicity, apostolicity, and add infallibility, perpetual visibility. The first four are given in “Milner's End of Controversy;” indeed, they are the well-known marks as given in the Catechism of the Council of Trent. Nowhere is the truth given as a mark of the true Church. This is strange—still more strange, since, in your definition of the Church, the profession of the true faith is made essential to it. It is very convenient to assume it as a definition, and to drop it as a mark; but you have replaced it by a very convenient substitute-infallibility, which means, that whatever it teaches must be right, so that I must take it for true without inquiry. Before, I was to take the true faith, as showing Christ's Church; now, I must take the Church and all it teaches, without inquiry, as securing the truth for me. Which is the right way? Both cannot be. Holding and professing the truth are not infallibility. Every true Christian holds and professes the truth, but he is not infallible. If the Church profess the true faith, she holds a true faith which exists already to be professed, as it was given by inspiration to those whom Christ sent to reveal it. If she is infallible, she is the source of truth, not the receiver of it, not merely the depositary of it. Now, that is true of God alone.

But, in giving the first four marks, you allege your system justifies you. They are those given in the Catechism of the Council of Trent. The only point I would now insist upon here is this very solemn one, that the truth forms no mark of the true Church in the system of Rome. She dare not present it as a test; she disclaims it, she avoids it, she pleads unity, sanctity, catholicity, apostolicity. We will examine these just now. Truth cannot be borne as a test. All that is taught is to be received without any test at all, though an apostle could say, “prove all things, hold fast that which is good.” They of Berea were noble in the apostle's eyes because they searched the scriptures to see whether these things were so; but the test of truth cannot be endured at Rome; it is not pretended to be one of the marks of the Romish body. In place of it, it would impose all it teaches without any test at all-pretending to be infallible, which is the attribute of God only. Do I assert that man, by his own powers, is able to fathom the truth? No; but the Lord has said,” They shall be all taught of God; whosoever, therefore, hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.” God may employ any one, a minister of the word, a mother, a friend, a book to present the truth-grace applies it to the heart; that, the Church, even the true Church, has no pretensions to do—though she is an instrument to hold the truth up before men; but God alone can bring it home.

On the other hand, the Roman Catholic, having relinquished the truth as a test of the true Church, saying, that the truth is to be searched for in vain, leans not on grace, but entirely on human powers, to find the true Church; he points out, to use the words of a celebrated controversialist and bishop, “Certain exterior visible marks, such as plain unlearned persons can discover, if they will take ordinary pains for this purpose, no less than persons of the greatest abilities and literature.” This is stated in reply to the marks of the true Church, which the author declares to be laid down by Luther, Calvin, and the church of England—namely, truth of doctrine, and the right administration of the sacraments; that is, truth of doctrine and the right administration of the sacraments are objected to as adequate marks of the true Church, by which it may be known.

Now, if it be a question for heathens or Jews—for them the whole question is, just how to be saved. If they believe and are baptized they are saved, and members, it is to be supposed, of the true Church, before they have discussed its merits at all. If it be a question which arises among Christians, who seek among Roman Catholics, and Protestants, and Presbyterians, and other bodies, where the true Church is to be found; if, I say, the question arises among Christians, they have not all knowledge, doubtless, but they have saving faith, or they are not Christians at all; and hence, the truth is a most sure means of ascertaining the true Church. Thus, if I know, as a matter of my own salvation, that the divinity and atonement of Christ are the very truth of God, and I found anything calling itself a church, which denied these fundamental doctrines, I could at once say, That is not the true Church. Souls may be ignorantly in error there, may come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved; but I cannot own the body as the true Church of God.

And here a great and important question arises, on which I desire to say a few words, from its intrinsic importance, though the book I am commenting on relieves me from the necessity. They quote the scriptures, and, consequently, suppose us capable of understanding them, heretics though we may be, capable of receiving proof from them. But the subject is too important to pass it over with this remark, conclusive though it be. It is said, we cannot judge of scripture; it is alleged that laws require judges, and the like. Now, I do not go upon the ground of our capacity to judge scripture. My reason, dear reader, is very simple—it judges us. “The words that I speak unto you,” says the Lord, “shall judge you in the last day.” “The word of God is sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierceth to the dividing asunder of joints and marrow, and soul and spirit, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” There is a conscience in every man; God's word speaks to it, and judges everything in his heart. It is the light which manifests all things—the revelation of God and of Christ, who is light. I do not judge if the light be clean; it shows whether I am.

When Christ was in the world, when He spoke the words of God, were not men bound to receive them on peril of condemnation? Did it require the Church's authority to lead men to receive it? All the religious authorities—authorities which they quote to confirm their doctrine—rejected Him. Are His words less binding, less true, less holy, less gracious now? The word of God is not judged—it judges. Woe be to the man who hardens his heart against it! Men did then; what was the consequence? God, by John Baptist, mourned to them, they would not lament; He piped to them, they would not dance. Hardening their consciences against the conviction of sin, they (to use the words of the blessed Lord) rejected the counsel of God against themselves; that is, to their own eternal ruin. The word which was, and, blessed be God, yet is spoken and sent in grace, will judge them, and all who reject it in the last day; for God knows that, when He sent it in grace, He sent it

with ample proofs to men's hearts and consciences that it is His word.

But a word more on this. It is not denied that the scriptures are the word of God. The Council of Trent has added seven books to the canon, never publicly received into it before, and against the express testimony of Jerome, the author of the Vulgate translation, which they receive as authentic. But leaving these contested ones for the moment (for in the New Testament there are none such), they own that the scriptures are the word of God. They own that Peter wrote his epistles as an inspired apostle; Paul his, John his, and so of the other books of the New Testament (and the same holds good as to all the Old Testament, to the Jews). Now, save the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, all the books of the New Testament are addressed to all the faithful; in one epistle, that to the Philippians, the bishops and deacons being added. That is, to express myself in modern language, the New Testament was addressed not to the clergy but by the clergy, the highest and wisest of them assuredly, to all the faithful in general, or in particular places. Now, if the faithful in general were incompetent to use them, how came the apostle to write them to them? The apostles thought what they wrote was suited to the mass of the faithful; you think it is not; which is right? And mark what a monstrous position you put yourselves in—the apostles wrote (to say nothing of the guidance of the Holy Ghost yet) in the way they thought best suited to the mass of the faithful, writing to all of them; and even in one case particularly insisting that care should be taken that it was read to all. You think you can do it better than they. What monstrous presumption! Did they do it badly, in a wrong manner, so that you can do it better? If really looked into, it is blasphemy; for it is the Spirit of God who addressed all this, save the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, to the common mass of the faithful.

But another very solemn question arises here, that of the authority of God in the matter. God did address the writings in question to the mass of the faithful as binding on their consciences, directing their lives and rejoicing their hearts. Now I do not insist here on the right of every Christian to read the scriptures (though no man has a right to call it in question), but on the right of God to address Himself to whom He will, and of the sin of intercepting what He has addressed to His servants. If I have sent directions and promises to my servants, he who hinders their having them as I send them, and directly from myself, meddles, not with the right of the servants, but with mine. God has sent His word to the faithful, not to the clergy (I except Timothy and Titus, as to this argument, however profitable, and in spirit binding on all). He who hinders their receiving it, or pretends to claim control over their getting it, flies in the face of God's authority and God's own acts. To pretend to communicate God's thoughts better and more clearly than His inspired apostles, and to hinder His communications reaching His own servants, when He has addressed them to them, is a strange way of proving any to be the true Church of God. And that is what exactly the clergy of the Roman Catholic system do.

But I will enter on your marks of the true Church. They are unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity. You refer to some other points, which I will advert to in their place.

First, unity. That the Church of God was one at the beginning, and manifestly and publicly such, is evident to every one that reads the scriptures. That it is not, if we consider it as a public, visible body on earth (for the true body of Christ will be infallibly so in glory, and is so always in the living unity of the Spirit) is equally evident, from the simple fact that we are inquiring which of two or three bodies, or if any of them, be the true Church. Unity of doctrine, and general discipline, which

you give as being unity, is not sufficient. These may prove sameness in two bodies, as well as unity. There must be corporate unity—a single body. I seek more than you do, therefore in unity. Further, your proofs of unity are utterly vain and useless; they are as true of the Greek body, which detests and rejects you, as of the Romish, which denounces the Greek as schismatic and heretical. They have bishops and the assembling on Sundays, and the Eucharist, and the same doctrines, and the same general discipline, which you plead as proofs for Rome. You would find these in the Protestant Episcopal Church, too, all over the world. Perhaps, indeed, we may except a confession to a priest. But what a strange mark of unity you have given us here. It is perfectly certain that if it be one, no Christian for centuries after Christ was in the one true Church. There is not an historical point more incontestible than this, that private confession to a priest is a novelty unknown to the early Church. After the earliest times men did public penance for scandalous falls, and no confession was imposed as to others. There was, indeed, for a time, one penitentiary priest at Constantinople, and, as it appears, elsewhere; and such scandal arose, on a certain occasion, from it, that it was abolished by Nectarius; and his successor, Chrysostom, at the end of the fourth century, urges, over and over again, confession to God alone. Augustine's words are equally clear; so are Ambrose's. In the thirteenth century alone, it was first made obligatory by the Lateran Council, under Innocent III.—the same Pope under whom the Inquisition was established, and the Crusades formed against the Albigenses, and the atrocities of that holy war perpetrated in the South of France.

We agree that unity was at the first, and it does not exist now. There are Romanists, Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, Protestant Episcopalians, Presbyterians, all composing nominal churches, containing, the smallest of them, millions of professing Christians. Your talking of unity of doctrine and discipline amongst Romanists is nothing at all to the purpose. So there is amongst the millions of the Greek church; so there is in the smallest body of Christians you may affect to despise. The question is, is this found in the whole professing church? If you tell me, But none of the others, save Rome, are in the truth, that is just the question to be solved, and I must first have the truth to judge by. If I have that, according to the word of God, to judge by, then I judge the Romanist system to be apostasy from the truth of God. That you are at one among yourselves proves nothing at all, because others, as the Greek body, are that also. Nay, to go farther, Mahometans are, as to doctrine and general discipline, with pretty much such a schism as Greeks and Romans show under the name of Christ. Nay, in China we have numerically more than all put together in one system, worshipping heaven and the manes of their sainted ancestors.

You will say, and say justly, But these are not Christians—have not the truth of God at all. But then I must know what the truth is to judge that. I do (blessed be God!) know the sure precious truth of God, the doctrine of Christ, as God has revealed it. But when I use this, I find that you have it not.

But you have the Pope. Is this a security for unity? Why, you know well that there was a time when there were three at a time, and all three set aside by a council, a general council—that of Constance. if such unity as you speak of was necessary to the existence of the true Church, and the Pope was the keystone of it, where was it then? and where is your apostolic succession? In which of the three am I to trace it? There was a regular double succession of popes for fifty years; and then we have a council deposing a pope; and mark it well, the present succession of the apostolic see, and the consequent existence of the whole Romish body, depends on the right of a general council to depose a pope, and its superiority to the pope, for it flows at best from the pope

set up by the council when they had deposed John XXIII. I say, at best; for these three popes are each of them sources of an ordained clergy. Again, when Pope Liberius solemnly signed the Arian creed, and the vast majority of Christendom were Arian, where was the unity of the Church through the pope then? Now I will not affirm that the story of Pope Joan (that is, that a good—for nothing woman was pope) is true; but, with the real uncertainty whether it be not true, what is become of succession, as a secure test of the true Church?

We have touched now on the question of apostolicity, as well as unity; but, on other grounds, this mark will not help you out in your assertion that the system of Rome is the one true Church. The apostolic succession of the Greek and Eastern bodies is as sure, and, indeed much surer—to say nothing of the Protestant—than that of Rome. So that this will not hinder my being a Greek, or an Armenian, or even a Protestant, How will this visible external mark help me? Am I to settle all the nice questions of the Council of Constance? Am I to settle whether Urban VI., or Clement VII., or their successors, were the true popes of their day? or, when the successors of each line were condemned by the council as guilty of heresy, perjury, and contumacy, and were excommunicated, am I to consider them popes or not? or, instead of them, the third set, Alexander V., and his successor, John XXIII., and who was in turn degraded by the council for his crimes? It is a dreary scene; yet it is not I, but you, who have referred me to apostolicity as a test of the true Church.

Do you say, the poor man has nothing to do with all this? But this is apostolicity. It will not, you mean to say bear examination. For how am Ito settle apostolic succession but by knowing it exists? Is this a simple external visible mark? Why, it is a question your most learned divines are at sea about, and void. They tell you the pope and a general council together are infallible; but how, when a council condemns a pope, and deposes him, a deposition on which the best line of your present orders, and the validity of the succession of the actual Peter, depend? Again, which are the general councils? This they dare not say; because if they admit Constance to be one, then the Church can act without a pope, and depose him; if they deny it, their succession is gone, because the present popes derive their succession from this act. Am I to settle all this, before I know the truth of God for my soul, or find the true Church? Where am I to find the records? How many historians am I to read? What is the authority of these authors? What a difference from the truth learned from the simple word of God! Or am I to gulp down as I find it, because Rome is infallible—I know not why?

But one word more as to the pope and unity. You tell us, when a heresy spread, a council was assembled by the authority of the pope. Now, if you have the smallest acquaintance with ecclesiastical history, you must know that all the early councils were summoned by the emperors. They were held in the East; and when Christendom in those quarters was torn in pieces by clerical contention, and ambition, and doctrinal discord, the emperors tried to make peace by gathering these general assemblies, none having been held (if we except that recorded in the Acts) before the emperors professed Christianity; and then it was only bishops and others within the Roman empire who met. The Council of Antioch before that time formally condemned the very term as heretical which the Council of Nice established as the only secure test of orthodoxy against Arius (that is, Homoousion); and this circumstance being pressed by the Eastern bishops who got influence over Constantine, the affair ended in Arius being received as orthodox into what you call the Catholic Church, and dying in its communion; and in Athanasius, who held what both you and I

believe to be the truth, dying in banishment. And in the subsequent reign (the emperor being an Arian, and the orthodox persecuted), the pope signed the Arian creed, as a more dutiful subject than I suppose he would be now. But this by-the-by; it is perfectly certain that, in the first and great general councils, the pope did not assemble them by his authority. Is this what you refer me to as securing me in the knowledge of the truth and the true Church?

But you tell me, also, I have a test in its catholicity, that is, its universality. But here the voice of facts speaks too loud for you not to sink into what is ridiculous. “It must contain,” you say, “more members than any other community or denomination of professing Christians.” More members! a majority Is that all the truth of God has to depend upon? What has that to do with universality? Why, if I live in England, a poor countryman, such as you address your book to, the immense majority are Protestants; indeed, save Irishmen, none else scarcely could be found; and if I am to take such a poor test as the name of a building, everybody knows that if I asked, Where is the church? I should be shown the Protestant place of worship; all else are chapels. Indeed this test would hold good in Ireland. But is your test of the true Church reduced to a majority? Go to the east, where little is known beyond their own doors, and there this simple, external, visible test is the certain exclusion of all pretension of the Romanist to be of the true Church.

But some facts on this point require a little comment. You tell us that Rome has two hundred and thirty millions of adherents. Where have you found them? The fact is, that you have exaggerated by pretty nearly a hundred millions. There are in the world, on a rough calculation—for nothing more can be given here, or indeed be arrived at, as to some countries—there are in the world about one hundred and forty-three, say one hundred and forty-five millions of Romanists, eighty-five millions of Protestants, sixty millions of Greeks, and perhaps four or five millions in all of other denominations, as Armenians and the like in the east. Asia and Africa contain a certain number of Protestants and Romanists difficult to enumerate, and scarcely changing the proportions. That is, there are about as many professing Christians who hold that Rome is right and who hold that she is wrong. But who, in his senses, would take this, or the contrary, to be a means of ascertaining the true Church? Had men gone by numbers, they would, in the fourth century, have gone from the confession of Christ's divinity to the denial of it with the different emperors and the same pope, who would have helped them in and out with the majority into (not unity, thank God, for some would not give up the truth for an emperor or a pope, but into) so-called orthodoxy, if majorities were to decide it. And, alas! being mere professors, so it happened that they did wheel about with the turn of the tide.

I have spoken briefly of three of the marks of the true Church—unity, apostolicity, catholicity. As to unity, the Romish body is one, the Greek Church is one, and so of others: but general visible unity is lost, or we should not have to inquire which is the true Church. Catholicity, or universality, you have given up the pretension to—you claim only a majority; so that, if universality be a test, Romanists have not the true Church, nor, since there are Romanists, any other body either.

This test, by your own confession, and change of it into a simple majority (itself more than doubtful), makes the whole ground on which you search for the true Church a perfect absurdity. Your own statement proves, if universality be a test, that there is no true visible Church at all. Lastly, apostolicity is the most absurd test imaginable; for, while pretending to be simple and external, the succession of bishops from the apostles' day must be ascertained, or the mark does

not exist at all. And in the next place, Greeks, Armenians, Syrians, and even Protestant Episcopalians have it, and prove it as gaily as Romanists themselves; while the only place where it is known to be most grievously damaged and upset is in the papal succession, where for fifty years there were two popes at a time, both ordaining other successions; and at last three, all put down for heresy, and another set up by a council which upset all their claims together. I have reserved the question of sanctity: it is a painful one, and I shall speak of it at the close.

I shall now refer to your use of scripture. First, your quotation of it is important. It is then available, intelligible to the faithful, and conclusive. We can understand it with God's help (without which we can do nothing right), and it binds our conscience. Your use of it is another thing. You quote, for example, passages, or parts of passages (for one is applicable to the state of glory), saying, that Christ would have one fold and one shepherd (i.e., no longer Jews or Gentiles as distinct people); Christ's prayer, that they all may be one; then the passage which applies to glory (“the glory that thou hast given me I have given them,” precedes what you quote); Paul's direction to the faithful, to be careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; a direction to Timothy to keep what was committed to his trust; and to Titus, to reject heretics. It is clear, you say, from all these texts, that no one can be a member of the Church of Christ unless he holds the same doctrine as she teaches. Well, how this conclusion flows from a prayer for unity, or an exhortation to keep it in the bond of peace, is, I confess, beyond me, and, with all humility, I apprehend beyond anybody; because there is nothing in the passages you quote about the conclusion which you draw. Common sense tells us, that a person who is a member of a body, and does not hold what it teaches, is, in some respects, inconsistent. But your conclusion is utterly false, for either the Church must teach some error, or no member can ever be in any error whatever, without ceasing thereby to be a member of the Church at all; for if he be in any error, he holds something the Church does not teach, or else she teaches error.

But, though you tell us the texts prove it, you (strangely enough) give in the same sentence a totally different reason for it. The Church has received authority from Christ to teach all nations. Allow me to correct an error of a very grave character, on which all your reasoning, and all the Romish reasoning, is founded. You say the Church teaches. Now, I deny that the Church teaches at all; she holds the truth, has learned the truth, is sanctified by the truth; she teaches nothing. She is taught, and has learned. Ministers, whom God has sent for that purpose, teach. It was never said to the Church, “Go ye and teach all nations.” It was said to the apostles, when Christ ascended; and they went and taught, as did certain others, sent by the Holy Ghost; and the Church was gathered and built up. Then, those whom God raised up as pastors and teachers, waited, or were to wait, on their teaching.

But there is authority, you allege, also in matters of discipline; but this resides in the body. The passage you quote from Matt. 16 (your textbook failed you here, or you failed it; it is Matt. 18:17: chapter 16 is your favorite passage of the rock, on which it is built) does not speak of doctrines, but it does speak of the whole assembly, where a man is, and not of clergy or church teaching, or doctrine. If one Christian wrong his brother, the latter is to seek to win him alone; if the attempt fail, he is to take two or three, that all may be clearly established; and, if he do not hear them, the injured party is to tell it to the whole assembly; and, if the trespasser neglect to hear them, then the wronged man may hold him as unclean and a stranger. What has this to do with the clergy settling doctrine authoritatively, or with the clergy at all, or with doctrine at all? Just nothing. But when

nothing is to be had, we must get the best sounding passage we can, that there may be an appearance of the authority of scripture: with the reality of it Rome can well dispense. Shall I tell you what the citation of this passage by Rome proves? That there is no passage in scripture to favor her pretensions—not a trace of one: had there been one, this would not have been always cited, while the smallest attention must prove it to have nothing whatever to do with the matter, and that Rome is forced to pervert scripture to have some appearance of being justified by it.

That is all you have to say for the unity of the Church. The unity of the Church I believe to be a most precious truth; but if you place it where you do, scripture will not bear you out, because it speaks of the saved, quickened, sanctified members of Christ, called to glory, as His body, the Church. There is another view of the Church. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. 2) As the body of Christ, it is surely preserved and kept;—but as a responsible body on earth, its career will certainly close. A falling away will come. This is positively declared in scripture; “that day will not come unless there be the falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, who exalteth himself above all that is called God or worshipped.”

(To be continued.)

Chapter 223

Romanism: an Answer to the Pamphlet of a Romish Priest, Entitled “the Law and the Testimony": Part 2

As regards the texts to prove the universality, you quote a number of passages which do not apply to the church at all, in which she is never named, and the context of which proves to demonstration that they do not apply to the church. I shall quote one to skew how utterly untenable this application is” Ask of me and I will give thee the Gentiles for thine inheritance, and thy possession to the ends of the earth.” But continue— “Thou shall rule them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.” Is that the church, or judgment? Any one may see, by looking at the epistle to Thyatira in Rev. 2, that it is a judgment to be executed when the church is glorified with Christ. But your proof that these promises apply to the church destroys, on the contrary, all your arguments. You say they are to be fulfilled in the last days. To prove that the last days mean the time of the church and its universal prevalence, you quote the passage of John, which shows that the last days are those of Antichrist. Is the time of Antichrist's rule the time of all nations flowing into the church? For that is the passage you are proving applies to the universal prevalence of the church. Why, in Antichrist's time, instead of all nations flowing into the church, if any one confesses Christ be will be killed. Your friends, the Fathers, speak with the most terrible apprehensions of those days, when Christianity is to hide itself in dens and caves, and, save in such places, scarce such a thing as a Christian known, and if known, slain by apostate fury. This was a very untoward proof of your doctrine.

Another proof you give us of the universality of the church is, that the gospel is to be preached in all the earth. This is more untoward still, because this is not done yet, very far from it; as gathering the nations, the very large majority remain heathen, and a very great part have never been visited by the preachers of the gospel. So that the mark of catholicity or universality is not yet to be found at all. If all the ends of the earth seeing the salvation of our God applies to and means the catholicity of the church, then the church is not catholic yet; for all the ends of the earth have not seen the salvation of our God.

But you quote another— “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world for a testimony to all nations.” Surely this word shall be accomplished; but you should have finished the sentence, for it destroys even the hope of catholicity, as you state it. It continues— “and then shall the end come.” So in Rev. 14 it is said, the everlasting gospel should go to all them that dwell on the earth, and to every people and nation, and tongue and language, saying, Fear God and give glory to Him, for the hour of His judgment is come. Indeed, if you would take the trouble to read Psa. 98 (97), which you quote, you will see it states the same truth; it closes by saying, are to rejoice before the Lord, for He cometh to judge the earth.

You tell us that every succession of bishops and priests.... communicated to their flocks and successors the same doctrine they themselves had received from their predecessors. Did they? Why the whole world was Arian at one time, save the persecuted. But that is not all. If the bishops and priests did this, why are you seeking to bring the professing Christians of (geographically) the

greatest part of the world back to what you consider the truth? Did all the Greek bishops of the East do this? Do you own that they did? If so, why seeking to win them to Rome, and glorying in having here and there a little parcel of “united Greeks,” and all the Asiatic bishops, and the Egyptians, to say nothing of poor England? Did they, rejecting you utterly as they do, deem they had the true doctrine handed down? I deny it altogether as to Rome. It has been proved a hundred times over, that it has corrupted the doctrine of the Apostles. But I take a shorter road; because, if the whole body of Greek and eastern bishops, who teach different doctrine from Rome, have done so, then Rome is wrong; and if they have not, their bishops and priests have not communicated to their flocks and successors the same doctrine they had received. It is merely an assertion that yours have, which is just the thing to be proved; it cannot be itself a security, because a very large proportion (as you admit) have not done so. The bishops of some hundred millions, between Greeks and Protestant Episcopalians, teach quite different doctrine from Borne. Have they taught what they received? It is sadly poor ground you stand on for your proofs of the true church.

As to your texts for apostolicity, I have no doubt that the Lord sent the apostles and was with them, and will be with all who, sent of Him, walk in their footsteps and preach their doctrine, and that these will be sent to the end of the age. But how does this prove that the Romanists are these persons? Your proof is that, unchanged by lapse of time, Rome is teaching, in every age, the same doctrine God revealed and the apostles promulgated. Now this is just the question. In order to settle it, I must know what the apostles promulgated. There is no so good way as having it from their own lips, addressed to all the faithful; but when I take this sure and admirable criterion, I find that you teach all the contrary of what they promulgated. You teach that there is still a sacrifice for sin, and they very earnestly teach there is no more such. They teach there is one only mediator, and you teach there are a great many, and in most solemn acts leave the true one totally out. In the Confiteor used for renewing the remission of sins the name of Christ is not found, neither as confessed to, nor as demanding His intercession, though you have Michael the archangel and saints in plenty. You teach the Pope is the head of the Church; they teach that there is but one, and that is Christ; and so with a multitude of the most fundamental doctrines. I take the test you appeal to, and I find it totally condemns the system you advocate. I conclude you are not the real successors of the apostles at all, to whom these promises were made. The pretension is ruinous to you if you are not. What is the judgment of a loyal man of one who pretends to be king when he is not? That he is a rebel in audacious hostility to the true king. If you are not the apostles' true successors, the pretension to be so proves you to be in bold and presumptuous hostility to the Lord, and to those whom He did send; and that is the truth. The question is not, whether the Lord gave apostles and ministers, but whether you are those He gave.

You tell us to remember our prelates who have spoken to us the word of God, whose faith follow, and denounce the Reformation as setting them aside. As to the mass of the prelates at the Reformation, they did not speak the word of God or anything else to the people; and those who did preach did not preach the word of God. To know at any time whether they do, I must have the word of God to judge by. The apostle tells the Hebrews that their leaders had: does he tell me that your prelates do? How should he? Their faith was to be followed. The apostle puts his seal on it, though in truth the passage speaks of practical faith. They were to remember those whose death had crowned their profession. But how that teaches me that the Pope or a priest teaches the right doctrine, no human wit could divine; nor will it do, for Protestants, at least, to say to them, Obey

your prelates. The question is to know whether they could own you as true prelates—a very different matter.

Here your mild winning preface gives place to judgment. You quote a passage which applies to the last and final message of the Lord Jesus to the Jews, and in which He declares judgment on that impenitent race, if they did not receive it; and you apply His title in sending it to yourselves, and His denunciations to your Protestant brethren, as you call them. Happily we are not Jews, and you are not Christ. Your threats do not awaken terror, but pity for your presumption, and ignorance of the passage which you thus quote at random. The apostles were strictly forbidden on this journey to go to any but the house of Israel. They were not to go near a Gentile, showing the true character of their mission.

In fine, the passages you quote, which embrace the whole world in prospect, prove, not indeed that Christ has failed in preserving the true church, His body—those livingly united to Him by the Spirit—those whom the Father has given Him (as He says, “Those whom thou hast given me I have kept”), for that is impossible; but that the visible church, those particularly called clergy, have wholly failed in acting up to the responsibility connected with these passages. They have not to this hour, though eighteen centuries have elapsed, carried the gospel into all the world. Instead of that, another thing has happened. So corrupt was the visible church that God has allowed the greater part of what was professing Christendom to be overrun with Mahometanism, which has spread AT LEAST as widely as Christianity; and what you call the Catholic church has had so little spiritual power, that well-nigh half the church split off from it, and became the Greek church (I am speaking according to its own pretensions, for I believe what you call the Catholic church to be Babylon); and subsequently, by the grossness of its corruptions, lost near half the countries which remained to it; and in others, as France, Belgium, Bohemia, and Moravia, only escaped the same result by suppressing by the most cruel persecutions the profession of the truth—in Spain and Italy burning those who had any conscience in maintaining it, and in France celebrating the horrible massacre of St. Bartholomew by medal and rejoicing.

Have you never read so much as this warning, drawn from the case of Israel: “On thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut of?” Of the professing church you have lost rather more than half; of the heathen world you have not gathered in a quarter, yet you claim catholicity i.e., universality—on such texts as, “All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.” Have you not shame in quoting it?

But this leads me to your next question—the infallibility of the church. You have quoted passages from the Old and New Testament to prove the church is infallible. First, for the quotations from the Old, if I can call quotations passages, or bits of passages, with the beginning, or end, or middle left out. I can hardly think you read the passages, as I have no wish to have an ungracious thought of you. But you must allow me, at the risk of being tedious, to refer to and complete those passages you have adduced. Not one has the smallest reference to the church. The first is, “I have made a covenant with my elect, I have sworn to David, my servant, thy seed will I settle forever.” Now, allow me to say, the church is neither David nor the seed of David, nor ever called so in Scripture, nor by any sober man. And, further, if you will take the trouble to read the Psalm, you will find that it is a plaint that the family of David is utterly overthrown, his crown thrown to the ground, and all that is contrary to the hope founded on this promise. Now do you mean that this has actually

happened to the church? If so, what comes of your argument? You are unfortunate in your quotations. You see why I am unwilling to believe that you have read the passage you quote from. Now if you apply it to David's seed, of which it speaks, the case is quite clear; it has been set aside, their throne has been cast down, as Ezekiel speaks, “I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, till he come whose right it is, and I will give it him.” When Christ displays His glory, then indeed the promises to the seed of David will be accomplished. Till then His throne is cast down to the ground. But in whatever way you please to interpret the Psalm, it is a complaint that the promise, which you cite, has, as to present fulfillment, wholly failed. Is that what you think as to the church?

In your quotation from Luke there is not a word about the church, but a statement that the throne of David belonged to Christ as come in the flesh, for He is born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, but that is not the church's connection with Him.

I turn to other passages. Did you ever read Isa. 66? This is what it says: “For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by his sword will the Lord plead with all flesh; and the slain of the Lord shall be many.” Then he describes their idolatry and abominations, and continues, “For I know their works and their thoughts: it shall come, that I will gather all nations and tongues; and they shall come and see my glory. And I will set a sign among them, and I will send those that escape of them unto the nations, to Tarshish, Pul, and Lud, that draw the bow, to Tubal and Javan, to the isles afar off, that have not heard my fame, neither have seen my glory; and they shall declare my glory among the Gentiles. And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses,” &c.... Then comes your extract, and after it follows this— “And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh.” Now do you believe that that applies to the church, and that it is this dreadful judgment of all flesh, by the Lord, which has set up your clergy, brought out of all nations? or, if you do believe it, do you think any sober Christian can think that an evidence, that you have solid proofs of what the true Church is?

Again, why did you not begin and finish the quotation from Jeremiah? Suffer me to do both for you. You begin with— “And they shall be my people.” Now, what precedes is this— “And now, therefore, thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city, whereof ye say, It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence. Behold, I will gather them out of all countries, whither I have driven them in mine anger, and in my fury, and in great wrath; and I will bring them again to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God.” (Jer. 32:36, &c.) Is that the church Has He scattered it in wrath, anger, and fury, into all lands; and is it only at some future restoration to its original place, that He will own it as His people? Do you believe it applies to the church? And now see how it finishes. You close with— “I will not cease to do them good.” The prophet continues, “But I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul. For thus saith the Lord; Like as I have brought all this great evil upon this people, so will I bring upon then all the good that I have promised them. And fields shall be bought in this land, whereof ye say, It is desolate without man or beast; it is given into the hand

of the Chaldeans," &c. Now, do you believe that God has utterly dispersed the church, and that it is only when He shall bring it back again, that He will begin to put His fear in the hearts of those who compose it? Or is it not as plain as possible to what it all applies?

But I am bound to hope that, whatever it may be of Isaiah and Jeremiah, you certainly never have looked at the passage in Ezekiel, because you expatiate on every member of the phrase you give, and show in detail how it applies so beautifully and clearly to the church. But the middle of the passage is entirely left out, though you give it as a continuous whole. This is what comes in after "shall do them." "Another 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." (Ezek. 37:25.) And this is what precedes: Two sticks, representing Israel and Judah, which had been separated, were to become one in the prophet's hand; these two parts of Israel, being separated, were to be united; and then it is said, "And say unto them, thus saith the Lord God, 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 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; and David my servant shall be king," &c., which you quote.

Now every one who has the smallest acquaintance with scripture history knows what the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel are which were separated in the time of Rehoboam, and what the land means where their fathers dwelt, and that it has nothing to do with the church founded by the apostles. But if you will apply it to the church, instead of proving the infallibility of the church, you prove that it proving been divided, scattered, given up to idolatry and transgression, and that it is only when it is brought back from this state that God's sanctuary (which it had wholly lost) was set up in the midst of them, and that then the heathen would know that God sanctified it, when His sanctuary was in the midst of them. They had been in idolatry, divided and dispersed, and had not had God's sanctuary amongst them. Do you believe this applies to the church? But it is the passage, taking what your citation has left out of it. If it does apply to the church, does it prove its infallibility? And why do you cite only a part of the passage? I will not for a moment charge you with garbling scripture in this way, and applying passages in such a manner. Your church has taught you this; you have got it in her schools of theology, and have not examined for yourself. But do you think that your church's garbling passages, cutting out parts of them, leaving out the beginning or the end or the middle or all three, is a proof of her infallibility, to a sober Christian taught of God, or any man of sense at all? Of course, if a person examine nothing, there is no reason why he should not receive anything, even the church of Rome, or Mormonism, or anything which superstition or fanaticism may propose to his imagination.

But you quote Daniel too: "In the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed." In the days of what kings? The ten kings, if you examine the chapter. Do you mean that the Church was only set up after the ten kingdoms existed; that is, after the destruction of the Roman empire? But what does the prophecy say of this kingdom? A little stone, cut out without hands, was to smite the feet of the image, and the whole image was to be totally

destroyed, so that no trace was found of it; and the stone that had smitten the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. That is, it first destroyed every trace of the empires and kingdoms of the image, and then extended itself. Do you mean that the church first effaces and obliterates every trace of the empires, east and west, and then begins to spread? There is a judgment of the earth, which you have sadly overlooked: you are not indeed the only one.

This is all you quote from the Old Testament to prove the church infallible, in not one of which the church is mentioned, and not one of which can apply to her, and, if they do, instead of proving her infallible, prove she has utterly failed, and lost the presence of God, because this is the truth as to Israel who has so lost it, of which they expressly speak.

We come now to the New Testament. And here I must notice that infallibility is used in two senses totally different, and when one is spoken of or proved, the other is assumed to be so. We are sure the church is infallible; that is, it will surely be kept through this world as to its eternal salvation, till Christ takes it to glory. Till that blessed day He will always have true members of His church upon earth, will keep them, secure eternal life to them and for them. In this sense the church cannot fail. There will, infallibly, be a church. But infallible is used in another sense, that a person or a body can never fail in what it teaches. The church is said, by Romanists, to be infallible in what it teaches. Now this is a very different thing. I may be infallibly kept of God for salvation, yet never teach at all, or even fall into error sometimes. Again, an individual or the church may be kept in the truth by grace, and yet have no pretension to be infallible in teaching. Now I doubt not that God will maintain the truth in the earth, and the church too; though there may be partial failure, yet, in spite of failure, He will preserve it. But the church has nothing to do with teaching infallibly. She has to learn and hold and profess the truth, not to teach at all. Some of her members may; but no one says they are infallible. Somewhere God will always preserve the truth, and some witness to it, in the earth. Thus, when Arianism overspread the world, and the Pope received it, and put his signature to its doctrines, many, though banished and persecuted, and hidden through violence for the most part, still held fast the truth. So, amid the disputes and violence which characterized the conduct of ambitious bishops (so that one very large council of them, held at Ephesus, is called the council of robbers in ecclesiastical history), yet God preserved the substance of the truth. And if the Eastern church erred, and patriarchs erred, and popes became Arian, still some held fast the faith and a witness for it. You may find a whole council of bishops establishing semi-Arianism at Sirmium, and accepting Arianism at Ariminum and Selinica, but yet God preserved the truth.

But no one is infallible but God. Hence, when an apostle or a prophet was inspired by Him, he spoke the perfect truth. But an apostle or prophet was not himself infallible; for Peter denied the Lord, and, even after he had received the Holy Ghost, carried away all the Jews with his dissimulation. Yet the humblest child of God, if waiting humbly upon Him, will be kept in the truth.

I now turn to the tests you quote; and first, the famous passage— “Upon this rock I will build my church.” Now, the confession of Peter was a remarkable one; it was revealed to him by the Father Himself—a personal favor conferred upon him, which belongs to no one else. We may receive his faith, as every true Christian does; but the revelation is not made directly to us, but to Peter alone. “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas.” Now, nobody is Simon Barjonas but himself, not even the other apostles, and certainly not Pius IX. Thus taught of God, Peter made a confession which none had yet made—Christ was the Son of the living God. Several had owned Him to be the

Christ the Son of God, but he adds the living God. So in his epistle he says— “He hath begotten us to a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead; unto whom coming as unto a living stone, ye also, as living stones,” &c. Now, here was more than a Messiah come to the Jews, and owned to be, as in Psa. 2, Son of God. It was the power of life in God Himself which was displayed in Him; as He says, He was the resurrection and the life Himself. Now here, in the person of Christ, was that power of life and resurrection on which He would build His church, and the gates of Hades—that is, of Satan, as having the power of death—should not prevail against it. It is always true; the resurrection of the saints will be the great final proof of it. The resurrection of Christ was the pledge of it, and has given us a living hope. Here, if I may so speak reverently, the Son of the living God, He who was the power of life, was pitted against him “who has the power of death, that is, the devil.” But the knowledge of the person of Christ, as Son of the living God, removed all question as to the issue of the conflict, and laid a foundation for the church which nothing could shake. It was not mere Messiah glory, nor the kingdom: the living God was engaged in the matter in the person of His Son. Satan did his best—the Lord allowing it—in Christ's dying on the cross; but it only demonstrated Christ's absolute victory in the resurrection. This is the foundation of the church, so that it cannot fail—the person of Christ as Son of the living God. God forbid I should trust a church, or be of it, which was founded on a man simply! Be he an apostle himself, he is but a man, and that will not do to build God's church upon. Is God to build on a mere man? Christ (for He says, I will build) on Peter? It may do very well for man's church; it is natural man should build on man; but it will not do for God's. It would be impossible, and destructive to His glory. God is not going to set aside His Son for Peter.

But Peter, let men say what they will, is never called a rock. He is called a stone; he partook of the nature of the rock, God having quickened him with this life, and given him to confess Christ in this character. But Peter means a stone, and does not mean a rock. People do not build on a stone, even if it partake of the durability of the rock to which it belongs. Peter is not the rock nor a rock; he is, as to his name, a stone, Peter having just confessed the true, living, and divine foundation of the new thing, which the rejected Christ was going to raise up in contrast with rebellious Israel; and Christ, having recognized that the Father himself had taught Peter this great truth, carrying far beyond the hopes of Israel, says, “Thou art a stone,” thou participatest in this truth; and on this rock, this eternal truth of My person, which you have been given of the Father to own, I will build the church. The Father had revealed this great truth of Christ's nature to Simon, and Christ gives him besides the name of Peter; for the confession of truth, by divine teaching, connects a man with the strength and durability of the truth he so confessed; he abides livingly with it and by it. The Lord adds that He will give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven (not of heaven, but of the kingdom of heaven to be established on the earth); and here Peter had to serve, whereas Christ builds the true church. He used the keys on Pentecost, and with Cornelius, and the like.

As to the Lord's sending the Paraclete, and teaching the twelve all things, surely this precious promise has been fulfilled. To apply it to the church is mere nonsense, because the Lord says, He shall bring to your remembrance whatsoever I have said to you. Now, He had said the things to the twelve, not to people alive now. The Holy Ghost may graciously act in any Christian's heart to make him attentive to Christ's recorded words; but He cannot bring to his remembrance what Christ has said to him, unless he pretend to have fresh revelations, and then have forgotten them. Hence, though the church pretends to be infallible, and teach all truth infallibly, it has never

pretended to have recalled to it what Christ had said to it. It would prove the absurdity of the pretension on the face of it; but then, unfortunately, this is what the Lord has said, and you have quoted.

You say, this states plainly what the Holy Ghost would do when He came. Quite true. But for whom? He could not do this but for those who had heard Jesus during His life; and, mark, H was to teach the apostles all things, and guide the into all truth—that is, the work which the church pretends to do is done long ago. It may be for me by this truth, have it, be kept by it; but it was all taught to the apostles. If you say, that is what we say—we have learned and kept it; we own it was all taught to the apostles, not to us; our boast is to keep it safe. Then the verses you quote as a promise to yourselves do not apply to you at all, for they speak of teaching all things, and bringing all things to their remembrance which Christ had said to them. In a word, the thing was complete before you were there, as the text you quote proves. The only question is, Are you acting on, believing, and are your ministers teaching, truths received long ago? The promise is not to you, but to others long since gone. Whether you are doing so, I try by what these persons have confessedly left us. When I try this, I find you abusing their record to every false pretension to exalt self, and that you have departed altogether from the truth they taught and were guided into. The Holy Ghost has not to teach the church all things, because He has taught all things already to the apostles: the text you quote proves it. That He may apply it now to the heart, is all very true; that devoted men may teach the same truths to the heathen, or build up the faithful in detail, is all true; but the truths are taught. There is no question of infallibility, because the truth is already there.

That the Holy Ghost remains with the church, and dwells in all true Christians, acts in them, helps them, makes them obedient to the truth; that He will never go away till the time of glory comes, I fully believe. But this does not make them infallible. There is no place for infallibility, when all the truth is there. What are they to be infallible about, when nothing more is to be revealed? That, as weak creatures, we may be kept, preserved in the truth, so that the testimony of it should be always as a fact preserved in the world, is most true and most precious, and that God, I doubt not, will accomplish, according to His sure and precious word. You say, “If the Holy Ghost did come and remain with her, and if He continued to teach her all things whatsoever the Son of God revealed to her, how could she fall into error?” Now what is the meaning of this— “continued to teach her?” Was she then ever learning, and never coming to the knowledge of the truth? Continued to teach her all things whatsoever the Son of God had revealed to her—revealed to her when? Why continue to teach her what was revealed to her? She had, then, wholly forgotten it. “Continuing to teach her all things whatsoever the Son of God revealed to her,” has no tolerable sense. Why did she not keep by the Holy Ghost what had been revealed to her, instead of being taught anew? But I repeat, When revealed to her? It was revealed all of it to the apostles, who had conversed with Jesus. It has not to be revealed to the church.

You quote also John 16; but it is the same thing in substance, save that as the passage in John 16 spoke of remembering what He had said, this speaks of showing them (not to the church) things to come. Does the church pretend to have new prophetic revelations? Not one. Where are they authenticated and promulgated with her sanction? In a word, we have great pretension to authority when self is exalted; but when the test of reality is to be met, be it as to the past or the future, she is dumb. She has never authenticated one saying of the Lord as brought to her remembrance, nor dared to commit herself to a thing to come which she could show; nay, nor any fresh knowledge of

the glory of Christ not in the written word. Yet this was the remaining part of the Holy Ghost's office, as stated in John 16; indeed the whole of it, as teaching and revealing. “He shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you: all things that the Father hath are mine; therefore said I, he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.” Now what of the past, present, glory of Christ, or of the future, has this boasting body, which calls itself the church, ever taught which is not revealed in the word given by the Apostles? Let them produce, authenticated by the church, some new truth not in the word. If not, what is revealed to her? unless she boasts of forgetting it continually, to be retaught it anew, and pretends this is the special glory of God, and a proof that she exclusively has the Holy Ghost—namely, that she has not kept the truth, and has to be taught it afresh. That individuals (enabled by God) may, through the help of the Holy Ghost, teach the truths revealed long ago, every one admits; but no one pretends such to be infallible.

But, further, the Lord promises to be with the Apostles in teaching all which He had commanded them to the end of the world. It is urged (what is not in the passage) that, as it is to the end of the world, it must be for their successors. Whose successors, and successors in what? In bringing the heathen to the faith? I do not doubt that, though it be not with the title of Apostles, whoever does the same service in grace will find the Lord with them in the service, according to their measure; and this is what is promised. Though secured, when inspired to reveal anything, the Apostles were not infallible. They had the Lord always with them in their service; in like service they who accomplish it will find the Lord with them, I doubt not, to the end. There is nothing whatever else in the promise; not a word about infallibility—it is not the subject of the passage, no more than the church; it speaks of the Lord's help in the missionary service they were to perform in His name. He would not abandon them in it; surely He did not.

Thus you have cited from the Old Testament passages which, you allege, speak of the church, which declare the body they contemplate, have been divided, dispersed, idolatrous, doing detestable things, and deprived of the presence of God—His sanctuary being set up only when promised restoration takes place. This is a very strange proof of perpetuity and infallibility, which secures from every error; and the citing them equally curious as a proof of infallibility in teaching. From the New, you have cited passages which declare that all truth was revealed to the Apostles; and hence, if the Holy Ghost has always to continue teaching the church what was revealed to her, affording a proof that she had not kept the truth and had to learn it again; an equally curious proof of infallibility and security. You quote one, a serious and important one, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.” The church of God has been established of God to maintain and uphold the truth; and I am sure, however dark the times, God will never, till judgment comes, leave Himself without a witness of the truth, in and by the church, binding on the consciences of men. Blessed be His name that it is so!

But you cannot speak of the whole visible church as having continued to be such; because you believe that half Christendom, and undoubtedly the most ancient part of it, where it was first established by all the Apostles together, and the latest under apostolic care, has departed from the truth, and is not a pillar and ground of it. The Greek church is disputing with you for the holy sepulcher, and, for many years, the Turks using whips to keep the combatants quiet; while now we have the West arrayed against the East in a war which had its origin in this very dispute. This immense body of the most ancient bishoprics in the world have ceased to be a pillar and ground of

the truth. All Protestant Europe and America have equally, in your judgment, abandoned it. It is not a promise, then, that the whole visible church is necessarily and always such; for, by your own account, a very large part (nay, if we include the Protestants, Nestorians, and Eutychians, the greater part) is not; if they are, you are not. It is not, then, the body of the visible church as such. Where this true church is to be found is another question; but your use of the passage is certainly unfounded. You cannot present the visible church as a security for the truth, when you affirm that half of it has gone away. If you tell me they are not the church, but we are, that is just what is to be proved; at any rate, they were, and thus the ground of securing is gone.

(To be continued)

Chapter 224

Romanism: an Answer to the Pamphlet of a Romish Priest, Entitled “the Law and the Testimony": Part 3

OR AN ANSWER TO THE PAMPHLET OF A ROMISH PRIEST, ENTITLED “THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY.” (Continued from page 28.)

I HAVE now examined all you have alleged for this. In conclusion, I reply to your assertions. The Old Testament never speaks of the church. Paul declares it was a mystery bidden till the Holy Ghost was given—hidden from ages and generations—hid in God. Christ, no doubt, founded His church (i.e., on the day of Pentecost, and in general by the apostles), but He promised to be with them, not her, to the end of the world. The Holy Ghost will surely abide with Christ's true disciples till He takes them up to glory. He did not declare that He would teach the church but the apostles all truth—a promise undoubtedly fulfilled; and it is equally sure that Satan's power will never set aside the church of God, and she is, according to God's counsel, the pillar and ground of the truth, whatever may be the condition of the visible body called the church; which we have shown, by your own account, cannot be what this passage applies to. But that you are it is a very different question.

Instead of declaring that the professing church could not fail, mark it well, the Lord has declared the express contrary. He has said, first, as warning (referring to the Jews, lest the Gentiles should deceive themselves by their conceit), “Be not high-minded, but fear upon thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness, otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.” He has farther declared, that a falling away or apostasy (so that it is certain that it would not continue in God's goodness to the end, for apostasy is falling away from it) would come; and that the day of Christ's coming to judge could not come till it did. He has declared that the presence of Antichrist was the mark of the last times. He has declared, the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the last days perilous times shall come (men running into all kinds of wickedness shall have the form of piety, denying the power of it); and warns the true disciple to turn away from such, and refers him to the scriptures as able to make him wise unto salvation. You seek to turn him from them, and to trust in that in which it is certain, by God's word, apostacy was to be found.

You may ask, what do we make of the promises of God? I answer, they are infallible; but he who has the scripture, the true servant of Christ who has the truth, has them before his eyes, but has all the rest of the word, so that he does not misapply them. Satan applied true promises to Christ without reference to obedience. He used the rest of the word to show that His part was to walk with God, and He would surely have all that God had promised to the true believer. He does not look for the heirs of promise in what denies the truth, to which God Himself has referred him for warning. He knows that all the unfaithfulness of man will only glorify the faithfulness of God, and that God will certainly preserve the truth and His saints (even should there be partial failure amongst them) till Christ Himself comes to fetch them according to His own promise at the end. They do not count the mass of ungodliness and corruption and worldliness around them to be the little flock which is to inherit the kingdom. They do not take the tares for wheat, though it be not

their business to root them up (as you have pretended to do, rooting up, for the most part, as the Lord warned, the wheat with them); but they are sure the Lord will keep the wheat for His garner, and that the Holy Ghost will never leave them till He does, nor allow the truth to fail in the earth. It shall be maintained to the end by the church taught of God.

But I am touching on the next point, the perpetual visibility of the church. That there is a great public body, called the church of Christ, is notorious. The marks you now give you rejected, when, as you alleged, Luther, Calvin, and the church of England pleaded them as such: but we cannot expect error to be consistent. But suppose I was born in Greece or Russia, and I was told that I should obey my pastors, and that pure doctrine and the same sacraments were the marks of the church visible, what would be the effect? Why I should remain a Greek, and abhor you as false. I should have to go to the Propaganda at Rome to find you out, you are so invisible in those countries. Is the true church to change with countries, and east and west? and can these be the adequate marks of it, which, in one, would make me take a body to be the true church, which in another three days' steaming would make me reject as schismatic and heretic? You are tired, I am sure, of the Greek church. But there it is, as ancient as yours, with the same claims. It has its pastors, it has its sacraments, it has what it calls the true faith, as you allege of yours, it has its visibility. The marks you give me make me a Greek when in Russia, and you at Rome condemn me for using them, when I get there, and, if I were born in Russia, persuade me they are insufficient, and that I must leave what they prove to be the true church there, and join you. Yet there are these Greeks in spite of you. God has taken care, by their existence, to make all your pretensions and marks futile nonsense. They are proved to be worth nothing to secure a man's finding the true church, for some of them prove two or three to be such, while the existence of the two or three proves the essential ones to be false. God has taken care that the sober godly inquirer should have patent proof, if he take the pains that your allegations of unity, universality, visibility, perpetuity, tradition, and all the rest, are just worth nothing; because, in the dreadful departure of the professing church from God, He has taken care that there should not be unity, and, consequently, no universality; while visibility, and tradition, and perpetuity, and antiquity are as strong for one as the other, and, therefore, prove nothing for either. Blessed be God, the spiritual man, who has his Bible and reads it wants no such proof. He knows that the truth of God has been perverted, the forms of piety assumed, and the power gone; the headship of Christ abandoned (though Romanists alone have ventured to set up another head, and hence are worse than Greeks), and subjection to ordinances brought in. He sees the Spirit's words fulfilled— “In the last days perilous times shall come” —the form of piety, denying the substance. But of this a word at the close.

Must I turn again to your use of the Old Testament? I can afford to be brief after what we have already examined. You quote Isa. 40 “Arise, be enlightened, O Jerusalem, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” But again, whom am I to accuse? I honestly lay it on your church and not on you. You have left out, between what I have just copied and the next verse of the chapter, an all-important verse, which shows the absurdity of the application of the passage: “For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee.” Now, whatever is the subject of this chapter under the name (justly used after the Vulgate, though not in the Hebrew) Jerusalem, it had been in darkness, though existing, and in an awful state, as the previous chapter shows. Truth

failed, and he that departed from evil made himself a prey; but now the Lord visited her, and while all else was in darkness, light and the glory of the Lord was here. Indeed Paul has quoted part of the preceding description to show the awful state of the Jews. But do you believe that the truth having failed, and he that departs from evil making himself a prey, is a description of the true church? Is that, indeed, what the church of Rome is? Or, again, when the full light and glory of the Lord has risen on the church, so that it is in “cloudless manifestation and universal visibility” as you say, how comes darkness just then to cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; or why did you leave that verse out? So the Lord goes on: “In my wrath I smote thee” (ver. 10); and again, “Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee.” (Ver. 15.) When and how long was this unfailing and perpetually visible church forsaken and hated of God? Apply it to Jerusalem which is named, and nothing is more simple: we know it has been her state.

You quote also (and the same a little before) Isa. 2 If you take the trouble to read that chapter, you will find that it is concerning Judah and Jerusalem, and describes the blessing as being brought about by the dreadful judgment of the Lord, when men shall go into the clefts of the rocks for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty, when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth. Well may the Spirit of God add, “Cease ye from man.”

Again, Ezek. 17, we have these things explained by the Spirit: “Know ye not what these things mean? tell them, Behold the king of Babylon is come to Jerusalem and hath taken the king thereof,” &c., and then describes the conduct of Zedekiah, and, at the close, predicts the raising up of Christ as seed of David. What has this to do with the church? The seed of David is not the church.

In Jer. 31 it is revealed: “He that scattered Israel will gather him.” Has God scattered the church? Is the church the backsliding daughter of Ephraim? Further, the Lord says, “Like as I have watched over them, to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict, so will I watch over them, to build, and to plant, saith the Lord.” Has God watched over the church to pluck it up? And the prophet adds, after the verse you quote, what you do not quote: it runs thus: “Then I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord. Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord, from the tower of Hananeel unto the gate of the corner,” &c., “and it shall not be plucked up, nor thrown down any more, forever.” Jeremiah addressed the Jews, and told them, that God would not cast them off in that future day, and that the city should be built, and that then they who had been so utterly plucked up should never be so any more. Is this the church? That God's name may be great among the Gentiles no one disputes, and that under the figure of Jewish offerings they should offer theirs, every Christian can believe; though I do not believe it applies to the church.

And here allow me to ask a question. All the passages which you have quoted you have applied figuratively up to the present; now that there is a question of oblation and sacrifice, you apply it literally. Why so? The apostles were the light of the world, and so set doubtless. But how does this prove that you are that light, or that it was to be perpetual? Though, however dimmed, I doubt not that God has never suffered it to be extinguished. The Lord is speaking of His true disciples, poor in spirit, pure in heart. Do you mean that the mass of the professing church, Romish, Greek, Protestant, or Presbyterian, are that? I have been in many Roman Catholic countries, and in Protestant and Presbyterian; and, though doubtless there are blessed exceptions, the mass of

pleasure—bunters and money-hunters and passion-governed men are not what the Lord describes in Matt. 5. Or do you mean that, when their character was wholly changed, they are as much light as before? Or is it the judgment of the Romish body, that moral condition or holiness has nothing to do with the light the saints should give?

The Lord, on the contrary, says in this same chapter (which you take care not to quote), “If the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is good for nothing.” You may salt other things with salt; but if the salt be savorless, what other thing shall salt it? In fine you tell us, because Christ said to the apostles, “Ye are the light of the world,” therefore the church is so at all times—i.e. the outward professing Romish body—a strange conclusion where nothing is proved at all. The word of God says the contrary, that the day shall not come except there be a falling away first. (■ ■ποστασ■α.)

Your chapter on tradition is hardly worth an answer. Every one knows that tradition in scripture always means a doctrine delivered, and never has the Romish sense of it. A passage you quote shows it: “The traditions you have learned by word or by our epistle.” The apostle had preached to them by word of mouth, and written an epistle to them: they were to mind all he had taught them. Next, your arguments are a mere nullity. You urge that the apostles taught by word of mouth before they wrote to the churches. Undoubtedly. Who ever doubted it? The question is, whether, since they wrote, what men have retailed for seventeen centuries can be relied upon—a question you do not so much as touch upon. You refer to Timothy's committing the truths Paul had taught him to faithful men—an excellent service—a thing which is done, be it well or ill, among different sects of Christians in their theological schools and colleges, and I doubt not was very well done by Timothy. But how does this make it authoritative teaching? No man's teaching is held even by Rome to be infallibly authoritative, save that Ultramontanes hold the popes to be infallible e, which the Council of Constance, as we have seen, held them not to be. The question is not, whether Timothy taught or whether you do, but whether you have got what he taught besides what is written. You have no authentic truth by tradition. In the very epistle you cite we have the proof of it: “And now ye know what withholdeth,” says the apostle, for when he was yet with them he had told them of these things. Now, here is an instruction given by word of mouth, which we have not got. Can you produce any authenticated church statement of what it was?

Tradition is very convenient to say (I leave something you can have no proof of), in which you must obey me blindly; but when we come to ask what are they, they are not to be had. The Rabbis, to whom you refer for purgatory, keep the poor Jews in blindness by the same means. The early church was frightened by the warnings of the apostle, and thought the final judgments would come after the revelation of antichrist, on the fall of the Roman empire; but this consent of the Fathers as to the millennial scheme and Christ's soon reigning at Jerusalem (for scarce could any topic be found more generally believed by them), this sure tradition belied itself; and already in Augustine's time and after it passed off into a more general spiritualization, and the faith of the early church (which is declared positively by Justin Martyr, in his dialog with Trypho, to be held by all the orthodox) was cast off as a fable, and the early Fathers left on these points in oblivion and forgetfulness; and the account between tradition, universal tradition, and an orthodoxy founded on tradition, having been thus far falsified by fact, had to be settled by modern orthodoxy, passing as lightly over its grave as it could. Though they misapplied it, I believe, in the substance, Papias, Irenaeus, Justin Martyr, Nepos, and the orthodox of those days, were right, and not Origen and

Dionysius and the moderns. But I believe it, because scripture is clear upon it.

But you mention two things in particular, which you say are founded on tradition, and which are not in scripture—Lent and Sunday. The apostles, you say, instituted the solemn fast of Lent. If they did, certainly it is not found in scripture. But let us see what the facts are. I need only quote Irenaeus, a godly Father of the church, who had heard Polycarp who had heard John. There was a dispute between Victor, the bishop of Rome, and the churches of Asia, as to the celebrating of Easter. Victor would have it on Sunday, and the Asiatic churches celebrated it (as did all the old British till the sixth or seventh century, if I remember right) on the day of the resurrection, whatever day of the week it fell upon. For the Passover was computed by moons, and was held upon the fourteenth day after the new moon, and the resurrection was three days, of course, after, and this did not always fall on a Sunday. The Easterns went by the days of the month, the Westerns by the days of the week. Well, Victor refused to own them as Christians at all. Irenaeus agreed, it seems, with Victor in opinion as to the day it should be kept upon. But earlier than this, some thirty or forty years before, the aged Polycarp, himself a disciple of John, came from Asia to Rome, to confer with Anicetus, bishop of Rome, about it. Think of a disciple of John himself (and a most blessed old man be was, and a martyr too) going all wrong, and insisting on a tradition derived from John himself contrary to the pope's tradition and his authority too! Well, Polycarp would not give in, nor Anicetus either; but they agreed, it seems, to part in peace, and each go his own way. But Victor, a more energetic and less Christian man than Anicetus, orders all the Christians in Asia to change their rules in this respect, and follow Rome, and give up their apostolic tradition. However, they would not; and then he excommunicated them all in mass, as far at least as Rome was concerned. It was thunder, however, not lightning, for they did not obey; and the bishops elsewhere continued in communion with them. This did not please all the bishops, says Eusebius, some of them writing pretty sharply to him (Victor); and Irenaeus warned him not to cut off whole churches, who observed the tradition of their ancient customs. This was at the end of the second century; and then he adds (says Eusebius) not only was the controversy about the day, but about the form itself of the fast; for some think they ought to fast one day, others two, and others more, and some measure this day forty hours, day and night; and this variety of observance had not its birth first in our age, but began long before, with those who went before us.... And then he adds, and thus the disagreement as to the fast commends the unanimity of the faith.—Euseb. v. 24.

Now this little bit of ecclesiastical history gives occasion for one or two remarks: first, how the Roman bishop sought to satisfy his ambition, not quite two centuries after Christ; but secondly, at the same time, not only Polycrates at Ephesus, and others, but other bishops besides paid no attention to his orders, and even rebuked him sharply. Thirdly, what a slippery thing tradition is! Here, as to this very Lent, which is adduced as a proof of apostolic tradition, Polycarp who conversed with John has one from him which he will not give up; because he who leaned on the Lord's bosom, he says, had so kept it and taught. But Victor, who professed to have Peter's and Paul's too, excommunicates whole churches because, after Polycarp's clear tradition, they kept John's. Could not tradition secure certainty on such a trifle as this? The conflict was maintained till the fourth century, and even long after that the Asiatic way was maintained in certain churches derived from that country.

It is urged that the Holy Ghost was to teach things the apostles could not receive while Christ was alive. No doubt; but what has this to do with tradition? Further, that the Holy Ghost was still

teaching. This would tend to show that tradition was not needed; for, in that case, the Church had always the same teaching as the apostles themselves, and did not want theirs by word or letter. There is a passage or two important to cite, as regards tradition and apostolic succession.

But I must give the reader a few more quotations from the Fathers as to this Lent, which is not in scripture, says the author, in which he is surely perfectly right, but is observed by tradition from the apostles. The Romans in the fourth or fifth century observed Saturday as a fast, and the Easterns and many of the Africans dined and ate as usual, and did not think of fasting. A hot Roman in Augustine's time attacked all the churches for not following the Roman custom. It was alleged, as the origin of the custom, that Peter, having to contend with Simon Magus, fasted along with all the Roman church on Saturday. If he did, I am sure it was a very godly and excellent thought and act for that time; hence the Romans did it every Saturday, when there was no Simon Magus at all. Augustine wrote a letter to a presbyter, Casnelanus, on this hot-headed Roman's book. He gives a pleasant reply enough to the Simon Magus reason, that, if he was a figure of the devil as they said, they would have that work every day of the week. But in replying to this we have from him general remarks on fasts, which touch our present point of tradition. He says, that was the opinion of the most, that it was a mere Roman custom in reference to Peter's conflict with Simon Magus. “But if,” he continues, “it be answered, James taught this at Jerusalem, John at Ephesus, others in other places, which Peter taught at Rome, that is, that men should fast the Saturday, but that other lands had deviated from this doctrine, and that Rome had remained firm in it; and, on the contrary, it is replied, that rather certain places of the West, among which is Rome, have not kept what the apostles delivered, but that the lands of the East, whence the gospel itself began to be preached, have continued, without ever varying, in what was delivered by all the apostles along with Peter, that they should not fast on the Sabbath (Saturday), that dispute is interminable, generating strifes, not finishing questions.” —Augustine, Ep. xxxvi. And then he says that the unity of the faith was the point, for that the glory of the Church, according to the Psalm, was within: “The king's daughter is all glorious within;” that the observance was only the garments; and that she was in golden fringes, clothed around with variety: so the Vulgate, circumcincta varietate, after the Seventy.—Psa. 44

What a testimony this bright light (as the author alleges, and justly, compared with much of the Fathers) affords of the certainty of tradition, and about fasting, and about Roman tradition too! It was a source of interminable disputes, he says. In the same letter we have another statement, which I will quote, on the point: “But since we have not found, as I have above remarked, in the evangelical and apostolic letters, which properly belong to the revelation of the New Testament, that it is clearly prescribed that fasts should be observed on any certain days, and therefore, that thing also, like many others which it is difficult to enumerate, has found in the garments of the daughter of the king, that is the church, room for variety, I will tell you what the revered Ambrose answered me, when I asked him about this.” And then he relates how his mother was uneasy, because at Milan they did not fast the same days as at Rome; and was she to follow the custom of her city, or that of Milan where she then was? Ambrose, a light too among the Fathers, told her he could not teach her better than he practiced—a good deal to say, too, if he went beyond fasts; and so she was to do at Milan as they did at Milan, and to do at Rome, in such matters, as they did at Rome. So Augustine recommends in the beginning of the letter:— “In those things, concerning which divine scripture has settled nothing certain (and we have seen he states that it had not

settled any certain day for fasting), the customs of the people of God, or the institutions of those of old (majorum), are to be considered as a law." This is a strange way to talk, if these are apostolic traditions too. We see, however, the real source of it—following old habits which were made a law of.

However, we have something about Lent itself from Augustine. "The quadragesimal period of fasts, indeed, has authority (i.e., scriptural) both in the old books—in the fact of Moses and Elias—and from the gospel, because the Lord fasted so many days, showing the gospel not to depart from the law and the prophets. In the person of Moses, namely, the law in the person of Elias, the prophets are found. . . In what part of the year, therefore, could the observation of quadragesima be established more suitably than on the confines of, and close to, the Lord's passion?" And then be shows many wonderful mysteries in the number 40. But where is the apostolic tradition here?

But we have something more from the Fathers on quadragesima. We have seen Irenaeus telling us that some fasted one day, some two, some several, some forty hours continuously. Now this last is the real secret of this number forty. Tertullian is a Father who lived in the end of the second century, an upright and able man; so that the famous Cyprian used to call him "the master," saving, Bring me the books of the master. This was the famous Cyprian who wrote a celebrated book about the unity of the church; though he would not yield to Rome on what both thought a vital point, namely, re-baptizing heretics. But this Cyprian tells us that the church in his day (Cyprian de Lapsis) was corrupt to the last degree; that professing Christians were bent upon money-making, men luxurious in their habits, women painting their faces and adorning their hair—cheating going on in a shameful way—marriages with heathens taking place—bishops leaving their sees and flocks to carry on secular affairs, and making long journeys to gain money—not helping their hungry brethren—seeking large fortunes—seizing on property by insidious frauds, and employing usury to enrich themselves. In other treatises, he insists on the evil state of Christendom.

Such a state of things seemed to have moved Tertullian, who lived just before Cyprian, and driven him (Jerome says it was the envy the Roman clergy bore to him) to believe in the rhapsodies of Montanus and his two prophetesses of Phrygia, who were much stricter in their lives and fastings. The pope was on the point of receiving them too (already acknowledging, is the term used), when a certain Praxeas, afterward a famous heretic, came to Rome and put the pope off it, who then excommunicated and rejected them. Our famous Tertullian would not give them up, and said they were rejected, not because of the spirit they alleged they had, but because of the fasts they gave themselves up to. However, this led him to say something of these fasts; and from him we learn that the Catholic party had their quadragesimal fasts from this—the forty hours that Christ passed, as was alleged, in the grave; and that the scriptural authority (for none of them knew anything of apostolic tradition) they had for it was this: "When the Bridegroom shall be taken away, then shall they fast in those days;" and that as Christ was taken away till His resurrection, therefore they fasted these forty hours—a curious reason, by-the-bye, for doing so, when He was, according to this theory, restored to them. But let that pass. Here we have, from the two earliest Fathers who speak of it (Tremens and Tertullian), the original of quadragesima, i.e., forty.

But you shall have, reader, a specimen from history also. After relating what we have stated as to the observation of Easter, and that the Quartodecimans (the Asiatics who kept it the third day after

the fourteenth of the moon) alleged that John had taught them; and the Romans boast that they had received their way from Peter and Paul, but that neither could bring a writing to prove it (he does not seem to have valued oral tradition much), he goes on to speak of Lent. Socrates, lib. v. c. 22. “For these who are of the same faith, the same differ among themselves in rites. It will not, therefore, be out of place to add somewhat about the various rites of the churches. First, therefore, those fasts which are kept before Easter you will find differently kept among different people: for those who are at Rome fast three weeks continuously, except the Sabbath and the Lord's day (it is a question whether this does not apply to Novatians). Those who are in Illyria, and throughout Achaia, and those who live in Alexandria, fast six weeks before Easter, and call that the quadragesimal fast. Others, again, follow a different custom from that. They begin their fast the seventh week before Easter, and, fasting three only of five days with intervals, call the time nothing the less quadragesimal; and I cannot but wonder why, although they differ among themselves about the numbers of days, they still call it by the same name of quadragesimal. But of this appellation each different person, according to his own invention, gives a different reason; for not only in days alone, but also in abstinence from foods, they are found to differ For some, indeed, abstain altogether from eating what has had life; others eat fish alone of such as have had life; some, with fishes, eat also of birds, affirming that they also are formed out of water, according to Moses; some abstain from fruit of trees, and from eggs; some eat only bread; others do not use even this. Some, fasting to the ninth hour, eat without distinction of every kind of food afterward. There are other observances again in different nations, and innumerable causes are alleged for them; and since no one can produce a written precept concerning this matter, it appears that the apostles left to the choice and will of every one that each one might do what is good, neither from fear nor necessity.” What a certainty of apostolical tradition we have here! Zozomen gives the same accounts. Lib. vii. c. 19. Cassian, too, tells us, as others state (I have not his works), the same thing. For a long time there were only thirty-six days' fast, even when six weeks or forty-two days were kept; because they never fasted on the Lord's day, till at last either Gregory the Great or Gregory II. (in the close, that is, of the sixth, or beginning of the eighth century, for it is disputed which) added Ash-Wednesday and the three following days to make it forty. Think of an apostolic tradition arranged seven hundred years after Christ, and grown from forty hours to forty days, and all the original reasons gone!

But I have yet one extract more from this same Cassian, for which I am also indebted to another. Cassian was a monk, founded monasteries and nunneries, was ordained deacon by Chrysostom, Patriarch of Constantinople, and made priest by Innocent, pope of Rome. He will give us a sounder idea, perhaps, of this apostolic tradition. “It is, therefore, indeed to be remarked that, as long as the perfection of that primitive church remained inviolable, this observance of quadragesima (Lent) did not exist at all; but when the multitude of the faithful, abandoning that apostolic devotion, daily gave themselves up to their wealth, &c., it then pleased the body of priests, that men, bound by secular cares, and almost ignorant of continence or compunction, should be recalled to holy work by canonical obligation of fasting, and compel them by the necessity of a legal tenth (36 days is tenth of 360, or nearly a year”).

What a history of Lent in the way of devotion! and think of apostolic tradition! The reader will not think that I attach great value to Lent or tradition; but I have quoted these passages, because Lent has been selected as a point brought forward as a matter of apostolic tradition for a thing not in

scripture. We have seen now what, in this carefully selected case, such an assertion is worth, and what solid authority the Fathers are.

I am now going to quote something in favor of what the author says; for you may generally find in the fathers both sides of anything, except the truth itself. Jerome says (he is writing to Marcella against the Montanists, who had three Lents) that one Lent in the year is observed, according to the tradition of the apostles, and says just that much in passing. Leo calls it the apostolical institution of a forty days' fast, which the apostles instituted by the direction of the Holy Ghost. But then Jerome also says (to show what a solid thing apostolic laws founded on tradition were in those days), “But I think you should be briefly put in mind, that ecclesiastical traditions are so to be observed (especially those which are not in opposition to the faith”) (how much such a reserve skews he could have thought them apostolic!) “as they have been delivered by our ancestors. But let each province abound in its own way of thinking, and consider the precepts of their ancestors as apostolic laws!” Letter 52, Benedic. 71, Verona Ed. As to Leo, Pagi (a very learned and highly-esteemed Roman Catholic commentator on Baronius's Annals, and another) tells us that Leo was used to call everything an apostolical law which he found either in the practice of his own church, or decreed in the archives of his predecessors, Damasus and Siricius. (Pagi Critic. in Baron. an. lxvii. note 16.) I use another's quotation in this instance also.

You have now, reader, the authorities for Lent being proved by apostolic tradition, and for the Romish assertion to that effect.

I turn to the Lord's day, the other example selected by the author: it is old battle-ground. My answer to this is easy, a lighter and a happier task. It is always distinguished in the early church from the Sabbath, which invariably means Saturday. As regards the law, the change of the whole system involved the abolition of the Jewish Sabbath. The Jewish Sabbath was the sign of their covenant; but this was broken on their part, and gone, and buried on God's part in Christ's grave. The Sabbath, which was the public sign of it, Christ passed in the grave.

No establishment of any form of relationship with God took place under Moses without the Sabbath being anew introduced—a very remarkable fact; and in Ezek. 20:12 it is said, “And I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them.” Hence these Sabbaths could not be preserved as a Jewish Sabbath according to the commandments; because, when once Christ was crucified, God did not sanctify the Jewish people any longer. This the Lord showed beforehand, over and over again, during His ministry, in the way He acted and spoke on the Sabbath days.

But, further, the Sabbath was the sign of the rest of the creation; and sin having entered into the world, and man having rejected Jesus who had come into its sorrow, there could be no rest of creation in connection with the first Adam. So “If they shall enter into my rest, though the works were finished from the foundation of the world:” grace, and power, and redemption must be the basis of rest and blessing. Hence, when they maliciously and unreasonably accused the Lord of not keeping the Sabbath, He does not pay heed to their malice, but says (in the touching revelation of a grace which, if it could not find its rest where sin and misery were, could begin to work where all was ruined), “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” We can rest neither in sin nor sorrow, but can work in grace, where both are, and find occasion for work, if not rest, in it. The Sabbath of the Jew, as the rest of man in creation, whatever physical mercy it may be to him as it

is, could not remain spiritually as the valid sign of a state of things which was abrogated and passed away.

Is there no such witness of rest, and a better rest too, which remains for God's people? Surely there is. If now our rest is not on earth, because it is polluted, it is prepared in heaven, where we shall have our place in glory by resurrection (or an equivalent change), as Christ entered there by it. Hence, not God's rest in the first creation, but the day on which Christ rose from death, which had passed on Adam the head of the first (and which He had in grace taken on Himself), became the witness, as far as a day is, of the church's hope of rest. She does not celebrate her joys and her hopes on the day her Lord was in the grave—how could she? (it was the proof of the ruin of the old, of the first, Adam)—but on the day on which He rose, the day of the triumph of the Second, who is the Lord from heaven. The Jewish Sabbath fell with the whole system of which it formed part.

It was not the church changing a day; it was gone before the church existed; the cross abrogated it and all it was connected with. The church could not have existed, had the sign of the covenant made with Israel remained in force as a witness that the covenant remained entire. The Sabbath was the witness of man having a share in God's rest under the first covenant; but he could not. The covenant was gone, and the sign with it. The resurrection inaugurated with divine power a new ground on which man could rest—a new scene in which he was to find blessing, when the ordinances of blessing were not to be imposed as law, but revealed in grace and spiritually understood.

Have we no proofs from scripture of the institution of the Lord's day not imposed as law, which would be contrary to the very nature of Christianity, but established in grace? The plainest. First, the Lord Jesus assembled on that day His disciples, and met them: two or three assembled in His name, and He in the midst of them. Next Lord's day He did the same thing. This the Gospels give. The Acts inform us that the disciples met on this day to break bread. In the Epistles, the day is remarked as that in which the faithful were to lay by for the poor saints, as God had prospered them; and in the Revelation it is expressly called “the Lord's day” “κυριακ■ ■μ■ρα;” and the apostles were peculiarly blessed on it.

Such is the scriptural warrant, not for making a law, but for recognizing the Lord's day, the first day of the week, as one of worship and blessing; and so it has ever continued. The word of God gives it according to its unfailing perfection. It does not make a law of an ordinance where grace reigns, but it marks out distinctly the character and blessing of a day given us by grace, as the Lord's day, the day on which He began all things new for our eternal blessing. The Old Testament has, in more places than one, recognized the eighth—that is, the first day after the old week was closed—as the day of special blessing. This was a pertinent figure.

Thus we have seen what tradition affords on one of the topics produced by the author, and what scripture affords on the other; that tradition is obscure, variable, and establishes nothing—can demonstrate nothing—which scripture does not prove; and that scripture is clear and simple. For Lent there is no warrant, and it is not in scripture; and as to the Lord's day, even to the very name, we have the clearest testimony possible of its observance in scripture.

Chapter 225

Romanism: an Answer to the Pamphlet of a Romish Priest, Entitled “the Law and the Testimony": Part 4

OR AN ANSWER TO THE PAMPHLET OF A ROMISH PRIEST, ENTITLED “THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY.” (Continued from page 44)

But you say that the doctrine necessary for salvation was carried down by tradition, from the expulsion of Adam from the garden to the time of Moses. If I am to believe tradition, there were writings. Seth, we are told, set up two pillars, and engraved what was necessary to be known, that it might not be lost; and we are told where, which, I am ashamed to say, I forget, and cannot now search for. However, though I judge it certain, that the use of letters was far more ancient than is supposed, and that there was a mass of knowledge in those ancient times, now lost, of which we have traces in heathen mythology and heathen notions (just spewing how insecure a means it is), and that God has given us just what is needed of it in the Scriptures; yet I do not believe in Seth's pillars. At any rate nobody ever read what was on them. But your reference in the case is most untoward; because this tradition was so powerless, that the whole world departed from God, so that He had to bring in the flood to destroy men from off the face of the earth. And after the flood, all was so wholly lost, that even Abraham's family were fallen into idolatry (Josh. 24:2), and God had to begin afresh by a new revelation of Himself to him. There were traces of truth which remained, as sacrifices; but the devil had got such complete hold of them, that they offered them to him, not to God. Such was the effect of tradition in the case you quote. Your saying that the reference of sacrifice to a Redeemer to come was known to the Jews by tradition, is monstrous. Their prophets are as clear on it as possible.

In fine, I do not, certainly, contest that Christ established a church on the earth. No doubt He did. As to her being known by the four marks, we have examined them. Unity is gone—universality gone with it, as you admit you only claim a majority, which upsets both; apostolicity breaks down, for the Greeks have it more than you (for they have not a double and treble line of popes for a long while, as Rome has had). As to sanctity, we will speak of it hereafter. And moreover, the marks are not marks at all; for the church was as true, when there had been no succession, no catholicity—that is in the days of the apostles—as any can be now. If these marks are a test, the church wanted them when it was truest and purest.

We are next told of the Fathers and of the unity of the church. Of the latter I have spoken already. It is natural that when men are in possession of a wide field of power, they should not wish it to be broken up. We have already seen that the true church, the body of Christ, united livingly to Him by the power of the Holy Ghost, is and must be, as seen of God, always one; and that it will shine forth as one in glory. And we have seen that what is called the church—Christendom—is divided; and that the boast of the Romish body of being one within itself, proves nothing as to the unity of the whole church; while the truth is, that nothing can be more evident than this, that it is not the true church at all, but the most corrupt of any body that pretends to the name; its marks fallacious; while as to truth, and holiness, and spiritual union with a heavenly head, she avoids the test of

truth, belies in practice the test of holiness, as every honest conscience knows, and as I shall show hereafter; and has another head of unity on earth in place of Christ.

I will now, therefore, speak a little of the Fathers whom you adduce as witnesses. Only remark, that the Fathers cannot tell us whether the visible church is one now, the only really important point, for the plainest of all reasons, that they lived centuries ago. If they only tell us that it began in unity, we do not want them for that, because the scriptures are plain enough upon it, historically and doctrinally; only that unity they show to us was composed of real saints quickened of God, though false brethren were already creeping in unawares, as we learn from Jude, and the mystery of iniquity already at work, as the Apostle Paul teaches us. They show divisions always ready to break out, restrained by God's grace and apostolic care; they show that there ought to be unity, but a unity which is called the unity of the Spirit; the power of God, by the Holy Ghost, keeping the true members of Christ bound together in one body—not a vast body of persons, three-quarters of them infidels, and few of the rest doing more than going through a routine of forms. The scriptures show us such a unity as God can create and own. The Fathers may echo it as a duty, but cannot tell us what is now.

But we will spend a word on them; the name sounds well, and seems to claim respect. Some of them were godly men, a very few martyrs for the Lord's name, a few more confessors in persecution—a real crown of glory for a Christian; but as to doctrine, they (and in particular some of those who suffered) are the loosest, wildest, most absurd writers that ever wrote a book, to make sober men wonder how any one could possibly read such a mass of nonsense, bad morals, and heresy. If books containing such doctrine as is found for the most part in the Fathers, notions with such an absence of common sense, and such morals, were written now, every honest Christian in the country would forbid them to his children, or they would lie a lumber, so as to render such a prohibition unnecessary; while, as for the doctrine of some of them, Christians would be apt to burn the books, and Romanists the writers. This will scandalize some people perhaps; but as people are talking so much about the Fathers, it is better the truth should be told. I admit piety is found in some, and, on some points, doctrinal truth in part of others; but there is not a child's religious book in these days which would not contain more and sounder truth than a whole folio of the “Fathers.” All the early Fathers held the millennial reign of Christ, which is now rejected by Romanists, to show how much their authority weighs where it does not suit. Most of the Antenicene Fathers were unsound as to the person of Christ, and corrupted by Platonism.

You may think, that this is mere Protestant abuse of authorities which are against us; but we have already seen that you are not much acquainted with them, and I shall produce the highest Romanist authority for what I say. The very learned Petau, a Jesuit, a man whose theological works are of standard reputation in the Romish body, after speaking of heretics, says: “Others were indeed Christians, and Catholics, and saints; but as the times then were, that mystery (of the divinity of Christ) being not yet sufficiently clearly known, they threw out some things dangerously said.” —Pet. de Trin., lib. i. c. iii. s. 1. Poor Jerome, at a loss to maintain their orthodoxy, says, “It may have been that they have erred through simplicity (simpliciter), or have written in another sense, or that by unskilled editors (copyists) their writings have been by degrees corrupted, or, at least, before Arius, as a mid-day demon, was born, they have said some things innocently and less cautiously, and which cannot escape the calumny of perverse men.” —Jerome, Cont. Ruffinum, lib. H., 17, Ver.

Now I have no objection to take the excuses of Jerome; but if, in such a fundamental point as the divinity of the Lord Jesus, such excuses have to be made for them, what can be said of their authority? This is said by Jerome, when the famous Clement, of Alexandria, presbyter, and Dionysius, patriarch of Alexandria, were stated by another Father, the first to have said that the Son of God was a created being; and the latter to have fallen into Arianism, as he surely did when writing against the Sabellians; and when it was objected against him, said he did not mean it. Jerome will not allow that their writings were corrupted by heretics. The title of this chapter of Petavius is this “The opinions of certain of the ancients on the Trinity, who flourished in the Christian profession before the times of Arius, discordant from the Catholic rule, at least in the manner of speaking, are set forth; as of Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Tatian, Theophilus, Irenaeus, Clemens Romanus.” Think of all these eminent Fathers, if we except perhaps Tatian, holding opinions contrary to the Catholic faith on the subject of the divinity of Christ, or at least expressing themselves so! What a comfortable security for right interpretation! I do not pretend that Petavius is warranted in all he says; but if so very learned a Jesuit judges the Antenicene Fathers thus, even if some of them may be speciously defended (as the Protestant bishop Bull, and the Jesuit Zacharia, and Horsley, and Burton have attempted to do), while some certainly cannot, what possible reliance can be placed on them? And remember, that it is on the capital point of the divinity of Christ.

Let us now give a few details. Justin Martyr, and, it seems, Athenagoras (and it was a common notion) held that Christ existed in the Father, as His word or reason, and became a distinct person only for the purpose of creation. Justin denies the possibility of the supreme, omnipotent God coming, going, acting, descending, or shutting Himself up in a narrow body, as described in Genesis; and that Abraham, Isaac, &c., never saw the Father, and Ineffable, and of Himself Lord of all things ■πλ■ς, and, therefore, of Christ Himself, who is God by His will, His son and messenger, because He is the minister of His will.— Dial, c. Try. 282, 286. This is Arianism; yet, in other places, he speaks of Him clearly as God. Clement of Alexandria uses language which makes his doctrine as to the godhead of Christ uncertain. He says that He had a nature nearest to, or very near (παρεχεστατ■) to the Father: and as to the humanity of Christ, writes what is utterly heterodox, denying that Christ could possibly be nourished by food, and saying that He only ate that people might not think He only appeared to have a body. As to Origen, be was as heretical as he well could be. He unequivocally declares the Son to be inferior to the Father, and the Spirit to the Son; and held that all men had lived before they were born, and were born here according to their previous merits, could recover themselves here, and be saved, as could the devil, and as it seems, when in a heavenly state fall, for all that, afterward:—in a word, every wild notion that might grace a Mormon. Tertullian received Montanus and the Phrygian prophetesses as having or being the Paraclete, and treated the Catholics as carnal. The term by which Arius was finally condemned, and which had been condemned as heretical by the previous Council of Antioch, was withdrawn after the Council of Nice, and Arius was thereupon received into, and died in the communion of, what is called the Catholic church, this famous word being revoked; and Athanasius died in banishment, deposed from his see, by the Council of Tire. Now, I am satisfied that Arius's views are the most deadly error possible. But what, then, can I think of the fathers, if compelled to think of them? Hermas, who is presented as an apostolic Father, tells us, in his similitudes, that the Son (seen in his vision) was the Holy Ghost; and that God took counsel with the angels what to do with Him; and He made a pure body, and put Him into it, and that was the

Christ. Yet this book, we are assured, was read in the churches.

And now for one or two further details. Ignatius, you tell us, was Bishop of Antioch after Peter had fixed his chair at Rome; you are aware that it is contested that Peter was at Rome. It seems, indeed, almost impossible. However, the succession of the bishopric of Antioch is nearly in the same obscurity as that of Rome, probably because they had not at the beginning such bishops as afterward; Euodias is alleged to be the first at Antioch—some say Peter put him into it, others Paul. The most authentic histories declare he became bishop of it after the death of both. Some, to clear up matters, say that Ignatius had the Gentiles, and Euodius the Jews, and then Ignatius both. If this were the case, it is possible this may have created difficulties in his own path, and this it is that which makes him speak so feelingly of adhering to the bishop, for such is his principal subject. His exhortations to unity, and avoiding heresy, are all very well, though there is evidently an excessive excitement produced by the thought of a man just going to martyrdom, and very full of it, and I must say not very full of Christ. Blessed as his end may have been, Polycarp and the Vienne martyrs shine, it seems to me, much more brightly. There is more peace, more calmness, more humility. Still it was given to Ignatius to honor his Lord, by giving up his life for Him, and every true Christian will honor him.

I have already remarked, that you have taken Clement of Alexandria for Clement of Rome, and I have said what is needed on the former, who was the head of the school at Alexandria, and not a bishop at all. He avows that he must conceal all the highest parts of Christianity, as known to the initiated, and only say what suits the public. He was more a philosopher than anything else. Tertullian, as I have said, was forced out of what is called the Catholic Church by its worldliness and evil, and, after having written to prove it right by prescription, left it as a hopeless case. Cyprian in the main was a bright specimen of the Fathers, and a martyr, but he resisted Rome energetically, and never yielded, maintaining a correspondence with a famous bishop of Asia Minor, Firmilian, to resist its principles. Even he speaks of the Father commanding us to worship Christ, just as Socinus did. As to what is quoted from Hilary, one of the best of the Fathers, I cordially agree with his very scriptural statement. Whether Rome be that church, is another question. No such unity as he speaks of exists now at all. Augustine, too, was a bright light for the times—I have nothing to object to what is quoted from him. That modern Rome is the church is our question. The church redeemed by Christ's blood He purifies by the word, and presents to Himself a glorious church. All its members are members of Christ, and will be in glory; but this no Romanist ever pretends to be the case with Rome.

As regards what I have stated as to the Antenicene Fathers being obscure as to fundamentals, I do not deny that passages may be found spewing that they held Christ to be God:—there are many. But it is not denied that there are many which deny that He was the God over all, ■ επ■ π■ντων θε■ς, that being ascribed to the one supreme God. It cannot be denied that Justin Martyr, for example, teaches, in reasoning with Trypho, as to the Being who visited Abraham, that it could not be the supreme God, who is the Lord of the Lord on earth (that is, of Christ in these appearances to the old Fathers), as being Father and God, and is the cause of his being both powerful and Lord and God (I use the translation of a learned and orthodox theologian. The passage is to be found, Dial. c. Try. 388 E.) Justin declares (Dial. c. T. 283 A.), that it was not the supreme God who appeared to Moses in the bush. Trypho had said there was an angel and God there. Justin answers, that even so it was not God the Creator of all things. On the other hand, he

declares, page 227-8, that there neither is, nor ever was, any other God than He who created all things, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who led the Jews out of Egypt. He held (and it is not denied to have been the general doctrine of the Antenicene Fathers) that the wisdom of God, which dwelt in Him always, came out, as it were, into distinct existence, in order to the creation by the will of the supreme God. They owned Him to be God, but His eternal existence was ■νδι■θετος and not προΦορικ■ς. There was more than one source of this. First, they had only the Septuagint Greek translation, which in Prov. 8 reads, “The Lord created me in the beginning of his ways,” ■κτισε (not possessed me, ■κτ■σατο). Secondly, Platonism, to which indeed Justin refers, and the efforts to meet the accusations of the heathens, as to God the Son, to which the Platonic doctrine of the λ■γος afforded a reply.

Now I do not desire to accuse these Fathers of heresy, save Origen. But I am forced to read a mass of barbarous folio volumes to know what they do hold, and there I find Platonism in abundance. There I find it denied over and over again that Christ is God over all. There I find Him spoken of as having personal existence only just before the creation, and existing by the will of the supreme God, as His minister or servant. I find, indeed, when they are not philosophizing or meeting difficulties, that their own faith was for the most part more orthodox. But if I want to make orthodox theology out of them, I am obliged to read another set of volumes, in which Romanists deny and affirm their orthodoxy, as in Zacharia's edition of Petavius' Dogm. Theol.; and Protestants labor honestly, as Bull and Burton and Horsley and Kaye, to prove they are all right and orthodox, against Romanists and Unitarians; declaring that these learned Romanists undermine the orthodoxy of the Fathers, that there may be no resource but the church, and proving very clearly that the Unitarians are utterly unfounded in what they have said. But what security does this afford for the truth?—what reliance can be placed on the Fathers?

If I turn to scripture, nothing can be plainer. I may try to reason against it; but there I find, without any discussion or philosophy at all, that Christ is “God over all blessed for evermore;” that He and the Father are one; that He “was in the beginning with God, and was God.” I find that when Isaiah (chap. 6.) saw the glory of Jehovah of hosts, he saw the glory of Christ. In John 12 I find that He is the true God and eternal life. I find that He created all things. (Heb. 1, Col. 1, John 1) In a word, I find the proper eternal divinity of the Lord Jesus, and His distinct personality, taught as plainly as any truth possibly can be. John the Baptist goes before Jehovah's face, but it is before Christ. God with us, who saves the people, is Christ, The God-man (an expression, by the by, condemned as heretical by an early council—men were to say, God and man) revealed as plainly as testimony can make it; yet the unity of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) shining through every page from Genesis to Rev. 1 am not, of course, bringing all the proofs of the Trinity in unity here (it would be out of place); I quote only a few passages to show the positiveness and clearness of scripture, which gives these great foundations without a cloud and without hesitation.

The author quotes the Fathers on the sanctity of the church. I have not need to say much here. The Fathers cannot tell us what the Romish body is now. No one denies in the abstract that holiness is a characteristic of the true church of God. But the manner in which this truth is treated is singularly characteristic. The Fathers show “the sanctity of the Catholic church in her origin, in her first preachers, in her doctrine, and in her sacraments.” Now is it not singular that her practice is left out here? I should have thought that the first thing holiness would have to be sought in was practice. That the church's origin is holy is certain, for it is God Himself; and, as to power, the Holy

Ghost glorifying Christ in the gospel. That her first preachers were is no less sure, for they were apostles, and prophets, and saintly evangelists; that her doctrine was, is doubtless true, for we have it in the scriptures from God Himself, and are assured that “without holiness no man shall see the Lord;” that her sacraments, as moderns call them, were, no Christian will dispute either, if the term be rightly used. But then this only leads us to inquire, since this was so in the beginning, whether the doctrine and practice of Rome be like this; and if it be not, then I must conclude that she is not the true church, nor even like it.

But this question of practice our author avoids. It is too practical a one. Only, after a quotation from Tertullian on apostolic succession as a security for doctrine, which has nothing to say to holiness (Tertullian, who broke with the Catholic church, so called, because of its looseness) we just find “holy” in the virtuous lives of her children who observe her precepts. That reserve saves a good deal. We are told, too, that the fathers say there cannot be sanctity out of the Catholic church; but would it not be better to show that there was in what called itself so? Now, I have already given a quotation from Cyprian (and others could be added) which shows that, in some two hundred years after Christ, the self-called Catholic church was sunk into the lowest excesses of vanity, corruption, fraud, and avarice, bishops and all; so that God, he says, treated them most gently in sending the Decian persecution. Indeed the choice of bishops was more than once the occasion of bloodshed and war; yet Cyprian was a great stickler for unity.

On the catholicity of the church I have already spoken. That the Fathers used the testimony of the Church universal against heretics is quite true; nor, though not a final authority, are they to be much blamed, when it was universal. But we have seen they were not preserved by it themselves, nor was the church; and the question still remains, Is the Romish system in the truth? The Fathers, with their usual inconsistency, when not pressed by the heretics, equally declared that the scriptures alone were authority. They argued, and argued as it suited them. Thus Cyprian, against those who deserted what he belonged to, preached unity as obligatory. But. this same Cyprian was exceedingly opposed to the pope and Romans on the re-baptizing of heretics, and wrote against the pope, and never would yield to him. Stephen, the said pope, urged— “Let nothing be innovated on what has been handed down” (traditum). Hereupon our good Father changes all his language. “Whence,” he cries out, “is that tradition? Does it descend from the authority of the Lord and the Gospels (Evangelica), and come from the commandments and Epistles of the apostles? For God bears witness that these things are to be done which are written, and speaks to Joshua, the son of Nun, saying, ‘The book of this law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate in it day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all things that are written therein.' If, therefore, it is commanded in the gospel, or contained in the epistles of the apostles, or the Acts, that those coming from whatever heresy should not be baptized, but only hands imposed on him in penance, let this divine and holy tradition be observed What obstinacy is that! (in the pope, remember.) What presumption to prefer human tradition to a divine disposition, and not take notice that God is indignant and angry as often as human tradition sets aside, and passes by, divine precepts, as He cries out and says by Esaias the prophet, ‘This people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' Also the Lord, in the gospel, reproving and blaming, lays it down, and says, ‘Ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may establish your tradition,' mindful of which precept the blessed Apostle Paul himself also warns and instructs, saying, ‘If any one teach

otherwise, and do not acquiesce in the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and His doctrine, he is puffed up with pride, knowing nothing: from such turn away.'" —Ep. lxxiv. Ed. Oxon. Here every tradition is to be judged by scripture. O si sic omnia! and this is a pope!

The truth is, the Fathers were men, and reasoned as it suited them. The scriptures are the word of God, and speak plainly. "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." But the letter of our good prelate affords us some further and excellent advice— "It is simple with religious and simple minds, both to lay aside error, and find and dig out the truth. For if we revert to the head and origin of divine tradition, human error ceases [we must remember that tradition means any doctrine delivered by word or writing]; and the principle (ratione) of the celestial sacraments being considered, whatever lay hid in obscurity and a cloud of darkness, it will be brought out into the light of truth. If a canal, which conducts water that before flowed copiously and abundantly, suddenly fails, do not men go to the fountain, that there the reason of the failure may be known—whether the veins being dried up, the water has dried up at the source? or whether, being perfect there and full, running forward, failed mid-way? that if it be caused by the fault of an interrupted or leaky canal, which hinders the water from flowing constantly and without interruption, the canal being re-made and strengthened, the water collected for the use and drinking of the city may be re-presented with the same richness and purity as it flows from the fountain, which now is what the priests of God, keeping the divine precepts, have to do. And if in any one (or anything) the truths have tottered or vacillated, let us return to the original of the Lord, and the gospel (originem Dominican et Evangelicam), and the apostolic teaching (traditionem), and let the principle of our acting spring from that whence its order and origin has sprung." Here, remark, tradition does not mean what is now received; for the truth was tottering and lost, and he insists on going back from that to what was originally delivered.

Now we have gone up to the fountain, as Cyprian recommends, and we have found a rich and inexhaustible fountain of pure water of life in the very same source which he urged men to go to. We have found that the canal has been choked with filth; so that, though a little water has oozed through, the result has been mud, undrinkable and contaminated—that the little that trickled through the filth, which has gradually filled up the channel, is utterly tainted; but when the grace of God had led us to the fountain, we have found the water as pure, as fresh, as abundant as ever, and only the more delicious from having found it again. We have found the truth easily discovered and dug out, as Cyprian has said, once arrived at the treasures of the scriptures which God gave. I have already quoted from Irenaeus a passage, where he states that if we cannot find the solution of all that is in scripture, we are not to look for another God, but leave these things to God, because the scriptures are perfect as spoken by the word of God and His Spirit.

You quote the famous saying of Augustine—that he would not believe the gospel, if the church did not move him to do so. He speaks rather of what led him to do it than as authority. Still it is a very serious statement to find uttered. We will examine it; but you must forgive me for increased hesitation as to your having looked at the original. I am not aware what 2 T. Ep. 53 means exactly; but this passage is in a treatise against a letter of a Manichean, which was called Fundamenti. The old and new editions of epistles have neither of them, in number 53, anything to do with it. However it may appear as an Ep. in some edition I do not know of. But I have another reason for my hesitation. One would think, from your extract, that it was a continuous passage. This is in nowise the case. You read" Lastly, the name itself of Catholic. These so many and so great ties

bind the believing man to the Catholic church; and unless the authority of the church induced me to it, I would not believe the gospel." Between "Catholic" and "these" there is nearly as much as you have quoted; but that is no matter, for it does not change the sense. But when you say, "These so many and so great ties," I can hardly suppose you translate for yourself. It runs— "These so many and so great (tanta), most dear or cherished, ties of the Christian name bind." Now, the sentiment is left out in what you say. His affections were in play, and this he expressly speaks of in what follows in contrast with the certainty of truth; and the last and famous phrase is in quite another connection—nearly half a page of my copy farther on, and in another section. Nor have you ever finished the phrase which you end with "Catholic church." This I will do for you. You see you cannot be surprised if I believe you did not read the passage which you quote; for certainly your manner of quoting it would lead your reader to suppose it was one continuous paragraph. Augustine writes" Lib. Cont. Epist. Manichζi quam vocant Fundamenti, sec. iv." (v. in another edition)— "These, therefore, so many and so great most dear ties of the Christian name keep the believing man in the Catholic church, though, on account of the slowness of our intelligence or the merit of our life, the truth does not yet clearly (or openly) skew itself" That is, his affections—perhaps I might say superstitions—linked him to the church, though he did not see the truth clear. What a different thing from being a security for the truth! And so little was it intelligence of the truth that be is speaking of, that he begins his reasoning by saying, that simplicity of faith keeps the crowd safe, not vivacity of intelligence: and therefore, if he leaves aside the wisdom which Manichζans did not believe to be in the Catholic church, many other things would hold him quietly in its bosom. This shows what the dear ties were, and how little it had to do with the certainty of truth. But this is clearer still, if we cite all that follows the words, "the believing man to the Catholic church." I finished that phrase for you just now; I will now add what comes after the close of it— "But with you" [Manichζans, who were not Christians at all, held there was a good God and a bad one; they had a gospel of their own, Manes having, as was pretended, perfected with far clearer light what Christ had taught, and rejecting much of the scriptures], "but with you where there is nothing of these things (the most dear ties) which should invite or hold me, the promise of the truth alone resounds; which, indeed, if it be so manifestly shown that nothing can come into doubt, is to be preferred to all those things by which I am held in the Catholic [church]. But if it is only promised, and not exhibited, no man shall move me from that faith which binds me, by so many and such bonds, to the Christian religion."

Now here the bonds which did hold him were of no force if the truth was elsewhere, so that he does not look at them as themselves the truth. But, further, however confident he was that it was not the case, yet, if the truth were clearly shown elsewhere, they lost their power, so that they did not in themselves secure the truth. Is it not singular all this part should be left out? But be proceeds to reason with the Manichζan to see if he has the truth. It is a mere argumentation to put the Manichζan out of the field by beating his argument; and here it is we find the famous phrase you and others quote. This piece, called Fundamenti, began— "Manichζus, Apostle of Jesus Christ by the providence of God the Father. These are healthful words from the perennial and living fountain." "Bear with me," says Augustine, "if I do not believe he is an apostle. I ask, who is he? You will answer, an apostle of Christ. I do not believe it. You will have nothing you can say or do. You promised me the knowledge of the truth, and now you compel me to believe what I am ignorant of. Perhaps you will read me the gospel, and thence you will maintain the character assumed by Manichζus. If then you will find any one who does not yet believe the gospel, what will

you do with him when he says, ‘I do not believe?' But I would not believe the gospel if the authority of the Catholic church did not move me to it. To those therefore, to whom I have yielded, saying ‘believe the gospel,' why should I not yield when they say, ‘do not believe Manichζans?' Take your choice. If you say, believe the Catholics, they themselves warn me not to yield any faith to you; wherefore I cannot believe them unless I disbelieve you. If you say, do not believe the Catholics, you will not do right in compelling me by the gospel to [embrace] the faith of Manichζus, because I believe the gospel by Catholics preaching it.”

We see at once here, that to put the Manichmans out of court, he insists, that when he attempted to use the gospel to make him receive Manichζus (Manes) and his doctrine, it could not take effect, because he had believed in the gospel by means of the very Catholics who condemned Manichζus. Now it is a very foolish and bad sentence; but it is merely a reasoning used in an argument ad hominem to frustrate the Manichζans by taking the ground from under his feet; and it supposes a person refusing to believe the very gospel he appealed to, and then insisting he could not use the gospel against Catholics, because it was through Catholics he had believed. It is no business of mine to defend Augustine, though he were a bright testimony to the grace of God. His reasonings are often weak and foolish enough, and admitted to be so by Romanists, and I may almost say by himself, for he excuses himself as writing in haste, and admits that, not having been able to meet Manes in the plain sense of scripture, he had turned it into allegories. But the close of the chapter shows clearly what he meant. He had been led to believe the gospel by the preaching of Catholics, and, thus led to it by them, he could not read it as condemning them—an argument which has no force. It is in no way a quiet dogmatic sentence, as it is presented. It is to be hoped that he did not mean that when, through the instrumentality of the preaching of the Catholics, he had been brought to believe in it as the word of God, he still held it merely by their authority; because if he really believed it to be God's word, and that he had really faith in it as suck, however brought to that conviction, he must believe it, because God had spoken it: otherwise there was no divine faith.

He who received Christ's testimony set to his seal that God is true. Anybody may move me and lead me to receive the Bible; but when I receive it, I have faith in it because God has spoken: otherwise it is mere human faith. It cannot be doubted—for we have his account of it—that the word of God had reached his heart with deep conviction within. It had its own title in his heart. Did he rest this on the Church's authority? Then it was human faith. A man may bring me my father's letter: I recognize it as his. Its authority is not the bringer's, but the writer's, though the fidelity of the messenger may have been necessary for my getting it. Once received, it has my father's authority—the authority of him who wrote it. There is no pretense that “commoveret,” the word Augustine uses, can mean the authority. It proves that the church had a practical influence over his mind, which led him to do it: all very well. It was Catholics' preaching which had led him to faith; he was converted from heathen wickedness and Manichζanism; but it was not their previous authority on which the scriptures rested, but an authority over his mind.

But I take higher ground than showing it was a mere argumentative phrase to excuse Augustine. If the principle be the sober judgment of Augustine, that he would not believe unless on the authority of the church, this is not believing because God has spoken but because the church had. If one tells me something, and another accredits him, and I believe the first because the other declares what he says is true, it is clear I do not believe the former, though I believe the fact he relates; for I

do so because I trust another, not him. That is, if I believe the gospel because the church authenticates it, it is because I do not believe it without: that is, God's saying it is insufficient. I do not believe God in it at all. There is no faith in God's word.

But see what ground the Romanists set me on here, for this is the real truth of the matter. God has spoken; the apostles and evangelists have recorded His revelation: if they deny it, they are infidels, not Christians. I am to believe God, because the church accredits what He has revealed. I am to believe the church because Augustine accredits it; that is, the authority of God Himself (who, in sovereign grace, has spoken to us) is reduced to the opinion I may form of the judgment of Augustine. What a favorable position! as if God, when He has spoken, cannot give proof that He has, so as to bind the Christian's, nay, every man's conscience! Now, I have a very poor opinion of the judgment of Augustine, and I shall tell you why; but what a foundation on which to rest belief in what God has said! I must have Augustine's authority for its being true; for if the church accredits the scripture and Augustine accredits the church, the judgment and authority of Augustine is my stay, and the base of the whole. I say, if God has spoken, His word obliges to believe because He has spoken: woe be to him who does not! You plead Augustine's word, that though He has spoken (for you dare not deny this, or you are an infidel)—though God has spoken, you would not believe Him unless the church guaranteed it, Is this faith? God speaks; I cannot believe what He says till some one else accredits it! It is as awful ground to go on as it is unstable and insecure; and this is all the ground that the Romish body can give as security of our faith!

The truth is, Augustine was first attracted by Ambrose's preaching, by his kindness and eloquence, and began to doubt his own Manichζanism; but he was converted by the scriptures, and established in the faith by the scriptures. “Therefore,” he says, “as we were infirm in finding the truth by mere reason, and the authority of the holy letters was needful for us, I began now to believe that thou wouldst in nowise have given so excellent an authority to the scriptures, in all lands, unless thou hadst written that by it I should believe in thee, and by it I should seek thee.” This, accordingly, he did, passing through much conflict; and, at last, abandoning himself to tears under a fig-tree, he heard a voice saying, “Take and read, take and read;” and he arose, took up the epistles to look at the first thing he opened at, and found a passage which was his deliverance. Such is his own account in his Confessions when he is relating the facts, not reasoning with Manichζans. He was not very nice in reasoning with these. He wrote a book against them early in his career; and when he could not make any proper sense out of the scriptures literally, or none could be made, so he says, he turned it into an allegory to get out of the scrape, hoping he might do better afterward; and so, indeed, he tried to do in a treatise on Genesis according to the letter.

As to St. Vincent of Lerins (not Sernis), there is a sentence of his almost as famous as Augustine's. It is this, that we were to believe quod semper, qua ubique, quod ab omnibus, what was believed always, everywhere, and by all. May I guess that you did not quote this famous rule, because you have only, as you allege, a majority—really just half; the Greek church, older than you, thinking you all wrong, and the Protestants thinking you Babylon? If man's opinion and agreement is to be the ground of faith, according to Vincentius Lirinensis, we can have none at all in these days. But the passage you do quote is an unfortunate one, because it was just the very order of Pope Stephanus, which the holy martyr, and the African church, and Firmilian, and Asia Minor, and the East resisted as subverting the church, and condemned by scripture, in a letter of which I have given an extract.

Allow me also to quote a passage of Jerome: “Hear another testimony, by which it is most manifestly proved that a presbyter is the same as a bishop” —Titus 1:5, seq.—and then quotes other passages. “But that afterward we should be shown who should have the pre-eminence over the rest, it was done as a remedy for schism, lest every one drawing [people] to himself should break up the church of Christ; for at Alexandria, also, from Mark the Evangelist, to bishops Heraclus and Dionysius, the presbyters always named as bishop one chosen from among themselves, and placed in a higher grade.” “Nor is the church of the Roman city to be esteemed one, and that of all the earth another. Both the Gauls, and Britains, and Africa, and Persia, and the East, and India, and all barbarous nations adore one Christ, observe one rule of truth. If authority be sought, the world is greater than a city. Wherever there is a bishop, Rome, or Eugubium, or Constantinople, or Rhegium, or Alexandria, or Tanis, he is of the same worth, he is of the same priesthood. The power of riches and the humility of poverty make neither a higher nor an inferior bishop; but all are successors of the apostles.” Am I attaching any authority to Jerome? The learned but irascible and superstitious monk is one of the last to whom I should; but it is just a proof that these fathers said what suited them at the moment of writing, as other poor mortals do sometimes—indeed, rather more, so that there was a name for their way of reasoning. It was called conomical; that is, they used reasoning proper to confute their adversary, without the least believing it was the truth themselves (like Augustine's allegories).

Chapter 226

Romanism: an Answer to the Pamphlet of a Romish Priest, Entitled “the Law and the Testimony": Part 5

OR AN ANSWER TO THE PAMPHLET OF A ROMISH PRIEST, ENTITLED “THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY.” (Continued from page 63.)

But we are arrived at the sacraments.

As to baptism, except Quakers, all own it as a Christian ordinance, so that the scriptures you quote for that are freely accepted. Moreover every true or even orthodox Christian admits we are all born in sin: only I do not admit the application of John 3 to baptism. There is an allusion to what you have quoted from Ezekiel, which has nothing to do with baptism; but from the very words you quote (and reading the whole passage makes it still plainer), it refers to the restoration of the Jews; and the figure of baptism refers to the reality; just as John 3 does also, where the Lord is telling Nicodemus that he must not marvel because He said to him that they, Jews, who thought themselves already children of the kingdom, must be born again. It was a sovereign operation of God, going like the wind, and hence could embrace Gentiles; but he, as a master in Israel, ought, from his own prophets, to have known that such new birth was needed for Israel, as the passage from Ezekiel, for example, shows. The Lord tells us, that the water which really cleanses is the word: “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” (John 12:48; 15:3); and Paul, “that he might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] by the washing of water by the word.” (Eph. 5) Baptism refers to this true cleansing, and so does John 3

As to confirmation, you have produced scriptures which show that the apostles, and apostles alone, conferred the Holy Ghost by laying on their hands; as to “the bishop, the successor of the apostles in the ministry,” complete and absolute silence. In the Epistles to Timothy and Titus, in which, according to your system, we might have expected it, not a word is to be found. The laying on of the apostles' hands conferred it, and that it might be clear that Paul was as great an apostle as the rest (Acts 19), a case is recorded in which he also did so. You have quoted some other passages which prove anything but this. “He who hath confirmed or established us with you in Christ” —was Paul confirmed along with them? This is too ridiculous. He, at least, says he never went near the other apostles to be confirmed, nor ever received anything from them. When, therefore, he says,” confirmeth us with you in Christ,” it is preeminently clear, he was speaking of nothing of the kind. Besides, βεβαι■ν is not the rite of confirmation. And further, it is God here, not an apostle or a bishop, who has done it. As to anointing, we read:

Ye have the unction of the Holy one, and ye know all things.” Again, why not finish Eph. 1, “in whom also, &c., ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance, till the redemption of the purchased possession?” Is confirmation the earnest of the inheritance? But if you say that it is the thing itself which is, and that confirmation is the sacrament by which it is received, then the text speaks of the thing (as it surely does), and not of any sacrament at all. That is, it has nothing to do with the matter. Now that sealing and anointing are

the reality of the thing, and not any rite, we have the certainty, because the word of God says, that “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power.” (Acts 10:38.) And again, speaking of Him, “Him hath God the Father sealed.” (John 6:27.) No one will have the folly to say, it could mean a sacrament as to Christ.

The history of confirmation is clear enough; we hear of it first, early in the third century, but not separate from baptism, but conferred at the same time, and with nothing to say to a bishop. In the next, however, it was soon left to the bishop to do. This separation of it from baptism, and leaving it to the bishop, was not established in the east nearly so soon. It continued an act of the baptizing minister, and is treated even by Jerome as that part of baptism by which the Holy Ghost is received, only left to the bishop in order to maintain his dignity. I give some quotations which show this.

First, there is Tertullian, De Baptismo, vii. viii. Having spoken of the water, he says, “Next going out of the laver we are anointed with the blessed unction, according to the former discipline (i.e., the Jewish), with which they were accustomed to anoint with oil out of a horn for the priesthood, with which Aaron was anointed by Moses, whence Christ has His name from chrism, which means anointing Then the hand is imposed calling and inviting the Holy Ghost in the way of blessing.” We see it is distinctly given as a part of baptism, without thinking of a bishop, and that the laying on of the apostles' hands as its source never entered his mind.

In a commentary, commonly attributed to Ambrose, in 4 Ep. ad Ephesians (given in Keble's note to Hooker), we read, In Egypt, Presbyters sealed or signed (i.e., confirmed), if the bishop is not present. And in the Apostolic Constitutions, lib. vii. 43, 44 (caput 28 in J. G. Cot.) the form of baptism and prayer to be used by the priest, is given, and then it is said, And after this when he shall have baptized him in the name of the Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, he shall anoint him with myrrh, adding, Lord God unbegotten, &c., cause that this anointing may be efficacious in the baptized, so that the fragrance of thy Christ may remain firm and stable in him, &c. Afterward there is a prayer for purity, vigilance, &c., by the coming of the Holy Ghost. Now, the Apostolical Constitutions are of the fifth century, so that the anointing and confirmation was still the baptizing minister's office. When they were composed, it is very possible they were Alexandrian, certainly Greek and Eastern.

In Cyprian's time (256), they were brought in the west to the bishop, but on their baptism. Referring to the case of Samaria, he says, “which also is done among us now; that those who are baptized in the church are offered to the presidents of the church, that by our prayer, and the imposition of hands, they should obtain the Holy Ghost, and be perfected by the Lord's mark.” —Ad Jub. 73 (p. 202). And so much was it held to be a part of baptism, that (Ep. 72) the African council say to Pope Stephen, insisting that heretics should be rebaptized as well as have hands imposed, “Then, indeed, at length they are fully sanctified, and can be sons of God, if they are born of both sacraments, since it is written, ‘unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' “Every one knows that all solemn acts or mysteries were called a sacrament in those days; there were seventy or even a hundred of them, for aught any one can tell, if we take the word. I cite this to show that it was considered as part of baptism. Eusebius quotes a letter of Cornelius (Pope) to the same effect as to a baptism of Novatus, on what seemed a death-bed; “for he,” the dying man, “did not get the other things which it is necessary to receive according to the

rule of the church, nor was sealed by the bishop; and not having got this, how should he get the Holy Ghost?" That is, this was the part of baptism by which, on their system, men got the Holy Ghost-Euseb. lib. vi. 43 (p. 244). We have already seen that these same bishops (to whom Cyprian says, persons were brought to be confirmed and anointed, so as to receive the Holy Ghost), he also says, were running through all the provinces to make money by fraud. What a picture of the "Catholic church!"

But there remains a quotation from Jerome which will complete the history of this rite— "I do not indeed deny that this is the custom of the churches, that the bishop runs off to those who have been baptized, far from the greater cities, by presbyters and deacons, to lay on his hands for the invocation of the Holy Ghost." "But if you ask in this place why we, baptized in the church, should not receive the Holy Ghost, unless by the hands of the bishop, which we assert to be given in true baptism, learn that this rite descends from that authority, that after the ascension of the Lord, the Holy Ghost descended on the apostles; and in many places we find the same practiced Otherwise if the Holy Ghost came down only on the demand of a bishop, they are to be pitied who, baptized by presbyters or deacons, in small towns or castles, or in remote places, have fallen asleep before they have been visited by bishops."

Remark here, that he overthrows entirely the doctrine of Pope Cornelius, just cited from Eusebius. What a mess these Fathers make of it! "But sometimes the safety of the church depends on the dignity of the chief priests, for if a certain extraordinary power, eminent above all, were not given to him, there would be as many schisms in the church as priests. Thence it happens, that without anointing, and the command of the bishop, neither a presbyter nor a deacon has the right of baptizing, which however frequently, if necessity compels, we know to be lawful for the laity to do. For, as one receives anything, so also he is able to give, it, unless also the eunuch indeed, baptized by Philip, is to be believed to be without the Holy Ghost." I quote this as showing—first, that it was a part of baptism; next, that the bishop did it merely as a matter of order and human arrangement, and that after all it was all as good without him if need was, being re. served merely to maintain order and his dignity, and that even Jerome had not the smallest idea of his conferring the Holy Ghost exclusively as the successor of the apostles. He goes into the case of Samaria; but his reasoning, though to the point as to Lucifer, his adversary, has nothing to do with our subject. For this he only refers to its coming on the apostles (of course, therefore, without laying on of hands), and insists, if the bishop was not there, it was had all the came, quoting as a proof the eunuch of Ethiopia.

I thought a plain history of the facts would be the best means of dispelling the mists and halo which surround the word "Fathers." The earliest, Tertullian, "a most ancient writer, and a man of great erudition" according to the author, speaks of it as a part of baptism done in imitation of Judaism. Gradually this part was reserved to the bishops for order's sake, but declared by Jerome not to be essential, but a matter of order, and got established gradually like other superstitious corruptions of early practices as it is now used. Jerome, "that most learned Father and doctor of the church," is unfortunate, for he very satisfactorily refutes on the point what the pope had laid down. Indeed, as I have said, you may prove anything but the truth by the Fathers. They said what suited them in their controversies.

But I have another little word to add here. The author, in the quotation alleged to be from Jerome, after the words, “And having invoked the Holy Ghost, lays his hands on them,” continues, “Where will you ask is this written? In the Acts of the Apostles,” &c. Not a word of this latter part is in what Jerome says; on the contrary, he goes on to prove it can be had without it. The author, I suppose from quoting secondhand without reading the Fathers, has fallen into a sad mistake here. It is the adversary of the orthodox—namely, Lucifer, or a Luciferian—whom Jerome, under the name of “Orthodox” is confuting, who says this. It gives us such a clue to the origin of these different rites, that I will quote it. Indeed Lucifer has in many things, perhaps, the best of it. “Are you ignorant,” says this honest but stern resister of Arianism in every shape (Jerome, it appears, rather agreed with Cyprian, that heretics should be rebaptized, which the pope would not allow), “that this is the custom of the churches, that hands should be afterward laid upon the baptized, and that the Holy Ghost should be invoked? Do you ask, Where is it written? In the Acts of the Apostles. Even if the authority of the scripture was not to be had, the consent of all the world on this point would have the force of a precept. For many other things also, which, through tradition, are observed in the churches, have assumed (usupaverunt) to themselves the authority of a written law." That is just it. Lucifer was a very faithful, but, as it appears, rigid and somewhat violent man. He was banished by Constantius for refusing to condemn Athanasius. He refused to receive Arian bishops as bishops on retracting their error, and said they must come as laymen. However Jerome is refuting him in the work quoted from; and the author has quoted Jerome's adversary as Jerome himself. What security for the faith!

I turn to penance. Your quotations of scripture prove that you have as little consulted it as you have the Fathers. You say, “Matthew and John record the same event” namely, Christ's coming to His apostles after His resurrection. John states a part of the communication Christ made to His disciples at this interview—the power of forgiving sins; Matthew another part—the power of baptizing and teaching all nations whatsoever Christ had commanded them; and in conclusion, Jesus Christ assures them that He would remain with them to “the end of the world.” This you do, in order to shew that the power to forgive sins remains to the end of the world. How can you expose your own ignorance to such a degree, or presume on that of others? The interview mentioned in John 20 was in Jerusalem, the day of the resurrection; and Matt. 28, in Galilee afterward, the last thing, recorded by him before the Lord's ascension. The whole fabric falls, being incorrect in every part. Now how comes it that for other things the bishops are successors of the apostles, as you tell us? and here “a person must have a very perverse heart, and covered with a dense spiritual blindness,” not to see that, on the contrary, all priests are their successors, proving both by the same text of Matthew, which says nothing about either, and thus can be arbitrarily applied to one as well as the other? Again, you quote, “Hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation,” as referring to penance (2 Cor. 5) But the apostle declares that this was preaching the gospel. “Now we are ambassadors for Christ; as though God did beseech by us, we pray in Christ's stead be reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Yet you dare to say, “Can language convey more expressively, more definitively, or more clearly, the power which God gave to the priests, of reconciling the world to him by the ministry of religion?” All this is foolish trifling. What do you mean by the ministry of religion? The apostle speaks of beseeching by the gospel in Christ's name; you, of penance. Are you going to put the world under penance? Is this your embassy?

But, further, you have not given a correct account of penance, as Romanists teach it.

You say, “the necessary dispositions—namely, contrition of heart, and a firm purpose of turning from his evil ways.” This is not a real account of Romish penance. The catechism of the Council of Trent, according to which you are ordered to teach your parishioners, states the contrary. The “integral parts are contrition, confession, and satisfaction. “We sin against God by thought, word, and deed; when recurring to the power of the keys, we should, therefore, endeavor to appease His wrath, and obtain the pardon of our sins by the very same means by which we offended His supreme Majesty. In further explanation, we may also add, that penance is, as it were, a compensation for offenses which proceed from the free will of the person offending.” Again— “On the part of the penitent, therefore, a willingness to make this compensation is required, and in this willingness chiefly consists contrition.” But still more clearly, after quoting the council of Trent, it is said: “From this definition, therefore, the faithful will perceive that contrition does not simply consist in ceasing to sin, purposing to enter, or having actually entered, on a new life: it supposes, first of all, a hatred for sin, and a desire of atoning for past transgressions.” You have left all this out. It is easy to talk of contrition of heart; but it chiefly consists in the willingness to make compensation, satisfaction—to atone by one's own free will.

But there is another part of the doctrine you have omitted. “Contrition” (it is still the catechism which is instructing us), “it is true, blots out sin; but who is ignorant that, to effect this, it must be so intense, so ardent, so vehement, as to bear a proportion to the magnitude of the crimes which it effaces? This is a degree of contrition which few reach; and hence, through perfect contrition alone, very few, indeed, could hope to obtain the pardon of their sins” (by that they could do without a priest or confession). “It therefore became necessary, that the Almighty, in His mercy, should afford a less precarious and less difficult means of reconciliation and of salvation; and this he has done, in His admirable wisdom, by giving to His church the keys of the kingdom of heaven. According to the doctrine of the Catholic church—a doctrine firmly to be believed and professed by all her children—if the sinner have recourse to the tribunal of penance, with a sincere sorrow for his sins, and a firm resolution of avoiding them in future, although he bring not with him that contrition which may be sufficient of itself to obtain the pardon of sin, his sins are forgiven by the minister of religion through the power of the keys.”

Justly, then, do the holy Fathers proclaim that “by the keys of the church the gate of heaven is thrown open;” that is, to sinners who have not repented as they ought: those who have do not want the keys. Penance then is substitution for adequate and right repentance—it is making the conscience easy when it has not properly repented, that is, hardening it. Who does not know this to be the case? A conscientious soul, grieved with sin, is miserable because it has not done its penance in a right spirit; a careless sin-loving heart goes to confession in order to receive at Easter, as they say, and begins its score of sins again merrily, when the old one is wiped out. It is sorry, no doubt, for having committed them when they are over—who would not?—and afraid not to receive when Easter comes round, and for the moment proposes to do no more such. Real thorough contrition is not required; penance supplies its place. Contrition, he is taught by his “church,” chiefly consists in this willingness to make satisfaction or compensation; and so be gets absolution for the past, and begins over again. Can there be a more iniquitous system?—not a notion, taken up by the ignorance of these poor sinners, but established by the deliberate teaching of what calls itself the “church.” Now, I believe that remission of sins is, or ought to be,

administered in the church of God still: first, in reconciling the world—which has nothing to say to the matter we are on now, even as to ordinances, because restoration or penance, whatever form it has, belongs to the church. Heathens are received by baptism, not by penance: whenever a poor Jew or heathen is received into the church, he receives, as to his present manifest standing, forgiveness; he stands before God as a forgiven man: all recognize that be enters by baptism. Further, if a person be justly excommunicated for sin, being a Christian, he is, on restoration, forgiven his sin as to his public standing before God; so that the forgiveness of sins, in this sense of the word, as to a man's manifest standing and condition on the earth, does continue, and will, as long as the church subsists.

The history of confession I have already given. Auricular confession is a very modern introduction—it was needed when an easy way of letting off sin was wanted coincidently with the growth of priestly power. The passage of James, “Confess your sins one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed,” is the plain proof that confession to a priest was unknown. It was a useful mutual exercise of charity, so that chastisement might be removed, when the heart was right before God. Was it to priests that many came and confessed their deeds in the passage cited from the Acts, when they burned their books of magic? The reason why baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is valid, and “I absolve thee from thy sins, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” is not, is a very simple one; it is this—Christ positively ordained one, and did not so much as hint at the other. Besides, you know very well that in case of necessity a layman, nay a woman, can baptize a child; will you allow the same power in penance? If not, why do you assimilate them, as if one proved the other?

You quote Chrysostom. But he wrote urgently against confession to a priest, as we have already seen. I do not deny that Christ gave power to His church to forgive sins in the sense I have explained it. I believe it to be a glorious truth, that whosoever is rightly in the church is enjoying the absolute full unlimited forgiveness of all his sins. But we are talking of auricular confession to a priest, and of satisfaction and penance substituted for real full contrition, in order to have it.

I come now to the Eucharist. I have already remarked that you have not ventured to say one word for the mass; you seek to justify transubstantiation, not the sacrifice. You quote John 6. There are three points in this chapter as to Christ; He is the bread come down from heaven, i.e., the incarnation; there is His flesh and blood, i.e., His death; and His ascending up where He was before. In all we are to own Him. The Lord's supper most preciously presents Him in one of these. It presents a dead Christ the body broken, and the blood shed. You say the Jews took Him literally, but they certainly knew nothing about the Lord's supper. “The disciples,” you add, “knew likewise that Christ meant what He said.” “The sublime mystery they did not comprehend.” But then they did not understand Christ at all, but took Him quite wrong; and therefore the Lord corrects them and says, “It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing.” He takes care they should understand He did not mean them to rest in the letter of what He said. They took Him according to the letter. They were quite wrong. Many, supposing He meant it literally, went away. The rest held to Him, because His words were eternal life.

You urge that God could make man out of slime, Eve out of a rib, and a pillar of salt out of Lot's wife. No doubt; but when He made a man, he was a man in form; He did transubstantiate the mud. But a man was a man to all intents and purposes, not to all intents and purposes (save your telling

us otherwise) unchanged mud. He did not look or taste like slime, remain unable to move, speak, think, and go on as before. So of Eve: nobody, when she was changed, could take her for a rib. God gave proof to man of the change; so in the case of Lot's wife. Here there is none—no sign of God's power of any kind. We must believe, we are told, not reason—yes, if God has taught it.

You quote John 6 and you quote, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven,” words as plain as, “this is my body.” Am I to believe that Christ was transubstantiated into living bread? The words are just as plain, just as positive: why not believe them? Are we to eat Him incarnate and alive on earth? Where? Yet “he that eateth of that bread shall live forever.” In the Lord's supper I cannot, for His body is presented broken, not whole; His blood shed, not in His body. But, again, the Lord declares that whosoever eats Him, as He describes, is fully and finally saved. They “shall live forever.” They “have everlasting life, and he will raise them up at the last day.” “They abide in Christ, and Christ in them.” That is, it is the real vital saving possession of Christ by faith in the perfect efficacy of His life and work, in which those who possess will abide, and Christ raise them up consequently at the last day. But this is confessedly not true of all who partake of the Eucharist. That is, the passage does not refer to it; it refers to what the Eucharist refers to. Further, the terms of the institution preclude the literal sense; for, whatever image He employed, it could not then be literally Himself; because His body was not yet given, His blood was not yet shed, and this is what it is expressly a sacrament of. The Lord plainly slims what He meant in saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood,” which is clearly a figure; and “I will not drink of this fruit of the vine.” (Matt. 26) Nothing can be plainer. But the Lord did not really hold in His hand a broken body and shed blood; for His body was not broken and His blood was not shed. Yet that is of the very essence of the truth, for it was shed for the remission of sins, and there was no remission without it. In a word the testimony is as plain as possibly can be, that the literal sense is untrue and impossible: shed blood there was none. Now Christ is glorified. There is no dead Christ; it cannot be He in reality—He in the letter; for there is no such Christ in reality as broken and His blood shed. He is alive for evermore. 1 Cor. 10 is the plainest of all in reality; it speaks of the body as broken.

As regards a mouse eating it, I am not fond of such arguments, because, though I do not believe lifeless bread to be my living Lord, save as faith realizes Him, yet it is a memorial of Him, and there is no profit in irreverent associations. Yet you have in nothing met the argument in the smallest degree. According to your system, the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ are there; yet it cannot help itself against a mouse. The argument has the same bearing as Isaiah's. The idolater makes a fire with part of a tree, warms himself, roasts at it, and says of the rest, It is a god, and worships it. Here a mouse eats it: it is turned into corruption; and you adore the rest as God. The argument may be a painful one, but it is complete. He cannot deliver himself, says Isaiah: a deceived heart has turned him aside; he cannot say, I have a lie in my right hand. When the Lord says, “Do this in remembrance of me,” it was saying it was a memorial of Him when He was gone, not His presence. But there is no life in the wafer. It is monstrous to say it is God, and eat it literally, let Fathers say what they may. It is not a living Christ: were it so, it were no sacrifice either, nor shedding of blood. I live by the life of a living Christ; I feed, commemoratively, on a dying one (such as, blessed be God, He can be no more, and is not now). Hence the cup, and drinking the cup, are essential to the import of the sacrament, and that the blood be nowhere else; for, if not shed, there is no remission.

And now mark the amazing import of this point. The poor Romanist does not partake of the cup. The reason, as is alleged, that it is all the same, is what is called the doctrine of concomitancy—that each element contains all—that in the bread the body, blood, soul, and divinity of Christ are all found. Now, if the blood be in the body, there is no sacrifice, no redemption, no remission of sins. Without shedding of blood, says the Holy Ghost (Heb. 9), there is no remission. Now, if the blood be in the body, it is not shed; that is, the poor Romanist—and I do not reproach him with it, but what calls itself the Catholic church, and the enemy of souls—the poor Romanist has the sacrament of there being no redemption, or no remission of sins; for, as he receives it, His blood is yet in the body. Think how the enemy has mocked his poor soul! No doubt the Fathers spoke of it as the flesh and blood of Christ; but they say plainly now—I repeat I do not cite them as of weight, for there is no one less worthy of authority than they—but, as an historical fact, they any sufficient (not certainly to show that they were not superstitious enough, but) that superstition had not traveled in five centuries as far as it had in fifteen. It went faster with the people than even the clergy, in some respects, for they brought in their heathen habits. Of this anon. I will quote enough from them to show that, when it suited them in argument, they say the contrary of Romish doctrine: it is very possible, when it suits them or their imagination is at work, they teach it too. It just shows what they are worth. The mere saying, “flesh and blood,” means nothing.

But to the point. First when the controversies as to the two natures of Christ were on foot, and yet earlier, on the possibility of His taking flesh, which the Gnostic heretics denied, they insist on the bread being there when He is spiritually or divinely present, as a proof that the two things can be together. Here their whole point was, that it was still bread; just as His flesh, as a living man, was true flesh, which the heretics denied. Thus Tertullian: “He made the bread, received and distributed to His disciples His body, saying, This is my body, that is, the figure of my body; but it would not have been a figure unless the body was truly such; for an empty thing, which is a phantasm, cannot have a figure.” The reader must know that early heretics denied that Christ had a real body: Tertullian argues, from the Eucharist being a figure of His body, that the body must be real. Irenaeus argues in the same way, and is very positive as to the bread being there after the consecration, of which he speaks a “For when the bread, which is from the earth, receives the invocation of God, it is no longer common bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of two things, earthly and heavenly; so our bodies,” &c. So Augustine (after saying that people said Christ was immolated at Easter, and constantly, though He never was but once long ago, and could be but once) says, “For if the sacrament had not a certain similitude of these things whereof they are sacraments, they would not be sacraments at all; but; from this similitude they receive, for the most part„ even the name of the things themselves.” What can be plainer? “For the Lord did not hesitate to say, This is my body, when He gave the sign of His body.” “The feast at which He commended and delivered to His disciples the figure of His body and of His blood” (on Psa. 3). “He who abides not in Christ, and in whom Christ does not abide, beyond all doubt neither eats His flesh nor drinks His blood. although he eats and drinks for judgment on himself the sacrament of so great a thing.” —In Joann. Tract. xxvi. 18. Chrysostom is quoted also, as saying, “Before the bread is sanctified we call it bread; but, divine grace sanctifying it through the ministry of the priest, it is freed from the name of bread, and judged worthy of the appellation of the Lord's body, although the nature or bread remains in it.” —Epist. ad Caesarium.

This last quotation has a very curious history. It was quoted by Peter Martyr. The Romanists cried, Forgery. Peter Martyr deposited it at Lambeth. It was taken away in Queen Mary's reign. Bigot published it at Paris (he was a Romanist). The edition was suppressed, but the Archbishop of Canterbury got the sheets as they passed through the press, and published it in England; and others have done so.

These may suffice to show that, rapidly as superstition grew, four or five centuries (that is, as long ago as Edward III.) had not sufficed to obliterate the original doctrine of the church of God. It was made a dogma of the church only in the thirteenth century, in the Lateran Council, under Innocent III., the bloody instigator of the crusades against the Albigenses in the south of France, and the establisher of the Inquisition. In the tenth, it was openly disputed, many prelates supporting the writer; and in the ninth was openly maintained, and the author not condemned as heretical at all, that transubstantiation did not take place. The reader may remark that several of the quotations I have given are from writers whom the author has quoted, skewing, when speaking soberly, how little they attributed to their own words the force which is attributed to them; or rather they spoke rhetorically about it in discourse, and showed at other times it was only rhetoric. Again, what a ground to put our faith upon in order to receive it! But I will add some other passages of the Fathers, skewing distinctly, as a learned Romanist has admitted, that, up to Chrysostom, the church did not really hold transubstantiation as a doctrine, however rhetorically individuals may have spoken. I attach no kind of importance to their opinion but historically, as the Romanists lean on them; it shows what a broken reed his way of assuring true doctrine is, and that is our point now.

The passage of Justin Martyr quoted by the author proves the contrary of that for which he cites it. Justin treats the Eucharist as bread, wine, and water, and as nothing else literally. The author has not, as so often has occurred, given the whole passage. “This food,” he begins: what food? Hear Justin. “Those called among us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread, and wine, and water, over which thanks have been given, and carry it away to the absent, and this food is called among us Eucharist. For we do not receive these things as common bread nor as common drink; but in the same way.” (This the author has entirely changed, I suppose, as usual, quoting from a text-book. How honest they are—that is, the instructors of the Romish body—we have seen by this time.) “As by the word of God, Jesus Christ, our Savior, being made flesh, had flesh and blood for our salvation, so also the nourishment by which flesh and blood, through change [into them], are nourished, over which thanks have been given, through prayer of the word which is from Him, we have been taught to be the flesh and blood of that Jesus made flesh.” Now here, whatever it was to their faith, it was really and substantially bread and wine and water, such as nourished the natural body. No Romanist could say that bread and wine and water were given to be partaken of by each person present, nor that they took what nourished their body, on being changed into it. Hence the author, or his text-book, omits it.

Theodoret, in answering the Eutychians who held that there was only one nature in Christ, says, “He that called His own natural body wheat and bread, and gave it the name of a vine, He also honored the visible symbols or elements with the name of His body and blood, not changing their nature, but adding grace to nature.” Dial. i. tom. iv., p. 17. The Eutychian heretic Eranistes (Dial. ii. p. 85, Ed. Schulze iv. 126), says, “As the symbols of the Lord's body and blood are one thing before the invocation of the priest, but after invocation are changed and become another thing, so

also the body of our Lord, after its assumption, was changed into the divine substance." Theodoret replies, "Thou art taken in thine own net, which thou hast made; for neither do the mystical symbols depart from their own nature after consecration, for they remain in their former substance, figure and form,"ο■σ■ας κα■ το■ σχ■ματος κα■ το■ ε■δους. This is most unequivocal.

Indeed the controversy with the Eutychians and Monophysites, who confounded the divine and human natures in Christ, proves clearly that transubstantiation was not believed in. They used the fact of its being still bread and wine against the Eutychian doctrine, as they had against the Gnostics the fact of their being material creatures.

So Ephrem of Antioch, "The body of Christ which is received by the faithful does not depart from its own sensible substance, and yet it is united to spiritual grace; and so baptism, though it becomes wholly a spiritual thing, and but one thing, yet it preserves the property of its sensible substance, I mean water, and does not lose what it was before." Quoted by Photius, god. i. 229.

Pope Gelasius writing also against Nestorians and Eutychians on the two natures in Christ, says, "Doubtless, the sacraments of the body and blood of Christ which we receive are a divine thing, on account of which, by them, we become partakers of the divine nature, and yet the substance or nature of bread and wine does not cease to exist." Facund. Lib. ix. c. 5. As the sacrament of His body and of His blood, which is in the bread and consecrated cup, we call His body and blood, not that the bread be properly His body, and the cup His blood, but because they contain in them the mystery of His body and blood. Hence the Lord also Himself called the bread He had blessed, and the cup which He delivered to His disciples, His body and blood.

This may suffice. The real historical truth is that, when they departed from the simplicity of scripture, they got into the doctrine of a union of grace and bread in the sacrament, and then into a kind of consubstantiation, such as Luther held. When Paschasius Radbert had taught something more than this, he was violently opposed by many church authorities. Berengarius, who taught the contrary, was at last, and indeed more than once (though supported by church authorities), being persecuted by Hinemar, forced to retract; and at last, as I have said, in 1215 transubstantiation was made a dogma of the faith, but never before.

Next we have extreme unction, for which you have not much to say. What has the account in the Acts, of the Apostles healing the sick by anointing them, to do with extreme unction? Intimated by Mark, says Trent. Why intimated? Was healing the sick the sacrament of dying men, to go prepared into God's presence? This is too absurd. And James says, "is any sick?" —not when they are dying, but when chastened for sickness for sin— "Let him send for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." That is, he was to be healed by their prayers; and, if sin occasioned it, be forgiven and relieved, not "prepared" to die. So the quotation you give from Augustine states— "Will deserve to obtain the restoration of his health;" and it is most certain that for centuries, up to Bede's time—that is, the ninth century, it was looked at as a remedy to restore health. The Greek church so uses it still, and the Council of Trent says, it may be so interdum. Indeed there is nothing to be said for it, as the short article of the author shows.

And why, if extreme unction wipes away the very remains of sin, do people who have had it go to purgatory? What ineffectual means all the Romanist sacraments are! A man is absolved, but that will not do; he has his viaticum, the Eucharist, in which is remission, they say, but that will not do;—extreme unction to wipe off the remains of sins— “reliquias peccati abstergit” (Conc. Trid., Bess. xiv. c. the poor man goes to purgatory after all to burn there for them himself; and then they say masses for him to get him out, though they could not keep him out. How different the peace of him who trusts the word of the living God, who believes His testimony! “The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin.” “By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” “Being justified by faith we have peace with God.... and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given to us;” “For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.” Such is the peace given, and the certainty of divine love, by the faith of the gospel. We know no hard God who will keep us down to the last farthing: Christ has paid it for us, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree. The Lord grant many poor souls laboring under this cruel bondage may know His love who gave His Son for sinners, and the salvation which is in Christ!

As to the sacrament of holy orders, you quote passages which prove that, by the laying on of the apostles' hands, gift was bestowed on Timothy; another, to show that he was designated by prophecy. I do not doubt either. When you can show me gift so bestowed, or a man marked out by prophecy for it, I shall own it with delight; but still you will not have proved that he is a priest. The scripture owns no priesthood now but Christ's, and that of all saints, in the sense in which all Christians are kings and priests He “hath made us kings and priests to God and his Father.” “Ye are a royal priesthood,” says Peter.

But the New Testament has not the smallest trace whatever of priests as an order. The priesthood of Christ is exercised on high; all Christians follow Him there in spirit. Romanists have returned in this, as in all their system, to Judaism, and Judaism after it is set aside; so that they are the beggarly elements of this world, just like heathenism, as which the apostle treats them in the Gal. 4:9-11. The New Testament speaks of a ministry as characteristic of Christianity—apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Every true Christian blesses the Lord for it, however it may have been abused. But priesthood there is none, save Christ and all true Christians; it is distinctive of, and essential to, Christianity that there is not, save as we all are priests. That is, we all go within the vail rent, directly and with boldness into the presence of God, where Christ is entered for us, into the holiest of all. The assertion of a priesthood (Christ apart) between us and God is a denial of Christianity. You do not attempt to quote anything till five centuries after Christ.

As to the word sacramentum, none in the least degree acquainted with the early ecclesiastical writers can attach the least importance to it, for they called every mystery a sacrament. Thus, one says there are three sacraments in baptism. Augustine says the number seventeen is a great sacrament; that one hundred and fifty-three, being three times fifty, the pentecostal number, with three, the number of times it is taken, has great weight, and if you begin with one, and go on adding each number up to seventeen, you will have one hundred and fifty-three (I leave my reader to try), and that is the meaning of the one hundred and fifty-three great fishes taken at the Sea of Tiberias. As I was on the word sacrament, I gave this one little example of Patristic matter, so that it may be understood why I said a child's book now would not contain such nonsense as they have: I think my reader will excuse my giving him any great quantity of it.

As to the obligation of marriage, it cannot be held too highly; instituted in Paradise, and confirmed by the Lord Himself, its sanctity (I doubt not) is the providential bond of all moral order in the world. If, as the apostle teaches us, one be wholly given up to the Lord's work without any snare to himself, it is all well. After what I have said of sacrament, I shall not be expected to insist on the word, one way or another. In Ephesians it is simply, in the original, “This is a great mystery; but I speak of Christ and the church.” That is, the union of the church to Christ, as His body, is a great mystery—she is His bride.

Chapter 227

Romanism: an Answer to the Pamphlet of a Romish Priest, Entitled “the Law and the Testimony": Part 6

OR AN ANSWER TO THE PAMPHLET OF A ROMISH PRIEST, ENTITLED “THE LAW AND THE TESTIMONY.”

(Continued from page 77.)

WE are told that the pope's supremacy was defined in 1439! It is very possible. The world had passed through the dark ages; Christianity was overrun by Mahometanism in more than half its territory; and here was the true secret of it. The patriarch of Constantinople had then recourse to Rome. For a long time after the seat of the empire was transferred to Constantinople, the ecclesiastical chief of that city and Rome contended for supremacy. However old Rome had precedency by decree of the Council of Nice, for ambition governed all these pillars of Christendom. You have still traces of this horrible ambition in Ireland, in the Archbishop of Dublin being primate of Ireland, and he of Armagh primate of all Ireland. I say they fought as to whether one should carry his cross—what a symbol to use for it! upright or level when he went into the province of the other. My reader must forgive me if I forget how it was settled; but it was. The rivalry of Alexandria and Constantinople was the source of endless disputes—one ever favoring the holders of doctrine condemned by the other to make a party; and the emperor convening councils to quiet them, and banishing them often to keep the peace, or making decrees themselves on doctrine which only led to new disputes, till they became contemptible. They were discussing some of these points when the Turks besieged Constantinople. The Constantinopolitan patriarch assumed at length the title of universal bishop, and was denounced by Pelagius II. and Gregory, as Antichrist, for his pains. The latter wrote to Phocas, who had murdered the Emperor Maurice, and succeeded him, to congratulate him, Maurice having favored Constantinople. Phocas acknowledged Rome as the head of all churches. Decretals were passed which gave the universal supremacy to Rome, everywhere owned to be forged now; and the eastern empire declining under the inroads of Saracens and then Turks, at last a union was proposed between the east and west, long opposed and rivals in doctrine and practices, as a proof of holiness and unity as marks of the true church. What a picture, to be sure, it all is, of servants and followers of Christ, as they pretended! This attempt at union was under Pope Eugenius IV. It was a desirable distinction for Rome. A council was sitting at Basle at this time; Eugenius dissolved it; it would not obey, and deposed him; but he declared it null, and called another at Ferrara, which afterward, because of the plague, was removed to Florence. The Council of Basle chose a new pope, Felix V. Most of Christendom owned Eugenius, but many universities Felix: however he resigned when Nicholas V. succeeded Eugenius.

But to return to the Council at Florence. The Greek emperor came, and Josephus the patriarch; and the Greek divines, particularly Bessarion—made cardinal afterward—gave up the Greek doctrine on the procession of the Holy Ghost, for the Greeks deny the procession from the Son. They admitted purgatory, which they did not before—now do not. Think of half Christendom not

believing it for fourteen centuries after Christ and agreed the pope should be the head of the church! But alas! they had reckoned without their host; for when they went back, the Greeks would not submit to the terms, and they themselves declared that all had been carried at Florence by artifice and fraud, and the separation has continued to this day. And this is the bride of Christ! It seems the pressure of the pope was worse in their eyes than the pressure of the Turks; that is, the Council of Florence, which clearly sets forth the pope's supremacy. Less than a century after, it becomes intolerable to the west too, and the Reformation arrived. So much for universality. Of course, some ground must be found for the supremacy, when it is there. The forged decretals established it. Scripture must be forced to contain it. I have already discussed the passage in Matthew; I need not repeat it.

But some of the points are to be cleared up. First, it is exceedingly doubtful if Peter ever was at Rome. Scripture never shows him to have been there, and it seems to me impossible to reconcile what it does state with his having been there. I admit respectable writers think he was, but scripture speaks only of Paul. Peter certainly did not found the church there. There were many Christians before any apostle was there, and Paul was the first that went. In the free exercise of their ministry, as the Holy Ghost has recorded it and thought proper to give it to us, no apostle founded the church at Rome. Paul, who preached the full and blessed gospel to the Gentiles (which was not Peter's office, as we know he was apostle of the circumcision, or of the Jews),—Paul went there as a prisoner. The gospel was never apostolically in Rome, save as in prison. It is possible that Peter closed his life there; but that is the utmost that can be historically admitted, because we have a divine account of what passed till then, and his presence is incompatible with that account. History is silent for a century afterward, and then every country sought to have it believed to have been visited, and its chief see founded, by an apostle or apostolic man. John lived at Ephesus, yet he certainly did not found the church there, as we know from scripture. So history alleges that Peter founded the church at Antioch—a statement entirely unfounded, because we have, in the Acts of the Apostles, a long account of the church at Antioch; and all that Peter had to do with it was to divide it, when it existed already, by leading away all the Jews by his dissimulation, so that Paul had to resist him to his face. It is just as little true that he founded the church of Rome. We have Christians at Rome two years at least before Paul went there, and Paul there two years, who began working with the Jews; and none of them, Christians, Jews, or Paul, know anything at all of Peter at Rome. He may have visited Rome to see the Jewish Christians after this, and been martyred there; but that is the utmost possible.

But we have in scripture a great deal of Peter and Paul, which is much more important than traditions about the former. And here I shall say, that I have not the smallest difficulty in saying that, in point of order, though all had the same apostolic authority, Peter was the first of the twelve. With Paul he had nothing to do; he had it during the life of Jesus, and God was mighty in him afterward. He first introduced the Gentile Cornelius; but then this had a definite and specific direction. When the Jews had rejected the gospel, and put Stephen to death, the apostles did not leave Jerusalem, as we learn from the Acts; and Paul, miraculously raised up of God as an apostle in an extraordinary manner, does not go up to Jerusalem, but preaches at once in Damascus, and afterward is sent out from Antioch, directly by the Holy Ghost. Jerusalem, the true mother church, having been dispersed, and having ceased to be the source and center of the gospel which the Jews would not receive, Antioch, not Rome, became the point of departure, and to it Paul returns.

Long after, he sees the apostles at Jerusalem, and they agree that Paul and Barnabas should go to the Gentiles, and Peter to the circumcision, or Jews; that is, Peter was not apostle of the Gentiles at all. He taught the same gospel, of course, as to salvation; but his ministry had the Jews for its sphere. God, says Paul, was mighty in him towards the circumcision, as in me towards the Gentiles; that is, the Jews were the sphere of Peter's ministry. His epistles are directed to the Christian Jews in Asia Minor. He was nowhere apostle of the Gentiles. Of the church, as founded among Gentiles, Paul was the divinely appointed master-builder—Paul only in the account God has given to us. The apostles may have gone anywhere afterward, and doubtless did; but God has given his account of the order he recognized; and there Paul is apostle of the Gentiles, and Peter of the Jews. He was nowhere the founder or origin, by his ministry, of the church among the Gentiles according to God. He was so feeble on the point of their admission and liberty in Christ that Paul had to withstand him to the face.

As to Rome no apostle founded the church there; Paul, the first apostle who went there, went there as a prisoner. This has been always the place a full gospel has had there. When the church fell into Judaism, which nothing but Paul's energy saved it from as long as he lived, then they naturally began to look for the apostle of the Jews, as their original founder, and Paul had the second place in their minds—his gospel, as he calls it, none. But they should have gone to Jerusalem—it was impossible—it had fallen. Its principles, once instructive as figures, were really the same as heathenism now, and to that Christendom consequently gave itself up. It turned again, as the apostle speaks in Galatians, to the beggarly elements to which it again desired to be in bondage. They kept days, and months, and years Gal. 4. The Roman system is merely a return to heathenism founded on Jewish forms (which God has judged), and claiming the name of Peter, the apostle of the Jews. It is that which Paul was struggling against all his life, and foretold would come in when he was gone. Voluntary humility, worshipping of angels, keeping days, and months, and years, trusting in works, he has long ago pointed out and denounced as signs of abandoning Christ. Of these Rome is the source, and Rome has the heritage. It is a mystery of iniquity fully developed, which is fleshly religion; just as the great mystery of godliness is God manifest in the flesh, and the true people of God marked by boasting in Christ Jesus, worshipping God in spirit, and having no confidence in the flesh.

As to the keys of heaven, it is nonsense. He had the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and opened the door on Pentecost to Jews, and, in letting in Cornelius, to Gentiles. When Hilary says Peter believed first, the good man makes a mistake. It was Andrew (John tells us, in the first chapter of his gospel) who sought him, and brought him to Jesus. Jesus gave him the place of eminency he had among the apostles. Ambrose owns that Paul was to learn nothing from him; but Peter, to know that the same power was given to him as to himself. The truth is, that Paul and not Peter, had the doctrine of the church revealed to him—its unity and union with Christ. This is not the subject of Peter's teaching. Paul declares he had it by express revelation, as a mystery and dispensation committed to him, and that he was minister of the church as well as of the gospel to fulfill, i.e., complete, the word of God by this wonderful truth of the one body united to Christ from among all, Jews and Gentiles. See Col. 1:24, 25, 26; Eph. 3:1-10; Rom. 16:25, 26, and, indeed, other passages.

As to your reasoning, it has not much force. You see I admit that, amongst the twelve, Peter was the first, but this was evidently a personal pre-eminence. “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjonas.” Pius

IX. is not Simon Barjonas. It was a personal gift and energy of faith which made the Lord call him a stone, as he called James and John sons of thunder. Every Christian owns that in the blessed apostle; but gifts and God putting His seal on them do not go down by succession; if they do, where is Paul's? where is John's? If popes have Peter's inheritance, who has John's and James's? If it is a principle of successors, with equal power and authority necessarily continuing, where are the other apostles' successors, with their authority? No; this is all nonsense. God was mighty in Peter, and God was mighty in Paul. But this was personal—exclusively and entirely personal; and they say so, as it is evident. You cannot have a successor in gift, or it is not a gift. An office may have a successor in it. But that is not the case here, for there are no apostles now sent by Christ Himself directly from Himself. But gift and God's being mighty in one is confined to the one He is mighty in. To talk of a successor to that is at once nonsense and blasphemy. I have said Peter and Paul say so. Thus Paul speaks: I know that after my decease grievous wolves shall enter in, not sparing the flock: yea, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; wherefore, watch," &c. Now here Paul most plainly declares that he looks for no successor, but that, when he is gone, evil will flow in; and then commends them to God and the word of His grace, which the Romanists certainly step in and deprive us of—hinder us from going directly to God, and defrauding us of the word of His grace. Peter so little looked for a successor, that he writes, in his epistle, that he was writing to them because he would take pains that after his decease they should have the same things always in remembrance. So that these two great apostles never dreamed of having successors. This is of the utmost force. Paul ordained elders for the care of the churches. As to successors, he so little thought of it, that he declares evil would flow in, and that in the last days perilous times and apostasy would come. But of this in a moment. No; there are two great systems: one leans on succession and ordinances, which the apostle denounces; the other, on God and the word of His grace, to which He commends us, as able to build us up and give us an inheritance among the sanctified. Rome has chosen the former; the true Christian blesses God for the latter.

Their reasoning is too absurd to dwell on. There is the consciousness of its weakness. You say the Pope of Rome is the successor of Peter;.... the Pope, therefore, is by divine appointment Peter's successor. That is logic to be sure—can anything be more glaring? And to this you append (it is happy that you hang it on such a peg), "whoever, therefore, is not under the care and government of this one shepherd belongs not to Christ, is not of the one fold, and cannot be saved." We thank Rome for her tender mercies. We have read, "If thou confess with thy mouth, the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." You will surely forgive us if we trust an inspired apostle more than yourself—an apostle revealing God's precious grace to us poor sinners, more than Rome's anathemas, especially when they hang on reasoning such as this. The pope is the successor of Peter; therefore the pope is by divine appointment the successor of Peter; therefore whoever is not under him cannot be saved. If that is not convincing, what should be?

But your facts, however eloquently stated, are not much more solid. You say, Is there any institution in the world which has remained unchanged by the lapse and vicissitudes of nineteen hundred years, except the primacy and government of the Roman pontiffs? Now, first, the primacy of any bishop was violently denounced as late as Popes Pelagius and Gregory; and for centuries Rome exercised no jurisdiction out of what was called Libra; i.e., seventy suburban sees. Many

sought her influence as eminent, many resisted her as in error and would never yield, as all Africa and Asia, under Cyprian and Firmilian, who denounced the Pope Stephanus heartily.—Cypr. Epp. lxxiii.,lxxiv. In those days the primacy of Rome was unknown. It has never been owned in the Greek Church. Only at Nice was it settled to have precedency of Constantinople. At the General Council of Chalcedon the pope's legates presided, but the council set aside the precedency of Rome. They state that, as Rome had been the imperial city, the Fathers had accorded precedency to it; but as now Constantinople was, it should be on an equality—τ■ν ■σων ■πολαυουσαν πρεσβειων. Leo's legates protested and produced his orders that they should allow of no diminution of his importance, for it seems he expected it. They withdrew; but there the canon of an acknowledged general council is declaring them equal. The legates had produced the Nicene decree with an addition of their own, stating that Rome was the head of all churches; but the genuine canon was brought forward, so that that plea was overthrown. Pretty work for the successors of apostles! But think of all this horrible ambition being made the foundation of the church, so that a person cannot be saved who does not submit to it! Is this Christianity?

But when you say, “Has any institution,” &c., you upset your own system. When you went upon apostolic succession, you gave us the succession of all the sees in the world as securing sound doctrine; now it is only at Rome, and nowhere else. Which is true? If it be only at Rome, the security you gave us for doctrine is entirely gone, and the universality and apostolicity of the church so called with it; you destroy your own groundwork. But, further, “the name of every pope from Peter to Pius IX you tell us, may be seen in every bookseller's shop.” Nay, not only so, “but should any claim this dignity without being legitimately appointed, he would be hurled from the chair of Peter as a usurper by the united voices of the Christian world.” Indeed! How came it then that for seventy years there were two, and half Europe obeying one and the other half the other, and part of the time three? Which of these was legitimate? and are both of them in the lists in the booksellers' shops and Catholic libraries? Your foundations are rotten hero and your eloquence rash. The popedom is a great worldly prize. Already in the fourth century you will remember Damasus and Ursicinus contended for it, and there was what amounted to a civil war, and abundant bloodshed; and Damasus beat his opponent and was pope—a strange successor to Peter, though he be such in the booksellers' shops!

Peter's apostolic position then I own, as apostle of the circumcision, and first among the twelve; but that the command was given to every successor of Peter to the end of the world is a mere chimera. Scripture excludes the idea. It is Barjonas who was blessed, because of the revelation of the Father to him.

You justify next the invocation of saints and angels. In vain has Paul denounced the worshipping of angels (it is not latria, but threskia, all religious deference or service whatever) as a voluntary humility, saying, that it is leaving Christ the head. In vain has he declared that there is but one mediator, the man Christ Jesus. Borne will return to heathenish ways and Jewish superstitions, for such they really are; and in order to do so she has consecrated books of Jewish superstitions, as if they were the word of God; and has dared to do it in the sixteenth century—a deed never ventured on before.

We will examine this point. First, Genesis is quoted; “The angel that redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.” Here then Rome is bold enough to teach us that angels redeem us from evil, that

angels can bless us. But we can never get whole passages from Rome. All is garbled. Here is the whole, “God, before whom my fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads.” The angel was the God of his fathers. Are you ignorant that angel is applied to all those manifestations of God in favor of His ancient people? Do you not know that Stephen says that Moses was with the angel in the bush, who said, I am that I am? Do you not know that Hosea says that Jacob wrestled with the angel and prevailed; yet Jacob called the name of the place Peniel, because he had seen God face to face; that God had called his name Israel, a prince with God, because he had wrestled with God and with man and had prevailed? See numberless other passages; and are you not ashamed to quote this passage? You quote Zechariah. Here too we find the same angel of the covenant, the angel Jehovah, Malak Jehovah, interfering for Jerusalem—that angel who could say, as we have seen, “I am,” and before whom, consequently, Zechariah shows us Joshua standing to be judged, and Satan at his right hand to resist. Will you say that angels are to judge too? Any one the least acquainted with the Old Testament knows who this angel of the covenant is. The cases quoted of Jacob, and so of Manoah, skew that this angel was Jehovah Himself, He who appeared to Abraham and to Isaac, the Word of God, the second person in the blessed Trinity. That Michael the Archangel will stand to accomplish God's will in favor of Israel in due time, I doubt not—all angels do this; but it has nothing to do with the matter. The angel in Rev. 8 and x. is also undoubtedly the Lord Himself, acting as priest in viii.; and in the glory of the Lord taking possession of the earth in x. You quote one figurative passage of the twenty-four ancients presenting as figurative priests the incense, according to a Jewish image, on high. The church in glory will be composed of kings and priests; and here it is prophetically set forth in this character in figure; but it is when it is complete in glory. Hence twenty-four, because there were twenty-four classes of priests established by David, and the whole is a symbolical vision—no statement of what goes on now at all, but spewing (what scripture tells us plainly), we are made kings and priests; and hence they were on thrones and crowned. Now this takes place only in resurrection, and all have yet to wait for that. Have you nothing but a prophetic symbol of resurrection glory to base your worship on, when the resurrection is not come?

You quote Tobias also; that is, the Apocrypha. This is one of the terrible sins of Rome. She has pretended to authenticate as scripture what was never owned as such till the middle of the sixteenth century, and what the very person who made the translation which she declares to be authentic states not to be scripture at all. Over and over again he (Jerome) declares there are twenty-two books, excluding thus the Apocrypha from the canon; and in particular, in his preface to Tobias, says it was not in the Hebrew scriptures. In his preface to the books of Solomon he says, “As therefore the church reads, indeed, Judith and Tobias, and the books of the Maccabees, but does not receive them among canonical scriptures, so also let her read these two volumes, for the edification of the people, not to establish the authority of ecclesiastical dogmas.” He refers to Ecclesiasticus and Wisdom. Athanasius reckons them up also, twenty-two, both in the Synopsis (if it be his, for some have doubted it), and in the fragment of the Festal epistle, giving them, he says, because some would dare to mix apocryphal books with divine scriptures, and speaking of Tobias and others as read but not canonical. Origen tells us the same, Eusebius also. But, to be brief, Christ never cites these books, nor are they found in the Hebrew at all. They were never owned by the Jews as part of their scriptures. Josephus is distinct as to what was received, and says there were none after Artaxerxes; that there were others, but not canonical, and that the prophets gave

their sanction to books as forming part of the canon. He owned they have no kind of authority whatever; and all authority, Jewish and Christian, declared they were not of the canon till the Council of Trent. Now the oracles of God are committed to the church, as of old they were to the Jews. The church gives them no authority—it cannot to what God has spoken; but when God had given them, He entrusted them to the church to keep—only watching over it in all His providence—and Rome has proved herself not the church by deliberate unfaithfulness to this, by setting up as scripture what all Jews and the church and all witnesses declare with one voice is not. She is self-condemned here. See what is said in Maccabees: “If I have written well and as befits the story, that is what I wish; if ill, it is to be pardoned me.” Why it is blasphemy to ascribe such words to the Holy Ghost, and of that blasphemy Rome is guilty.

Lastly, no passage has been even attempted to be quoted of addressing saints or angels. But I will here also give the history of this matter. The first commemoration of the saints was praying for them, that they might speedily see the face of God. Gradually, between rhetoric and Jewish and heathen practices, the saints took the place of the heathen demi-gods. But Romish practice goes farther, because they found prayers on the merits of the saints, as may be seen in the Roman Missal (as on Patrick's day, for example, March 17). As to praying one for another on earth, it is clear and simple, and the New Testament teaches it and shows it practiced—never to saints absent. As to the Virgin Mary, the Holy Ghost, who knew what would come in, has recorded for us that she never asked anything of the Lord, without being rejected in her request; the Lord saying, What have I to do with thee?

The great and dreadful evil of this doctrine is this: the grace of the gospel shows us two great things: first, that Christ has wrought so great and glorious a work that I can go directly to the Father, in His name, certain that He hears me, and have boldness to enter into the holiest by His blood; secondly, that Christ in His rich grace came down here, was tempted in all points as we are, without sin—that He is touched with the feeling of my infirmities, and knows, having learned here below, how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He has shrunk from no suffering, no humiliation, that I may have confidence in His love, and readiness to help. The invocation of saints and angels comes to deny all this. He is too high, too exalted; His heart not tender enough! Saints who never shared our place are to be more trusted; the tenderness of the Virgin Mary, who never shed her blood for me, is to be more trusted. It is all shameful dishonor put upon Christ's grace and tenderness. I know no one so kind, so condescending, who is come down to the poor sinner as He. I trust His love more than I do Mary's, or any saint's; not merely His power as God, but the tenderness of His heart as man—none ever showed such, or had such, or proved it so well. None entered into my sorrows, none took a part in them as He; none understands my heart so well; none has inspired me with such confidence in His. Let others go to saints and angels, if they like: I trust Jesus' kindness more. If it is said, He is too high, I answer, He became a man that we might know His tenderness; and He is not changed. And why go to them? Why, in Jesus' name, not go straight to the Father? The need of all this troop of mediators only shows that men do not believe the gospel. They cannot go to God Himself. Now Christ has brought us to God; suffering, the just for the unjust, He has brought us to a God of love, our Father, having put away our sins. Rome would turn us out again to leave us trembling at the doors of the saints. I would rather go to God Himself. He, I know, loves me; He has given His Son for me. Which of the saints has done that? As to angels, they are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of

salvation. Looking to them is treated as apostasy in scripture. If you will have Fathers, here is a quotation for you, Ambrose, on Rom. 1; “Men are accustomed, when feeling shame for having neglected God, to use a miserable excuse, saying that by them (the saints, &c.), they can go to God, as by counts (officers of the court) people go to the king. Away then! Is any one so mad or so unmindful of his salvation, as that he should give the honor of the king to a count, when, if any should be found to treat of such a matter, they would rightly be condemned of high treason? And so they think they are not guilty who defer the honor of the name of God to a creature, as if anything more could be kept for God. For therefore men go to the king by tribunes or counts, because the king, after all, is but a man, and is ignorant to whom he ought to trust the common weal; but to find favor with God, before whom nothing is hid, for He knows the merits of all—there is not need of one to plead for us (suffragator), but of a devout mind.” I might quote many more from Origen, using not latria, but honor and do homage to. So Eusebius from Dionysius—I reverence the true God alone, and none else.

So continually in the early conflicts with the heathen; and the well-known passage of the epistle on Polycarp's martyrdom, when the Gentiles refused his body, lest they should do homage to him; “Not knowing,” they say, “that we could neither abandon Christ, who suffered for the salvation of the whole world of the saved, nor reverence any other. For, to Him, being indeed Son of God, we do homage; but martyrs, as disciples and imitators of the Lord, we love deservedly, because of the great love they have shown to their own king and leader, with whom we would be partakers and fellow-disciples.”

Ambrose thought then, though saints were used only to go to God by, it was high treason against Him; and the saints round Polycarp's martyr-pile, that it was abandoning Christ to reverence them (σ■βειν). Alas! ere long the high treason was committed, and Christ indeed abandoned; while Fathers condemned, Fathers sanctioned, and scripture was forgotten. As to the latter, the statement that it is clearly set forth in it is totally without foundation. Invoking saints is not found even in the passages the author has quoted. In genuine scripture the case is found of a saint in his confession going to do homage to an angel; but the angel positively forbids it, ordering him to offer it to God, for he was his fellow-servant. But what says Rome?—Heed.

The invocation of angels was forbidden by Council of Laodicea, which calls it a secret idolatry. Athanasius uses the invocation of Christ as a proof that He is God; and says, “no one would say God and an angel bless me” (exactly what the author attributes to Jacob); and so other Fathers. And, as I have said, they were prayed for as not yet in the presence of God, that they might speedily arrive there. There was superstition enough, but not Romish doctrine. We learn that Theodoret recommended that, to win the Gentiles, they should present to them the saints and martyrs in lieu of their demigods. It is just what has happened—there are curious facts connected with this. As soon as the Council of Ephesus had decreed that Mary was the mother of God, temples, with all their worshippers, dedicated to the gods, passed over to Christianity as a profession, and Mary took her place as Cybele had before.

I will give the account of this transformation, as given us by M. de Beugnot, a very learned Romanist, whose work was crowned by the Institute of France. “After the Council of Ephesus the churches of the East and West offered to the adoration of the faithful, the Virgin Mary, victorious over a violent attack (she had been decided to be mother of God then). The peoples were dazzled

by the image of this divine mother, uniting in her person the modesty of the virgin and the love of the mother—emblem of gentleness, of resignation, and of everything that virtue presents of sublime; who weeps with the unhappy, intercedes for the guilty, and never shows herself, but as the messenger of pardon or of kind succor. They received this new worship with an enthusiasm sometimes too great, since, for many Christians, this worship became the whole of Christianity. The heathen did not even endeavor to defend their altars against the progress of the worship of this mother of God. They opened to Mary the temples which they had kept shut against Jesus Christ, and confessed themselves conquered. It is true, they often mixed with the adoration of Mary those heathen ideas, those vain practices, those ridiculous superstitions, from which they seemed unable to separate themselves. The church however was delighted to see them enter into her bosom, because she knew well, that it would be easy for her, with the help of time, to purify from its alloy a worship whose essence was purity itself." M. de Beugnot, Histoire de la Destruction du Paganism en occident, vol. ii. 271. His illustration of the fact is in the following note: "Among a multitude of proofs I chose only one, to show with what facility the worship of Mary swept before it the remains of heathenism, which still covered Europe. Notwithstanding the preaching of Hilarion, Sicily had remained faithful to the old worship (heathenism). After the Council of Ephesus (that which declared Mary the Mother of God), we see its eight finest pagan temples become in a very short space of time, churches under the invocation of the Virgin. These temples were, first, the temple of Minerva at Syracuse, second, the temple of Venus and of Saturn, at Messina; third, the temple of Venus Erycina, on Mount Eryx (it was said to have been built by 1Eneas); fourth, the temple of Phalaris, at Agrigentum; fifth, the temple of Vulcan, near Mount Etna; sixth, the Pantheon, at Catania; seventh, the temple of Ceres, in the same town; eighth, the sepulcher of Stesichore. The ecclesiastical annals of each country furnish similar testimonies." And that is pretended to be Christianity!

The truth is, all this system is a mere mixture of Judaism and heathenism. The heathen temples were built over the relics and tombs of heroes and demigods. They sprinkled themselves with holy water on going in, for which they had a place at the entry. They had their images, which they justified in the same way—their priests, their chancels. They believed that every admirable man had gone to heaven, and there interested themselves in the affairs of those who prayed to them. Their temples were built in a similar manner. Rome has not been able to exclude Christ, but it has overwhelmed Him with heathenism as far as possibly can be, the clergy having accommodated it to popular customs to win the people. Thus the directions given to Augustine, when sent to the Saxons, was to adopt their feasts and customs as much as possible, and give a Christian turn to them. Christmas day is a curious example of this. No one knows the day Christ was born. The Greek church kept His birth and baptism together on the 6th of January called Epiphany. Hear again M. Beugnot, ii. 265: "The Romans had acquired in their religion an excessive passion for public festivals; and Christianity, far from opposing a disposition which required only to be directed with more wisdom, adopted a part of the ceremonial system of the old worship. It changed the object of the ceremonies, it purified them of their old filth, but it retained the epoch at which many among them had been celebrated. It is thus that the multitude found in the new religion as much as in the old the means of satisfying its ruling passion."

Think of the blessed Lord sitting at the well of Samaria, and teaching that men should worship in spirit and in truth, for the Father sought such to worship him, and the "church" taking care the

ruling passion for shows should be gratified! The author adds in a note, “The Saturnalia (a festival of unbridled joy) and many of the festivals were celebrated in the calends of January. The Nativity (Christmas) was fixed at the same epoch. The Lupercalia, pretended festivals of purification, took place in the calends of February. The Christian purification was placed on the second of February. For the feast of Augustus, celebrated in the calends of August, was substituted that of Peter. de Vinculis, fixed on the first day of that month.” So, he adds, to the Ambarvalia, Mamert substituted rogation days for country people; so numberless temples became dedicated to worship called Christian. At this day the Pantheon (that is the temple of all the gods) is dedicated to all the saints. It is well known that the statue of Peter at Rome was a statue of Jupiter Olympius, and they tool: out the thunderbolt and put in the keys. It all hangs together. Nor is it merely so modern an author as Beugnot, however learned, who speaks of the corruption of Christianity by the influx of heathenism. Augustine gives us very precise information as to it. He thus writes in a letter in which he is recounting to Alypius, Bishop of Thogostan, the manner in which he had put down the drunken feasts, which were held to celebrate the martyrs (for such was the case in Africa; and so determined were the people to have them, that the clergy had winked at it), and would now explain how he had excused to the people those who had let it go on, by showing how it had risen in the church, for he must needs excuse the clergy. “Namely, after so many and so vehement persecutions, when, peace being made, crowds of Gentiles, desiring to embrace the Christian name, were hindered by this, that they were accustomed to consume festive days with their idols, in abundance of feasts and drunkenness, nor were they easily able to abstain from their pernicious and so very ancient pleasures, it had seemed good to our forefathers, that they should let this part of their infirmity pass, and that they should celebrate other festal days after those they left, in honor of the holy martyrs, or not with similar sacrilege, although with similar luxury.”

Is this the holy Catholic church, which, to get in crowds of Gentiles, suffers them to go on, without the least moral change, with their feasting and drunkenness, only substituting holy martyrs for idols? It is not I that make the charge, or account for it thus; it is the sober, historical account of Augustine, Presbyter. He says, they called it Letitia, joy, endeavoring in vain to hide the name of drunkenness. He told them that not even the carnal private people were found publicly drunk in the name of religion. In another letter he says to Aurelian, Bishop of Carthage: “But since these drunkennesses and luxurious feasts ate not only wont to be believed to be honors rendered to the martyrs, but also a solace of the dead [they did not think of praying to them, at any rate], it would seem more easy that they may be persuaded then from that filth and baseness, if it should be prohibited out of the scriptures, and offerings for the spirits of them that sleep, which it is to be believed really help somewhat, over their memories (i.e., when buried or celebrated), should not be sumptuous,” &c. And Chrysostom advises his hearers to partake of the meal to be appointed in honor of the martyr, besides his martyrium, under a fig-tree or vine, instead of joining in the heathen feasts in Daphne, a suburb of Antioch, where was a famous temple to Venus, with all sorts of wickedness. Can one doubt for a moment of the heathen character of all these feasts in honor of martyrs and saints? But what a picture of the state of the church! The holy Catholic church setting them to get drunk in honor of a martyr, because it was sacrilege to get drunk in honor of an idol, and they would get drunk somewhere! No wonder a priest did not include practice in the elements of her holiness. But I anticipate the last point. It was invocation of saints led us to these festivals in martyrs' memories.

Chapter 228

Romanism: an Answer to the Pamphlet of a Romish Priest, Entitled “the Law and the Testimony": Part 7

Purgatory remains besides. On this Rome is very weak. She has recourse to it, because full redemption by the work of Jesus, and the reality of a new nature, is not believed. It is not believed that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin,” as scripture says it does; it is not believed that “he that is dead is freed from sin,” and has left it all behind if he be a Christian, “absent from the body, and present with the Lord,” Christ being his life, and he a member of His-body. None of this is believed, hence they must have a purifying fire after death for the Christian, for such only go there (and not those who die, as they say, in mortal sin). Nor do they really believe even in the efficacy of their own rites, as we have seen. If they send men to purgatory, they do not believe that extreme unction, abstergit religuias peccati, wipes off the remains of sin; nor in the other means used for a dying man. They can give no certainty, with all their boasting of being the true church: a man may be of it and lost after all. Nay, they cannot keep him out of purgatory, with all their rites, even if he be finally saved. They know no other God than one who will exact the last farthing; a God of love, who is a Savior, they know not.

But let us see their proofs. The Council of Trent was uneasy about it; it is anxious that curious questions about it should be avoided. And the author takes care here to tell us, that Romanists receive many doctrines on the authority of the Catholic church, which are not contained in the written word. To be sure they do: I suppose, by such an introduction, that purgatory is one of them. It is a candid avowal: they have no warrant from scripture for many things they teach. Now, I repeat, the church has to receive and keep the truth, but cannot reveal it; God may use a man—a Paul or a Peter—but the church, as such, receives and keeps it. The church's teaching is all very well as a conventional expression; but the church cannot reveal anything, and that is the whole point here. As a body, it is impossible. Its members may teach it, or they may be the instruments by which God reveals it; but the body, as such, cannot reveal it: God uses individuals' minds or mouths for that. The church is not, by its very nature, as a body composed of many individuals, capable of it. It may, and ought, in its common faith to maintain the truth. We are told that they have been revealed by Christ, and always taught by the church. Revealed to whom? to the whole church as a body, or to an individual? If to the latter, then it is not to the church it is revealed, nor who teaches it. The church receives the revelation made to the individual. If the revelation has been to the whole body, let the author say, where and when it was made as to a single truth. This is an important point. I deny any truth was ever revealed to the church as a body—i.e., that God so revealed it to the body, that it becomes to others a revelation by the church. It cannot be. Where has it been? I admit her duty to guard it when revealed, and hold it up before men.

But I turn to particulars. Moses does not teach the creation of angels, but he teaches the creation of all things—the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts of them. All the creation is spoken of as referred to man; other scriptures state it clearly. “He maketh his angels spirits.” I have already spoken of the sabbath and the Lord's day. Moses does not speak of rewards and punishments of a

future life; because he was showing the ways of God with Israel in and on the earth by favors and judgment here, God being present with them and dwelling among them on the earth. Other scriptures of the Old Testament are clear enough. If the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son rests on the church's authority, it is not worth much. The Greek church does not hold it. The early teachers extant are very loose indeed as to the doctrine of the Spirit, though not denying it; and, as we have seen, on the whole doctrine of the Trinity in general. But in John it is said, the Father sends, and the Son sends from the Father. As to the discussion between Greeks and Romanists, it is endless metaphysics. That the Holy Ghost is a divine person, one with the Father and the Son, scripture is clear. He wills, distributes, comes, is sent, is grieved, leads, intercedes: in a word, He does every kind of personal act; yet what is spoken of as done by Him, it is expressly said, God does, in the same chapter (1 Cor. 12). Further, the Spirit is called not only the Spirit of God, but the Spirit of the Father, and the Spirit of the Son, in Gal. 4; the Spirit of Christ, even when speaking in the prophets, 1 Peter 1:11, and Rom. 8:9: and of Jesus Christ, Phil. 1:19. He is, indeed, oftener called the Spirit of the Son than the Spirit of the (your) Father. The word procession is never applied to the Son. The Greek Fathers, before the separation from Rome, never use it but in connection with the Father, as it appears; the Latin from after the Arian controversy, do. Charlemagne raised the question, and Pope Leo said it ought not to be put in the creed. It rather appears, that the dogmatical assertion of it (the Council of Nice had only, “I believe in the Holy Ghost;” the second, that of Constantinople, added, “proceeding from the Father,” without adding “and the Son”) first took place in Spain, where Arianism prevailed; but from the fifth century, the Latin Fathers speak of both Father and Son. The Greek held to the terms of scripture. The Council of Ephesus commanded nothing to be added to the creed. Pope Leo not only said to his legates at the French Council, it ought not to be inserted, but to hinder it, had the creed fixed on at Constantinople, engraved in Greek and Latin on silver plates, and fixed up, without the addition of “and the Son.” It was only in the papacy of Nicholas I., in the latter end of the ninth century, that it was regularly inserted. The Greeks objected, and, in what they call the eighth General Council, ordered it be removed.

So much for the church's teaching, and Vincentius's “what always, what everywhere, what by all,” as the sure rule of faith. The Latins did not quote church authority for it, for they had none to quote. All the world knew (for heathens Lucian's Philopatris gives the substance of the creed very exactly, though in scorn) that church authority had never sanctioned it, and a General Council forbidden all addition, and Pope Leo this particular one. They appealed to deductions from scripture, such as, “He shall take of mine, and show it unto you;” “All things that the Father hath are mine;” and they said He was received from the Son, and hence proceeded from Him. I do not decide anything about the time; but, as to the Catholic church having always taught it, there cannot be a greater mistake or more unfounded assertion. And see what a proof the author gives us—she teaches it: therefore it must be right. That is a convenient argument in a book which is to prove she is right. The quotation of Mr. Whiston is unhappy. He wanted to have acknowledged as scripture acknowledged impostures of an Alexandrian, Arian seemingly in his views (as it appears Mr. W. was too), of the fifth century, and which our priest himself quotes in ignorance as of the first, but not as scripture.

The first authority adduced for purgatory is the Jewish church; the quotation to prove it is mistaken. The Lord kills and makes alive; He bringeth down to hell, and bringeth up. But what has this to do

with purgatory? Hell was School, the invisible place of death, or even the grave. It is a simple statement of the power of God to do what He pleases, to bring down and lift up. Ecclesiasticus, we have seen, is not scripture. The author speaks of the Jewish church believing it, as many portions of the Bible record; but the Jews did not receive this as the Bible at all. That the unbelieving Christ-rejecting Jews believe in a purgatory, is, I believe, quite true; but that is a strange authority for a Christian. They do not know redemption, but boast of being God's people in a fleshly way, but have no real resting-place for their souls. They want a purgatory. The Romanist has the same boast, and does not know redemption for his own soul, and he wants a purgatory too. I would not have put their faith on the same ground; the author has thought good to do it. He must know the Lord's judgment of that ground— “In vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

As to funeral feasts amongst the Jews, it is very likely: they are not the only ones who have them. When people are hard pinched, they will quote anything. The author quotes Zech. 9:11: “By the blood of thy covenant thou hast sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.” What sending people out of a pit where there was no water by the blood of the covenant has to do with purgatory, it would be hard to tell. The prophet is speaking of Ephraim, and God's dealings with the Jews, and nothing else; and declares that, in virtue of the blood of the covenant, He will deliver them from a pit where there was no resource to refresh them. The whole chapter refers to God's dealings with Ephraim and Judah.

Next comes the well-known passage of Christ's going to preach to the spirits in prison. I have no doubt that it was the Spirit of Christ in Noah; as in the same epistle Peter says, the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets; and that it is not said He preached in prison at all, but to those who are spirits in prison now, because they did not listen when He preached in Noah; and the force is then obvious. The Jews would not listen to the Spirit of Christ speaking by the apostles, and the few who did were despised and persecuted. There was no living Christ to help them on earth. Well, says Peter, it was only by His Spirit He went and preached in Noe, and there were only eight souls saved then, fewer than you; yet the others are in prison, for not having listened. Let it be remembered, that the passage speaks only of the disobedient in the time of Noe. Now God had said then, “My Spirit shall not always strive with man, but his days shall be a hundred and twenty years.” Yet these are chosen, as the only ones with whom His Spirit should strive afterward; and mark, it was the Spirit which then strove, Christ's Spirit, which went and preached. Moreover, Peter, in another passage, says, that the sparing Noe, and bringing in the flood on the world of the ungodly, was a proof that God knew how to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished. How so, if they were preached to afterward to be delivered? The sense then to me is evident, and the whole Roman Catholic application of the passage fails. But at any rate, who ever heard of preaching in purgatory? That is not Romish doctrine. People go there to finish penance, and be purged, not to hear sermons.

Christ says to the thief that he should be in paradise. It is monstrous, well-nigh blasphemy, to quote this. Do they mean that the blessed Lord went to purgatory? When Paul was caught up to paradise, and heard unutterable words, he did not go to purgatory, I suppose. Departed souls are in an intermediate state, no doubt, because they have not their bodies: but they are “present with the Lord” (2 Cor. v.); “They depart and are with Christ, which is far better” (Phil. 1); they are the same day in paradise with Him (Luke 23); the Lord Jesus receives their spirit (Acts 7) Paul did not

descend into paradise; he was caught up there. But it is monstrous and horrible to make purgatory out of the paradise the soul of Christ went to at His death.

His work was so blessed, that the poor thief, justly hung for his crimes, could go straight to paradise with Christ Himself, and not go near any purgatory, because he was purged by the death of Christ. This was what the Lord told him, and teaches us—that the Lord's work was so perfect, that it takes a thief into paradise, as sure as Christ is there, for Christ had borne his sins, and His blood cleansed him from them. The thief thought he would have to wait till Christ came in the glory of His kingdom. No, says the Lord, you shall not wait till then; you shall go straight to paradise with Me to-day. His work was perfect for him—cleansed him; and those wretched teachers would make purgatory of it, and send the Lord there! The Lord forgive them.

As to agreeing with thine adversary, &c., Matt. 5 is meant. There is the general idea of reconciliation in grace, or judgment if not; but the specific application is to the Jew, with whom Christ was on the way. They would not be reconciled, they are under judgment, and as in prison, and there they will stay till they have as a nation received full chastisement. Then they will come out. So in Luke 12. It is definitely connected with an appeal to the Jews, why they did not discern that time (i.e., when the Lord was in the way with them). As regards forgiveness in the world to come, purgatory is not forgiveness, but purging when a man is forgiven; and no forgiveness in the world to come means never forgiven at all; as Mark expresses it— “hath never forgiveness.” It is the same thing; the Jews had three periods, or ages, here translated worlds. But it has nothing whatever to do with another place, but with another time. The first was before the law; the second, under the law, in which they were; the third, the age (world) to come, or that under Messiah. In this they knew there would be more abundant grace and forgiveness than under the law. If their sins were as scarlet, they would be as white as snow; but here was a sin that would not be forgiven even then. Till the kingdom was set up (it was at hand then), the world to come was not arrived.

As to baptism for the dead, baptism has nothing to do with penitential acts and prayer. Paul is speaking of those fallen asleep in Christ, and suffering himself every hour; and after expatiating on what the resurrection is, from 1 Cor. 15:18 to 28, he resumes. What would they do who enter into the ranks in the very place of those fallen asleep (the dead), if the dead do not rise—who would take place along with them, if they are to remain dead, and get only that for their faith? To join such ranks, and replace them in them, would be madness; and if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men, he declares, most miserable. The passage speaks of baptism, and not of things done for departed souls. If purgatorial fire can be called, by a figure, the last baptism, what has that to say to baptism for the dead?

It is not sins he is speaking of, when speaking of wood, hay, stubble, in 1 Cor. 3, but preaching and teaching; and if, though a real Christian on the foundation, all his labor is bad, as labor, from teaching nonsense and futility, even if not heresy, when put to the test by trial, it all goes. He is not lost, but his work is; and he sorely shaken and disturbed. Paul is speaking of his own, Apollos', or others' work, not of their sins. Origen believed nobody would be lost, not even the devil, and that hell served for purgatory, and men came back and might fail over again. He is a pretty authority to quote for purgatory.

What Christ's walking in Solomon's porch on the feast of the dedication has to do with admitting the authority of the book of Maccabees, no human wit can tell. The feast after the dedication was

there, and be met the people on it. The Maccabees tell us how it came to be celebrated, as Josephus does many other things which the Savior joined in as a Jew. But He could do that without sanctioning the book of Maccabees. As to these books, the first is a fair useful history of the times, never admitted by the Jews into the canon, nor owned as scripture till the Council of Trent. The second; the one quoted, is a very worthless, bad, self-contradicting book, giving three contradictory accounts of Antiochus's death. I have not the decrees of the Council of Florence; it is possible it may have been admitted there near 1500 years after Christ. The second of Maccabees ends— “I will make an end of my discourse also with these things, and if, indeed, well, and as suits the history, it is as I should wish; but if less worthily, it is to be pardoned me. For as always drinking wine, or always drinking water, is bad for us (contrariton,), but to use them alternately is delectable, so for readers, if the discourse is always exact, it will not be pleasant. Here, therefore, it shall be completed.” Think of the audacity, be it Florence or Trent, of saying that a book which gives this description of itself, is inspired.

But let us take the case alleged; it is quoted for this passage: “It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.” Now, that this was a Jewish superstition, like many others, this may lead us to believe; just as they thought the stars were living beings, and many other things, as previous existence of souls. But here the case does not answer at all for the point it is quoted for. Idols were found on the persons who were slain, and the cause of their death manifest. They had died in mortal sin; but that does not send a man to purgatory in the Romish system but to hell. But I must go a little farther here, and charge the Vulgate, or at any rate the present reading of it, with being an entirely corrupt translation, or rather version. The Maccabees are in Greek, and the passage in Greek runs thus: “He made a collection of two thousand drachms and sent it to Jerusalem, to present a sacrifice for sin,” that is all; and then speaks of it as done well and comelily, thinking of the resurrection. And after saying it was a good thought, referring to what went before, he says, “Wherefore he made a propitiation about the dead, to do away the sin.” The shape in which it is therefore in Latin is only a clothing put upon it, by I know not whom; it is not much matter. The author also highly commends Razis for killing himself—xiv. 42. I do not know whether that is canonical; and gives such a history of his deeds as I must leave to the reader to believe, if he can, and admire if he will. He ends, after running himself through with a sword, and doing all manner of feats afterward, by plucking out his own bowels, I do not know how, and throwing them at the people. I do not know whether this is a part that, as the author says, is not very exact to make it pleasant; Rome says it is inspired.

We are told next, that the Apostolic Constitutions were written by Clement, the companion of Paul. Why there is not a writer, ancient or modern, Roman or Protestant, unless his friend, the Revelation Mr. Whiston, that believes it. They are universally recognized as an imposture, written four hundred years after Clement. As to Constantine, it was poor work to cry so for him, for he would not be baptized till he was on his death-bed (though he had managed the church for years, and called a General Council and managed it), in order that he might be sure to be washed quite clean. They might as well indeed believe in purgatory, as seek to secure themselves by such shifts as that. But prayers for the dead did not form purgatory at all; they were used long before purgatory was believed in. The real history of this matter was this. The full acknowledgment of grace is the hardest thing for the proud heart of man to submit to. Its tendency is always to look at God, as Rome does, as an austere man, who will exact the last farthing; and to maintain his good

opinion of himself in pretending to satisfy God, while after all, as works cannot quiet the conscience, he has recourse to ordinances to pacify, if they cannot purify, it. Hence, even while Paul lived, he had to struggle incessantly against this tendency. Peter slipped into it at Antioch, and most of Paul's Epistles were written against it—that is, against Romanism, or what is now called Puseyism, showing it as the mystery of iniquity which was corrupting the church—a form of piety denying the power, and which would go on, till it broke out into open apostasy. It is characterized expressly in his epistles by works, ordinances, voluntary humility, worshipping of angels—the very things Rome now boasts of, and by not holding the Head, i.e., that real union of the church with Christ, which, while it puts her before God in the same place as Christ as to acceptance, is the power of a new life, in which saints live to God as dead to sin with Christ, and alive to God through Him—perfect acceptance, perfect peace with God, and a really new spiritual life manifested in all a man's ways. The devil and man's heart do not like this; he will have pleasure and ordinances, build tombs of the prophets, have memories of martyrs, celebrate ordinances over their tombs, and get drunk at the celebration.

Man is naturally idolatrous; and a corrupt church will, as we have seen, furnish him with martyrs, if he cannot have demigods. Still the poor “Catholic church” did not get its present stature all at once. There was what in these times is called “development.” The blessed energy of the apostle hardly held the saints, of whose conversion he had been the instrument, even during his own lifetime, in the power of the truth. They were already then returning to the beggarly elements of heathenism under a Jewish form. “After his decease,” as he warned it would, that “mystery of iniquity,” which worked as leaven while he was there, spread freely, and the full knowledge of redemption, as he had taught it, was gone, Heresies sprang up like weeds, the general remedy used against it was not truth and grace but external unity, no matter how much evil; and with the influx of numbers corruption came in. Jude warns us of what was going on; and John, that there were already so many antichrists that the last time was apparent.

In the third century superstition had made ample progress, and we find, not indeed prayers to saints, nor purgatory, but prayers for them. If the knowledge of redemption was practically lost, if works and ordinances had taken their place, if the corrupt morals and proud asceticism of Clement, of Alexandria, and Tertullian had taken the place of the gospel, men's minds wanted something to mend them when dead, who knew neither redemption nor holiness when living. At first, as given by Origen, it was calling them to mind, with thanksgiving for them, and prayer for resemblance to them. The first person who speaks of these prayers for the dead pretty definitely, is the upright but ardent Tertullian, who left the “Catholic church” as no longer bearing its looseness; and, with an African imagination, though a Father, fell into the wild pretensions of Montanus. His disciple the martyr Cyprian also speaks of them; he who tells us that all morality was gone, men given up to shameful vanity, women painting their faces, bishops running about all the provinces to make gain by fraud.

But then, at this time, they prayed for martyrs, apostles, prophets, patriarchs, saints, and all the departed together, that they might have part in the first resurrection; and the virgin Mary, among the rest, was prayed for in the same way, and not only among the rest, but especially for her. Cyril of Jerusalem says the same in connection with the Eucharist, saying, We believe it to be a considerable advantage to their souls! So Austin says, as to the drunken bouts, the people believed it to be a solace to the martyrs; and he says, since it was to be believed, it was something

(aliquid). But then here a difficulty arose; a step was made in the superstition, and the saints and martyrs being greatly exalted, they were considered as enjoying the beatific vision; full heathenism was flowing in, and they were to help the living, not the living to help them. This was an immense change indeed in the “Catholic” view of things. Epiphanius justifies prayers for saints, because it put a difference between Christ perfect and other men's imperfection, showing be had wholly lost the notion of Christ Himself being our righteousness, and that, when we depart, we are with Him; but showing too, that all other men were held to be prayed for (not a word, remark, about purgatory all this time). So Hinemar, in the ninth century, tells us, “Grant to us, O Lord, that this oblation may be of advantage to the soul of thy servant Leo (a St. Leo) by which, in its immolation, thou hast granted that the sins of the whole world should be loosened.” In the thirteenth century, as given by Pope Innocent, it was become, “Grant to us, we beseech thee, O Lord, that, by the intercession of the blessed Leo, this offering may profit us.”

Such was the progress in this superstition. How different from the peace of “to depart and be with Christ is far better!” From this scripture truth they went back to Judaism, and believed they were in hades waiting. Now, we know that till the resurrection we are not in our perfect state of glory; we do not wait in a separated state in that sense; but scripture is very clear as to it— “To-day,” says Christ, “thou shalt be with me in paradise,” for redemption was accomplished. “Lord Jesus” says Stephen, addressing Christ in heaven, “receive my spirit,” and so fell asleep praying for his murderers. “We are always confident,” says Paul, “knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord, and desiring rather to be absent from the body and present with the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5) And again, “Desiring rather to depart and be with Christ, which is far better.” Nothing can be plainer; but the power of it was lost. That Christ had by one offering perfected forever them that were sanctified was forgotten; that God would remember their sins and iniquities no more was lost for their consciences; and hence the intermediate state became a kind of prison for the departed, where prayers, they knew scarce how, would do them good; yet, at first, they were joined with thanksgiving, but there was no thought of their living in purgatory—it is never supposed a moment in their prayers. They also looked to their having part in the first resurrection, which all, they supposed, had not. But then “Fathers” had other notions as regards purgatory, to say nothing of Origen who was out of the way wild and heterodox. They held that, at the last day, men would be purged with fire; to this they apply “baptized with fire.” It was not now, but in the day of judgment; he owned that was the fire of the day of judgment. Thus Ambrose (I take this quotation from another)— “All must pass through the flames, though it be John the Evangelist, though it be Peter, the sons of Levi shall be purged with fire, Ezekiel, Daniel,” &c. So, Hilary, “Because to the baptizing in the Holy Ghost it still remains to be consummated by the fire of judgment.” “As we are to render account of every idle word, can we desire the day of judgment, in which we are to undergo the unwearied fire in which the grave punishments of a soul to be expiated (purified) from sin are to be undergone?” “If,” he adds, “the Virgin herself, who conceived God in her womb, must undergo the severity of judgment, who is so bold as to desire to be judged by God?” And Jerome speaks a similar language in the closing sentence of his Commentary on Isaiah, “And as we believe the eternal torments of the devil, and all deniers and impious men who have said in their heart there is no God, so of sinners, and impious men, yet Christians, whose works are to be tried by fire and purged, we think there will be a moderate sentence of the Judge, and mixed with clemency.” He is speaking of the final judgment depicted in Isa. 66. I quote it to show what the fire of purgatory then thought of was; but I cannot let it pass without remarking how

entirely the truth of God was lost and abused. Redemption cleansing from sin—God's not imputing it—never enters into their mind. They know nothing of the blood of Christ cleansing from sin. Secondly, they have no thought that all are utterly condemned if they come into judgment— “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.” Thirdly, impious Christians they make better off than other impious people: the Lord says they are worse off, “He that knew his Lord's will, and did it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.” The light that was in them was darkness, and how great was that darkness! Austin says, Enchir. 78, ad Laurentium cx. (29) (another witness of the thick darkness the best were fallen into, and which shows the idea of intermediate punishment, not purgatory, but rest or misery, according to deserts)— “With the sacrifice for the very good, it was thanksgiving; for the not very bad, propitiations; for the very bad, though they are no help for the dead, they are a certain consolation for the living” (that is, a lie was, for the dead were not helped). “But those whom they profit, they profit for this, that there should be full remission, or that damnation itself, at any rate, should be more tolerable!” The Benedictine editors cite masses said to mitigate hell; and Augustine goes on to show they will not get out, that God may remember mercy in (not after wrath, he says) wrath, and alleviate them from time to time.

Is it not deplorable I might cite more passages, but these may suffice. Prayers for the dead there were in the third century; in the next, at any rate. Purgatory was decidedly unknown for six centuries. The Greek church has never received it; the Fathers are all confusion about it. It was a Platonic and Jewish idea. The purgatory generally spoken of in the fourth and fifth was the final judgment which would be in measure to Christians—which, mark, denies the other. Augustine, after saying that an unmarried man built gold, &c., a married one, wood, hay, and stubble, and reasoning much on the subject says—Some were willing to prove an intermediate fire by the fire trying every man's work; and thought they who had lived without indulging their affections wrongly would not go there, and the others would, adds— “I do not oppose, because perhaps it is the truth” —non redarguo quia forsitan verism est. That is it began in the fourth or fifth century to be hinted at as possible—Augus. de Civ. Dei, lib. xx. 26. Prayers for the dead, disproving purgatory, are found there from the third, showing the knowledge of redemption to be lost; and purgatory began to be hinted at merely in the fourth or fifth, the purgatory of a final judgment proportioned to sin being then taught (redemption being wholly lost as a doctrine giving peace to the soul), and in the sixth and seventh it began to be established as a doctrine. That is the true history of it.

Here our author closes his subject. Why have we nothing of indulgence?

I had reserved the point of holiness as a proof of the true church. I have no longer need to say much. It is a painful point to touch on, because it seems like attack. But when holiness is advanced as a proof—and in its place it is a very real one—what can one do (since it is a proof, though not taken alone) but show that holiness did not characterize what is called the Catholic church? I say not alone, for scripture always gives counter-checks. A man comes to me with the truth in form, but unholy—that is not the Spirit of God. The Spirit of truth is the Holy Spirit. Another comes to me with a great appearance of holiness, but he has not the truth. It is not the Spirit of God, for the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. God guards His children thus on every side. But holiness is a proof in its place; I must therefore touch on it.

We have seen in the third century Cyprian declaring, that corruption was universal, and that the bishops were running about everywhere for money, and making gain by fraud. We have seen that the martyrs' memories were, in the fourth and fifth, celebrated with drunken feasts, and Augustine fearing a sedition, if an attempt was made to stop it. We have learned from him that this was deliberately allowed, to please heathens coming in, and let them go on in their own ways unchanged, only substituting martyrs for idols. This is holiness neither in practice, purpose, nor doctrine. Augustine—De Opera Manichmorum—complains of their running about to sell relics, to make money; and so great was the superstition, that the fifth Council of Carthage orders the innumerable altars to martyrs to be overturned, unless it made a tumult; and, if it could not be done, warn the people not to go.

Hear Jerome now as to priests (so-called). A law was made by Valentinian against priests and monks getting inheritances. Jerome says he does not complain of the law, but of its being necessary. The caution of the law is provident and severe; yet even so avarice is not restrained. We mock at laws by means of trusts; and, as if emperors' decrees were greater than Christ's, we fear the laws and despise the gospels. And then, “It is the ignominy of all priests to study their own wealth. Born in a poor house, and in a rustic cottage, I, who could scarce content the loud cry of my belly with millet and coarse bread, now am nice about fine flour and honey.

I know the kinds and names of fishes; I am knowing on what shore a shell-fish is gathered; I discern provinces by the savor of birds, &c. I hear, moreover, of the base service of some to old men and old women without children—themselves put the chamber pot, besiege the bed, receive with their own hands the purulence of the stomach and the expectoration of the lungs. They tremble at the entrance of the physician, and with faltering lips inquire, whether they are better; and if the old person is somewhat more vigorous, they are in danger, and with feigned joy their avaricious mind is tortured within; for they fear lest they should lose their pains, and compare the vigorous old person to the years of Methuselah.” Epist. lii. 34.

What do you think of such a state of the clergy, and general enough at least to require a law, not from heathen, as Jerome remarks, but from Christian emperors? Is that holiness? Was bloodshed and tumults, through ambition in the election of bishops, whether from individual ambition, as at Rome, or disputes between the clergy and people who should elect, as happened in France, a holy state of things? Hear Sulpitius Severus in Gaul de Vita B. Martini xxiii. “But that I may insert less things than these (although, as is the course of our times, in which all things are depraved and corrupted, it is almost the chief thing, he did not yield priestly firmness to royal adulation); when many bishops from divers parts had come together to the Emperor Maximus, a man of a ferocious spirit, and elated with victory in the civil wars, and a base adulation of all around the prince was to be remarked, and the priestly dignity, by a degenerate inconstancy, had bowed before the royal attendant, in Martin alone apostolic authority remained.” He relates he gave the cup of honor to a presbyter to drink before the Emperor, “And it was celebrated in all the palace that Martin had done at the king's dinner, what no one of the bishops would have done in the festivals of the lowest judges.” It was a mixture of the lowest servility and the haughtiest pride: so it ever is in such case. Pride at last got the upper hand.

But your doctrine, you say, is holy. Is it holy to have an absolution to facilitate men getting ease to their consciences, when they have not thoroughly repented? That is the express doctrine of your

sacrament of penance, and the daily snare of millions in practice. The doctrine of attrition and a sacrament, or contrition without it, is the most iniquitous principle ever invented to content men with sin; and so it works. Can you show me a more dreadful set of persons than a multitude of the popes, though with honorable exceptions in early days yet never without excessive ambition? What do you say to indulgences? As a doctrine compounding for penances, as a practice compounding for sins, and paying for my faults with another's dreamed-of superfluous merits, and all disposed of for money? Is that holy doctrine? Are the taxes for sin in the Romish chancellery—i.e., how much is to be paid for each—holy in doctrine or in practice'? Good books forbidden at any price; all sins set off at some price. Is it a holy thing to teach, as to corruption produced by celibacy, si non casti cauti? Let me ask, what was a great part of the bishops' revenues, at the time of the Reformation, derived from? Do you know that in Rome, at this day, according to statistical accounts, of over three thousand children born, considerably more than two thousand are given up to be brought up by avellin institutions, illegitimate or abandoned by their parents? Are not Romish countries known to be walking in corruption and evil, even more than Protestant ones? Do you think a person traveling through Spain, or Italy, or France, would find holiness characterize the country? Their state is awful. Do I say, then, that Protestant countries are holy? far from it. No one is, but he that is born of God, and who is led by the Spirit of God. But I say that the professing church, and, above all, the Romish body is not; not a person who goes to the East but would sooner trust a Turk than those called Christians; but this is of long date.

I will close this by a passage from Eusebius: “Wickedness of unutterable hypocrisy and dissimulation was risen to the highest pitch; the pastors of note among them, despising all bond of piety, turn in contention one against another, only increasing in strife, threats, envy, hostility, and hatred one against another.” Lib. viii. 1. Austin declares, that in his day if any one would live godly he was mocked, not, by heathens simply, but by the professing Christians.

But to close. The truth is, all this has been predicted. Even in the apostles' days Paul declares, with a sorrowing heart, “All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.” He declares that the mystery of iniquity did already work, and would issue in apostasy, in God's own time; that evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse; that in the last days perilous times should come; that there would be a form of piety without the power. We have seen this fulfilled. It fills the heart with sorrow, but not surprise; it tests, but it confirms faith; it shows the pretension to universality and external perpetuity, as a visible body, to be the sign of a false church, not of a true one; for the scriptures speak of apostasy, perilous times, and judgment, cutting off, if professing Gentiles do not continue in His goodness, while it is prophetically declared they will not. God will surely keep them that are His, and His own true church will be preserved and maintained, till the time for the Lord to come and take it into glory with Himself. As to the outward professing body, the Lord has declared that the mystery of iniquity, which existed in the apostles' days, would go on till the full apostasy which would bring the judgment. The tares were sown by Satan in the field; the Lord will reap it in judgment. It is a solemn subject, as solemn for Protestants as for Romanists, for God will judge righteous judgment as to all, and there is grace in Christ for the one as for the other. Yes, holiness is a mark; but it is not forms of piety. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;” but God will have reality; it is the real putting on of the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. It is being renewed in the spirit of our minds—this is the holiness which God will have. It is wanting alas! in many Protestants; but it is that which every man, who

knows the actual state of Ireland, mid still more perhaps other countries professing Romanism, knows does not characterize the vast bulk; he knows that corruption and evil are (with the exception perhaps of Belgium) in the proportion of its influence; France bad, Italy and Spain morally insupportable.

Yet holiness is a mark of the true church; but my reader, Protestant or Roman Catholic, note it well, truth, the truth of God's holy word, is another. Not the uncertain vacillations of Fathers with the growing superstitions of the mystery of iniquity, but God's own pure, certain, blessed word, written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, by apostles and evangelists, and addressed to Christians and whoever has ears to hear. Lastly, grace is a mark of the true church. The knowledge of a God of love, a God who has given His Son because He loved poor sinners; of that Son's having perfectly accomplished redemption by His own offering of Himself once for all; the knowledge that His blood cleanses from all sin, that He has made peace through the blood of His cross, and that by Him all that believe are justified from all things, and have eternal life; that God will remember their sins and iniquities no more. Yes, holiness, the truth, and the knowledge of a perfect and accomplished redemption of a God of love, mark the member at least of the true church, of the body of Christ, of the children of a heavenly Father.

May you, reader, as a repentant sinner, know them for yourself!

Chapter 229

Romans 6 and 1 John 1:7

Dear Sir,— I am indebted to you, my unknown donor, for a tract by “Adelphos.” Like many others, it calls for no notice in itself. There are attacks whose only importance is that they serve to show the state of those who make them; and this is one of that class. The morbid, disappointed, and unruly may sympathize with the writers; but every generous soul rejects their insinuations without an answer to expose them.

It has nevertheless appeared to me that, without interposing in others' battles, it might serve the Lord and the truth to give a specimen of “Adelphos's” charity and competency. I will therefore transcribe, from the note to page 17, enough to put in evidence the tone of the writer, who is plainly one of a small knot of malcontents, whose mission seems to be Ishmaelitish indeed—the effort to fasten revolting charges of false doctrine on their brethren. “One of the most offensive instances of this wrong division of the word of truth that I have lately seen occurs at page 7 [it should be 11] of a tract entitled, ‘The Salvation of God,' where we may read that the blood of Christ effaces the sins, but it does not meet the question of sin that is working in the believer after he is brought to God. What does? Do you not know that you are ‘dead to sin?' Is then, it must be asked, the blood of the Son of man to be no longer ‘drink indeed' to believers after they are brought to God? The exact contradiction of this rash assertion by the Spirit in 1 John 1:7 will suggest itself to every thoughtful and unfettered mind. To expose fully the objectionable nature of such teaching would require much more than a note. I can here only warn the reader of its direct tendency to foster carnal security in Christians and to obscure and depreciate the true doctrine of the cross.”

Now here I join issue distinctly with these men, and I affirm that it is they, not we, who are despising the full work of Christ and flatly opposing the word of God. For not even “Adelphos” can deny that the incriminated tract places the sinner within the doors sprinkled with the Lamb's blood as the only possible refuge for him in his guilt. The question discussed is the distinctive force of the Red Sea and of Israel's passage across it. To this the answer is brought from Rom. 6. The believer is there taught that he died with Christ, and consequently had to count himself dead to sin and alive in Jesus Christ to God. Is not this the truth? Is it not the special object of the chapter to show that grace does not foster carnal security or cloak a bad walk? It is “Adelphos” who flings away the divine safeguard. Who does not know that this is the crying vice of evangelicalism? Their tradition, even where it does not tack on the law as a rule of life, directly tends to make the blood of Christ the exclusive provision for the soul; especially when it goes the length of repeated sprinklings and reiterated recourse for restoration, as a guilty Jew again and again brought his sacrifice with a fresh confession of his sin.

The question discussed there is what gives power against the dominion of sin in practice. The answer, as repeated in the tract but denied by “Adelphos,” is, not that we are come to the blood of sprinkling (true and precious and indispensable as this is); not that we must not be led into other and further truth in Christ (which is what his argument here assuredly sets aside), but just the contrary—that we need and have more in our blessed Lord and His infinite work; that, besides His

blood, “so many of us as were baptized into him, were baptized into his death,” and thus, like as He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. He that died (this is the point) is justified from sin. The question of the remission of our sins we have had already fully settled in Rom. 3-5:11.

I grant indeed that death with Christ “Adelphos” and his companions never seem to comprehend. This lies at the root of much of their bitter hostility. They set themselves to decry a revealed truth, which they themselves do not appreciate. This, in the words of “Adelphos,” I should call truly “rash,” and “most offensive;” and I have good reason to know that the same spirit and similar opposition, even to a principle so elementary and of the deepest moment for practical walk, pervade the party and their doctrine. Is it sound? Does it promote holiness? Is such a course really of God? Are they too stiff to learn?

Again, he asks, “Is the blood of the Son of man to be no longer ‘drink indeed' to believers after they are brought to God?” I answer, most assuredly; it is the sweetest food of faith. Eating His flesh and drinking His blood, we dwell in Him and He in us. If “Adelphos” is an older man than the young brother he rebukes, he is so much the less excusable for putting such a question, which is equally misleading in what it suppresses and in what it suggests. For he might, not to say must, know that those he assails love to show forth and dwell on the death of the Lord. For my own part, much as I delight in the power of His resurrection, and in His heavenly glory, my heart ever turns, not to our union with Him, but to His death, in which all the moral being of God was glorified, even in respect and in spite of sin, as it was and could be nowhere else, through the grace of the Lord Jesus. This joy of entrance into His dying abides ever here, as I believe it will be not less but perfectly known in heaven.

Hence we see that, as the passover is really deeper morally than the Red Sea as a type, so Rom. 5:1-11 goes beyond Rom. 8 in this that the former is more simple and absolute in its presentations of sovereign grace and God Himself, while the latter is no doubt richer in its display of what we are in Christ, and of what Christ is in us by the Spirit of God, closing triumphantly with God for us, rather than setting Him as the object before us in whom we exult. The note ignores the beautiful consistency of scripture, arrays one truth in which we all agree against another, which is all-important in, its own divinely ordered place. This the tract sought to state simply, and thus supply a most evident lack, which the resistance and the party spirit of its censor unwittingly confess and only confirm. But where is Christ's glory, where the guidance of the Spirit, in such tactics?

But “Adelphos” is as mistaken in his use of scripture as we have seen him unconscionably censorious. For I must ask in my turn, Is drinking the Son of man's blood laid down in scripture as the principle of a believer's walk and watch against the sin that is in him breaking out in his ways? Or is it not, as I have shown, “How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?” Under the pretense of guarding the value of Christ's blood, it is really an effort to undermine another truth of God, bound up with Christ dead and risen, of which he has yet to learn the power.

Finally, 1 John 1:7 is not “the exact contradiction” of the statement as to Rom. 6, nor does it touch the question. “Adelphos” reasons from the Authorized Version, which may be correct enough for ordinary use. But it is as bad scholarship as it is bad doctrine to apply it to ridding the believer from indwelling sin, or giving him practical power against it. The true force is, “the blood of Jesus Christ

his Son cleanseth us from every sin" (■π■ π■σης ■μαρτ■ας). No unbiased scholar who weighs the passage will deny this; as no person open to the bearing of truth will deny that the truth here laid down connects itself with Rom. 5 and the passover, rather than with Rom. 6 and the Red Sea.

There is this brand on the assailing brethren that they have all condemned in strong terms, and separated themselves for years, from that laxity in ecclesiastical walk, which they would now excuse if not commend; and that they in general yielded to the pressure of old friends what they once (as we thought with godly sincerity) believed to be a question of Christ. Can any dispassionate doubt what was the true source and nature of the change? Perhaps "Adelphos" too has not forgotten one in particular whose lack of singleness of purpose exposed him to go out and come in over and over again? I have no wish to wound needlessly; but was it too much to hope that one so infirm of purpose might learn both to distrust himself and to watch against that censoriousness which is ever suspecting evil in what is not understood? Take for instance, the repetition in this tract of the outcry about "smiting," the Lord's death, atonement and life in resurrection. Do not think that I am going to refute what always seemed to me to carry along with it its own refutation. It is a melancholy witness how far the heated feelings of retrograde hearts can fling out charges which their authors possibly believe themselves, and a very few followers who believe what they believe. I could wish them all a happier lot than the detective line of things to which they have addicted themselves. The Lord alone can give that subjection to His word in a sense of His grace which can so far keep us right.

Your servant in the Lord, W. K.

Notes on Romans 8:2

We have seen the precious principle of no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus re-asserted with yet greater strength and absoluteness than when first introduced in the latter half of chapter 5. Not only are such not condemned, but there is no condemnation for them. They are in Christ, and there no possible condemnation can reach. Undoubtedly they are justified; but what is said goes farther than justification by blood. Justifying of life is supposed; but there is more, as we shall see presently. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death.”

Questions have been raised here as to “the law,” used at the beginning and at the end of this sentence. There is no real difficulty nor ground for doubt. The apostle has already given us to see his use of the term for a given principle acting uniformly, as when he speaks of “law of faith” (chap. 3:27) in contrast with “law of works:” and later still “law in my members,” or “of sin,” there contradistinguished from the “law of my mind.”

The meaning then is the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus acting constantly to a given end. Undoubtedly this is only since the gospel was preached, but it does not therefore mean the gospel. Nor does the apostle say life only, but “the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” In the distressing conflict under law, described in the latter portion of chapter 7, there was life: else there would have been insensibility to sin; but not the power of the Spirit working in and with it: else there would have been liberty, and not the bondage that there was then.

John 20:22 may illustrate the expression. The Spirit is not apart from quickening the soul; but here was more. It was life more abundantly, life in resurrection. Jesus risen breathed on the disciples, already quickened, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” It was not mere conversion; still less was it the appointment to an office or the conferring of a gift (χ■ρισμα). It was life according to the position of Jesus now risen from the dead and no longer under law, and with this the Spirit is distinctly associated. The fruit of this we see in the disciples thenceforward. It is not that they might not make mistakes in thought, or word, or deed; but we see after this a liberty, joy, and intelligence unknown before.

So here “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death.” For the last time in this discussion the “me” is spoken of. If the distress was personal, so is the deliverance; if he had reasoned out the case of one bound under law, transferred in its application to himself, so to himself he transferred the application of the freedom enjoyed. Sin and death were no longer a governing principle, and this by the very fact of the life in Christ which he had by the Spirit. It is not, as Theodore of Mopsuestia (in loc. p. 67, ed. Fritzsche) thinks, and many since, that he is anticipating the resurrection or future state, but the actual condition of the Christian. The freedom was his by the Holy Ghost when he left off seeking victory over indwelling evil by efforts under law, was willing to yield himself up as powerless for the good he desired, and submitted to the righteousness of God. Then the Spirit working in the life given proved Himself to be not of weakness any more than of fear; but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

Thus it is plain that the resurrection of Christ, which is the fountain of the life as we have it in Him, is the link between our justification and the practical holiness which God looks for and secures in the Christian. It is erroneous to treat this verse, or even the first as a mere summary of justification. Calvin is nearer the mark than such as Haldane and Hodge who so limit it. Nevertheless, as I do not think the leader of Geneva warranted to speak as he does of the apostle's language, so it appears to me that he betrays his own defective acquaintance with the gospel in the same sentence. “By the law of the Spirit he improperly designates the Spirit of God, who sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ, not only to cleanse us from the stain of sin as regards guilt, but to sanctify us to true purity." The mistake is exclusively in the commentator, who did not comprehend the profound and accurately expressed wisdom of the apostle. To have confessed his own ignorance, when he found himself out of his depth, would have been more modest, rather than to have adopted language hard to reconcile with a becoming sense of God's word. Does He call things improperly? Thus far Calvin's temerity, the more glaring because of the ignorance betrayed in what follows. For we have here to do, not with the blood of Christ sprinkling souls, but with the Spirit acting with the fixity of a law in the life which is ours in Christ—a life which is in resurrection power and hence has freed us from the power of sin and death: otherwise sin and death must have governed. It is no question of pardon here but freedom from the constant operation of sin and its wages. Our very life, now that the Spirit is given, declares and proves us freed.

“The law of sin and death” does not mean the law of God, as some of the divines strangely said through making “the law of the Spirit” to be the gospel; it simply means the uniform principle of the flesh in moral character and in result. Power is in the Spirit who has shown us our place in Christ and set us free as alive to God in Him. Thus the common place of no condemnation to those that are in Christ is shown to be inseparable from a new life in the power of the Spirit in Christ risen, which freed us from sin and death as a law; and this is made intensely personal. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death.” The next two verses will explain how God in His grace has effected this, without enfeebling, yea, maintaining in no other way so well, His holy condemnation of evil—of our evil.

Notes on Romans 8:3-4

Evidently, then, the resurrection, the death and resurrection of Jesus, is the basis of all this doctrine. It was viewed as the seal of redemption at the close of chapter 4. For He was delivered up for our offenses and raised for our justification. But there is much more in His resurrection. It is a spring of life, and this too in the manifestation of victory over all the consequences of sin and death. Such is the power of Christ's resurrection even now for the believer as far as concerns the soul. And herein lies the real and mighty link between justification and practical holiness. Not only has the Christian been justified by blood, but he has justifying of life in Christ; yea, the life of Him risen from the dead when all charge and judgment have had their course, sin been put away, and God glorified. Where this truth is not seen, a godly soul may well have fears, if not anxieties, as to the issue, and must naturally insist on the guards due to the grace of God in redemption; where it is simply and fully seen, there must be—there ought to be—confidence in the heart purified by faith. Not that there is not here below the need of habitual self-judgment; but, along with this, one is entitled, in looking to Christ dead and risen, to be as sure of the character of His life as of the efficacy of His blood. In both the believer finds his blessedness. But some, it must be spoken to their shame, are ignorant of the true character of God and of deliverance in and by Christ the Lord. Emancipation from the law of sin and death is the effect, as the apostle declares, of the law of the Spirit of life in the Savior. The moral ground of this on God's part is shown in verse 3, the practical result on our part in verse 4.

The same uncertainty which obscures the force of verses 1, 2, prevails as to verses 3, 4. Some regard the question handled as exclusively justification; others as no less exclusively the extirpation of the dominion of sin. It appears to me certain, that, while the subject is sin, rather than sins, the apostle is summing up, and hence not confining himself to a single point, and that each of the contending parties has missed not only truth held by their opponents, but much which both have failed to see. Imperfect views of redemption occasion, if they are not the same thing as, these defects. The new place of the believer is feebly seen on either side. With this the chapter opens, not Christ in the believer, though this is also true, and will be shown shortly in the chapter, but the believer in Christ, and hence “no condemnation” proclaimed. Next, it is shown that the very life given, being in the power of the Spirit, the life of Christ risen, is the witness of our deliverance. Neither sin nor death remains a law to us, as we see in the state described in the preceding chapter 7. But there is more. The powerlessness of the law is confronted with the efficacy of redemption, and this to the moral end of the believer's practical obedience. Such is the outline and connection of the four verses, as will appear more in detail presently.

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God having sent his own Son in likeness of flesh of sin, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who walk not according to flesh but according to Spirit.” (Ver. 3, 4.)

There is no need to supply anything, as the first clause, grammatically, is in apposition with what follows; doctrinally, in contradistinction. It was not within the power of the law to meet the case; for

though law spiritually applied might detect sin, the characteristic sin of fallen human nature, it must, condemn the person too in whom the sin was found. It was therefore wholly unavailing for the purposes of grace; it could curse, it could sentence, it could not save. It was essentially therefore, for sinful man, a ministry of condemnation and of death. “The flesh,” or natural condition of the race, was a state that admitted of no alternative. God would and did take the matter in hand, not by Moses through whom the law was given, but by the mission of His own Son. “Grace and truth came—was—through Jesus Christ.” Then, and by Him only, was this seen in the world. “The Word was made flesh.” God sent Him in likeness of flesh of sin, in real flesh and blood; not like a man, but in truth a man; in likeness not of flesh, but of flesh of sin. Such was the flesh of His mother, and of her was He born as truly as any son of any mother; but without an earthly father as to His birth. What was begotten in Mary was of the Holy Ghost. Wherefore also the Holy Thing that was in due season born was called the Son of God—for this reason of His supernatural and holy generation; though for higher reasons also, of divine and eternal glory, of which not Luke but John is the appointed herald.

God sent Him then in likeness of flesh of sin, not in sinful flesh, but in its likeness; and in Him, the Son, the Father was glorified in a world departed from God, of which Satan was the prince; tried as never man was tried, and found perfect in each and all, in word and deed, in thought and feeling, inwardly, outwardly, every way, perfect; as God the Father had never before found in anyone or anything. Yet blessed and refreshing as is such a sight in such a world, and in such a nature, fraught with infinite results for the divine glory, all had come to naught for the deliverance of any from sin's guilt or power, if God had done no more. Christ had glorified the Father as a holy, obedient, dependent man, who never did, never sought His own will, but God's. But man was willful, wretched, guilty, lost. God sent His own Son therefore, not alone as the exhibition of human perfection, and divine grace and truth withal, but also “for sin,” περ■ ■μαρτ■ας. It is the very reverse of an indefinite statement, being the well-known technical expression for sin-offering (as in Heb. 10, and the LXX.), and therefore distinctly pointing to the death, as the previous clause to the life, of Christ.

Thus was solved the otherwise insoluble problem: God had done it in and by His own Son to His own glory, and thus holily and righteously for sinful man. Impossible without the death of the Son of God. But now in Him, a sacrifice for sin (not more acceptable in His life than a sin-bearer in death, when consequently God must and did forsake even Him), God executed sentence of condemnation, not on sinners but on sin, sin in the flesh, and this expiatorily; for He made Jesus, who knew no sin, sin for us, that we might become God's righteousness in Him. There is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus. Not only has the Christian a new life in Christ risen by the Spirit, of which the law is liberation and liberty; but God laid the moral ground for such grace as this, in the utter condemnation of sin in the flesh, by His manifestation to take away our sins, in whom is no sin.

Thus was vindicated the free gift of God to us, eternal life, the righteous groundwork on which even now we possess in Christ that risen life with which no sin ever mingles, though we have still the old and evil nature of our own to mortify day by day.

And if the Son of man was glorified, and God glorified in Him thus, was there no present moral result in those whose new life He was in the infinite grace of our God? This could not be; and the

apostle adds in the next words the answer. God so wrought in Christ, in order that the requirement (the righteous claim, τ■ δικα■ωμα) of the law might be fulfilled in us that walk not according to flesh, but according to Spirit. This, I cordially grant, applies not to justification, as so many of the divines erroneously teach. It is the practical consequence of justification, or rather of the infinite work of the Savior, in those who receive Him; but this is no reason why we should overlook, with many other divines, the equally sure and yet more solemnly important basis for our holy walk in His atonement.

Another remark it is well to add on verse 4:—how admirably it falls in with chapter vi. 14! It is only when the Holy Ghost works in a soul quickened with the life of Christ risen from the dead, by virtue of redemption through His blood, that power follows against sin. When practically under law, i.e., laboring to correct and improve the flesh, as too many saints are (like the case described in the latter half of chap. 7.), there is no power; and, spite of a renewed mind, there is constant failure and grief of heart in consequence. Christ, not the law, Christ in grace and truth, Christ dead and risen, is the sole power of holiness by the working of the Holy Spirit in us; and the heart answers in love to God and man, so that what the law required of those under itself, but in vain, is really fulfilled in those who are not under law but under grace.

Notes on Romans 8:5-8

The apostle proceeds to contrast more at length those who walk according to flesh with those who are in Christ. He shows that in both cases there is a nature with its own objects. It is not a question here of some faithful and others failing; “for those who are according to flesh mind the things of the flesh; but those according to Spirit, the things of the Spirit.” Each class has its own sphere, which engages its mind and feelings. Manner or measure is not before us; but flesh and Spirit, or rather those characterized by them, go out after their respective natures—and love or hate accordingly. Duty has its place, and is invariably claimed and regulated by the relationship in which people stand; but here another topic is under discussion, not so much relative position and its responsibilities as the new principle and power of the Christian compared with all other men. He is characterized, not by flesh (i.e., human nature fallen, estranged from God, and as we shall see, enmity against Him) but the Spirit, and this identifying itself with the very being and state of the Christian, just as we see in the case of demoniacs that they were bound up with their evil possession, so that the man and the unclean spirit could only be severed by God's power. Further on we have the Holy Spirit treated as an indwelling person, who acts in and with the believer; but here it is a characteristic state predicated of the Christian, contrasted with that of all other men out of which he is brought by faith in Christ. For all were alike in the same state, “in flesh,” as born of Adam; but those according to the Spirit mind the things of the Spirit, things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man to consider, things which God hath prepared for those that love Him.

Here it may be profitable to observe that the Spirit is not once brought before us in the first great division of our Epistle (chap. 1-5:11) till redemption, the remission of sins, was fully established, cleared and done with. It is only in the conclusion (Rom. 5:1-11) which winds up this part of the apostle's argument that he introduces (ver. 5) the earliest mention of the Holy Ghost. “And hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” In the appendix of doctrine on the divine deliverance, not from sins, but from sin, the method of procedure is exactly similar: the Holy Spirit only reappears in chapter 8 which is the conclusion to this most momentous addition. Only here, as connected more with practical state and walk, we meet with a rich development and great variety of application, instead of the passing though sweet allusion of chapter 5.

Nor will the thoughtful Christian find it hard to discern the wisdom of God in both. For even in the face of this remarkable omission of the Spirit in the discussion of man's unrighteousness, and then of God's righteousness in the gospel by faith of Christ, man is prone enough to drag in what God has left out; and believers continually doom themselves to a lack of peace with God by an inquisitive search in themselves after the effects of the Spirit which might satisfy them of their renewal and acceptance. Now it is not denied for a moment that none but the Spirit quickens by the word, revealing Christ to the soul; yet this truth, acknowledged on all sides, makes the absence of reference to the Holy Ghost given so much the more notable. Till redemption is known, God would direct the eye to Christ: He alone who died for the sinner is entitled to give him comfort

in respect and in spite of his sins. His blood alone cleanses from all sin. It may be, it is, wholesome to look within as well as without, and to learn more and more what a sinner I am; but God will have me to look outside myself to Christ exclusively for pardon. To look within for righteousness by the Spirit enabling me is illusive, nay ruinous. I must be content with, and rejoice in, the blessedness David describes of the man to whom God imputes righteousness without works. Like Abraham, I need not be discouraged by my own weakness, or the inability of all around to help; I ought like him to give glory to God; for it was not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses and was raised again for our justification. And therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

After all this it is that God speaks to us of the gift of the Spirit, and the love that is shed abroad in our hearts by Him. We can bear this truth then, as then only indeed we are sealed by the Spirit. For though the Spirit can and does quicken one dead in trespasses and sins, He never seals a soul in such a state; He seals only where there is life and cleansing by the shed blood of the Savior. Christ no doubt had the Holy Ghost descending and abiding on Him apart from blood; but He was the Holy One of God and came to redeem others, not to be redeemed. But none other was or could be sealed save as a consequence of His redemption. Hence we see in the Acts and the Epistles of the Apostles that the Holy Spirit was given in His name, even the quickened not being thus sealed till they submitted themselves (which was not always an immediate sequence) to the righteousness of God.

But here the allusion is brief. There is no dwelling on the internal operations of the Spirit till we come to chapter 8. The reason seems manifest. It would not be meat in due season till the mighty result of Christ's death and resurrection was applied to our nature, to our conscious, and intelligent deliverance (by faith of His work) from the sense and power of sin, as well as from guilt by our sins against God. Christendom affords solemn lessons, not only in the past but in the present, of the dangers those run who take a different route. For what is the necessary result of mixing up an inward search after the fruits and witness of the Spirit with the anxieties of the soul anxious, and it may be quickened? It can be none other than either to buoy him up with a joy founded on feelings more or less self-righteous, or to plunge him, if conscientious, into the depths of distress, endeavoring to extract a miserable comfort from the very fact that he is so harassed with a sense of sin while he clings to the barest hope that he may be a child of God.

When the apostle has set forth fully the work of redemption, when we know, as believers in Christ, not merely the sins effaced by His precious blood, but sin in the flesh condemned—both morally in Him who was absolutely free from it, yet withal in grace to us bearing its consequences judicially as a sacrifice for it that there might be no condemnation to those that are in Him—when this is learned solidly by divine teaching, we are in a position to profit by the fullest instructions in the ways of God by His Spirit in respect of us. Here accordingly there is neither silence nor stint.

But it cannot be too rigidly insisted on that God's condemnation of sin was on the cross in the sacrifice of Christ for it. Those who deny that the soul's deliverance can be till we actually die, are no less in error than others who affirm that it means the new and sanctifying power of the Spirit by Christ. Both have to be taught a great truth which they have overlooked. Undoubtedly there is more before us than justification from our sins. It is a question of how to be rid of the burden of sin,

indwelling sin; and till we lay hold of the revealed answer in Christ, the Spirit convicts of sin, instead of delivering from it. The answer is that God condemned sin in Him who was sent in the likeness of flesh of sin; but as a sacrifice for sin. Therefore to faith sin is as completely annulled as our sins—both righteously, but in grace, both by Him who for both suffered at God's hand that we might be delivered and know our deliverance now by the faith of Jesus Christ our Lord. We must not confound the effect of this in victory over sin with the act of God who thus condemned sin in the flesh. Christ's own personal overthrow of Satan and manifestation of uniform and spotless holiness here below would have but riveted condemnation on us more hopelessly, had He not also suffered for us on the cross. His sinlessness is incontestable; but it is ignorance and false doctrine to say that the condemnation of sin in the flesh is owing to it, not to His sacrifice for sin. Multitudes of divines may crowd the valley of indecision, and so say or write; but it is in vain. May their error perish, but not themselves. The sacrifice of Christ is the ground of our emancipation by the Spirit of life from the law of sin and death, as it is in order to a holy walk. The law, holy as it is, could effect neither; it claimed but never received righteousness, as it condemned the sinner without ever reaching sin in the flesh. This God did in Christ's sacrifice for sin, with its infinite blessing for us in both standing and walk. The law dealt with the old nature, the flesh, exposing its sinful character, but weak through it. The Spirit strengthens the new nature; and thus the believer, feeding on the word, walks accordingly, loving God and his neighbor.

Then follows the explanation why those who are in Christ walk according to the Spirit. If they were after flesh, the mind and affection would be on the things of the flesh. Source, character, and conduct go together. Flesh is never sublimated into spirit; nor does spirit sink or change to flesh; for, as the Lord said, “that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” Even Adam unfallen was not spirit. Hence there was no question of resurrection or of heaven till all of original state was lost by sin. The Last Adam brings in the “better thing.” Flesh cannot rise above itself, though it may fall into the depths of Satan. Even in its best estate we may perhaps say, “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again; but whosoever drinketh of the water that I [Christ] shall give him shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life.”

And as the essential character thus differs, as well as the range and objects of flesh and Spirit, so also the issues. “For the mind of the flesh [is] death, but the mind of the Spirit life and peace.” (Ver. 6.) The flesh has not one pulse of life Godward, however active in its pursuits and pleasures here. On the other hand, the mind of the Spirit, its exercise of thought and feeling, is life and peace. It was so in Christ; and so it is in the Christian. How a sinner is to find either life from God or peace with God is not the subject-matter in hand, but the moral bent and result of flesh and Spirit. Flesh satisfies itself, or at least its desires are set on things seen and felt apart from God or His word; the Spirit cannot rest short of the love and the glory of Christ. And as this only is the life of the Spirit, so it is peace of heart. In every sense God has called us in peace; whereas, there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. How could it be otherwise with fallen humanity? “Because the mind of the flesh [is] enmity against God; for to the law of God it is not subject;” nor need one wonder,” for it is not possible. But they then that are in flesh cannot please God.” (Ver. 7, 8.) Awful conclusion for man as he is! Would that he laid it to heart as the truth, the sentence pronounced by the Judge of all the earth No fruit for God grows on that tree forever. There is and must be for the believer a new life in order to fruit-bearing. Not the things that are seen, the things of the flesh, but the

revelation of the unseen, the word of God Himself, seen by faith in Christ, nourishes this life; for without faith, the same apostle tells us in another epistle, it is impossible to please God. Now the flesh never trusts God; its mind is enmity against Him. The law brings in His authority and interdicts to the flesh its own way, which is everything to it. Hence its independence proves to be enmity against God; for in virtue of seeking its own will it neither does nor can subject itself to His law. Obedience is essentially incompatible with the self-will, the ■νομ■α, of the flesh, which would cease to be itself if it obeyed God. Hence the application of the principle to the unrenewed. “And they that are in flesh cannot please God,” whose complacency is in the man that ever sought and did God's will, not His own, and thus ever practiced the things agreeable to His Father.

Notes on Romans 8:9

To be in flesh then is hopeless ruin, its mind being at variance with God, and in utter insubjection to His law; and this is the sad condition of all the sons of fallen Adam. It is not however the standing of the Christian. As in the beginning of our chapter he is said to be in Christ and consequently outside every possible condemnation, so here it is said, “but ye are not in flesh but in Spirit, if indeed God's Spirit dwell in you.”

Thus the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is the witness and proof that we are “in Spirit,” and consequently not in flesh. But it would be a mistake to conclude that this condition was not reached and supposed in the preceding chapters. Indeed chapter 7:5 unquestionably implies the contrary— “for when we were in the flesh,” &c.; consequently we are not in the flesh now as Christians. So in chapter 6, the saints were bondmen of sin but now freed from it, bound therefore to reckon themselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus, under grace and not under law. This cannot be without life and the Spirit. The man who is alive of that new life takes the place of death at the word of the Lord, and attests the end of the old man in his own person. But in chapter viii., for reasons already given, the apostle is free to develop the relation of the Spirit to the Christian, and His various operations in and with the soul as far as would be suitable to the epistle in hand. We are in Spirit, if at all events God's Spirit dwell in us. Now that it is evident that man is equally weak and ungodly, now that he has learned that the way of God is not by victory over sin, but (owning his total powerlessness to recover or do well) by the work of Christ and death with Him, he can safely hear of the ways of the Spirit. He will not now seek by efforts to get free, for he has surrendered to the solemn and humbling fact of what he is as well as confessed his misdoings. God is wise and good in this as in all else: for if He strengthened the converted soul in its desire to gain the victory over indwelling evil by the work of the Spirit, it would make the work of Christ incomparably less prized and the soul satisfied with itself under pretense of trusting in the Spirit.

In truth scripture knows no such thing as trusting in the working of the Spirit in us as distinguished from trusting in ourselves or in our works. For what the Spirit enables us as God's children to do is ever counted as our own, and will be remembered and rewarded accordingly when God proves Himself not unrighteous to forget our work and the love shown to His name.

Deliverance is by death—the death of Christ, with whom we died. But we are alive to God in Him, and the Spirit dwells in us. We can then without presumption say that we are not in flesh. We are not viewed as mere men, characterized by the first Adam state and responsibilities; as it had been already shown that we are not under law, like Israel, but under grace.

Not, I must add, that we are not responsible, but that our responsibility is of a new character, founded on the new relationship which grace has given us when delivered from our old state of ruined men. “Ye are not in flesh.” Nothing short of this is the due language of the Christian. It is the most general expression for nature, for man as he is; and, as Christians, such is not our condition. We are “in Spirit,” not merely under the dominion of our own renewed mind; but that which was

first set before us as being “in Christ” is here said to be “in Spirit,” a condition formed by the action of the Holy Ghost who is glorifying Christ according to the will and mission of the Father.

Let us bear in mind that it is more than being born of the Spirit, which in fact embraces all saints, and is not more true of the Christian than of the Old Testament or of the millennial saint. But to be “in Spirit” goes farther, and is proved by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit after Jesus died, rose, and went on high. “But ye are not in flesh but in Spirit, if at all events God's Spirit dwell in you.” Christ risen is a life-giving Spirit, as we see in John 20; exalted, He sends down the Holy Spirit as power. (Acts 2) If one really believes in Christ—i.e., the gospel, he receives the Spirit and so can be said to be “in Spirit.” This is the sole recognized condition, though there may be a state short of it for a season. The case described or personated by the apostle in the central and latter part of chapter vii. is that of one born of the Spirit, but not yet “in Spirit,” which is the proper Christian state.

Observe, that it is no question here of measure, or of moral disposition, but of new facts in the realm of grace. Certainly he of whom they are true is intended to realize their truth and to walk accordingly. Still it is important to see that God reveals to the Christian, not as a special privilege of a favored soul here and there, but as a broad certain characteristic of those now called according to His purpose, that they are not in flesh but in Spirit. There is no mingling of the two states. We were in the one; we are now in the other. It is not a state, again, after our death physically, but after Christ's death, at least when it can also be said that we died with Him. It is therefore true of the Christian now in this world, absolutely true from the beginning of his career on earth as a Christian till its close. I speak of course of the true believer only.

Is there no partial state recognized here? No fluctuating, no uncertainty, no mixing up of the old Adam state and Christ? Not in the slightest degree. “Ye are not in flesh but in Spirit.” Is the Christian then without the flesh? Clearly not; but the true state and statement of the case is, not that be is in flesh, but that flesh is in him. The old nature is there, and ready to break out into sin if there be not self-judgment, watchfulness against the enemy, and looking to Christ. The flesh is beyond doubt in the believer: only he is no longer in flesh, but in that new estate of which Christ is the display and the Holy Spirit is the power and character. The flesh is an evil thing, always to be hated and in nothing allowed. The Christian however is entitled to know that he is not in flesh, but that he is clean contrary to it as to his condition—in Spirit, always supposing that God's Spirit dwells in him. Anything anomalous or intermediate is not here taken into account. The apostle contrasts this previous natural state with the full Christian position, not strictly speaking, with the new birth. Thus the Spirit's dwelling in the believer is used as the then public testimony on God's part. This must be modified in the present confusion of doctrine, as well as the absence of manifestations in power. Yet the great substantial truth abides unchanged.

“But if any one hath not Christ's Spirit, he is not his.” This parenthetical statement is to be weighed without deducing, as is often done, what it was clearly not intended to convey. Thus some would draw from it that the Old Testament saints must have had Christ's Spirit in the sense here discussed, as others again would deny a condition of soul in which one may be quickened, as in the latter part of Romans, without being sealed, examples of which are so frequent in the Acts of the Apostles. But the fact is that the apostle is now treating of one who is no Christian at all save in outward name, like Simon Magus, in contrast with those who have Christ's Spirit. And this seems to be confirmed by the use of α■το■ rather than α■τ■. Where the soul submits to divine

righteousness in Christ, the Father seals with the Spirit. Here I suppose He is designated “Christ's,” not as if it were another Spirit than God's, but as having displayed Himself there above all in the perfection of a life consecrated to God from first to last. Grace gives the Spirit to all that believe on Him now, not necessarily when the soul is first plowed up, but assuredly on receiving the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. So sure is it, that if one has not His Spirit, one is not of Him.

Chapter 234

Notes on Romans 8:10-11

It is evident that the apostle is here closing the answer to the question in the latter verses of chapter 7: “O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?” In the answer there are three parts. The first is, that as Christians we start with a position of deliverance in Christ (chap. 8:1) and the possession of a life of liberty (ver. 2), in both its parts founded on and justified by the cross of Christ (ver. 3). There could be, and there ought to be, no deliverance, unless sin were righteously atoned for and blotted out before God. Ought a single sinner to be set free, if God's glory were enfeebled by it? But it is not so. On the contrary never was such glory brought to God as by the cross of the Lord Jesus; never such a display of righteousness as well as of love as in the cross; and more than this, there never can be such a display again. The one spot and hour and act and person that stands out from the whole of this world's history from eternity and to eternity, distinct from all that ever was or ever will be, is the cross of the Lord Jesus; and yet it was in consequence of this very cross that God could deal in such tender mercy before it came; and it is in consequence of it that God will never rest in His love till all sin is completely gone, all evil judged, and all His mercy has had its full result in the accomplishment of His purposes. No wonder therefore that the cross of the Lord Jesus has brought in a signal change even now. It would not have been worthy of God had He not given by it a present deliverance to him that believes in Christ.

This deliverance then consists of these two parts: that we are placed in and as Christ before God. For Christ was not an individual solely, who simply came and did a great work for others, but apart from Christianity He is a public man in an infinitely better sense than any other could be. The queen, for instance, is a public person. As sovereign she gives expression to whatever is the law of the land; her sign-manual is supreme authority. Properly speaking there is no statute law without her. I use this merely as an illustration. But the Lord Jesus is a public person in an infinitely higher yet closer and nearer way, because no subject could be said to be in the sovereign as the Christian is in Christ. She may represent the people that she governs, but there could be nothing more intimate in their relation to her. The wonderful truth of redemption shows that the Lord Jesus is a public person so far as to give us a place in Himself above, and not only in identifying Himself with our guilt before God which He did once for all on the cross. In another sense He died for every man. Nothing can be more certain than that both are true, that He died for those that believe, and that He died for every man—with this difference, that the believer alone can say that He bore our sins in His own body on the tree. But it is the guilt of the natural man that, Christ having died for all, he nevertheless rejects Him. Yes, the deepest aggravation of unbelief is that, though Christ came for every creature, none would have Him. Not a living soul would have had Him unless by the special grace of God that opens a believer's eyes and inclines his heart to receive Him. This God does for the elect, though all be responsible. But the Lord Jesus is more than a Savior who died for us. He is now the great pattern of One who, having been under the most intolerable judgment of sin, rose from the dead perfectly delivered and in the fullest sunshine of divine delight and peace and joy to show us where the Christian is and how God looks upon him. Is not his place in Christ

Jesus, risen from the dead? Is he not entitled to look up and say, There is where I am? I am not denying that here we are still walking in this poor wretched world; but God's word warrants us as Christians to receive what He has done in Christ and to say that we are thus in Him. As a man, I look back at Adam and see his sin, the power of his natural affections carrying him away. When he fell, did he remain the noble creature he was before he fell? Alas! he was deceitful, yet insolent, willing to throw the blame upon his wife or upon God in order to excuse himself. So every sinful man is apt to be not only bold against God but a coward with a bad conscience. And this is what we are in our natural state, some showing more of the insolence, others of the cowardice. There is not a bold man that is not sometimes a coward, and alas! there is no man so timid that he is not sometimes insolent. How complete the moral havoc before God and man!

God then has brought in this perfect deliverance now, but only for the soul in its standing in the first place. He that has received Christ has this wonderful boon, not only his sins forgiven, but his sin so judged that God can and does put him in Christ, and as Christ before Himself. He is entitled to repeat the language of faith and say, I am in Christ Jesus, and there is therefore no condemnation. How can there be condemnation for Christ? It is Christ that settles and determines the place that grace has given me as a believer. Consequently I may humbly say, as the word of God for my soul, There is no condemnation.

But there is more than this. He will not allow it to be merely vague, lest it might appear intangible general blessing, but as pointed and personal as can be. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” It is not merely the death of Christ Jesus. His death in itself never gives full Christian liberty. It met my guilt, but I want more than this; I want a power of life that has won the victory. And this is what I have through grace. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death.” No wonder therefore that people, when not aware of this, are always occupied with a miserable toil under the law, rather hoping than knowing their sins forgiven. But the blood of Jesus, His mighty work, in death, simply meets their guilt and puts away the iniquities of the old man. Do you not also need the power of a new and risen life? This is what follows. “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus freed me from the law of sin and death.” Such is the second part of the deliverance. First, there is no condemnation in Christ; next, this power of life in Christ is mine; and both these things are vindicated by the cross of Christ which he mentions in the following verse. “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 practical consequence follows: “That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Is there then no flesh? There is the old evil nature in the believer; but he is not in flesh, he is in Christ. You cannot be in sin and in Christ at the same time; you cannot be in Adam and in Christ together. You were in Adam as man, but are in Christ as a Christian. Hence the apostle goes so far as to declare that the Christian is not in flesh at all. Does this mean that we are perfect and nothing else? Not in the least. It does suppose that you are made perfect in Christ, but it admits the humiliating fact that flesh is in us: otherwise we should never do wrong at all, there would be no self, no vanity or pride in us. But if we are not in flesh, as has been often said, flesh is in us as a matter of fact. “Ye are not in flesh” is God's estimate of the deliverance already given us in Christ Jesus.

Verse 10 does not speak about our being in Christ, but rather the converse, which is sometimes forgotten by the children of God. Not only am I in Christ, but Christ is in me as a believer. The effect of knowing that I am in Christ is that there is no condemnation: not merely am I not condemned in this or that, but all condemnation is absolutely annulled. There could not be anything of the sort for the Christian. God must condemn His own Son if He condemned those that are in Him; and every Christian is in Him. I grant you that people may make a bad use of this, but those who go on thus are not to be regarded as Christians at all, as indeed they never were. They were professors and nothing but professors; light-hearted men that would treat the Lord Jesus as they would one of their fellows, and the grace and truth of God as a common thing, making God the servant of their own lusts. Now He can be a Savior from all evil, but never a servant to the will and passions of men. But what He loves is grace, where a poor sinner, miserable because of his sins, and hearing the announcement of His gift of Christ, comes to Him to be saved. Could God with Christ in His presence say No? Contrariwise, the measure of His salvation is that, first of all, as to our standing, we are put in Christ risen from the dead, who is his life in the power of the Spirit. Next, there is the active working of the Spirit of God in the believer. This is what is spoken of here: “If Christ be in you, the body [is] dead because of sin, but the Spirit life, because of righteousness.” If I allow the body its own will, there is nothing but sin produced. How am I to get power against its dragging me into sin? Hold it for dead: this is the prescription. “If Christ be in you” —he is not speaking of unbelievers, but simply about Christians. To them the word is, If Christ be in you. Remember, this is what you are to do: count the body as a dead thing; do not pamper it, never yield to it. If there be the allowance of the active will therein, it is not merely the body, it becomes then simply “flesh.” Where there is the working of will, irrespective of course of God's, the body is but the instrument of sin, not of righteousness. Thus the way for the Christian to get power against the sin that is in him is to count the body dead. Is he that is dead to allow such and such an evil thing to work? When you cease to hold it for dead, there is sin; but if you do, the Spirit works in moral power. “The Spirit [is] life, because of righteousness.”

It is only so far as you do not yield to your own will that sin is practically null and void, and the Spirit of God acts freely. The apostle is looking at the actual working of the Spirit of God in us. It is not life simply viewed as ours, but as in exercise, a matter of experience day by day. What is between these two points (i.e., the soul's deliverance as in verses 1, 2, and the resurrection of our bodies)? “If Christ be in you, the body [is] dead because of sin, but the Spirit life because of righteousness.” Righteousness is not found simply by seeing that I am in Christ. This alone will not do. A man who merely talks about being in Christ and makes this his Christianity will turn out very bad indeed. He is merely making Christ a means for getting off eternal condemnation and present responsibility, but this will not do. As sure as you have got Christ and you are in Christ, Christ is in you; and if Christ is in you, take care you do not allow self to work. Where the body is not treated as dead but as alive, and is allowed to have its way, sin must be the result. If you treat it as dead, its career is ended, its course is closed, and the Spirit of God deigns to become the sole spring of what you are seeking.

And let no one suppose that this is bondage. It is Christian liberty. To do a thing because you must do it is never Christian liberty. A slave does a thing because he must; and when we are in a low state, we are apt to make a law of everything. When the affections are not flowing, we are only kept from what is openly evil, because there is a sevile dread of doing what our consciences know

is contrary to God. When this is the case, I am forgetting my blessed portion. What is it? Even now Christ is in me. If Christ be in me here, I am responsible to do His will. How is this to be done? I have got my body: if I allow it to have its own will and way, it will land me in sin. Treat it as dead; and let the one spring of what you desire be that which pleases the Spirit of God. “The Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.” There is no practical righteousness produced in the Christian, except by the power of the Spirit of God. If the body is allowed loose rein in what we desire, it is only sin. The Spirit, on the contrary, is life in the practical sense, and this is the only way of righteousness for our walk.

But then there is a third point of the deliverance, and this is, that, “if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you” (which we have been shown now to be the case, not only that dwelling in us but life because of righteousness), “he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by [or rather because of] his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” This is a rich and precious word. As sure as you now have the Spirit of God dwelling in you—the Spirit that raised up the humbled man Jesus, He that raised up the glorious One, who was made Lord and Christ, will raise up your mortal bodies. We have to mark the contrast of His personal name “Jesus” as compared with what follows. “He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies” and this “because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

I grant you there is no power intrinsically, there is mortality working in our bodies; but “he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies, because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you.” What a sure hope and full portion is that of the Christian! For thus I am delivered in my soul; I am called to give my testimony practically by the Holy Ghost that I am delivered, instead of being a man under law or in the flesh; and, again, I shall be raised. Even this mortal body shall be quickened—not a new body created and given me, but this mortal body shall be changed. This is no mere fresh creation but the most glorious proof of God's love and grace towards us. The mortal body shall be raised because of His Spirit that dwelleth in us. The Holy One who now dwells in us will never let go His claim to the mortal body in which He now dwells. He dwells in us, because of the risen life of Christ that is in the redeemed. If redemption had not been accomplished, and the life of Christ had not been given to us, He could not dwell in us; but where these are, He as it were says, There I must be. The Holy Ghost cannot be separated from Christ in the believer. He acts as one who loves to be there to the glory of Christ; and thus He strengthens us, the active mighty spring of good and the watchful guard against evil. “The Spirit [is] life because of righteousness.” But as sure as this is the case, “if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you.”

Chapter 235

Notes on Romans 8:12-14

The practical conclusion of the apostle follows. “So, then, brethren, we are debtors not to the flesh, to live according to flesh. For if ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die; but if by [the] Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live.” (Ver. 12, 13.) The deliverance of the Christian gives him the fullest title against the flesh; and he has the power of the Spirit that he should live according to Christ, not according to flesh. The structure of the phraseology is peculiar, but I believe admirably wise. The sentence looks unfinished and sounds as if another member were wanting to complete it. But God is always right; and no addition is needful or even admissible: if anything were added, it would but detract from the force of the truth as now stated. “We are debtors not to the flesh to live according to flesh.” Used to the schools and forms of man, one waits for some such statement to be added as that we are debtors to the Spirit or to Christ the Lord. This the inspired writer avoids saying. He knows the tendency to legalism, and would cut off excuse first. He would maintain us in liberty, the full liberty with which Christ set us free. But there is no enfeebling of responsibility. On the one hand, “If ye live according to flesh, ye are about to die; but if by the Spirit ye put to death the deeds of the body, ye shall live” on the other hand. The former is a natural and necessary consequence; the latter is a gracious and assuring pledge from God.

“For as many as are led by God's Spirit, they are sons of God.” (Ver. 14.) Here we begin to hear of our relationship in contrast with the place of servants or slaves, which Israel had under law. It also paves the way for the introduction of the Spirit as the personal agent, instead of being viewed simply as characterizing our new nature and status in contrast with flesh. But it is not correct to say that υ■■ς θεο■ differs from τ■κνον θ, in implying the higher and more mature and conscious member of God's family. The true distinction is that the former is the less intimate of the two and does not necessarily suppose a proper birth-tie. It need not go beyond public position by adoption, without being really born into the family, but in full contradistinction in every case to the place of a slave. Hence John, who treats of life, never speaks of us as “sons;” for the word is wrongly rendered so in John 1:12 and in chapter 3:1, 2, of his first epistle. It should be “children,” as being truly born of God. Nor is this at all enfeebled by the fact on the other side that Jesus is never called τ■κνον but υ■■ς. It would be derogatory to, and a denial of, His eternal glory to speak of Him as God's τ■κνον (child). But He is Son (υ■■ς) in more senses than one. He is Son of God as born in time and viewed on earth in His predicted association with Israel as their Messiah and king. (Psa. 2) He is determined Son of God in power by resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1) And what is more important than all, and the basis of all, He is Son of God, only-begotten Son in the Father's bosom, entirely apart from the time of His manifestation or the results of His work of redemption, Son of the Father in His own nature and personal relationship in that eternal subsistence which is essential to the Godhead and characteristic of it. For this last we have chiefly to consult the Gospel and Epistles of John. Nothing therefore can be more correct than the language of all the inspired writers; nothing more feeble than its appreciation by theological writers even with the facts and words before their eyes. But the source of their failure is quite intelligible: a sense of Christ's glory as inadequate as of the derived privileges of the Christian.

Notes on Romans 8:15-17

Thus we have seen the weighty and momentous fact that the Holy Spirit in distinct personal action associates Himself with the Christian. It is not only that He produces a new spiritual being and estate into which those who are Christ's are now brought: this we have had largely, but there is more insisted on here. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.” Not merely must one be born of water and the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5); not merely did the disciples receive the Holy Spirit, as Spirit of life more abundantly, when the risen Jesus breathed on them (John 20:22); but now the Holy Ghost, personally present, guided these richly favored saints in the conscious dignity of God's sons. There is liberty where He is, not law; yet the moral result which law demanded grace produced; for if they in dependence look to the Lord Jesus, and to their God and Father, He on His part is no spirit of weakness or of cowardice, but of power and of love and of a sound mind, and by Him are they thus led.

“For ye received not a spirit of bondage again to [or for] fear; but ye received a spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” (Ver. 15.) Gentiles though they were (for there is no allusion here as in chapter 7 to such as know the law), they were not brought into the spiritual condition of the saints in Old Testament times, especially indeed of those under law, who through fear of death were subject to bondage during the whole of their life. Out of this the Jewish saints were brought by the gospel, which equally met the Gentile who had never experienced the legal discipline, but had lain here and there, seemingly overlooked in their wild course of lawlessness and idolatry. The one as much as the other received a spirit of adoption or sonship, as indeed it is said elsewhere: “because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” The Holy Ghost could not but act in unison with the Son who had revealed the Father, and would give the sense of no relationship short of sons. The slaves had morally closed their history, not only by persistent rebellion, but by war to the death of the Son of God. From a lost world grace was saving, and placing those who believed in the Lord Jesus in the position of sons; and the Holy Ghost personally deigned to lead them, beside imparting a nature conformable to God and distinct from man though made good in man. It is in contrast then not merely with Gentile license and boldness, but with Jewish bondage and fear; and the Spirit gives us to cry, Abba, Father. So cried Jesus in Gethsemane, not on the cross. If we cry thus, it is the expression of dependence on and confidence in our Father, not of a suffering such as His, where His utter abandonment draws forth the still deeper and essentially distinct “My God, my God, why past thou forsaken me?”

“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God: and if children, heirs also; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if indeed we suffer with [him] that we may also be glorified with [him].” (Ver. 16, 17.)

Thus the Holy Spirit takes part in all. Does He content Himself only with imparting a new and divine nature? By no means. He has His appropriate internal witness; He Himself bears it with our spirit that we are of the very family of God, as indeed we are born of God. But now it is not alone the fact but the conscious joy of it. Christianity is not objective only, but just as remarkable for the

gift by grace of inner power and comfort; the Son reveals the Father, and gives the Spirit. It is not merely the gospel believed, but a real inward witnessing of the Spirit with ours that we are God's children. There is far more no doubt; but this there is, and it is of consequence to recognize it. Some may have substituted it for the testimony to Christ and redemption; but we must avoid the error of denying it. He would not be absent from the joy of the saint. Have we not this consciousness of being God's children? Whence have we it? Is it a process of reasoning from the gospel? God forbid. Let us call realities by their right names. It is the Spirit itself witnessing with our spirit that we are children of God. How Calvinists or Arminians misuse it may be of importance in each case; but this is the truth of God, realized in every simple-minded Christian, whether opposing parties hear or forbear.

Here the reasoning, it will be remarked, is not to our being God's children, but from it. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God: the inference is, that if children, we are also heirs. Wondrous to say, we are “heirs of God;” more wonderful still, “joint-heirs with Christ.” Israel were the lot of Jehovah's inheritance. Not such is our place; we are heirs of what God possesses; and this is both asserted in all its fullness as well as accounted for in our added title— “joint-heirs with Christ.” We are to share all things with Him, for as all things are His by right of creation and redemption, so are they ours by His grace who has placed in the utmost possible nearness to Himself. There is indeed the condition of suffering with Him in order that we may be glorified together; but this He makes good in all that are His. It is not suffering for Him; for all Christians do not. But all suffer with Him, who have the divine nature, even Himself as their life, in an evil world, which constantly wounds and tries those who have that nature. It will not be so in the millennial age; when, as the state of things will preclude suffering, so there will be no specific glorification with Him as the hope of such sufferers. Special trials and rewards will be no more, though there will still remain the reigning in life by one, Jesus Christ our Lord, forever, But the reign with Him for a thousand years will be past, as also concurrently the place of suffering with Him.

Notes on Romans 8:18-25

Thus our association with Christ brings us into the new place which He has entered by death and resurrection, and into the relationship of sons. Yea, the Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, the Heir of all things. But this supposes moral conformity with Him in this world, before we are conformed to His image in glory as in verses 29, 30, if we are suffering together that we may be also glorified together. This suffering flows from possessing life in Him whilst passing through a scene where all is opposed to Him; and the indwelling of the Spirit, instead of hindering this holy sorrow, is rather the spring of energy both in keen apprehension and deep feeling of every way in which Christ is dishonored, and in meek endurance of all by which we may be tried according to the will of God. Hence, if this place of suffering in the world as it now is be a necessary consequence of divine life surrounded by all that is working out its way of misery, estrangement, and rebellion against Him, it is an immense privilege to suffer with Christ, cheered along the road by the prospect of sharing His glory.

“For I reckon that the sufferings of this present season [are] of no account in comparison with the coming glory to be revealed in regard to us." No Christian doubts that the apostle estimates according to divine truth; and certainly if none had by God's sovereign will and power of the Spirit such a vivid foresight of the coming glory, none of those that followed Christ ever tasted as He of sorrows by the way. And this is made known to us that we may rest and rejoice in the reckoning. The divine excellency will then shine forth unhindered, and we shall have the fellowship of His delight everywhere.

Far as the distance may seem between creation in general and those whom grace has now taken out of its ruin and associated in so intimate and complete a way with Christ as the Christian knows it, there is a link of the most direct and momentous sort. “For the earnest expectation of the creation is waiting for the revelation of the sons of God. For the creation was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but on account of him who made [it] subject, in hope that even the creation itself shall be freed from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.” Here, as it is a passage of very great interest and value, so ignorance of the truth conveyed has embarrassed most of those who have sought to expound it, whether orally or in formal commentaries. There is no real difficulty where the main drift of the apostle is caught. The perplexity, as is usually the case, is brought in with notions extraneous to his reasoning. Let us then consider briefly the truth conveyed, and that which has made it obscure to the mass of readers.

Both the present sufferings and the future glory in the apostle's mind touch on the creation, which he here personifies. It is represented first of all as on the stretch of outlook, waiting for the revelation of the sons of God. Externally His sons do not differ in bodily appearance, power, or glory from the rest of mankind; they may be weak, they may suffer, as also they fall asleep or die while the Lord tarries on high. But after the resurrection or change, at His coming, they are to be

manifested in glory with Christ when He is thus manifested also. Creation too awaits this blissful moment. Its deliverance from its actual misery hinges on them and their revelation.

Nor is there any ground of surprise at such a connection with men; for creation was made subject to vanity, not of course by its own will, but on his account who made it subject. Man was set by God as the head of the lower creation. When he fell, creation shared his ruin. When the sons of God are revealed at the appearing of Christ, there will be a proof that it was made dependent on them, and that the hope of emancipation is not in vain. If it was righteous that by the fall of its head creation should be subjected to vanity, how consistent and worthy of God that the redemption of His children and heirs should be followed by its glorious retrievement!

To explain this of the Gentile world, as is done by Whitby and others, is poor indeed; as also Doddridge's notion that it is merely the whole unevangelized world looking out eagerly for such a remedy and relief as the gospel brings, by which humanity would be secured from vanity and corruption, and inferior creatures from tyranny and abuse.

The apostle however is not speaking of the prevalency of the gospel of grace, but of the incoming and display of glory, and hence of the divine power which will free the creation, ruined by man, according to His own counsels. When the heirs are glorified around the great Firstborn and appear with Him in glory, then and thus is the inheritance to emerge from the thralldom under which it has long groaned, “the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” Compare Isa. 11; 12; 25; 32; 35 - 51, 60 - 65; Jer. 31 - 33; Ezek. 36 - 48; Dan. 2:44, 45; 7:14, 27; 12; Hos. 1:11; 2:3:5; Joel 3; Amos 9; Obad. 17:21; Jonah (typically); Mic. 4; 5:7; Nah. 1:15; Hab. 3; Zeph. 3; Hag. 2:6-9, 21-23; Zech. 2:4-13; 6:8 - 14.; Mal. 3; 4 It is the regeneration of which our Lord spoke when His rights shall be made good in the full and duly ordered blessing of Israel on earth. (Matt. 19) It is the administration of the fullness of times when God's will is to gather up together all things in Christ, the things which are in the heavens and the things which are on the earth, even in Him in whom we also have obtained an inheritance. (Eph. 1:10, 11.) For the reconciliation is to take in all things, not merely the saints' who are now reconciled. (Col. 1) This will be the rest of God (Heb. 4); and then will be manifested the wide and various circles of blessedness and glory, fruit of pure grace, to which we are come before they come in fact for the earth (Heb. 12), the world kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ, who shall reign unto the ages of the ages (Rev. 11), as is set forth in a crowd of other scriptures.

The creation was not made (as it now is) in decay, degradation, suffering, death. That God originally designed that it should be in such confusion and misery would be hard to digest; but the scriptures teach the contrary, as it shows that, whilst subjected to its present disorder on account of man's guilt and ruin, it longs not in vain for deliverance, but awaits in hope His revelation in glory. The very struggle of everything for life and against sickness witnesses that it is fallen to rise. Thus not only is the riddle of what now is solved by God's account of the past, but His word casts its own bright light on the future; for, though subjected to vanity, it was “in hope that even the creation itself shall be freed from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.” It is only by faith that any enter into the liberty of grace; and this is the portion even now of God's children under the gospel. Creation cannot of necessity know such liberty, being unintelligent even where it is animate; but even itself shall exchange the slavery of corruption by which it is now held down for the liberty of glory when the children of God are

glorified. Thus all will be vindicated on God's part, and all in due order. There can be no communion between us and creation in grace; there will be in glory when the power of God deals with all creation in honor of Christ's death, whose blood has bought not the treasure only but the field, the world which contained it, yea, all things.

“For we know that the whole creation groaneth together and travaileth in pain together until now; and not only [so], but ourselves, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, waiting for adoption, the redemption of our body. For by hope were we saved; but a hope seen is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he also hope for? But if we hope for what we see not, we await with patience.” (Ver. 22-25.) Here is the most decisive evidence, were more wanted, of the distinction between the creation on the one hand and the Christian on the other. And observe that the contrast is drawn most sharply and exclusively; for “all the creation” is distinguished from “ourselves.” Again, the mistake of embracing impenitent souls within “the creation” here intended is no less plain; for it is certain that, as their will is engaged, contrary to what is said of the subjection of the creation to vanity, so their earnest expectation awaits anything rather than the revelation of the sons of God, and they will be cast into hell instead of being delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of glory.

As Christians then we are not deceived by appearances and the mind and will of man who would fain hide the testimony to his own guilt and ruin in the wretchedness of creation dragged down by his fault. For we know that it is all in groans and throes till now: neither Christ's coming in grace and humiliation, nor the gospel preached in the power of the Spirit sent down from heaven set this aside, but called believers to glory above it, and to virtue in spite of it. Yet the groaning of creation was not only unintelligent but selfish, though in no way a matter of indifference to God, whatever it may be to dreamy or hard philosophy. And ourselves too, having the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan in ourselves, awaiting as sonship the redemption of our bodies. For the body of the believer has not yet experienced the power of Christ, and thus we have our link with the groaning creation. And the Spirit gives us so much the more to groan because we have access by faith into this favor in which we stand and we exult in hope of the glory of God. Our groaning therefore is not unintelligent, nor is it simply because of our personal suffering; but in fellowship with Christ, in horror of abounding evil, in love of good despised, in yearning after man and in desire for God's truth and majesty. The spirit, though of power and love and discreetness, makes us so much the more long for the day, when we shall be changed and manifestly sons of God as sons of the resurrection. It is not the sorrow of ignorant unbelieving uncertainty, but of the inward mind and heart over what is far from God and unlike Him, because of knowing what He is in Christ and in full confidence that we shall be like Him in that day. For we have only salvation by hope, not yet seen or in present possession; we hope for it complete according to Christ risen, and with patience await. It is well worth while.

Notes on Romans 8:26-27

We have seen the function of the Spirit in bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, as we saw previously the new condition which He forms in contrast with the flesh, and in which we now find ourselves by grace—in Spirit if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in us. Then we had the apostle contrasting the creation as it now groans with the liberty of glory when the sons of God, the heirs, are manifested in glory at the appearing of Christ; and along with this, the groaning of the saints, whose bodies are not yet delivered, no longer because of selfish feelings but in the interests and sympathies of divine love.

Now we are told of the relation of the indwelling Spirit to this state of weakness and suffering.

“And likewise the Spirit also joineth help to our weakness; for we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit itself intercedeth with unutterable groanings, and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what [is] the mind of the Spirit, because he intercedeth for saints according to God.”

Thus the blessed Spirit of God will not be severed from our weakness, now that He deigns to take His abode in us because of Christ's redemption. Even he who could work signs and miracles did not differ from his brethren by exemption from infirmity. Rather was Paul, the greatest of apostles, more than any other sensible of it. Caught up to the third heaven (whether in the body or out of it, he could not tell), he gloried of such an one, not of himself save in his weaknesses. And when he prayed to the Lord for the removal of the thorn for the flesh given to him, what was the answer? Not its departure; but “my grace sufficeth for thee; for my power is made perfect in weakness.” “Most gladly therefore,” says he, “will I rather glory in my weaknesses that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

It was not otherwise with the perfect pattern of all excellency in man here below. “Jesus wept.” He was deeply pained, sighing sorely in His Spirit. He knew what to say and what to do, conscious that the Father always heard Him. But we do not know what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unutterable. It is not now simply Christ with us but the Spirit in us, condescending to give our groanings a character entirely above the mere feelings of human sorrow. We feel the evil of the misery; we do not know what to ask; but at least we groan. Wondrous grace the Spirit associates Himself with our groaning; and the searcher of the hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit. Instead of slighting the ignorance which cannot ask a suitable means of relief, He interprets us by His mind who dwells in us, and who intercedes for saints (for of them only is it a question) according to God. It is not merely “according to his will,” as in the Authorized Version, but according to Himself. The inference of Macedonius from the passage is the working of the spirit of man wholly ignorant of God's mind which he altogether missed; nay, it is worse than this, it betrays the beguiling power of the serpent, for it evinces that enmity to God and man which not only loses all the comfort of the truth but turns the word to the dishonor of the Holy Spirit. For the unhappy man concluded from the text that the Spirit must be inferior to God and a creature, because He prays to God for us. He knew not grace, he appreciated not the moral glory

of God which stoops to serve, as love must do, if it save sinners in an evil world. Man can understand power in God; but love, especially love active spite of evil, humbling itself, and sympathizing, he overlooks and denies even to the denial of God Himself in those of whom it is predicated. The believer knows it as his deepest joy, and never adores with so full a sense of what God is as when he sees the Father declared in the Son, and knows that even his groans come up before God clothed with a divine character because of the Holy Ghost who is in us by the grace of our God. Just as evil spirits identified the miserable man who was thus possessed with their demoniacal character, and an individual was called Legion because many demons were entered into him; so the Spirit of God not less but more in divine goodness and power identifies us with Himself spite of our weakness and our ignorance, not for a moment lowering His own dignity but meeting us in love as only God could, and as even God would only in virtue of redemption.

Notes on Romans 8:28-29

These verses are a transitional link from the work of the Spirit in us to the bold challenge in the conclusion of the chapter (ver. 31-39), grounded on the assurance that God is for us against all adversaries and spite of every weakness. That they may be rightly viewed thus is apparent. First, there is a distinct allusion, in the opening words, to the previous clause, which traced the value and comfort of the Spirit in helping our infirmity. For He, when we know not what to pray for as we ought, Himself intercedes for us with unutterable groanings, yet according to God. Secondly, on the other hand, they are in bearing still more intimately a groundwork for what follows; for they set forth in a striking and connected manner the purpose of God as far as it is consistent with our epistle to treat of it.

We do not know what we should pray for as we ought; “but we do know that to those that love God all things work together for good, to those that are called according to purpose. Because those whom he foreknew he also predestined [to be] conformed to the image of his Son, that he should be the firstborn among many brethren. But whom he predestined, those he also called; and whom he called, those he also justified; but whom he justified, those he also glorified.” (Ver. 28-30.) The chain is thus complete from His own purpose in eternity to their glorification for eternity. It is the activity, extent, and scope of the grace of God for its objects apart from all circumstances, and, as we shall see later, in spite of them, let them be what they may, because they are but creature causes or effects, whilst God is for us and supreme above all, not a mere causa causata, but the one causa causans.

Even Paul, in 2 Cor. 12, did not know what to pray for as he ought; but the Lord was faithful and made the sufficiency of His grace known—an answer far better than the prayer. And yet not Paul only, but even we know that all things work together for good—not merely shall, but do now, and this for others as well as ourselves, for those that love God. Otherwise sorrows irritate. Here they are twice blessed, blessed to those exercised by them, blessed to other children of God; in short, to those that love Him and to those that are called according to purpose, for this is here carefully stated, lest the love of God on our part might enfeeble the thought of grace on His. Hence purpose and calling according to it are put forward.

It is important to observe that the apostle does not speak of a passive or naked foreknowledge (ver. 29), as if God only saw beforehand what some would be, and do, or believe. His foreknowledge is of persons, not of their state or conduct; it is not what, but “whom” He foreknew.

Further, those whom he foreknew, all of them and no others, He also fore-ordained to be conformed to the image of His Son. It is plain and well to note that we have the end bound up with the beginning; for the conformity here spoken of is not of that sort which is now produced in the soul practically by the Spirit through the word. The latter is most true, and often insisted on elsewhere, as in John 13; 15; Rom. 12; 13:1 Cor. 5; 6:2 Cor. 3:18; 7:1, Gal. 5:16, 25; Eph. 2:10; 4:5, &c. 1 John 2; 3, combines both: “We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” This is the conformity to the image of His Son of which the apostle here

speaks.; whereas the moral work in the heart of the believer is spoken of in the following verse: “And every man that hath this hope in him (i.e., founded on Christ) purifieth himself even as he (Christ) is pure.” There is and can be no less a standard for the Christian, whatever may have been the rule by which the Jew was tried. The purifying goes on now within us, but answers rather to the central teaching of our chapter; the likeness to Christ in glory, which will be seen in us when Christ is manifested, is the conformity to His image which is here assured to us.

It seems harsh, however, with Augustine and others to drag in sins here among the “all things;” for though no doubt grace can turn everything to account, scripture is the more careful to guard against the least real appearance of dealing lightly with that which is morally offensive to God.

Thus God foreordained the objects of His foreknowledge to conformity with the image of His Son in resurrection glory. Then they will be as He, according to divine counsels, in the predestined condition of man, the first-born among many brethren. The corn of wheat which died, but sprang up again, will have borne much fruit, Himself alike the pattern and the power; for nothing short of this meets the purpose according to which we have been called. The saints shall be manifestly then sons of God being sons of the resurrection, when He will transform the body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory. For if God delights in His own Son as the risen man, such and nothing less is the destiny to which He has ordained us beforehand. Nevertheless, whatever the communion, rightly will our Lord have His due place in that bright family—the chief or “Firstborn among many brethren.”

Verse 30 pursues the matter, connecting the ways of God in time with what is before and out of time. “But whom he predestinated, those he also called.” It is not only the call of grace in a general way, but made effectual to such as He foreknew and foreordained. “And whom he called, those he also justified.” Justification, like the call, is in time, and even subsequent to the call by the gospel. The Calvinists greatly err who teach that Christ rose because we were justified, a notion as subversive of sound doctrine as of holiness, and quite opposed to the scriptures which bind it up with faith. But this is not the only danger here.

For on the other side the Armenians are in error who apply συμμ■ρφους τ■ς ε■κ■νος το■ υ■ο■ α■το■ (conformed to the image of His Son) to holiness, as verse 30 abundantly confirms. For while foreknowledge, predestination, calling, and justification are set out in regular order, the series is suddenly closed by the words “but whom he justified, those he also glorified,” without one word about that spiritual conformity which we all confess to be a necessary condition in the salvation of a soul.

Was this omission an oversight of man, or divine intention? The latter only, I am persuaded; and with a wisdom by no means hard to discern. We are here in presence of the apostle's unfolding of God's purpose in its application to us and our security in the face of all difficulties and dangers. Now it is clear that the inner work would draw off to questions of our state. However important this may be, it were out of place here, besides the fact that it had been already insisted on with care and fullness after the opening verses of this chapter. In its own place the Holy Spirit had pressed it strongly and with solemn warning for any and every soul bearing the Lord's name. But here God would give the believer the unmingled comfort of what He is for us; and this excludes what He does within us, wholesome and indispensable though it may be.

It will be observed too that (■δ■ξασεν) “glorified” is an aorist, no less than the other verbs in verse 30. This is due to a similar reason. All is looked at from God's side and purpose, not as if the call, justification and glorification were already accomplished facts, but because the Spirit is emphatically asserting the whole from first to last, as assured in His eyes and by His word who does these things, known from eternity in His own everlasting now.

Chapter 240

Notes on Romans 8:31-39

We now enter on the distinct portion which closes this division of the epistle, where the apostle interrogates and, I may say, challenges all adversaries in presence of the rich and varied provisions of redemption.

“What then shall we say to these things? If God [is] for us, who [shall be] against us? He who spared not his own Son but gave him up for us all, how shall he not also with him freely give us all things?” (Ver. 31, 32.)

It is no longer that we are in Christ and Christ in us, nor is it the witness and work of the Spirit in us whether in joy or sorrow; but the deduction from all that God is for us, not only superior to all that would hurt us, but leading to the bold question, Who dare be against us? All is measured by God's gift of His own Son, not spared but delivered up for us all; a plain and irrefragable answer to every doubt both of the reality of His love and of its extent; and this for the entire family of God. There was one object above all dear and precious to God, His own Son; and it was His own on whom for us He spared in no way, but for us all surrendered Him to all that is dreadful in our eyes, to His heart infinitely worse—who knew His Father's love and felt evil as none but He could. That God should in His grace secure all things to us after such a gift is what we cannot but feel to be easily understood and suitable to His love, if not even necessarily due to the glory of Christ. Nothing can be lacking by the way: in the end we shall share all things with Him who is the Heir of all things. He made all, has reconciled all and will take all under His glorious sway; but we shall reign with Him. He is head over all to the Church which is His body, says our apostle elsewhere. Here he does not pursue the counsels of God but affirms the principle of grace in righteousness as applied to our individual relationship. It was no sudden thought but a settled design which went right through to glory with Christ, after the full trial and demonstration of the uniform and complete failure of the first man. It is now a question of the Second man and of those that are His; and thus it is as plain as it is sure that God is for them; and if so, who is against them? Our sins have been remitted, sin in the flesh condemned, ourselves believing in Jesus and His blood, yea dead with Him and alive in Him to God: who then is against us? God has proved Himself for us where we had most ground for dread, and dread of Him above all; for against Him had we sinned. But in nothing has He shown His grace so deep and conspicuous as in our hopelessly evil state; in nothing so exhibited the worth and efficacy of the redemption through His Son. We are entitled then in faith to ask: “If God is for us, who shall be against us?” We are entitled to count that He that spared not His own Son will along with Him lavish on us everything good for us now everything glorious by and by.

If His Son is the measureless measure of His love to us, “who shall bring a charge against God's elect?” In this epistle the Spirit glories in connecting the objects He is handling with God. Not only is the righteousness, the grace, the glory, God's, but so also is the gospel at the very commencement, and so here are the elect. The enemy had better beware of meddling with God's elect. What did Satan make of it when it was only Joshua the type of a better, and about Jerusalem that he dared to resist? Did not Jehovah then take up the matter for the encouragement

of the guilty whom He meant to save in sovereign mercy? Did He not declare that He had chosen Jerusalem, a brand plucked out of the fire? Not more distant but nearer is His relationship with us; not darker but far more clear the revelation of His grace to us since the death and resurrection of His own Son. Just as God interposed and spoke for Joshua, so here (says the apostle), “[It is] God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth?” This I think is the true way of arranging as well as punctuating the clauses. The Authorized Version impairs the link between the end of verse 33 and the beginning of verse 34, as also between the rest of verse 34 and verse 35; while others seem to me to injure the force by putting a note of interrogation at the end of verses 33 and 34.

Remark here that God is represented as the Justifier. It is not only that we have been justified by faith, justified before God, but He justifies. How does He justify? Is it not with that absolute perfection in which He carries on His work and His ways? Is it less perfect where He justifies those He destines to be conformed to the image of His Son in virtue of His infinite work on the cross?

But if there be an analogy with one prophet, there is a clear allusion to another. Isa. 1 introduces God's elect Servant, substituted for Israel who had rejected Him, and skews that He was not more certainly the obedient and suffering one than the Jehovah God of Israel who made heaven and earth. Hence whatever the indignities He endured, the issue is sure, and all through He reckons on the fullest vindication. He in the midst of His shame, though thinking it not robbery to be on equality with God, can say “the Lord Jehovah will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifieth me; who will contend with me let us stand together: who is mine adversary? let him come near to me. Behold, the Lord Jehovah will help me; who is be that shall condemn me? lo, they all shall wax old as a garment; the moth shall eat them up.” (Isa. 1:7-9.)

What Christ says in the prophecy, the apostle does not hesitate to apply to the Christian. How blessed is this identification! It is the more striking too because immediately follow words descriptive neither of Himself nor of the Christian who now enjoys His righteous vindication along with Him, but of the godly remnant who have to walk in darkness, though trusting in the name of Jehovah while they obey the voice of His servant (ver. 10), and of the godless mass who with increasing unbelief turn to every refuge of lies to end all in sorrow, shame, and judgment. (Ver. 11.) This brings out very definitely the peculiar blessedness of the Christian through known redemption, and the indwelling of the Spirit who glorifies Christ in their behalf as cannot be with even the righteous remnant.

It was needful to point out our distinctive position before a psalm is quoted (ver. 36) where we are viewed in circumstances analogous to theirs. For both are true: we have much that is common to all saints till Christ comes; but we and they have what is characteristic and peculiar.

“[It is] God that justifieth: who [is] he that condemneth [It is] Christ that died, but rather was raised, who is also at [the] right hand of God, who also intercedeth for us: who shall separate us from the love of Christ? tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? even as it is written, For thy sake we are being put to death all the day; we were reckoned sheep for slaughter.' Nay but in all these things we more than conquer through him that loved us.” (Ver. 32-37.)

Here not only have we Christ presented in the full extent of His work from His death on the cross through resurrection to His presence and activity of intercession for us at God's right hand, as the ground for the challenge. Who shall sever us from the love of Christ, but the difficulties and perils and sufferings for us along the road are mustered and arrayed in all their strength in order to prove its fidelity and unfathomable depth. Certainly, if we now, as the godly of old and ere long in the latter day, taste somewhat the bitterness of the way and the obstacles the enemy puts before us, Christ drank that cup and more to the dregs. Not only did He drink what was and could be His alone; but which of our afflictions was He a stranger to? Deeper by far, and felt according to the competency of His person to estimate and suffer, they became only the demonstrations of His perfect love to us, Himself all the while the faithful witness. Christ who is risen and on high has been in them all, having gone down incomparably lower than the lowest of us. None of these, then, shall separate us from the love of Christ.

Thus God has proved Himself for us, first, in the gift of His own Son and of all things with Him; secondly, in justifying us Himself according to His value for Christ and His work; thirdly, in the love of Christ who has borne witness of its strength here below in all possible trials that could separate us from any other as surely as He is exercising it for us before God in virtue of redemption. “In all these things we are more than conquer through him that loved us.”

“For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 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.” (Ver. 38, 39.) Here we have still deeper difficulties, not the visible, but the invisible, the spiritual; but after all (sum them all up as the apostle does in his climax), they are but the creature, and they are arrayed at their strongest in order to be blotted out as nothing in presence of the all-vanquishing love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

For here, as the suited winding up, let it be remarked that it is the love of God, rather than of Christ as in verse 35. Each is exactly in place; the love of Christ as evident in suffering to the utmost for us here, and animated with the self-same love in His intercession in heaven for us who suffer still where He suffered; the love of God none the less real if less in sight, His immense and unchanging love whose grace planned all, gave all, forgave all, justified all, sustains all, and will bring all to that fullness of love and joy and glory which can satisfy such a God and the redemption of such a Savior. If “the love of Christ” is our boast for its tender fidelity in fathoming all depths and pleading our cause above all heights, the immutable strength of “the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” before all and through all and to all eternity, imparts the fullest rest and confidence to our hearts.

Notes on Romans 9:1-5

The apostle now enters on a new section of the epistle in chapters 9 - 11, the main object of which is to reconcile the indiscriminate call of Gentiles and Jews with the special promises made to Israel. In this task he overthrows the fleshly pretensions of those who rested on nothing but a line of natural descent from Abraham: he proves that special promise has from the first been the principle of God; he points to sovereign mercy as the only hope for a people such as even Israel had shown themselves to be; he annihilates the poor and selfish and proud reasoning which arraigns the rights and righteousness of God, when the fact is that man is utterly unrighteous before Him; he demonstrates that according to the Jewish prophets Israel would be rejected, Gentiles called, and only a remnant of the ancient people saved; he shows that their rejection was owing to their failure in meeting the law of righteousness which they had deliberately chosen instead of the righteousness which grace gives by faith, while the Gentiles received it gladly, Christ being the grand test for both; he insists that this did not hinder his love and prayer for Israel that they might be saved, but salvation could only be by accepting Christ the end of the law for righteousness to the believer according to the secret of grace intimated in Deut. 30, supported and carried out by Isa. 28:16 and Joel 2:32, which opens the door of faith to more than Israel, even to those who, if they had not the law, might hear the glad tidings of good things (Isaiah which God sends out. He points out that the very unbelief of this on the part of the Jews fulfills Isa. 53; that the Psalms (15.) attest the wide-spread universal message of God, and that, while the law warned them of God's provoking them to jealousy by a no-people, the prophet (Isa. 65) is bolder still and explicitly announces God found by those who sought Him not (Gentiles), while Israel are condemned as a disobedient and gainsaying people. But the apostle would not close the subject without the most distinct statement, as well as proof from the prophets themselves, that God had not finally cast off His people Israel: first, there is always a remnant according to the election of grace, of which the apostle himself was witness; secondly, their fall was expressly to provoke Israel to jealousy, and therefore not to reject them even for a time; and, thirdly, on the ruin of the Gentile by unbelief and slight of God's goodness as of Israel before, all Israel shall be saved according to the written word of God (Isa. 59), all His ways of mercy and wisdom causing the apostle to burst forth into thanksgiving and adoration. Such is the general outline and argument, which maintains responsibility on the one side and the promises of God on the other, and reconciles the indiscriminate ways of God in the gospel now with the accomplishment of a special glory for Israel as well as the general blessing of Gentiles of the earth in the age to come on earth. Heavenly grace is not in question here. Hence it is the olive tree, not the one new man, of which we read.

The apostle then begins this most instructive episode, in which he explains the ways of God, with the solemn assurance of his fervent affection, and hence his distress for Israel in their present low estate and exposure to judgment.

“Truth I say in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bearing witness with me in [the] Holy Spirit, that I have great grief and unceasing pain in my heart, for I was wishing—I myself—to be a curse from

Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to flesh." (Ver. 1-3.) It is plain that he alludes there to the love Moses had proved so well, as God records it in the law; and he intimates that he loved them not a whit less. It was a wish that had passed through his soul. He does not refer to the days of his Pharisaism; for great as his zeal was, his love as a Christian and an apostle was far deeper as well as wholly unselfish. In his old unenlightened condition there was no question of such a feeling for them; as he had no right sense of their peril any more than of his own. On the other hand he does not lay it down as the deliberate wish of his present mind; but as a passionate self-sacrificing desire which had been in his heart, impossible no doubt, but evincing the strength of his burning love for Israel, as well as his sense of their extreme peril and utter ruin. Hence he dwells on his ties of relationship with them.

This leads him to speak of their privileges. Those who hate others lose no opportunity of detracting from them and denying at any rate favors that seem peculiarly theirs from God. Love makes the most of what is possessed by its object. Judged by such a test, there could. be no doubt of the love of the apostle who sets out the marks of God's goodness to Israel as none else had ever done before, not even Gamaliel, least of all his Sadducean enemies, Who could produce from tradition, yea, from the living oracles themselves such a bright roll as Paul here unfolds before those who ignorantly taxed him with making light of the blessings God had vouchsafed to his kinsmen according to flesh? "who are Israelites, whose [is] the adoption and the glory and the covenants and the lawgiving and the service and the promises; whose [are] the fathers, and of whom [is] Christ as to flesh, that is over all God blessed unto the ages. Amen." (Ver. 4, 5.)

Thus he gives them the divinely conferred name of victory with God and man, which they derived from their father Jacob; then he alludes to the name Jehovah deigned to call them by in his summons to Pharaoh— "my son, my first-born." Next he directs attention to the shechinah or glory-cloud which led out the people from Egypt, through the wilderness into Canaan. After this he speaks of those solemn covenants which God made first with the fathers, and particularly looking onward to that which He will make in the latter day with the sons. Then he names the lawgiving, before which all the boasts of ancient or modern times are but the merest smoke compared with the blaze of Sinai or the marvelous condescension which deigned from the tabernacle to treat of their least as well as greatest matters. The religious services or ordinances of worship next follow which justly claim to be the only ritual with its priesthood which God ever instituted for a people on earth. This however would have been short indeed without "the promises;" as these naturally are followed by "the fathers," and all is crowned by the Messiah. And here assuredly the apostle does not hide His glory. Let the Jews say all they might of Him whom they expected, they can never rise above what Paul delights to tell of Messiah. Alas! they would fain lower Him to the measure of their own desires; and worse still modern unbelief in Christendom answers to the old darkness of Judaism. The apostle however does not more surely lay down His descent from the fathers as to flesh, than His proper Godhead in His other and divine nature, "He that is" (says he) "above all God blessed forever. Amen." A more illustrious testimony there cannot be. But Satan for a while had blinded the eyes of Israel, so that they forsake their own mercies and deny a truth which, did they but see, they would recognize as both their brightest jewel and the solid ground of all their hoped for blessing.

Very needless difficulty has been raised about the terms ■ ■ν ■π■ π■ντων θε■ς. The Noetian heretics of old drew from this and other scriptures that God the Father suffered. Others in

opposing so flagrant an error were too anxious to restrict ■ ■π■ π■ντων to the Father, especially as He is unquestionably so qualified in Eph. 4:6. But there is no real difficulty; and it is only ignorance or heterodoxy which finds any; for scripture is plain in attributing not merely θε■τητα but θε■τητα to Christ. He is God, as is the Father, and also the Holy Ghost. They are each and all styled Jehovah, the name incommunicable to the creature, let it be ever so exalted. The Son did not deem it a matter of plunder to be on equality with God. He emptied Himself in taking a servant's shape; whereas even the archangel is at best but a servant and never can be other: it is Michael's blessedness and part to be serving God. Not so the Son: He humbled Himself to take the place of a servant, being in His own proper nature and dignity infinitely above it. He learned obedience by the things which He suffered; He had only known what it was to command; but, taking that position in communion with the love and counsels of the Father, He was therein the perfect pattern of all lowly obedience. How base to take advantage of His grace to despise His glory!—to be so occupied with the humiliation to which He stooped to glorify God the Father, and show us both God and man in His own person and ways, and above all, to accomplish redemption—to be so filled, I may say, with the circumstances of shame into which He went down in love as to forget who He is in Himself that for us descend so low! No; He that was the perfect man was the very God, equally with the Father and the Holy Ghost. All things were made not only by Him but for Him.

But is not this true of the Father? Assuredly: yet this in no way impeaches the title of the Son. Scripture is plain as to both. God as such in the true and full sense is and must be supreme. This attaches to the persons in the Godhead. Differences there may be and are; but not in this. To deny supremacy of the Son or of the Spirit is to fall into the Arian heresy or the Macedonian. No doubt, as in Eph. 4:5, Christ is contradistinguished as one Lord from the Father; and so similarly in 1 Cor. 8:6. This however, far from derogating from His intrinsic divine glory, only shows us another glory which He receives as the exalted man who is made Lord and Christ. He, and He distinctively, has the official place of lordship, though of course as a term of dignity it belongs alike to Father, Son, and Spirit; and so any one can see who will take the trouble of comparing the scriptures.

There is no discrepancy in the authorities there that affects the sense, as in 1 Tim. 3:16. Manuscripts and versions proclaim the truth with an unwavering voice: Christ is over all, God blessed forever. The notion that θε■ς is wanting in the citation of the early ecclesiastical writers is a mistake. They all read as we do, unless we conceive that Chrysostom omitted ■ before ■ν, as the Augian and Boernerian MSS. did τ■ before κατ■ σ■ρκα, which was probably mere inadvertence. What the Pseudo-Ignatius (ep. Tars.) or the Constit. Apostol. may say is of no moment. As to Athanasius, not only is it not true that he ever wrote περ■ δ■ το■ ε■ναι ■π■ π■ντων θε■ν σταυρ■θεντα φοβ■μαι (“I fear to say that the crucified One is God over all”), but it was not even the Pseudo-Athanasius who is so represented, but the Pseudo-Arius in answering the citation of this passage. Wetstein therefore was wrong here and betrayed his Arian animus. (See Athanasii Opp. i. 125 B, ed. Col. 1686). Erasmus is equally wrong in thinking that Cyprian and Hilary left out “Deus;” for it is only omitted by careless editors, and is found in all good editions. As to Origen, his wildness was such as to weaken the weight of his assertions; but what he does say, in answer to Celsus' charge that the Christians made Christ God the Father or greater still, is that, while some might be hasty enough to aver τ■ν Σωτ■ρα τ■ν μ■γιστον ■π■ π■σι θε■ν ■λλ ο■τι γε ■με■ς τοιο■τον ο■ πειΟ■μενοι α■τ■ λ■γοντι. Now I do not admit that Origen (contra

Cels. vii. 14) was justified in quoting the last clause of John 14:28 (which he misquotes) where it was a question of the Son's Deity, while the text speaks of His place of earthly subjection. But even he does not go so far as to deny supreme Godhead to the Son; he does deny, as all taught of God must, the monstrous folly that the Son has power over God the Father. The doubtful opinion of Eusebius may indeed be cited, who did restrict, it would seem, τ■ν ■π■ π■ντων θε■ν to the Father;. but it is well known that he was feeble as to the great truth of Christ's Godhead if not an Arian. But these seem really all who have been exaggerated into “multi patres qui Christum τ■ν ■π■ π■ντων θε■ς appellari posse negant” (Griesbach in loco), save indeed that by very strange logic it is assumed that to call the Father so is to deny it of the Son. But this is only the mistake handed down through Wetstein to the critic of Jena. The fact is that the fathers as a whole applied our text to the Lord Jesus without a suspicion of its incompatibility with Eph. 4:6. They are both equally true, as the Father and the Son are equally God. I grant that they speculated dangerously sometimes; and of their crude assertions controversy and heresy have availed themselves: the latter to cover its aberration from revealed truth; the former to make councils or the Pope the only securer of the truth, as against the earlier fathers and (what is worse) holy scripture. But from Tremens to Theophylact among Greeks, and from Tertullian to the middle ages among the Latins, it could be easily shown that the passage was accepted as we have it now in the Authorized Version and in the ordinary orthodox sense. Cyril of Alexandria is most express in contradicting from this text the Emperor Julian who was rash enough to say that Paul did not speak of Jesus as God. Nor is there a single name of sound reputation opposed to this.

The ingenuity of criticism however, having neither various readings nor ancient versions to invoke, is not content with misrepresenting the testimony of the early Christian writers and has strained itself in the most violent efforts to effect a diversion by the help of points; as it is well known that they are wanting in the most ancient copies. The Complutensian editors punctuate fairly. Erasmus, not in his earlier editions but later, suggested a period after σ■ρκα, as had been done before by the writers of two MSS. of the eleventh and twelfth centuries usually numbered 5 and 47 in the conventional list of Pauline copies. Lachmann and Tischendorf acted on this; and Vater clenched the rent quite as effectually by putting the cut-off clause or clauses within marks of parenthesis ended by a note of admiration. Now not only is this severance, however managed, in opposition to the mass of punctuated manuscripts, all ancient versions and citations, but, what is of more weight still, it is contrary to the invariable idiom employed to express such a blessing (or on the contrary a curse). The regular formula is to open the sentence with ε■λομητ■ς or some kindred word. Here therefore to bear regularly the desired punctuation the words should have run:—Ε■λογητ■ς ■ ■π■ π. θ., the ■ν in this case being worse than useless. The only apparent exception produced is from the Septuagint of Psa. 67, (68.) 19, κ■ριος ■ θε■ς ε■λογη■ς. But judging by the old Latin quoted in Holmes and Parsons' note, “Dominus Deus benedictus est,” it is no exception, because it is an assertion about God, not an ejaculatory blessing. The latter follows immediately; and then the usual order appears. The former clause may indeed be an interpolation; as there is no Hebrew text to found it on.

Further, the incongruity of such a doxology here, remembering the apostle's grief just expressed and the relation of the Jews to the Messiah, is also a decisive disproof; and, lastly, it would utterly mar the beautiful antithesis so characteristic of the apostle, even in the opening of this very epistle, in which he contrasts the human line of the Messiah with His divine dignity.

Another mode of punctuating, also suggested by Erasmus (who perhaps did not know that a Viennese MS. 71 of the twelfth century, represents it), and adopted by Locke, places the stop after π■ντων with a shorter clause taken as the blessing, and is even more objectionable, as it is pressed by the additional difficulty that we ought in that case to have the article with beds. It should stand Ε■λογητ■ς ■ θε■ς ε■ς τ. α■ ■μ■ν. But after all it would not effect what is desired, for it would connect ■ ■ν ■π■ π■ντων with the Christ; and it is impossible to have a stricter predication of supremacy. It is not merely, as Hippolytus and others thought, that the Father delivered all things to the Son, an important but different truth. Here we have what He is; and He is over all, being essentially divine.

Conjectural emendation of the text is another device of unbelievers to defraud the Lord of His glory; but this may be dismissed into its native obscurity. Even the Grotian expedient of dropping θε■ς, is contrary to all authority of MSS. but would be useless if conceded; for ■ ■ν ■π■ π■ντων is the strongest affirmation in itself of divine supremacy. Quite as futile was the effort to lower the sense of θε■ς by reference to 2 Thess. 2:4, and to translate the clause here, “who is as God,” &c. For, first, the supposed analogy is cast out of that verse on the best authority; and secondly, it would tell, if genuine, in the opposite way; for certainly the man of sin will not claim to be God in an inferior sense. The absence of the article is a sign that character is meant to be conveyed, and has nothing to do with inferiority. Compare Rom. 1:21.

On the whole then the reader may rest assured of both the text and the sense of this most impressive testimony to Christ, the importance of which may be in some measure inferred from the evident desire of so many since the Reformation, Catholics and Protestants, without reckoning Arians or Unitarians, who have done what they could to neutralize its force. Thanks be to God who vouchsafes the truth to be in us and to abide with us forever.

Notes on Romans 9:6-13

Two things then the apostle had asserted with the utmost strength in the preceding verses of the chapter—his burning love for his brethren after the flesh and consequent grief at their low estate and danger; and his sense of their privileges far fuller and stronger than their own, demonstrated above all in his estimate of their Messiah's glory whom they depreciated and had even rejected to their own ruin. This last however is not openly said but unmistakably implied; for the apostle treats their difficulties with the utmost delicacy, caring for their souls with a love truly divine. Whether the expression of his grief then or of that glory of Christ which they refused in unbelief raised the question, which the free grace preached to the Gentiles indiscriminately with the Jews of itself put in the most direct form, whether such a proclamation of grace to every soul, Jew or Greek, be compatible with the special promises to Abraham and to his seed? The Israelite instinctively resented the gospel as annulling his distinctive place of favor, and viewed the apostle's deep concern for their salvation through faith in Jesus as an impeachment of God's pledges to their nation as vouchsafed to their fathers. How could this plighted troth be sure, if the Messiah had come and been rejected by them? if the door was now as open to the Gentile as the Jew Where the value of the promises in either case? Did not the apostle's teaching clash with the trustworthiness of the divine word to Israel? This is fully met now.

“Not however as though the word of God hath failed; for not all those that [are] of Israel [are] Israel; nor because they are Abraham's seed, [are] they all children, but in Isaac shall a seed be called to thee. That is [it is], not the children of the flesh that [are] children of God, but the children of the promise are reckoned for seed; for this word [is] of promise, according to this season. I will come, and Sarah shall have a son. And not only [so], but Rebecca also, having conceived by one, Isaac our father (for not yet having been born, nor having done anything good or bad, in order that the purpose of God according to election should abide, not of works but of him that calleth), it was said to her, The elder shall serve the younger, according as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.

The reasoning is as conclusive as it is concise and clear, founded on proofs from Old Testament facts and words which a Jew certainly could not gainsay. Did he reason from the promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? From this very history the apostle refutes their unbelieving abuse of all. The word of God therefore retains all its force. Man only, the Jew specially, is proved to be faulty. Their objection assumed that God was bound to bless the entire race in natural descent from Abraham. But this would open the promises to the Ishmaelites. Not so, cries the Jew: the promise is only in the line of Isaac. Then, might the apostle rejoin, the natural descent is an unsound principle; for this embraces the Arabs sprung from Abraham after the flesh no less than the Jews. They themselves therefore to exclude the Ishmaelites must fall back on the promise tied to the line of Isaac. Promise therefore, not flesh, decides. How the answer of the apostle exemplifies the truth of the Jew and circumcision that God praises, stated already in the end of chapter 2, needs no proof. Hence it is equally said of Israel, and of Abraham's seed. It is universally true. Fleshly descent alone insures no inward blessing. The Israelite indeed in whom is

no guile is more than one of Jacob's posterity: all of Israel are not Israel, nor are Abraham's seed all children. Compare John 8:37, 39. God must be left free; and He is pleased to call Isaac, not Ishmael after the same sort. The call flows from grace and is inseparable, in the restrictive personal sense here intended, from choice. Far from disputing it, the Jew could not hear the case without falling under its irresistible force; for he wished not to take in the sons of Ishmael and must therefore agree to the necessity of God's call, not mere natural line, in order to constitute an adequately valid claim. And this is made more telling by the striking circumstance that Isaac was born in an exclusively natural way like Ishmael but according to a distinct word of promise on God's part.

The apostle follows up the argument by a still closer instance; for Ishmael was born of a slave, a concubine, Isaac of the wife. But what of Rebecca? She was in no sense a bondmaid, but bore to Isaac twin sons. No case can be conceived therefore more in point. Yet without the children being yet born or having done anything good or ill which could determine between them, God revealed His purpose respecting the younger or lesser of the two, so that election might thus stand fixed and indisputable where His authority is owned.

Hence the apostle contrasts the call of God with works, rather than our faith, so as to cut of the poor semi-Pelagianism of such as Chrysostom of old or Tholuck of late, which would make election governed by the foreseen superiority of one to the other. Language cannot more precisely contradict this, the natural thought (not of natural men only but) of reasoning or imaginative saints. Esau had done no ill to disqualify him, Jacob no good to qualify him; but, before either of the twins was born, God in the exercise of His sovereign will chose that the greater should do service to the lesser. Such was His purpose. Their works had nothing to do with the matter, and are excluded, so as to rest all on the caller, God Himself.

On the other hand, there is no ground favorable to that absolute reprobation which Calvin deduces from this place. Not a syllable is hinted as to hating the unborn Esau in Gen. 25 Man hastily infers reprobation of the one from the choice of the other. This is unfounded. Out of two who have no claim to choose one to a superior place is to exercise will; but to show favor in one case is not therein to condemn the other. They were in themselves both born in sin, as they no doubt grew up in sins. This is to be obnoxious to condemnation, which turns on man's sins, not on God's purpose. It is not Jehovah's word to Rebecca, but by Malachi which speaks of hating Esau. It was at the very close of the Old Testament, after Esau had displayed his unrelenting enmity to Israel. The love to Jacob thus was free; the hatred had moral grounds in Esau.

Notes on Romans 9:14-18

The assertion of divine sovereignty, though a necessary truth which springs out of the very nature of God, is repulsive to the natural mind. Yet no other thought consists with right, when the subject is duly weighed; and every scheme which man substitutes is unworthy of God and unbecoming to man. The doctrine which denies God His majesty is self-convicted of falsehood; equally so that which would represent Him as indifferent either to sin or to misery. He is light; and light is incompatible with the allowance of the darkness which reigns in the heart and ways of man. He is love; and love is invariably free and holy. Doubtless He is almighty and He will judge the sin which despises or rebels against Him as well as the offenses which the world seeks to deal with. And what is the universal state of mankind, which this Epistle had carefully proved not of the Gentile only, but yet more of the Jew who boasted of the living oracles which condemned his iniquity and transgression? It had stopped every mouth and brought in the whole world guilty before God.

When a sinner is awakened by the Holy Spirit to his own guilt and state before God, he owns this frankly, and justifies God in condemning himself, though crying for mercy which to his adoring wonder he finds already proclaimed to him in the gospel.

But man as such, ignorant of himself and of the true God, disputes the fact of his own utter and inexcusable evil and looks not to God, but rather writhes under His word and cavils at His ways. This, as it is the feeling of natural men in general, so particularly found expression in the probable objection which a Jew might feel. This the apostle confronts. “What then shall we say? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? Far be it. For to Moses he saith, I will show mercy on whomsoever I show mercy, and will compassionate whomsoever I compassionate.” (Ver. 14, 15.) That is, it is mere mercy and compassion on God's part wherever shown, not only without desert but in full view of the most grievous and destructive demerits. No one who feels his own real wrongs against God ever raises a question of righteousness with Him. Confounded at the sight of his guilty insubjection and disobedience and in short ungodliness, he is struck dumb before the concurrent and continual proof of the astonishing goodness and patience of God, were it only in dealing with Israel. So to the Jew (and of course for the profit of ourselves and all the world) the apostle alleges the solemn and most gracious words of Jehovah to His servant in Ex. 33 So apt a testimony, among almost countless passages applicable in principle, there is not in the Bible.

Consider the circumstances, and the conclusiveness of his answer will be apparent, though at first sight it might seem singular to meet such a question with such a citation. And can anything be more characteristic of divine revelation than this? Haste pronounces that irrelevant and unreasonable which, when fairly and fully searched, proves alone right and true, alone suited to meet man as he is, alone consistent with the character and glory of God.

The national history was scarce begun before all was morally ended by their idolatrous apostasy from Jehovah at the foot of Sinai, where the people with Aaron at their head danced naked before the golden calf. Unrighteousness with God! There was assuredly the grossest unrighteousness in Israel; and what could righteousness with God do but call aloud for their irrevocable

condemnation? On that ground the objecting Jew, like the unbelieving Gentile, only shuts himself up to sure and unsparing judgment; for there can be no doubt of man's guilt, and justice on God's side has but to pronounce and execute the sentence of perdition.

Is God then bound to this and nothing else? He must be, on the blindly suicidal principle of man self-righteous yet unrighteous, who in his hurry to blame God forgets that it would be to his own helpless ruin. But God, though He can justly answer a fool according to his folly, may not in His grace. He has resources in Himself on which to fall back.

So in the passage before us the people disowned that Jehovah had delivered them from the house of bondage in their cry, “As for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.” (Ex. 32:1.) Thereon Jehovah not only plagued the people for their idolatry (ver. 35), but told Moses to go up thence, “thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt into the land which I sware,” &c. Forthwith Moses pitches the tabernacle without the camp, so that every one who sought Jehovah might go out there. But he does more; he there intercedes for the people, insists that they are Jehovah's people, and would turn the assurance of going with himself into one of going with him and them. “For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? Is it not in that thou goest with us? So shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.” Then, when Moses beseeches Him to manifest His glory to him, He says “I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah upon thee and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.”

Thus the bearing of the declaration is as evident as it is appropriate and unanswerable. For a people in such a case to harbor the thought of unrighteousness with God is a monstrous forgetfulness not only of their actual state in relation to Him but of their only hope in His sovereign mercy. Once before they took the ground of righteousness in accepting the law; but before the tables of stone were brought down, they had forfeited everything by their infraction of the most fundamental precept of the law. Hence hope there could not be, unless in His compassion. They had shown out what they were, and the sooner because of their self-confidence. Now it remained to learn what God is; and this is His word even in presence of the foul dishonor they had done Him: “I will show mercy on whomsoever I show mercy, and I will compassionate whomsoever I compassionate.”

Things were no better in the apostle's day. For the people had meanwhile so gone on in idolatrous rebellion that God at length swept them away, first Israel by the Assyrian, then Judah by the Babylonian. And now the returned remnant were under Roman bondage and had been guilty of rejecting their Messiah, as well as of quarreling with God's grace to the Gentiles. It is plain then that man is apt to be most self-righteous when he has least reason for it. “Not this man but Barabbas” cried they all. “We have no king but Caesar” answered the chief priests. Their moral degradation was complete; their faith was null and void. Ill would it have become such a people at such a time to ask “Is there unrighteousness with God?” It is just there, however, that the human spirit is most ready to dispute with God.

But the word is exceedingly broad and deep: where does it put any man? where the sinner? We Christians should surely know that only grace saved or could save us, as it called us with an holy calling, not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace which was given

us in Christ Jesus before the world began. When a soul is truly broken down and judges itself with integrity and a spiritually enlightened con science, how sweet is the feeling that there is righteousness nowhere fully, truly, and intrinsically but with God, confessing its own manifold and utter unrighteousness, and welcoming His own expression of sovereign mercy! It is only hard self-righteousness which holds out and disputes. Faith bows before the God of mercy and blesses Him. If only low and bad enough in my own eyes, I shall be but too thankful for the mercy that was sovereign enough to come down and find out me; if I can rest on the word of truth, the gospel of salvation, for such a sinner as myself, shall I pare down or narrow the indiscriminate riches of His grace to any other? “So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.” There may be an allusion to the frustration of Isaac's notorious wish, and of Esau's efforts to gain through the chase, and of Jacob faulty enough to lose all by his trickery but for sovereign mercy which secured to him the promise. It is certainly the conclusion of grace against man's vain confidence in his own will and exertion.

But the greater the grace, the greater the sin of resisting God in it. Hence the other side needs to be presented. For the God who shows mercy is the judge of all, and will prove what it is to set at naught all that He is. So Pharaoh did of old; and what was the consequence? “For the scripture saith to Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.” (Ver. 17.)

The king of Egypt was a thoroughly selfish, cruel, and profane man when God first sent him a message by Moses and Aaron. The effect of the summons on such a spirit was to bring out his blasphemy against Jehovah and more savage oppression of Israel. And as sign and his miracle told on his conscience, but evil desires and counsels prevailed, Pharaoh became incomparably worse till the obduracy of the king shocked his servants, and even after the concession was wrung out, false hopes of vengeance on Israel lured him and them to find a grave within the opened waters of the Red Sea. God thus made a most striking example of Pharaoh, not a mere exposure of his malice, but of His own power on that background, so that His name might be thus told abroad in all the earth. Never does God make a man bad; but the bad man Pharaoh, made yet worse by his resistance of the most striking divine appeals, He made manifest, raised up as he was from among men to such a height, that his downfall might tell on consciences far and wide throughout the world. Hard at first, God sealed him up at length in a judicial hardening; as He warned the Jews by Isaiah should be the case with their impenitent hearts, and so He executed it when they rejected Christ (John 12), and the Holy Ghost's appeal in the gospel. (Acts 28:25-28.) “So then to whom he will he showeth mercy, and whom be will he hardeneth.” In both cases the unrighteousness is solely with man, who is, as far as he is concerned, irremediably evil and ruined; before God acts either in grace or in judgment for the display of His own great mine to the wide, rich, and endless blessing of all who heed His word. He is always holy but always free. On the other hand, fallen man is always evil and deserves condemnation. God freely acts in grace here, freely acts in judgment there, that any soul may beware of provoking His indignation and learning what He is in his own destruction, and that the guiltiest of sinners may know that no man is too far gone to be beyond reach of His mercy. I speak of man as such, not of such as have believed through grace.

Notes on Romans 9:19-21

These verses present a fresh objection, and the apostle's answer worthy of all attention not only in itself but as an inspired specimen of the best method of meeting a cavil, first with a moral remonstrance and then more directly.

“Thou wilt say then to me, Why then doth he yet find fault? For who withstandeth his purpose? Nay but thou, O man, who art thou that answerest again to God?” (Vers. 19, 20.)

The objection seems founded on the absoluteness with which the mercy of God as well as His hardening had been asserted by the apostle just before. The unbroken will of man avails itself of this to resolve all question of good and evil into the divine purpose. But this is a mere human deduction which loses sight of the moral glory of God as well as the responsibility of the creature. It offends therefore against first principles, and would destroy all truth, holiness, and righteous judgment.

Undoubtedly the purpose of God does stand, and there is no creature which does not in the end subserve His will: yet Satan, little as he intends it, only clenches it most when he seems most to succeed by his lies and destructive power in thwarting and persecuting those who are precious in the Lord's eyes. Take the cross itself as the plainest and most unanswerable example. But should this enfeeble our moral judgment of creature wickedness? Does it deny the fact that Satan and man are responsible for all they do against Him, or that both must be punished for it? Hence Peter taxes the men of Israel with the guilt of crucifying the Messiah: “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ye have taken and by hands of lawless men have crucified and slain.” How different is the holy and perfect word of God! Everything is in its place, not one side only but both. God has His determinate counsel and foreknowledge. The Jews played their evil part, the Gentiles theirs. They together, however at variance in thoughts and feelings, manifested their characters and their guilt; but in the very same fact they fulfilled the prophets and gave occasion to the display of the holiest judgment of God and the accomplishment of the work of His grace.

Hence the ground of reasoning is wholly fallacious. The probation of man discovered his evil state, the fruit of his first departure from God who was dishonored by him when all was very good, and whose every fresh trial only served to demonstrate with increasing evidence the depth and extent of sin and the irremediableness of the flesh. The wisdom of God is such that He can and does turn all that man pursues in his heartless folly to the account of His purposes; but this is altogether independent of man's will which is always and inexcusably evil. Not only therefore is God free to censure man, but He will judge him for all by the Lord Jesus at the last day.

If it were true, as Calvin says, that those who perish were destined to destruction by the will of God, the case were hard indeed. But scripture never really speaks thus, and the language of the texts usually cited in support of such a decree, when closely as well as fairly examined, invariably avoids such a thought, however near it may seem to approximate.

In truth it is but the expression of the heart anxious to gather an excuse for its own willful evil and a plea against judgment from the irresistible will of God. Yet better is known in the heart of hearts all the while. It is never said in scripture that sin was God's purpose; but man fallen under sin is the platform where He does display His ways, counsels, and even Himself. God did not make any man to be evil; but from all (being evil already) He does choose according to His sovereign will and skew mercy to some, not all, though all be no more guilty than the some may have been. It would be perfectly just to destroy all. But if pleased to spare whom He will, who shall say to Him, nay? It would be to set up a claim of superiority over God, and is really a claim to judge Him. Now whenever a sinner is converted, he feels and owns the just judgment of God, even though such a recognition sanctions the execution of the divine sentence against one's self, yet withal never quits in despair, but looks and cries, feebly at first perhaps but with increasing earnestness, for mercy.

Cavils of the sort always presuppose the conscience not yet searched and the will not bent and broken before God. Neither insinuations of unrighteousness with God, nor the plea of the necessity of man's sinning as a part of God's purpose could satisfy, or emanate from, a repentant soul. So the apostle first of all answers with a rebuke. “Nay but thou, O man, who art thou that answerest against God? Shall the thing molded say to him that molded, Why didst thou make me thus?” Is it possible a man so speaks? It is equally irreverent and unholy. As this challenge why God (whose purpose is so firm, inflexible, and sure of fulfillment) should any longer find fault, blots out moral government and denies the difference of good and evil, so the audacity which disputes against God and practically defies His right to condemn wrong, proceeds on the assumption that He is bound to save every one alike, or at least to punish none; that is, bound to be worse than the basest of those who despise and rebel against Him, bound to a moral indifference which they would not tolerate in their wives or children, in their family connections, in their servants or their tradesmen! Such is the worth of human reason when it does not surrender to the word of God. The fall is ignored, and its ruinous consequences. God did not form man as he is, but good and upright; and He warned him of his danger and of the inevitable issue of disobedience. In every point of view therefore the ground of unbelief is as false as it is also a forgetfulness of the majesty of God and of the due attitude of the creature toward Him.

The apostle takes occasion to affirm the sovereign title of God in the most unqualified way. “Hath not the potter authority over the clay out of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor?” Whatever the holy boldness of this language, however it is singularly free from swerving to the right hand or the left, it would be easy to prove by countless witnesses how prone the best and wisest of uninspired men have been to err, even with this divine chart before their eyes to guide them. But it is easy to slip on either side: the hard thing is to hold only to the truth of scripture, and not to speak where it is silent. The apostle does not say that God has exercised the right which He beyond just question possesses; but the divine title is maintained in its integrity. We shall see in the next two verses how the right is used; but it was due to God and wholesome for man that His absolute right should be owned. How seldom those who talk of rights seem to think that God has any? They are absorbed in themselves, in man: God is in none of their thoughts. Yet surely if any rights are to be respected, His ought to be the foremost whose sovereign will gave us being and all things. If we count ourselves entitled to do what we will with our own, what can we say of Him to whom belong ourselves and all that we have?

His right then over man as over every other creature is incontestable: a right which unbelief disputes only because it has never seriously thought of the matter, or it yields to a spirit of manifestly outrageous presumption and rebelliousness. There are no rights if the Creator has none: if they exist at all, His must be absolute over us as creatures. He can form as He pleases and assign to us a position high or low in the scale of creation as it seems fitting in His eyes. In the verses which follow there is the further consideration that we are not only creatures but sinners, which necessarily must bear its bitter fruit and judgment from God. But His sovereign title it was important to affirm in itself before the introduction of the actual state or the doom of man.

Notes on Romans 9:22-24

The absolute authority of God over the creature has been so laid down that none can fairly dispute it. But this is far from being the whole case: His power is unlimited, His title incontestable. “And if God, wishing to show his wrath and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy which he before prepared for glory, us whom he also called not from among Jews only but from Gentiles?” (Verses 22-24.)

The mind of God was to display His wrath in this evil world and to make known His power where men easily and willingly forget Himself. But the way adopted was admirable and worthy of His nature. Arbitrariness there was none, but “much long-suffering.” So He bore long with the corruption and violence of guilty man. Could man then justly tax God either with lack of compassion for himself or with haste to mark his iniquities? Impossible that a holy God could have fellowship with evil or be indifferent to it! But instead of promptly blotting out of this life the rebellious creatures who make of the world a field for incessant warfare against what they know of God, or who at least live negligent of His will though He has revealed it fully, the history of the world since nations began is the fullest proof of endurance on God's part. He never made them as they are; but the sin of man now fallen He endured spite of countless and constant provocation. They sinned, they transgressed, they despised His mercy, they braved His wrath; but He endured with much long-suffering.

Sinful men thus living in enmity against God are here styled “vessels of wrath,” on the one hand; as those who believe are designated “vessels of mercy” on the other. They are objects respectively of wrath and of mercy, and are figuratively supposed to contain each that quality which will issue in destruction or in glory.

But there is a shade of difference as distinct as it is refined and profoundly true which no reader should overlook. The vessels of wrath are said to be “fitted for destruction.” But it is neither said nor implied here, or anywhere else, that God fitted them for it. They were fitted by their sins, and most of all by their unbelief and rebelliousness against God. But when we hear of the faithful, the phrase is altogether different, “vessels of mercy which he before prepared for glory.” The evil is man's, and in no case is it of God; the good is His and not our own. Not the saints, but God prepared the vessels of mercy for glory. More strictly He prepared them beforehand with a view to glory. That is, it was not their preparation while on earth, His only when the glory arrives. The apostle affirms here that God prepared them before unto glory. It was His doing. None doubts that they became by grace obedient, holy, and thus morally conformed to His nature; but it seemed good to the Holy Spirit to dwell here only on God's preparation of the vessels of mercy beforehand for glory. Thus the riches of His glory are made known upon the vessels of mercy, for so they are called, not vessels filled with these or those spiritual qualities, however true this might be, but vessels of mercy.

But in this passage as elsewhere there is no sufficient reason to depart from the ordinary meaning of “glory” or to give the word the sense of God's mercy. Nor does Eph. 1:12 sanction this, where glory maintains strictly its own distinctive place, as will appear to him who thoughtfully weighs verses 6, 7, 12. The word grace is undoubtedly and most properly left out of the last, where grace is not intended to be expressed any more than in verse 14 where it could not be. The Spirit looks onward to the day when the purpose of God shall be accomplished.

Such is the inheritance when the excellence of what God has given and made us shall be displayed. But the relationships to Himself which His infinite love has brought us into, and in which he has revealed Himself are far deeper. Hence the word in verse 6 is “to the praise of the glory of his grace,” the fullness of the revelation of Himself, as in verse 7 the abundant resources of His goodness, in view of our misery and guilt as once sinners. In all this then I see exact discrimination, not the confusion of different thoughts or words. No doubt then the wrath of God, long impending but long kept back, while He is sending forth the message of the mercy He delights in, will at length burst on those who have despised His warnings, but who will then prove what it is to be vessels of wrath. And the vessels of mercy will then be displayed in those scenes of divine excellence which no evil or failure shall ever sully.

Thus lost man will in the end be compelled to justify God and to take the entire blame on his own shoulders, who preferred to trust Satan as his friend and adviser rather than God; while the saved, however dwelling in bliss, will know and make known all as the riches of His glory, themselves debtors to His mere but unfailing and unfathomable mercy.

But the moment mercy is thus fully before the apostle's mind, he by the Spirit turns to the magnificent proof and exhibition God gave of it in calling—not from among Jews only, but also from among Gentiles. The law distinguished and separated the people which was under it from all other nations which were not. Grace, as it supposes the total worthlessness not of the Gentiles only but also of the Jews, so it goes out and calls in not from Jews only but from Gentiles. Distinctions may be in place where there is still hope of man and the trial proceeds. Not so when the probation of the most favored has ended in irremediable guilt and helpless total ruin. Then the door opens for mercy; and if God is pleased to exercise it, can the Jew pretend that the Gentile is not at least as good an occasion for mercy as himself? The greater the need, the misery, the darkness, the greater is the room for God to prove the depth and extent of His grace. On the footing therefore of His own mercy has God called (for it is a question of calling, not of governing a people already subsisting before Him under His law) even “us not from Jews only but also from among Gentiles.” (Ver. 24.) He calls in grace, freely to all, shut up to none, from Jews certainly but from Gentiles too.

Notes on Romans 9:25-26

The quotations taken from Hosea are worthy of all consideration, both in themselves and in the comparison of the references here and in 1 Peter 2:10. Some feel the difficulty; others, who do not seem to see anything particularly to be noted, prove how little they enter into the deep wisdom of God here displayed.

The call from among Gentiles is not the question with Peter, who accordingly does not cite Hos. 1:10. He contents himself with using Hos. 2:23, which he does not hesitate to apply even then to such of the Jews as came to the one foundation stone and became thus themselves living stones. Writing to the strangers of the dispersion throughout a part of Asia Minor, he had only the believing Jews directly before him. Hence there is remarkable force in telling them that they were a chosen generation and a royal priesthood. This their fathers attempted to make their own at Sinai on condition of their own obedience; and, as we know, broke down immediately as well as unceasingly ever afterward, till the final sentence was pronounced and God by Hosea pronounced the Jew Lo-ammi (not my people). The apostle now, addressing those who had received the rejected Messiah, not only predicates unconditionally of them under the gospel what was only offered to their fathers under a condition which utterly failed, but shows that they do not need to wait for the glorious kingdom of the Messiah to be revealed before they can be assured of the gracious reversal of the old sentence: “which in time past (says he) were not a people, but are now the people of God, which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.” The shining of grace from Christ risen on those that are His assures even now, not yet indeed of the setting aside of the power of evil in the world, but of the bringing the believing Israelites addressed into distinct, present, and known relationship with God. If the many still persevered in their unbelief and its bitter consequences, this did not hinder God from cheering the godly remnant by the apostle's employment of the prophet.

Our apostle cites the same scripture as Peter uses, and more fully too; but he also cites Hos. 1:10 almost precisely as it stands in the Alexandrian copy of the LXX. Is it then certain that he quotes these two passages from Hosea as applicable to the Gentiles being called to be the people of God? This is generally assumed as manifest from the words themselves, and from the transition to Israel in verse 27, though many who say so confess that in the prophecy they are spoken of Israel, which, after being rejected and put away, was to be again received into favor by God.

But it is always well for the believer to search narrowly an assumption of the kind, more especially when an apparent discrepancy is thereby insinuated between the Old Testament and the New. It is wise to try our own hypothesis over and over again, for we may rest assured that the One divine author cannot slight a word He has written. “Scripture cannot be broken.” Is the assumption itself well grounded? We need not then dwell on the answers which are attempted to the difficulty which appears to me made by those who seek to answer it—answers with which those who give them scent themselves by no means satisfied, and no wonder. The question is as to the precise aim of the Spirit. For myself I cannot doubt that He contemplated the Jews and the Gentiles in the two

citations from Hosea; for if He meant only the Gentiles in both, why quote them in so peculiar an order? Why place the fragment of chapter 1:10 after that of 2:23? If on the other hand He means to illustrate the call of grace under the gospel first to the Jews, spite of their having lost their distinctive name of relationship, nothing can be more natural and appropriate than his use of chapter 2:23 before 1:10 is quoted; and thus the apostles Paul and Peter are seen to be not only in perfect harmony with each other, but in their application exact to the evident bearing of the prophet. The common error sets all three in opposition. The very order too agrees precisely with the verse before (24) in Rom. 9 which is followed up by the citations.

But if this be so with the employment of Hos. 2:23 by the two apostles, if they both expressly apply to converted Jews that which the prophet expressly wrote of them and of them only, what of chapter 1:10? This, it is freely granted, may not be so obvious, but in my judgment it is on mature consideration no less sure. Yet why should the latter part of the verse refer to the sons of Israel because the former does? Let it be observed that there is a striking break or at least offshoot in the middle of the verse, which might most naturally prepare the way for another disclosure of God's purposes of grace. I allow that it is somewhat veiled; but this was proper and intended. The turning aside to call in Gentiles was intentionally concealed till the time came; but when it did come, enough was found, expressed hundreds of years before by the prophets, to prove that all was ordered and left room for and justified in passages here and there, which could scarcely have prepared any beforehand for so momentous a change but fell in with it expressly when it was a fact. So there is to my mind a similarly rapid transition in Isa. 65:1, 2, of which the apostle makes use somewhat later in this very argument, and gives us divine certainty that, as verse 1 applies to the call of Gentiles, so verse 2 goes even farther than the early half of Hos. 1:10, for it intimates the rejection of Israel. The apostle guided by the Spirit was tender to his brethren after the flesh and would not yet set before them so unpalatable a truth. All he is proving here from Hosea is that, as the ruin of Israel does not preclude but rather gives occasion for the call of grace in the gospel to the Jews spite of their dreadful estate, so the same prophet very remarkably leaves room for Gentiles to come in on, a ground which shall yet bless Israel beyond measure and number. “And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said unto them, Not my people, there it shall be said unto them, The sons of the living God:” I see no more reason to doubt that Gentiles were not by accommodation but directly and primarily meant in this striking portion than in the first verse of Isa. 65. The same apostle who warrants the application of two verses of Isaiah in Rom. 10 warrants the application of two verses of Hosea in Rom. 9. The call of Jews and Gentiles he attests in the latter; the coming in of Gentiles and the rebellion of Israel he proves from the former.

Thus there is no ground whatever for the idea that the inspired Paul does violence to the prophet by applying to Gentiles what was written about Jews; or that the principle on which he quotes is merely that of analogy, instead of direct divine authority. Still less is it true that God makes so light of the ground on which He set Israel as to allow the theory that the nations had ever been in any similar position before the call of Israel, or that Israel has lost it irrevocably to let the Gentiles in, and thus merge all for the future on one common level. Not so: the Gentiles have not stood by faith, but become high-minded and will surely, because of unbelief, be broken off the olive-tree, whereon they are now grafted; and as surely the Jews, not continuing in unbelief but truly repentant and blessing Him who is coming in the name of Jehovah, will be once more in sovereign mercy grafted into their own olive-free. This will not be under the gospel. For as concerning the

gospel they are enemies for our sakes, jealous that we should meanwhile receive the truth and hating the grace which saves the vilest through Him whom they cast out. “But as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes,” as will be demonstrated in that day, when it will be no longer the call of indiscriminate goodness as now, which ignores all earthly distinctions and unites to Christ in heaven, but the fulfillment of the magnificent purposes of God for the world, according to which the Israel of that day, converted and restored to their land, will be the most intimate and honored and important instrument here below for the universal blessedness of the race and the earth. As the election of Israel was before the gospel was sent out, so it will be after the gospel shall have finished its heavenly work. Then the purposes of God for Israel, which came to naught under the first covenant, will be made effectual and stand forever under Messiah and the new covenant.

Meanwhile, if any from Israel are blessed, it is on the principle of God's having called them, spite of the people being Lo-ammi, and giving them to obtain mercy anticipatively now, as the remnant will another day at the end of this age. But mercy now, as we of all men should know best, is not confined to them, but has called from among Gentiles also. Thus the two citations of Hosea were each equally required; and only the latter of the two used by Paul as the apostle of Gentiles, and in fact writing to saints at Rome, who were even more numerously Gentile than Jewish. Hence the reason and beautiful propriety of our finding the latter part of Hos. 1:10 not in Peter's Epistle but in Paul's.

But there is another feature, not palpable to the careless eye, but most real and in the highest degree confirmatory of a Gentile reference as originally intended of God in the close of Hos. 1:10. Thus the Holy Spirit does not say merely (as Dean Alford for instance like others ancient or modern) “as a general assertion, that in every place where they were called ‘not His people,' there they shall be called ‘His people'.” If Gentiles were not His people, like the Jews now for a time, those who receive the gospel are called, not “His people” merely as the Jews shall be, but “sons of the living God.” It is the special well-known title which grace now confers on all who hear the rejected One who speaks from heaven; and the emphasis is brought out the more powerfully, because it is said so expressly of Gentiles who never enjoyed the title of the people of God, if scripture is to rule our thoughts. There is thus a propriety in the new title which suits the actual state of things, rather than the millennial day and the relationship of restored Israel; and this too pre-eminently fitting in with the call of Gentiles, who, if by the Holy Spirit made willing to take the place of dogs, find “the crumbs” richer fare than those ever tasted who once were free of the Master's table.

Notes on Romans 9:27-29

The apostle now goes a step farther. He had shown from Hosea the grace which will reverse the solemn sentence of displeasure pronounced on the Jew in view of the captivity in Babylon, as well as the rich mercy to the Gentile to which the gospel lends so bright a light. He cites Isa. 10 for God's ways with His people in view of the Assyrian. “Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the sons of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: for [he is] completing [the] matter and cutting short in righteousness, because a matter cut short will [the] Lord make on the earth.” The prophet looks onward to the close of the sorrowful history of the chosen people, when the Assyrian, whom God first employed as the rod of His anger, will no longer be a just object of dread, and those who used to stay themselves on a staff which smote them, or even on that broken reed, Egypt, shall stay themselves on Jehovah the Holy One of Israel in truth. It is the great crisis of prophecy, the end of the Lord with His people who prove Him to be very pitiful and of tender mercy, whatever the rough roads and stormy skies meanwhile. They may have been ever so numerous; yet not the mass but the remnant shall be saved. For He is finishing and cutting short the matter in righteousness. It will be no question then of patient mercy, but a matter cut short will the Lord make on the earth or land. And this is not the only testimony of the kind: from the beginning we read to the same effect. “And as Esaias hath said before, Unless [the] Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodom, and been made like as Gomorrha.” Because He was dealing in righteousness with Israel, they should be cut down to the uttermost; because He was faithful to the mercy promised, His gracious power would hinder such a total extermination as befell the guilty cities of the plain. The remnant should be saved, a seed for sowing the earth afresh, when they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which Jehovah their God has given them. Great then shall be the day of Jezreel, when Jehovah will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the corn and the wine and the oil; and they shall hear Jezreel. Ere it comes judgment must take its course; but in the end mercy glories over judgment, and the remnant, saved by grace, by grace is made a strong nation.

Plainly however, as the prophets lacked not the assurance of mercy to the Gentiles, so they still more abounded in warnings of judgment on Israel. This then was not the new testimony of grace which the Jews so keenly resented as interfering with their ancient privileges. Let them beware of fighting against God who had taught both these truths in the living oracles specially entrusted to themselves, and their boast, though certainly but little understood. If they therefore quarreled with such a sentence, it was evidently not so much with Paul as with Isaiah and the Holy Spirit who had inspired him.

What a witness on the other hand of divine truth, of indiscriminate grace, that the gospel, in itself unprecedented and wholly distinct both from what was seen under the law and what will be when the kingdom appears in power and glory, does nevertheless find its justification from words both of mercy and of judgment uttered hundreds of years before by the various servants God sent to declare His message to His people! But as they blindly despised them and rejected His word then for idols, so now they fulfilled them yet more in the rejection of Christ and hatred of the grace

which, refused by them, sought and was received by Gentiles, and thus yet more proved the word divine to the confusion of the unbelief which is as blind as it is proud and selfish.

Notes on Romans 9:30-33

Thus the case on both sides has been set out with the clearest testimonies of the prophets. It only remains to draw the conclusions so far.

“What then shall we say? That Gentiles that pursued not righteousness attained righteousness, yea, righteousness that is of faith; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, arrived not at a law of righteousness.” (Ver. 30, 31.) Such precisely had been the bearing of the living oracles to which the Jews justly pointed as their peculiar treasure from God; yet these oracles declared unequivocally what was borne out by the actual facts. The Jews were completely broken as a nation. They had enjoyed the most singular favors: how was it now? Why their disruption? Why the carrying away to Babylon? why their subjection without so much as the shadow of a king of their own to the iron dominion of Rome? I speak not, it was useless to speak to them, of still worse impending. If they neglected the words of Isaiah, if they sought not into the visions of Daniel, it was vain to expect that they would heed the warnings of the Lord Jesus. But their own prophets amply sufficed to interpret the actual state around them and to prove that Jewish rebelliousness to God was as certainly revealed beforehand as Gentile acceptance of His mercy; and these are precisely the great and invariable characteristics of the time that now is, which Christianity supposes and Judaism denies. In the Gentiles grace is displayed and triumphs; by the Jews it is for the present refused and calumniated. Yet does all this only accomplish the prophecies every Jew owns as divine. That Gentiles, spite of their dark ignorance, their utter indifference to God, should be brought to the right way, not of law indeed (the Jews need not be jealous of that) but righteousness on the principle of faith, righteousness outside themselves, by the grace of God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, so that it might be through faith; that Israel, zealously in quest of a law of righteousness, had not reached it, was not more patent, if the gospel be true, than if the ancient prophets be accomplished.

The moral ground also is as plain as the word of God. For the pretension of man to take his stand before God on his own obedience of law is refuted; as on the other hand grace avowedly goes out to the basest and most careless, giving and forming what is good, as well as putting away the evil to the praise of divine mercy, but withal righteously; yet it is no righteousness of law, but rather of faith, so as to be open to those who knew not the law, as well as to such of Israel as were broken down as to self and taught of God to receive only of His grace in Christ. Thus God has glorified Himself as truly as He has convicted the first man of entire hollowness and total failure.

Israel then has not come to a law of righteousness. “Wherefore?” As it was through no lack of privileges from God, so it was from no want of their own efforts in pursuing after it. But they pursued wrongly. They overlooked, as unbelief ever does, both God and themselves; alike what is due to His majesty, what necessarily flows from His nature; and again, what sin has wrought in the moral ruin and incapacity as well as guilt of man: in short, “because [it was] not of faith but as of works. They stumbled at the stone of stumbling, even as it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense; and he that believeth on him shall not be ashamed.” (Ver. 32,

33.)

Sinful man understands duty to obey with a commensurate reward annexed to success; and he is ever slow to conceive his own failure and inability to meet the just requirements of God. The last thing he likes to do is to take all the blame of his evil on himself, unless it be to accredit the God he has wronged with real and perfect goodness toward himself in spite of his wrong against Him. But of all men the Jews were the least disposed to it and the most obstinate in their own thoughts. For why, reasoned they, should we have the law of God if it be not to attain acceptance with God by our faithful observance of its precepts? Where else is its value and its use? Error fatal to the ancient people, how much more to Christendom to which the gospel tells the wreck of Israel on this very rock of offense, that men who hear and bear the name of the Lord should not repeat it to their own yet surer destruction!

Unbelief of grace, self-righteousness, is far more inexcusable now than of old. For Christ the Son of God is come and has accomplished redemption; and the glad tidings God sends forth on the express ground of universal ruin in man that he may thankfully receive another even Jesus, and rest on His work before God with peace and joy in believing. But men, baptized men, stumble still, as Israel stumbled, at the stone of stumbling, the Lord Jesus. If they felt their own real state, how would they not bless God for such a Savior! But they were proud, they were blind. They were satisfied with their own obedience, at any rate with their own efforts. They stumbled at the stumbling stone; but the same Christ delivers the believer from hurt, from shame, from confusion. He was set, as Simeon said to Mary, for the fall and rising again of many in Israel and for a sign to be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed: no otherwises aid Isaiah. (Chap. 28:16.)

Chapter 249

Notes on Romans 10:1-3

The connection of the opening verses of chapter 10 with chapter 9 is full of instruction for the soul. To many a mind it may seem illogical; but this is only the narrowness and infirmity of man who is apt to reason from himself, not from the truth. God's revelation affords the only sure basis; for He alone sees all sides of every object, He alone imparts the suitable affection and enables one to form the sound judgment.

So here the apostle had refuted Jewish assumption of inalienable privilege necessarily bound up with every member of the Abrahamic family, and proved, on the contrary, their ruin and indebtedness to the sovereign mercy of God. Again, he had opened out with irresistible force and clearness the Old Testament scriptures, which declare that God would call Gentiles in His grace, yea, that the mass of Israel should perish for their rebellious unbelief and a remnant only be saved, namely, whoever believed on Christ the stumbling-stone, who therefore is in principle as free to the Gentile as to the Jew. But this amazingly comprehensive and connected sketch of the revealed ways and certain counsels of God as to man on the earth did not at all interfere with his ardent love for Israel. Men often pervert a scanty portion of such knowledge to shut up their bowels of compassion from those who are to blame and under God's peculiar chastening. But it was not so with the apostle: “Brethren, the delight of my heart and the supplication toward God for them [is] for salvation.” The substitution of “them” for “Israel,” required by the more ancient and better authorities, appears to me really stronger as being more expressive of affection than the common text. It was needless to define mere clearly for whose blessing he was so earnestly interested, and this the more because of their great danger. The threatenings in the prophecies verified in their deepening unbelief drew out his strong crying to God on their behalf, and this for salvation. For what short of it could satisfy a heart that loved them? To say that “internal as well as external evidence is against” α■τ■ν and for το■ ■σρα■λ proves nothing but the unfitness of him who could so speak to judge of questions which demand not learning only but critical acumen and spiritual discrimination.

“For I bear them witness that they have zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.” “Zeal of God” is an objectionable rendering, just as faith of the Son of God” in Gal. 2:20. The Greek genitive is far more comprehensive than the English possessive case, and admits of an objective force as readily as a subjective. “The love of God” in that tongue equally means God's love to us or ours to Him: the context alone decides. Here there can be no question of the intended force. The Jews were zealous for God but not according to right or true knowledge (κατ επ■^νωσιν). This filled the apostle's heart with so much the more affectionate care; for their zeal carried them the farther in the wrong direction, as ever must be in divine things where faith does not regulate according to the revealed mind of God.

“For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God and seeking to establish their own righteousness have not been subjected [or submitted themselves] to the righteousness of God.” No doubt, these self-righteous Jews were not justified before God. But the apostle goes farther, as

indeed the principle goes deeper. They ignored the righteousness of God, not merely the doctrine of justification, though this of course follows. But they were ignorant of God's righteousness revealed in the gospel. Man's merits composed the basis of their hopes, eked out by divine promises, by priesthood, rites, and observances. Messiah Himself was regarded as the crown and complement of their privileges, not as a suffering substitute and a Savior in the power of His resurrection after having borne their judgment on the tree. Hence they could only see an arbitrary choice backed up by their own confidence in their superior claims and deserts, but no ground of righteousness on God's part such as the Christian knows there is by virtue of the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; no thought of God as through atonement just and justifying him that believes in Jesus. The grace of the Savior by His work enables God to act righteously in accounting just us who believe, while it humbles us to own the truth of our utter sinfulness instead of leaving us to gratify self by setting up a righteousness of our own and hence keeping us from submitting to His righteousness in Christ as the sole ground of justification before Him.

Chapter 250

Notes on Romans 10:4-9

VERSE 4 has given rise to very various opinions. One which has prevailed from ancient times and perhaps still more among moderns, is that Christ is the accomplishment of the law. But there seems no ground whatever to confound τ■λος with πλ■ρωμα. Others again take it in the sense of "object" or "aim." But the simplest meaning as decided by the context appears to be "termination," though we know it is also used for "issue" or "result." And in this meaning the representatives of the most various systems coincide: Augustine and Luther on the one hand; Meyer, De Wette, &c., on the other. "Christ is [the] end of law for righteousness to every one that believeth." The Christ of God is made unto us righteousness. "By law is knowledge of sin." Righteousness cannot be had thus; only the believer is justified. Yet so sure is this result, that it belongs to every believer.

The apostle then contrasts the two systems and this by citations from the law itself. "For Moses describeth the righteousness that is of the law, that the man that has done the things shall live in virtue of them. But the righteousness that is by faith thus speaks, Say not in thy heart, Who shall go up to heaven? that is, to bring Christ down, or, Who shall go down into the abyss? that is, to bring up Christ from among dead (men). But what saith it? Near thee is the word, in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from among dead (men), thou shalt be saved." (Vers. 5-9.) Faith applies when all is lost under law and its righteousness is impossible.

First then is quoted Lev. 18:5, which is indeed a general recognized principle of the law, as the spirit is embodied in many passages. The ground of the other side is found in Deut. 30. I do not agree with those who conceive that the apostle has put the smallest strain upon the latter citation. As in the former be speaks of life or living, not of eternal life which is God's free gift and only in Christ; so in the latter his use of Deuteronomy is most profound. Moses is setting before Israel not only the consequences of their unfaithfulness, but the divine mercy which meets them in their ruin when their heart turns to Him spite of the broken law. Now Christ really lies under the law however veiled. "The Lord is that spirit," where those who read only the letter see nothing of Him and abide in death. But He is ever before the Holy Ghost. Hence the righteousness of faith did not cast the repentant Jew upon his own efforts, let them be ever so great.

"Say not in thy heart Who shall ascend to heaven? that is, to bring Christ down, or, Who shall descend into the abyss? that is, to bring up Christ from among dead (men)." Man could do neither. Had it been possible, neither would have suited the glory of God. He in grace meets man. It was the Father who sent His Son into the world. It was by the glory of the Father that He was raised from the dead. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son;" and God raised Him from the dead. On both truths the scriptures of the New Testament are most explicit. But what says Moses in this very passage here cited? "Near thee is the word, in thy mouth and in thy heart." The blessing is at the doors. Christ is given and preached. It is for man to name Him with his mouth and to believe with his heart. There is no question of heights to be scaled or depths to be sounded, which would put honor upon human earnestness and ability. Christ is proclaimed for the

simplest to confess Him, and to believe on His name. “That is, the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in thy heart that God raised him from among dead (men), thou shalt be saved.” The outward expression is put first, not of course as most important, but as that which first comes into notice to the praise of Jesus: nevertheless it is of no value for the soul save as the embodiment of faith. “In thy heart” does not seem to be meant as a measure of affection, however truly there ought to be love for Him who first loved us. It does suppose however that the heart is interested in the truth, and that it is brought to desire what it hears to be true, instead of any longer fighting against it—brought to rejoice in the conviction that it is the truth of God.

Hence, believing in thy heart as well as confessing with thy mouth, the blessing is thine. If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in thy heart that God raised Him from among the dead, thou shalt be saved. It will be observed that there is here no mention of death, but of resurrection. Death does not of itself imply resurrection; but resurrection does necessarily involve death. Jesus then is confessed to be Lord; why fear, why be anxious, if He who has undertaken to save is above all? You believe in your heart that God raised Him from among the dead. It is not only then that love came down to meet you and suffer for you, but power has entered, where Jesus was crucified in weakness. God entered the grave of Jesus in power and waked Him up—has raised Him and given Him glory, that our faith and hope might be, not in Christ only, but in God. He is for thee. He has proved it in raising up Jesus from among the dead. “Thou shalt be saved,” —not forgiven only—but “saved.” “If when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.”

Thus we see in Deuteronomy when the legislator has closed all the precepts and rites of the law, and shown Israel rebellious and ruined under that order of things, he does not fail to hint at the resources of grace. He supposes the Jew cast out of the land because of his infidelity to the legal covenant and of course to God Himself. Nevertheless though he could not draw near after that manner, the word was nigh him, in his mouth and in his heart. This is the word, says the apostle, which we preach. It is Christ, end of law to every one that believes. So it will be at the close of the age for the godly Israelite, who from his land of exile turns to God in the sense and acknowledgment of the people's ruin. If unbelievers were hopeless because they could not go up to Jerusalem, or cross the deep, for tithes or feasts or sacrifices, faith accepted the word which met their need in grace where they were. Christ ended law, yet was righteousness for the believer, and for every believer. It is too late to speak of living when the law is broken and you are banished in consequence under the sentence of death. Christ then is the one spring of confidence; but if for righteousness, He also closes law to every believer. The word of faith speaks a wholly different language from that of the law. Confessing Jesus as Lord or the Lord Jesus and believing that God raised Him from the dead is the word of faith; and it is not received only but preached. God is energetic in His grace and sends out the message far and wide.

Notes on Romans 10:10-15

Thus there is the very reverse of looseness or a merely imaginative ingenuity in the apostle's employment of the Pentateuch. The gospel anticipates indeed but is on the same principle of grace towards all which Deut. 30:11-14 holds out to the outcast Jew. For according to the outward letter and man their case will be seen to be hopeless. But with God all things are possible; and faith rests on God, who brings out in due time what was then among the secret things that belong to Him, in contradistinction from His revealed ways in the law. In Christ now revealed all is plain; and the Christian does not wait for a future day. To him it is indeed always the time of the end; and he looks for Jesus day by day, knowing that He is ready to judge the quick and the dead, and that God is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. The repentant Jew in the latter day will by and by be awakened to recognize the reality of His grace towards him; and he will find the word very nigh him, in his mouth and in his heart, ashamed alike of his sins and of his self-righteousness, broken in spirit and looking to God and to the resources of His mercy. So does the soul that receives the apostolic preaching now.

He had used the order of mouth and heart as in the original words of Moses. And so in fact it is that the gospel goes forth and exhorts men. We hear the confession of the mouth and trust the belief of the heart accordingly. But it is plain that the inner reception of the word must precede and accompanying the outer expression of it in order to a true and full work in a man. The apostle knew this better than any of us, and lets us hear it in his next words: “for with [the] heart faith is exercised to righteousness, and with [the] mouth confession is made to salvation.” Thus the whole case is accurately stated, every objection anticipated and met. Without believing then there is no righteousness. We are justified by faith and in no other way. But if there be no confession of Christ the Lord with the mouth, we cannot speak of salvation; as our Lord said, “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not [baptized even though he might have been] shall be damned.”

“For the scripture saith, No one believing on him shall be ashamed.” (Ver. 11.) Assuredly he whom God justifies can have no reason to be ashamed, but rather to be always confident and to rejoice in the Lord always. And here the apostle triumphs in the indiscriminate favors of the gospel. As before in chapter iii. 23 he had insisted that there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God; so now there is none, “for the same Lord of all [is] rich toward all that call upon him.” And this he fortifies by a citation from Joel 2:32; “for every one soever who shall call on the name of [the] Lord shall be saved.” There he stops. On the great future day all Israel shall be saved; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as Jehovah hath said, and in the remnant whom Jehovah shall call. Meanwhile the Spirit avails Himself of His own comprehensive promises preceding the clause which specifies that localized blessing and gives all possible breadth to the “whosoever” so dear to the large heart of the apostle of the Gentiles; He had indeed foreseen and provided for all. And it is as beautiful to hear the apostle using the part which falls in with his broad argument as it is to know what comfort the special promise in the entire verse will

bring to the inhabitants of Jerusalem in the day that is coming.

But this predicted opening the door so widely to all that call on the name of the Lord gives rise to a new development of the argument. As the Gentiles did not call on the name of Jehovah, a fresh instrumentality begins to appear with a view to awakening them from the dust of death and furnishing such a testimony as should draw out their hearts toward Him. It will be needed by the Israelites scattered up and down the earth among the Gentiles when their hour of national restoration draws nigh; but the Spirit applies it here, as He doubtless intended it, with admirable foresight to the Gentiles meanwhile. They must be called by the gospel in order to call on the name of the Lord to be saved. Preaching is thus eminently characteristic of the ways of God not under law, but since redemption. For “how shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe on him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without one preaching? and how shall they preach unless they shall have been sent? According as it is written, How beautiful the feet of those that announce glad tidings of peace, that announce glad tidings of good things!”

The law did not call any one. It regulated the ways of the people to whom it was given; and hence a priesthood was bound up with it which transacted their spiritual business with God, drawing near to Him in the sanctuary and representing the people there, with both gifts and sacrifices for sins. But the gospel supposes a wholly different state of things, in which the grace of God acts energetically, giving and producing what is according to Himself, on the proved ruin not merely of the Gentiles but of the Jews in the rejection of their own Messiah. Hence it goes out freely toward all, not merely to the Jews but to the Gentiles; and if these were the more necessitous, to these the more emphatically. Was the guilt, was the ruin, indiscriminate? So is His mercy; and the gospel is the witness which calls souls, not to do their duty as the tenure of life, but to believe in the Lord Jesus whom God raised from the dead, to believe for righteousness and to confess for salvation. Thus it becomes a question not of the law; for on this score a Jew was himself condemned and the Gentiles knew nothing of it, and if they did, could find in it no better hope than the Jews. For salvation is what a lost sinner wants; and as God's word demonstrates such a condition to be that of His own people, and salvation therefore to be their true want, so not even a Jew could deny the Gentiles to be lost sinners in the fullest sense. Would they then deny the Lord to be the Lord of any or of all? Would they affirm that He was poor, that He was not rich enough to meet the most deplorable need of all who should call upon Him? They might spare themselves the trouble of solving a question perhaps too knotty for Rabbis; God had decided it Himself long ago as Israel was sliding faster and deeper into the fullness of revolt from Jehovah. He had associated deliverance with calling upon His name; not with observance of law, which in fact those who had it had broken; and He had proclaimed it in terms so large as to encourage and warrant any one whatever. Consequently then the dealings of grace imply a testimony to be heard and believed by all that call upon His name; and this again, one to preach or proclaim it duly sent of God.

The cheering announcement of Isa. 52:7 is the authority here cited; but here again we may observe the wisdom of the citation. The apostle does not quote the latter clause of the verse “that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!” For in truth, according to the just sense of prophecy, the very reverse appears from that day to this. The days of vengeance were at hand for that Christ-rejecting generation, not of salvation for the holy city. And Jerusalem is still trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. But assuredly the joyful

tidings must come, for the mouth of Jehovah has spoken it; and then how beautiful, yea, on the mountains (which the apostle did not cite) the feet of him that publishes glad tidings of peace, that tells glad tidings of good things, that publishes salvation, saying to Zion, Thy God reigneth! No dust will make their very feet otherwise than beautiful because of the good news they bear. It is not as in Nahum the fall of Nineveh, nor yet of Babylon, for Babylon, a punisher or punished, is heard of no more after Isa. 48. We have entered the still more solemn charge from Isa. 49 - 57 which the prophet lays in Jehovah's name against His people, not for idol worship but for the rejection of the Messiah. Yet here we have the glad tidings of His pardoning and delivering mercy after reaching the lowest depths of rebellion. The apostle shows that in this as in so many other respects the gospel anticipates what repentant and restored Israel will receive from God in the latter day; (and may we not add?) in if possible a deeper form of the truth. For grace, as we know it in Christ (even beyond earthly glory itself, let it be ever so pure as in that day) gives the deepest motives to the earnest spread of the good news: and who so fit to apply the prophet thus as that indefatigable minister of the gospel, through whom mainly the gospel was even then present in all the world, and bearing fruit and making growth, as we learn in Col. 1:1.

No; the watchmen of Jerusalem cannot yet raise their voice nor sing together; for Jerusalem is still in the hands of the cruel foe, and the hearts of the Jews are still under a tyrant more deadly still; but eye to eye shall they see when Jehovah restores Zion, and the waste places of Jerusalem shall burst out and sing together after ages of desolation; for Jehovah will at length have comforted His people and redeemed Jerusalem when He makes bare His holy arm before all the nations, and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of their God. But the grace of God is not idle nor inefficient. Zion remains in the hands of the stranger because Zion's sons received not their divine King, but slew Him on the tree by the hands of lawless heathens who could be swayed by them and join them in that fatal deed, out of which God has caused to shine the richest mercy for both, if they but heed His message. Hence He is sending out His gospel, as this epistle styles it, as Paul also had received grace and apostleship for obedience of faith among all the nations in behalf of Christ's name.

We see clearly too in this how the ministering of the preacher is tied to the gospel itself. How debasing as well as groundless to foist in man here as if he must be the sender, where the whole scope is to make nothing of him and to glorify God in all things by Jesus Christ our Lord! In no part of scripture is man said to send out the preacher: God keeps this prerogative in His own hands. Hence, said our Lord here below to the disciples, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power against unclean spirits, &c. These twelve Jesus sent out.” He was man, and could pray and bid His disciples pray; but He was God, Emmanuel, Jehovah, Messiah; and so as Lord of the harvest He could and did answer the prayer by constituting the twelve His apostles and sending them forth on their mission. And if He is dead, He is risen and alive again for evermore, and still He from on high has given gifts to men. Believe not the enemy's lie that, because He is unseen, He has abdicated His headship or abandoned for one moment His loving care in supplying all that is needful for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Others who intrude into His place of sending out ministers of the gospel are but usurpers; and those who submit to be so sent are consenting parties (and for what?) to their Lord's dishonor. His will, His word, is plain

enough: all that is wanted is an eye in us single to Christ. We shall then see clearly how deeply all this concerns His name, even if it cost us everything in this world. Doubtless the gospel comes through men wherever it is sent from above men: only it is not for a man, or for any number of men, to arrogate the Lord's rights, who entrusts to His own servants His goods, to one five talents (to another two, to another one, to each according to his several ability) and who on His coming will reckon with those servants. Such is the doctrine of the divine word as set out dogmatically in the epistles and maintained even in the parables of the Savior. How false is the practice of Christendom; and how hollow the evasions or apologies (they cannot be fairly called interpretations) of theologians! Why sell themselves to do this evil? Are they blind to results plain before all other eyes? Do they heed not the warnings in the unerring word of God of still worse ills at hand?

Notes on Romans 10:16-21

Thus prophecy speaks, not of a law to be done or of ordinances to be kept, but of a testimony in which God has complacency as being of His own grace, and so a matter of faith. Even the Jew who had the law could only be blessed by the good news. The law had wrought ruin and condemnation and death for no fault of its own, but of Israel who had broken it and fallen under its curse. Good can only come by grace through a testimony sent them from God. But the prophet adds more in the following chapter, the solemn witness of unbelief even among the Jews. “But they did not all obey the glad tidings. For Esaias saith, Lord, who believed our report? So then faith [is] of report, and the report through God's word." (Ver. 16, 17.) Israel too, it is here shown, should be in part at least unbelieving, if the prophet is to be credited; for the apostle abounds in testimonies from the Old Testament to make good his solemn charge against the rebellious people of God, and vindicate hence the going forth of the good news to the Gentiles. It was not merely Paul but their most illustrious prophet long ago who gave this appalling picture of Jewish unbelief. But being a question of a testimony sent out to be heard and believed, the way was open to reach the Gentiles who had not the law.

“But I say, Did they not hear? Yes indeed, Their voice went out into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world” (ο■κουμ■νης, the habitable earth). The apostle quotes from Psa. 19 a striking and most apt illustration of the universality of God's testimony. For we readily see that the psalm divides into two parts, the works of God and the law of Jehovah alike testifying, one outward and universal, the other dealing with those who possessed it. The heavens belonged to no land in particular, nor do the sun and stars shine for Israel alone. They are for man in the earth at large according to the beneficence of Him whose rain falls on the just and unjust, and whose sun is made to rise on evil men and on good. Just so, whatever the circumscribed sphere of the law, the gospel goes forth in the grace of God without restriction. God is not indifferent, if the Jews were, to the Gentiles; He pities and has given a testimony to them in their dark ignorance. Compare Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:20. This however is general, though enough to assert and exemplify the principle.

The good tidings then came by a testimony sent of God through those who preached, not by the law which could only show the Jew his duty and convict him of sin because of his failure under it. The only hope of good therefore for a sinner is from the gospel; but, if so, it goes out not to some only but to all mankind. And as Isaiah proved that the message would be slighted by the Jews, they that preached having to complain to the Lord, “Who hath believed our report?” so the Psalms bear witness to a universal testimony of God in creation as illustrative of the principle that He thinks of and cares for, and would be known by, the Gentiles. Granted that the law dealt with Israel, has God nothing but the law? And what had the law done for them? or rather what had they done under it? “By the law is the knowledge of sin.” This is wholesome no doubt, and should he humbling; but what a sinner evidently wants is far more that this, even salvation, and to this the law does not pretend, but the contrary. It can kill, not quicken; it can condemn, not justify. Grace alone can pardon, reconcile, bless, and this righteously through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. But this is the voice of the gospel, not of the law, and goes out, as being grace, to sinners

indiscriminately, be they Gentiles or Jews matters little or nothing. They are needy, guilty, lost; and God is saving such by the faith of Jesus proclaimed in the gospel which goes out accordingly to all the world, being in no way tied to the land of Palestine or any other.

It was in vain again for the Jews to allege that this was a dealing without warning on God's part. He had not kept it so absolutely a secret that they should not have been apprised by His word in their hands. “But I say, Did Israel not know? First, Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy through [that which is] not a nation, through a nation without understanding I will anger you. But Esaias is very bold and saith, I was found by those that sought me not; I became manifest to those that inquired not after me. But to Israel he saith, All the day long I spread out my hands to a disobedient and gainsaying people.” Thus not only is the general principle illustrated from the psalms, but the lawgiver is himself summoned to give his ancient testimony to the future intention of God in provoking the Jews to jealousy on the occasion of His ways with those who were not a nation, or a foolish nation—an evident allusion to His mercy to the Gentiles, not abandoning His people, but provoking them to jealousy, and in fact drawing out their irritation. Still more explicit is the greatest of the prophets, who says outright that God should be found by those who were not seeking Him, and make Himself manifest to those who did not seek after Him—a description certainly anticipative of His call of the Gentiles; the more suitable because in the same contest He says to Israel that He spreads out His hands all the day long to a people disobedient and contradicting. A Jew would not deny the law, the psalms, and the prophets; no honest mind could dispute the interpretation. The application is incontestable. From the beginning, in their greatest prosperity, and when their ruin was predicted formally and fully, such was the uniform declaration of the Holy Spirit. They should not have been ignorant. God had taken care to testify the unbelieving obduracy of Israel and the calling in of Gentiles. They find God under that gospel against which the Jews more than ever rage and rebel.

Chapter 253

Thoughts on Romans 12

If the Gentile Christians at Rome were justified, and saved, it was through the mercy of God (see chap. 11:30). It was so likewise with any Jews there. It was all the mercy of God. The nation would finally be received back again on the ground of mercy, after Gentile apostasy. It is on account of the tender mercies of God that our bodies are to be given up a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. What different morality from that under law! Under the former, man in the flesh had to obey given commands, and so give righteousness to God: here the flesh is given up. I am laid on the altar of God, and my body is presented a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God (compare 2 Cor. 4:10). It is as we bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus will be manifest in our mortal bodies. The ministry of righteousness has written Christ on our hearts, and it is as the death has power over the old nature that the life will flow out. Christ has given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor. (Eph. 5:1, 2.) We are called to be imitators of God as dear children. We are identified with Christ, dead and risen: let our walk be worthy of this position and flowing from it. This is Christian morality. But if I am dead and risen, what have I to do with the world? Conformity to the world is a shame for a Christian. It is linked with the flesh, on which the ministry of the Spirit writes, Death. If I let the Spirit work, I am transformed by the renewing of my mind; I am practically now learning what good and evil is. I prove daily what is the will of God. Thus the body presented a living sacrifice to God, non-conformity to the world, and transformation by the renewing of the mind, fill up the Christian morality in this passage. When we are thus devoted to the Lord, we find ourselves amongst a new set of people, unknown before, but now known to us. They are members of the body of Christ. Are we to seek high things for ourselves here, as we did when in the world? No; just the contrary. We are not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but soberly, according as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith.

The truth of the body of Christ is here practically brought in to show the relative bearing of Christians one to another. All members have not the same office. We are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. The members of our bodies, though many, do not interfere with one another: so it is in the church of God. There are different gifts; let each one use his gift according to his faith, in responsibility to the Lord. Here perfect liberty of ministry is brought out. There is no such thing mentioned here as setting apart by man. Every one, if he has a gift, is responsible to the Lord to use it. This is not the license of the flesh, but the liberty of the Spirit. Notice also, these gifts flow throughout the one body, and not many bodies: “We being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” Exhortations follow, which enter into the minutest concerns of daily life. Do I really love a person? let not shyness, conventional usages, or selfishness, hinder me from sheaving it: Do I love my brother? let me in honor prefer him. Have I an honest earthly calling? I am not to be slothful in it, serving the Lord in it all, for He is my Master. Is a saint in need? help him. Is a saint passing by the road? open thy house to him. Are you persecuted? bless them that curse you. Do any rejoice? rejoice with them; do any weep? weep with them. Do you love the company of the rich? walk with men of low estate. Everything is

summed up in the little verse— “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.” If I am insulted, trampled upon, spit upon, like the Lord, what matters it? He gives His power. “When he was reviled, he reviled not again, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” He overcame evil with good in life; He overcame it in death, and rose Conqueror out of it all. Let us be followers of Him.

Chapter 254

Salvation and Sealing

The Epistle to the Ephesians especially brings before us our privileges, and God's counsels and purposes His sovereign goodness and thoughts about us, all depending on His good pleasure in Christ and His work. When I see the need of my soul as a sinner, and God's necessary judgment of sin, how I have ruined myself and am totally worthless, my soul is content to lie low before God and to be cast on His grace. Then I find myself adopted as a son and “accepted in the beloved” —not only redeemed through Christ's blood and forgiven my sins, but brought into glory. Two things run through this Epistle, God's intentions about us and the glory of the Son of God. It begins with counsels of God and the salvation of grace through the Lord Jesus Christ. The fact that Christ is God as well as man brings me to see how I can be loved as the Son. Love can come down to me as a sinner, as it can take me up where the Savior is.

The moment I see myself all sin, I may see all this grace shown me, just as much accepted now as when before Him in the glory. This I have not yet got; I am only waiting for the glory, but I am now accepted in the beloved. One must be either in sin before God, or in Christ accepted. There is no middle state. If looking at myself, I must be condemned; but if I rest on His sovereign goodness, the riches of His grace are mine in the gift of His Son, not dying only for sinners, but risen and in heaven, and myself accepted in Him. In Him I have redemption through His blood. In this there is nothing vague. There is forgiveness and redemption. I was a slave under Satan, but am redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. Christ has a title to me that none can gainsay. None can claim a tittle of my dust. I am not redeemed with corruptible things, but bought with His blood. God's righteousness and holiness are vindicated. Christ has not to do His work again. The redemption is accomplished, the work is done. There is peace and blessedness now for the believer. This does not hinder ups or downs: I may grieve the Spirit through a careless or faulty walk; but I am reconciled and saved.

The prodigal son might think of being made as a hired servant. It is not for us to dictate terms to God, He will make us sons and nothing less for His own glory. The creature, the body is not yet delivered. It is still a “groaning creation.” Though we have the Holy Ghost, it is in an earthen vessel. The soul gets rest in this spring of love from the God and Father of our Lord Jesus. How can such a worm as I am be in such a place? Even a little sickness may prevent my getting a good thought. But Christ is the head who rules and fills all.

Individual enjoyment depends on sealing. God does not seal a sinner, but a believer. The sinner needs quickening through faith of Christ. When you receive the word of truth and submit to God's righteousness, you get another thing: God puts His stamp upon that. When one is quickened, be seeks to please God; when he receives the Spirit of the Lord, there is holy liberty.

The Lord grant us the enjoyment of those things to the praise of His grace until the day of His appearing.

Chapter 255

Salvation and the Church

That a sinner, at all times since the fall, is saved in the same way, no Christian can doubt for a moment. But salvation is not the church, nor the church salvation. If it be said, must not a man belong to the church of God now to be saved? I say, Surely. That is, if he is saved he does belong to it, because this is God's divine order; but what saves him is Christ, not the church. Christ saved a Jew who was saved; but be belonged to Israel as the order of God at that time, not to the church; and the Jewish church, as men speak, is an utterly unscriptural idea. So far as an individual was saved, he was always saved by Christ; but this did not constitute the assembly.

There was a Jewish nation, and to it the man, called by grace as a Jew, belonged by birth, and was bound to adhere. Now he is not; because in the church there is neither Jew nor Greek. A man was a Jew by birth, and a Jew in orderly fellowship when circumcised. The church, even in its outward profession, stands by faith—is never composed of natural branches. The Jews were natural branches. They did not, in their divinely ordained place as Jews, stand by faith. A Jewish church is an unscriptural fallacy. Christ gave Himself for the nation, but not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad. This formed the church; the church or assembly is the gathering together of “such as should be saved.” This was never done in Judaism. The unity was a national unity, and no other. They were a holy people in their calling. When Christianity was founded, the Lord added to the church such as should be saved. He never did this before. That was the church, God's assembly in the world. If, before that, a Jew came to believe, he was added to nothing; he was a godly Jew, instead of an ungodly one; he belonged to what he belonged before. There was nothing to be added to.

“By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.” But the baptism of the Holy Ghost is positively asserted to be after Christ's ascension; in a word, on the day of Pentecost. The church invisible is no scriptural nor tangible idea. It is an invention, particularly of Augustine, to conciliate the awful iniquity of the professing church with the truth and godliness necessary to the true Christian. “A city set on a hill cannot be hid.” “Ye are the light of the world.” What is the value of an invisible light? a church under a bushel? There is no community in the invisible church. That the church is become invisible I admit fully; but I admit it as the fruit of man's sin.

But this has no application to Judaism. There the nation—the children of Jacob—were the public visible body, and meant by God to be so; and individual saints were never otherwise gathered: in Christianity they were. He gave Himself to gather into one the children of God who were scattered abroad. If they were gathered before as a church, an assembly, how could He gather what was scattered abroad Christ gave Himself to gather together the children of God which were scattered. They were children of God, but were not a church, an assembly. They were scattered, and Christ came to introduce another state of things. If they were a church gathered before, how did Christ come to gather the scattered? If it means that He was to save in one body, at the end of time, all the redeemed, they were never scattered. But the nation here is contrasted with the scattered children of God, and Christ came to change this state of things—to gather the scattered children of

God; that is, to found the church or assembly. Therefore He says, “On this rock” —the confession that He was the Son of the living God— “I will build my church.” Had He been doing it before, when it was not and could not be confessed that Jesus was the Son of the living God? Both Christ and the apostles speak of the church and the gathering the children of God as a distinct and newly introduced thing.

All the reasoning relative to a Jewish church comes from Judaizing Christianity, or rests on the utterly fallacious idea, that because men are saved in the same way, therefore they form a visible community, and even the same community. Why so? Men could be saved without forming a community. Individuality is quite as important as community—nay, more so, in divine things. Conscience and faith are both individual; sonship is individual. The Jews were a community, but not of saved persons, but a national community of the sons of Jacob. The church is a community, but not in any way of the same kind, be it profession or reality; it stands by faith. Individual salvation does not affirm the existence of a community, and there may be a religious community which does not imply salvation. The Jewish nation was such. The whole theory, on which the idea of a church in all ages and dispensations rests, is utterly false.

Facts fail equally. Up to the time of the Jewish nation, there was no community of persons making a credible profession. Abel offers his sacrifice in faith, but there is no community of those who make a credible profession; nor in Enoch, nor in the case of Noah. It is all a dream, the idea of a visible community before the flood. When I turn to the time after it, I find Job alone, and no visible community whatever; and of Abraham it is carefully stated, “I called Abraham alone, and blessed him” (Isa. 51:2): the point there urged being that he was alone, and that numbers were not necessary for blessing. When I come to the first religious community, I find it founded on a wholly different principle than a credible profession of faith. A man was of it by birth before he could make any profession. He was of it ipso facto, and could not be anything else: only his parents were bound to circumcise him the eighth day. The principle on which the visible church stands is faith. (Rom. 11) The principle on which Judaism stood was birthright, though not such as to destroy God's sovereign rights.

If scripture be true, though salvation was always the same, the church, or community, or unity of the body of believers, never existed till Pentecost. Nor did its Head, in that condition in which He could be its Head, i.e., the exalted Man, who had accomplished redemption. When thus exalted, God gave Him to be Head over all things to the church, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all. (Eph. 1:20-23.) He has made of twain one new man builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. (Eph. 2:14-22.) God dwelt in the nation of Israel in the temple of old. He does dwell, through the Spirit, in a habitation formed as a new man from Jew and Gentile by faith, and that only is the church: a mystery which, from the beginning of the world, had been hid in God, to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God. (Eph. 3) The heavenly powers, at any rate, could not see it, visible or invisible. It was (Rom. 16) kept secret since the world began—was not made known nor revealed to the sons of men before. Men were not builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. It was a mystery, bidden from ages and from generations—did not exist in fact. It is founded on the breaking done the middle wall of partition, and having one new man; the old thing was founded on strictly maintaining the middle wall of partition, and having only the old man. If scripture has any meaning, the church did not exist till Pentecost, when Christ had been

exalted as Head over all to the right hand of God, and sent down the Holy Ghost to gather into one body on the ground of faith. All men are saved alike, but all men are not assembled alike. Now church means assembly. Let the reader take notice of the double character of the church: the body of Christ on the one hand; the habitation of God on the other. The confusion of these two has been the foundation of Popery and Puseyism, which attribute the privileges of the one to those who have part in the other.

Chapter 256

Saul's Declension: Part 1

It is a homely and daily picture that this 1 Sam. 9 supplies of a man like Saul, dwelling with his father Kish, a Benjamite, a mighty man of power. Another point of similar interest is, that Saul found his occupation in pursuing the objects which this circle produced; until Samuel was commissioned to declare the purpose of God respecting him, and “to anoint him as captain over the Lord's inheritance.” Nor should this link of connection between the two, however different from each other, be overlooked, as affording sonic moral lessons of great moment to a servant of God.

There is considerable beauty in what Samuel said to Saul, when this link of association was severed by his exaltation to the throne of Israel and his heart was lifted up by the favor of God. Then Samuel said, “When thou wast little in thine own sight, vast thou not made the head of the tribes?” &c. A fallen nature, because it is such, always uses the mercies of God for self-exaltation, and therefore against the giver; and these are some of the lessons presented in the history of Saul, when invested by God with kingly power, and seated on the throne of Israel. While he was “little in his own eyes,” every relative duty that sprung up around him was of more importance and consideration than himself. Thus the asses of his father, which were lost, served him for an object as readily as when a few years after the Lord sent him to smite Amalek, and better done.

Indeed the sketch given of Saul as “a choice young man and a goodly, who from his shoulders and upward was higher than any of the people” falls singularly on the mind in connection with his diligent search after “his father's asses” through the land of Benjamin, except as we remember the secret, “when thou wast little in thine own eyes.”

The father was a rule to Saul in abandoning the pursuit as much as in undertaking the search in obedience. So when they were come to Zuph, Saul said to his servant, “Let us return, lest my father leave caring for the asses, and take thought for us.” “Little in thine own eyes” stands thus connected with ready obedience to the will of another and in self-denying devotedness of heart, be the occasion small or great, the missing asses of Kish, or Agag the king of the Amalekites.

But God had His own intentions respecting Saul and makes the object of Saul's search a link of introduction to the prophet Samuel for the establishment of kingship in the earth. The details of this and the following chapter are remarkable as spewing him how entirely God holds every one and all the circumstances in His own hand, so that His will is the controlling power over Samuel and the sacrifice in the high place. Saul and his servant, and the young maidens going out to draw water—all are truly great by being little in their own eyes, and God everything and everywhere, from the prophet downward, for the Lord had told Samuel in his ear the day before about Saul. “Then Samuel took a vial of oil and poured it upon his head and kissed him, and said, Is it not because the Lord hath anointed thee to be captain over his inheritance?”

More remarkable still are the instructions given to this first king, the anointed of the Lord, to suit him for the place and responsibilities into which he had been inducted; and this is in truth always the way of our God to us in the varying character of His grace.

Saul's first lesson was “when thou art departed from me [Samuel] to-day, then thou shalt find two men by Rachel's sepulcher, in the border of Benjamin by Zelzah.” As pertaining to the tribe of Benjamin, this should have been an open volume to Saul, for what was Rachel and what her sepulcher to the instructed heart but the “place of the mother's sorrow” Ben-oni; yet the birth-place of Jacob's hope, and therefore his father called his name Benjamin, or “the son of my right hand?” Like Abraham, who from the altar on Mount Moriah received his son Isaac back again from the dead in a figure, as a type of the true son in death and resurrection; so here, in Ephrath, Jacob and Rachel do but give out the two names which make up the person of Christ, who by His own cross and the empty sepulcher was the Man of sorrow and the Son of the Father's right hand. What deep but precious lessons were those for the first king over Israel to learn in communion with the ways of God till the true anointed one, great David's greater Lord, should come! Not merely as to kingship were these secrets whispered forth from Rachel's sepulcher, but also as to the redemption of the people, over whom Saul was to reign in figure, till the promised and covenanted blessings should be established in Jerusalem the city of the great king, and the “whole world be filled with the glory of God.”

Samuel's next instructions to Saul were “thou shalt go on forward from thence, and come to the plain of Tabor, and there shall meet thee three men going up to God to Bethel.” The Lord was thus setting Saul in the ways of His own steps, that he might learn who the God was with whom he had to do, and see that all His paths drop fatness. What should Bethel have been to a true Israelite, the descendant of Jacob, to whom God appeared when he fled from the face of his brother Esau—that memorable night when Jacob took of the stones, and put them for his pillow, and lay down in that place to sleep—that night, when he received the directions for his faith by the ladder set up on the earth, but whose top reached to the heavens, and on which the angels of God were seen ascending and descending? What unmistakable signs were these, and links of connection too, between the heavens and the earth by angelic agencies thus made known to Jacob, and bound up in his person! Beyond all this however was the Lord Himself, who stood above it, and said, “I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac, the land whereon thou liest to thee will I give it, and thy seed.” Jacob thus becomes the heir of promise, and with the assurance that “in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed;” confirmed too by the declaration “I will not leave thee till I have performed that of which I have spoken to thee.” Connected by grace with such promises and blessing, what could Jacob say in accordance with the Lord's mind but “this is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven?” Perfectly in keeping with the occasion was the further act of the patriarch, when he awoke early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put for his pillow and changed it into a pillar, and poured oil upon the top of it. To crown all, he changed the name of the city Luz, or “separation” (guided by faith), into that of Bethel, or the house and meeting place of God.

All seemed to promise fair with Saul at the first, as be traveled over these paths, and halted at these resting places of grace and of the veiled but promised glory to the land and people through the seed. Moreover, “men were going up to God to Bethel, and were carrying three kids, and another three loaves of bread, and another a bottle of wine. Besides this they were to salute Saul, and give him two loaves of bread. The oil which Jacob poured out upon the pillar has gained additional significance by these sacrifices; and the kids, with the bread and the wine, were the suited confession on the part of the godly that the people, who had commenced their history

across Jordan at Gilgal in the book of Joshua, had been since met by the angel of the Lord at Bochim, or the place of failure and weeping, in the book of Judges. Nevertheless this confidence is maintained to faith by Bethel, and the God of Jacob, who cannot deny Himself, and these confessions of the conscience are met by the assurance to the heart, thou “art the same, and thy faithfulness endureth throughout all generations.”

Samuel had likewise told Saul, “after that thou shalt come to the hill of God where is the garrison of the Philistines.” Nothing is more valued by the soul which has been led along the highway of Jehovah, God Almighty, in olden times, or in the new revelation which He has made of Himself to us, as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, than to find ourselves associated with His purposes, and moreover by grace “workers together with God” now in the ways by which He is accomplishing them. Saul was thus carried outside himself and his father's house, and the strayed asses which he diligently sought in the land of Benjamin, and became identified with the sepulcher of Rachel, and the vastness of God's thoughts in the son born, the Ben-oni and the Benjamin, if he can only read these lessons aright, with the prophet Samuel, and the Jehovah of Israel.

The plain of Tabor, and the three men going up to God to Bethel, had been crossed by Saul, and became the living witnesses to him that there was the same unchangeable God for to-day, as had been known by their father Jacob at Bethel. Moreover, they saluted Saul, and further associated him with themselves by act and deed in the gift of the two loaves of bread, which he was to receive at their hands. We may remark here that all these steps were previous to Saul's arrival at the hill of God, where the Philistines lay in garrison; and were the requisite strongholds for faith in communion with God, by which alone a successful conflict with the enemy could be maintained.

These principles are the same for Christian conflict with “the wicked spirits in the heavenly places,” however different the objects of our faith and communion may be, and assuredly are, in the Father and the Son, by the Holy Ghost, It is a wonderful word to us in Eph. 6, “finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” And again, as to the panoply for the Christian champion, “put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.” The will of our God is entirely different too, “for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenlies.” Still, whatever the range of the enemy's power, whether larger or smaller, or whatever the varying character of the conflict before Christ came, or since His exaltation into the heavens at the right hand of God, the enemy is the same, and the watch-word of the entire army of the faithful is “our sufficiency is of God.” “The Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee” was the word of Samuel to Saul, and “go in this thy might,” whether to him or to Gideon, was only to prove that God would make a way for Himself through the thickest or the mightiest of His foes, and for the faith that followed Him.

Besides the sepulcher of Rachel and the plain of Tabor and the hill of God with the garrison of the Philistines, a company of prophets coming down from the high place were to meet Saul, having a psaltery, and a harp, and a tabret, and a pipe before them; and they were to prophesy. With these also Saul was to be identified; for Samuel had said “the Spirit of the Lord shall come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man.” It is at this point, and not till then, that Samuel could say, “let it be, when all these signs are come unto thee, that thou do as occasion serveth thee, for God is with thee.” We may note here that the principles of God since

the fall of man are the same, however different in their application, or varied in their character. In the world that now is God called out Abram, the head of the family of faith, to walk with Him, and Bethel was the place of the altar where the Almighty God appeared to him; just as the mount was the meeting place between the Lord and Moses, or Gilgal in the days of Joshua, and mount Zion in the time of David.

In the instance of Saul (the first king between Jehovah and His people), it is important to see that three great ends were reached in reference to himself personally: he was turned into another man, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and God was with him. All that God could then do, short of effectual calling perhaps, had been done for Saul and a marvelous catalog it is! He had been instructed in “the matter of the kingdom,” and anointed as the king of Israel, led about and taught the sources of strength for a man of faith in “the living God;” had a view of the enemy's garrison where it ought not to be, and by the Spirit of prophecy guided, with others that prophesied, to look into the bright future of Jehovah's ways, with the Israel whom He loved. It is not till grace and goodness have done their utmost that responsibility begins, whether as to the kingdom or this king. “What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done? wherefore, when I looked for grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?” Grace in fact creates our responsibilities, whether then or now, and supplies what is needful for their fulfillment, so that there need be no discouragement as these increase, provided the flesh in us is kept under the death which has passed upon it judicially by God at the cross of Christ. The Spirit of the Lord upon Saul, or in a David—Jesus Himself with the disciples—men full of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, or a man in Christ now, show plainly enough the manner and the measure of the grace of God through Christ, and the increasing responsibilities, as knowing “that our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God;” so that “ye are the epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.” But Saul's responsibility, and how he acquitted himself, is our present subject of study, and instruction. God had done what His prophet had spoken, “and it was so, when he had turned his back to go from Samuel that God gave him another heart: and all those signs came to pass that day.” Saul, who had been thus identified with the interests of Jehovah and His people, and the company of prophets, was to be further associated with Samuel who was the link between God and the nation of Israel; if he could walk with Him in this character.

Samuel said to him, “thou shalt go down before me to Gilgal; and behold, I will come down unto thee to offer burnt offerings, and to sacrifice peace offerings; seven days shalt thou tarry till I come to thee and show thee what thou shalt do.” The place of Samuel before God, as well as his relation to the people was to be respected, nor is another to intermeddle therewith, though this other be the king of Israel. The Lord had early called Samuel to Himself, and had used him as the reprover of Eli the high priest, in the days when the ark was taken captive by the Philistines and the glory was departed. At Mizpeh he had gathered all Israel together, and Samuel prayed for them to the Lord. And as he was offering up the burnt offering, the Philistines drew near to battle against Israel, but the Lord thundered with a great thunder on that day upon them, and discomfited them, and they were smitten. So when Saul and his servant were directed by the young maidens of the city to the high place that they might find Samuel, and ask the seer about the lost asses, they were told “the people will not eat until he come, because he doth bless the sacrifice: and afterward they eat that be bidden.” What pertained to Samuel was made plain and clear to Saul; and the less had been anointed and blessed by the greater. He was to tarry seven days at Gilgal, till “Samuel came

to sacrifice to the Lord."

"And some of the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul he was yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling." "And he tarried seven days.... but Samuel came not, and the people were scattered from him." Here is the moment of trial for Saul: can he own the real link between Jehovah and Israel to be in Samuel; and leave all his new anxieties and cares there—or will he step out of his own place by intruding into Samuel's, and incur the displeasure of God? How easily is the line of individual responsibility traversed! "Wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them? and Jesus said, ye know not what spirit ye are of." "And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings: and he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass that as soon as he had made an end, behold, Samuel came and said, What hast thou done?" Saul attempts to give a good reason for doing a bad thing; and this in truth is what disobedience always demands where the thing in question is not confessed as a sin. He excuses himself upon the ground which fallen nature must take (the seeing of the eye), and regards only the people, his misgivings respecting Samuel, and his fears concerning the Philistines: and these are the three things which carry him away from God. "Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down upon me to Gilgal;" and this is the conclusion of the natural heart when guided by its own fears. Another thing comes to light, which accompanies such a condition of soul, "I have not intreated the face of the Lord: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering." What is this lesson to us, but a proof that the active restlessness of human nature, whether by the reasonings of the mind or the hopes and unbelief of the heart, unsettle faith, and prevent Saul from waiting upon the God of Israel, as the newly appointed king, in the hour of danger; or waiting for Samuel to offer the sacrifices appointed between Jehovah and his people? Then "Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel forever."

How often the hour for the establishment of the proffered blessing is lost through inadvertence, and becomes the moment of forfeiture and defeat, and of Satan's power! At this very point it is, when the kingdom and the king were about to be confirmed by burnt offerings and peace offerings forever, that Saul breaks down and like the first man Adam, who gave place to the last Adam, so the first king must be set aside to make room for the Second or true David. Sorrowful words follow from the lips of Samuel, who (instead of being in the place of offering, and blessing the sacrifices, and the people, and their king) becomes the prophet of woe to Saul: "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."

(To be continued)

Chapter 257

Saul's Declension: Part 2

(Concluded from page 237.)

We have thus an example in Saul of a man who though little in his own sight at the onset, allowed his nature to turn everything round, which should have glorified God to his heart and conscience (and faith too, if he had it), for his own advantage and self-importance. The illustrious spots in this world's history, along which the Lord had led him, from Bethel to Gilgal, and the transformation which, by the power and grace of God, had already passed upon him, to the astonishment of the people, so that they said “what is this that has come to the son of Kish?” should have made him truly great by keeping him “less than the least” in his own eyes. But it was otherwise; and Saul, ceasing to be this, does what is right in his own eyes, and is again as one of the common people. Nor let us fail to remember the way in which he accounts for his degradation to Samuel: I had “not made supplication unto the Lord; and I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering.”

In one of our church epistles, it is very instructive to notice that “pray without ceasing” is set in order, and jeweled by “rejoice evermore” on one side, and by “in everything give thanks” on the other; and it is added “for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus, concerning you.” The thing which is effectually excluded from this enclosure is that very flesh to which Saul fell a prey (“I forced myself”), when in the moment of real exaltation by grace his heart was lifted up within him. Our rejoicings as well as our thanksgivings should never part company with the word of admonition “pray without ceasing” lest the flesh should connect itself with our mercies, and escape in this way from under the consciousness of its worthlessness in any real service for God. Indeed the judgment of our flesh is of the greatest consequence in a walk with God; as we may plainly learn in the early lesson of Jacob and the angel and their wrestling at Peniel, when the sinew shrank and the name of the patriarch was changed into Israel; or yet more distinctly at the cross, where, instead of wrestling, God condemned sin in the flesh “that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” The journeyings of Saul had this character, as well as that he might have confidence in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as the God of Israel; but the flesh escaped and rendered Saul personally unfit for his anointing; he became of consequence in his own esteem, by the distinguishing bestowments conferred upon him “by grace,” which should have witnessed to him only of the goodness and greatness of the Giver.

If however the faithfulness of God in the ancient chronicles gives us the record of a faulty man as a warning of the way in which human nature may clothe itself with all that the Lord bestows and turn it round for self-exaltation instead of for His own glory, He will not leave Himself without witness, nor us without an example of the right sort. The closing days of Elijah's life may supply this to us; for, as Samuel gave faith's directory to Saul, so the prophet Elijah takes his successor Elisha with him on that remarkable journey which terminated in his being taken up into heaven; and a double portion of His Spirit descending upon Elisha as the witness for God on earth. Their starting point was Gilgal, and from thence to Bethel, where the sons of the prophets met them. And Elijah said unto Elisha, “Tarry, I pray thee, here, for the Lord hath sent me to Jericho. And he said, As the

Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, I will not leave thee. So they came to Jericho." From thence the prophet went on to Jordan, and so would Elisha, perfecting himself for his future place in Israel and work for God by thus acquainting himself with the spots on earth which were of greatest moment between the departing one and the God of Israel, ere the whirlwind which waited to carry him up into heaven did its work. So identified were these two in every way, that the link on which the blessing of Elisha depended was this, "if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee; but if not, it shall not be so." Places of strength and witnesses of divine power on earth had been visited; and now the sources of sovereign grace in the heavens were to be the rule of faith's observance; and true in its own simplicity and singleness of eye Elisha cried "my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof. And he saw him no more." Moreover, he took hold of his own clothes and rent them in two pieces; and he took up also the mantle of Elijah, that fell from him, and went back and stood by the banks of Jordan, and smote the waters and said, Where is the Lord God of Elijah? The waters parted hither and thither, and Jordan gave forth the man upon whom "the double portion" of his master's spirit rested, for the work which lay before him. He "entreated the Lord" and wrought marvelously, "forcing himself" into obscurity and nothingness.

A greater than any of these has since come into this world, and lighted up a new pathway for faith and the communion of our souls. A sword pierced through the mother's heart at His birth, as Simeon told out the mysterious history of the Jehovah's Christ to those around, and to Mary. Ben-oni and Benjamin were familiar names to her, as regarded her son and her Lord, when she stood at His cross weeping, or was the glad witness of His resurrection to the right hand of the Father. The life of Christ during those three and thirty years on earth, and what they unfolded to the anointed eye, are to us what the Bethel, and the plain of Tabor, and the hill of God should have been to Saul; or what Gilgal, Jericho, and Jordan really were to Elijah at his departure, and to Elisha who was left to glorify God in the midst of His people below. Elisha "saw Elijah no more," but our departed One is the coming Lord; and, instead of an Elisha, we have the Holy Ghost, come down from the Father and the glorified Son of man, to abide with us as the Paraclete while Christ is absent.

There is another stage in Saul's declension and departure from God, which may yet be examined for our profit, on whom "the ends of the ages are come." Samuel also said unto him "the Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over Israel; now therefore hearken thou unto the voice of the words of the Lord." At the beginning of Saul's action in this commission to smite Amalek and utterly destroy all they had and spare them not, he promised fair, and gets a thought from the heart of God, who in judgment remembers mercy, though the Amalekites were to be utterly consumed. The Lord of hosts said, "I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way when he came up from Egypt." And Saul came to a city of Amalek, and laid wait in the valley. If God would utterly destroy "the Hers in wait," surely He would remember the Kenites who showed them kindness; so "Saul said unto the Kenites, Go get you down from among the Amalekites, lest I destroy you with them; for ye sheaved kindness to all the children of Israel, when they came up out of Egypt." Of old, when Sodom was to be consumed by fire and brimstone, Abraham made intercession with God upon the footing on which Saul was now acting, "this be far from thee to slay the righteous with the wicked, and that the righteous should be as the wicked: shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" This was not the hour of Saul's temptation, though it was close at hand;

he “smote the Amalekites from Havilah, till thou comest unto Shur.” But Saul and the people spared Agag the king, and the best of the sheep and oxen, and all that was good; “but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.”

Here it is the first king falls a second time: first, intruding into Samuel's place by offering the burnt sacrifice; and now, in not maintaining his own place as “captain of the Lord's inheritance” in obeying the commandment of God. Again, he allows his nature to guide him, and is betrayed by the seeing of the eye, and the hearing of the ear, and by the reasoning of his mind; till at last self governs his actions, and he becomes separated from the thoughts of God, and thus loses the link of connection between the Lord and what Amalek did to Israel when they came up out of Egypt. How easily we may use whatever God may have given us outwardly, or in the Church, in a natural way, and so make another pedestal for self (like the Corinthians) and lose sight of the glory of God!

The Lord repented that he had set up Saul to be king, and Samuel was grieved, and cried unto the Lord all night; but not Saul, for he had gone his way. Again, Saul has himself and his doings to excuse or to defend, so that Samuel confronts him by asking, “Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.” The spring of this disobedience is thus traced to ignorance of God, and in what He delights; or in self-will, which is rebellion. And Samuel said, “Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king.”

“And Saul said unto Samuel, I have sinned;” but neither his confession, nor the exercise of his conscience and heart under sin, is in the presence of God and His holiness. On the contrary he betrays the fact, that his own great desire is to stand fair in the eyes of the people, and would even make Samuel subservient to this end, just as he had used the advantages of place and position which God had given him as king, for the like purpose.

He excused himself to Samuel for his disobedience of God, “but he feared the people, and listened to their voice;” as did Pilate when he delivered Jesus to their will to be crucified. But Saul cannot rise higher than himself, and would make use of Samuel to recover the reputation which he had lost. “Now therefore pardon my sin, I pray thee, and turn again with me that I may worship the Lord. And Samuel said, I will not return with thee, and as Samuel turned about to go away Saul laid hold of the skirt of his mantle and it rent; and Samuel said, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee, and given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou.” All that God gave him is forfeited and the kingdom gone, and Saul pursues his downward course rapidly to the witch of Endor, and fatally to Mount Gilboa, where he perishes under the Philistine army.

A few words upon the sin of Saul in destroying the vile and refuse, and sparing the good, may be of service. How could anything be good which was bound up with Amalek? And yet, if this principle be applied to the flesh and the world, which Saul failed to carry out according to the mind of God upon Agag and the land of the Amalekites, how common does Saul's sin appear in this day! Where is the unsparing judgment as to the flesh which accepts the declaration, “so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God,” and where the deep knowledge of oneself that returns the answer, “I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwells no good thing?” Where is the unsparing hand that, like Samuel, hews Agag in pieces, come he ever so delicately, that takes part with God in the

judgment of sin in the flesh, and accepts the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves but in God who raiseth the dead?

As to the world (like everything in the land of the Amalekites) how few of us have really learned the lesson “love not the world, nor the things that are in the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him!” Will any cast a stone at Saul for sparing the good and the best for sacrifice unto God, and destroying the refuse and the vile? What is the religion of to-day, but Saul's? “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life (and these were the things that guided Saul and were his overthrow) is not of the Father, but of the world.”

“And Samuel came to Saul, and Saul said unto him, Blessed be thou of the Lord: I have performed the commandment of the Lord.” Solemn words for today; and equally so was Samuel's reproof: “what meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in mine ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I bear?”

“And Saul said, The people spared the best of the sheep and oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God, and the rest we have utterly destroyed.”

May the Lord give the needed grace to apply all these principles to ourselves, in close self-judgment in His own presence; that so His holiness, and the cross of Christ, may not only be the rule of our faith, but of a more severe line between the Amalekites and the children of God now, and between Agag and the Spirit!

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” And again, “God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world.” For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

J. E. B.

Chapter 258

Scripture Queries and Answers: Colored Coverings of the Holy Vessels

Q. Num. 4—What is the general idea of the colored coverings of the holy vessels? B. A.

A. We have three colors; blue or rather bluish purple ■■■■■■■ than which was on the table, the candlestick, and the golden altar; ■■■■■■■■■ scarlet or crimson on the loaves; and ■■■■■■■■■■ reddish purple on the brazen altar. All relate to the person of Christ or the display of what He is. The first appears to be that which was heavenly or the divine in man. The table shows divine righteousness in character, the base of human order and administration; so the candlestick with its spiritual perfection; and the altar giving us intercession within. All on the journey were thus covered. What we know of them has this character in going through the wilderness. The loaves were covered with scarlet, that is, displayed royalty in perfect administration itself. So over the ark there was first the vail, Christ's human nature, then guarded on the earth in spotlessness untainted by the badger skin; and the result was the heavenly or divine in man manifested here. The reddish purple answers to the brazen altar of sacrifice and points to the more heavenly royalty, the One exalted as the consequence of self-sacrifice to God. It is Lordship glory or reign, but not so much displayed from heaven and displaying it as brought there in answer to suffering. It was more as conferred on man than displayed in him, though it will be displayed. The transfiguration displayed it, not the lowly Savior.

Chapter 259

Scripture Queries and Answers: Force of the Words for People and Nations in the Old Testament

Q. What is the distinctive force of the words used for people, peoples, nations in the Old Testament? And to which would the different Greek words in Luke 2:31, 32 correspond? A. B.

A. The words used for people, peoples, nations in the Hebrew are these. ■■■ “people” in the singular in general signifies Israel, ■■■■■■■■ in the plural “peoples.” This is very often indeed wrongly translated “people” in the Authorized Version, I suppose because “peoples” is not correct English; but the sense is quite different. I believe the ■■■■■■■■ are the peoples in connection with Israel, brought into relationship with Israel. ■■■■■■■■■, on the contrary, are the nations in contrast with God's people. It is used of Israel where it is disowned in Psa. 43. ■■■■■ ■■■■■■■■■■■ an impious nation. There is another word, and quite general, ■■■■■■■■■■ “tribes,” “races,” and so “nations.” This is the word translated people in Psa. 2, and often elsewhere. The word ■■■■■■■ is found in Gen. 25:16 (of Arab tribes) and in Num. 25:15, in the same sense. We have ■■■■■■■■ in Psa. 18 In Psa. 3:6, it is ■■■ Israel. In Psa. 7:8 it is ■■■■■■■■■; that is, while a general word, not the nations looked at in contrast with Israel, “Gentiles,” as we are accustomed to say. In Psa. 9 God is viewed as clearing the land of His enemies. He is known by the judgment He executes. The wicked (which may be of His people in the land) are turned into Sheol, are slain and go down to the pit, and the Gentiles also who give no heed to God but go their own way, despising Him. In Psa. 67 verse 2, it is “all the nations” everywhere, contrasted with Israel who speaks. Verse 7 is the effect. In verse 3 they are looked at as brought into Relationship, ■■■■■■■■ In verse 4 it is ■■■■■■■■■■, all the various tribes of the earth. Then He judges them, not in destruction as ■■■■■■■ but as peoples (■■■■■■■■) under Him. Then ■■■■■■■■■■ the various tribes or races He shall lead or govern. In verse 5 it is ■■■■■■■■ all the various peoples, but viewed in relationship with Jehovah.

We have three times in Luke 2 before the face of all peoples. Were the ■■■ expressed in Hebrew, it would be ■■■■■■■■ a general word (not I think here ■■■■■■■■■■) but viewed as brought into relationship with God. Then the nations, ■■■■, (■■■■■■■) were viewed as wholly invisible, unseen and ignored. The light of Christ was to reveal them, bring them out into visible existence, so that they became ■■■■■■■■ so to speak. Then “people Israel” is plain enough.

Chapter 260

Scripture Queries and Answers: Grammar in Revelation

SCRIPTURE QUERIES AND ANSWERS.

Q. Rev. 14:19; 17:4; 19:1; 21:12. Is not the grammar set aside in following the ancient copies? How are these anomalous constructions to be explained? W. L.

A. The anacolutha I cannot but accept on the authority of the best MSS. as the genuine phrases of the writer, which are no doubt in every instance intentional, though we may not in every instance see why. Later scribes changed these and many other such irregularities of form into expressions conformed to common syntax. Nobody would have introduced them unless they had been the readings of the text originally. The tendency of corrections is to smooth down what seems harsh. It is clear, that even apart from inspiration, John did not so write for want of knowing the more usual rules; for he employs them himself regularly, unless where he introduces these singular phrases for special reasons. The same principle is true of Luke 2:13; 19:37; Acts 5:16; 21:36; Phil. 2:1 (in critical texts, ■ιτις σπλ■χνα). But it is far more frequently applied and carried out more boldly in the Revelation than in any other part of the New Testament. Hebrew forms predominate.

As to the change from τ■ν λ. to τ■ν μ. which I accept as the true reading, it must be borne in mind that in the LXX. the substantive occurs sometimes in the masculine. Here the use of the two genders together is no doubt peculiar, and seems owing to the intervening phrases, το■ θομο■, το■ Θεο■, after which the Spirit gives more energy by availing Himself of the masculine form.

Again γ■μον βδελυγμ■των κα■ τ■ is a mixture of the ordinary genitival construction with the accusative, as the corresponding Hebrew word does. Emphasis is secured thereby.

Rev. 19:1 ■χλου.....λεγ■ντων is the construction ad sensum, common enough even in classic Greek and Latin, a singular collective with a plural following. See chapter vii. 9; John 12:12. In Rev. 21:12 ■χουσα for ■χουσαν is not the only instance of variatio structurae in verses 10 - 12. See Rev. 3:12; 4:1; 6:9; 8:9; 9:14; 11:1, 4, 15; 14:7, 12; 16:3; 17:14; 18:12; 19:12. In many of these cases various readings appear from the effort to remove the strange shape of the phrase to common concords. In such cases the well-known canon applies.

Chapter 261

Scripture Queries and Answers: Psalm 109:4

Q. Psa. 109:4. What is the force of the last clause? H. J.

A. “And I [am, or am to] prayer.” So the holy sufferer describes it. Instead of his love they were his adversaries, and he gave himself up to prayer in consequence. How astonishingly true of the Lord! though no attentive mind can apply the psalm exclusively to Him, nor even every word to Him in ever so general a way. There is no reference to Christ's priestly or intercessional character; still less does it depict Him as the fountain and source of all prayer, however truly He may be so. To draw from this expression the inference that from all eternity His Father heard Him is forcing scripture. The real thought intended is the giving up oneself to prayer in presence of those who are adversaries without cause.

Chapter 262

Scripture Queries and Answers: the Witness

Q. 1 John 5:6-10.—What is the witness in verse 10? Is it the Holy Ghost? If so, where is the truth of the indwelling of the Spirit introduced in that chapter? Is it in verse 6? And why is the Spirit first in verse 8 and last in verse 6? Also is the witness of men in verse 9 simply human testimony? or is it of men moved by the Holy Ghost? M.

A. Witness is an equivocal word in English, as it may mean either the person testifying, or the testimony borne. The Greek leaves no doubt that in verse 10 it is not the Holy Spirit, but the testimony itself. In verse 6 the Spirit is introduced as testifying, and there of course for the first time in the chapter, where He is viewed rather as present rendering testimony than as indwelling. This leads to a personification of the water and the blood so as to form a threefold class of witnesses, the Spirit who alone is strictly a person leading the way. (7) “For there are three that bear witness, (8) the Spirit and the water and the blood; and the three are to the one thing” (or, agree in one). On the other hand, verse 6 refers to the solemn fact, recorded only in the Gospel of John, where the water and the blood flowed from the pierced side of Jesus crucified: to which the Holy Spirit draws special attention as we see there. John 19:34, 35. In fact the Spirit followed; in testimony He naturally comes first. The witness of man in verse 9 means a testimony simply human; and the reasoning, as in our Lord's discourses often (Luke 13:15, 16; 14:4, 5; 15), is what is technically called a minori ad majus. As a rule, men's testimony is valid: how much more worthy of credit is God's!

Chapter 263

On the Scriptures

We may by a little consideration observe the value which God has set on the revelation He has, from time to time, been making of Himself and His will, and also our own title to the direct personal use of that revelation. And such truths are of serious and happy importance to our souls at all times, but in some sense especially now.

When the Lord God planted and furnished the garden, and set Adam in it, He made all to depend on His word or revelation: “In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” This was the revelation then; and man's history, as we know, was to hang entirely upon it. And thus, at the very outset, we see what a place of value the word which had gone out from the mouth of the Lord holds: and it became the direct object of the serpent's assault and enmity.

So, when the character of things had been changed through man's disobedience to this first word of God, all is made to depend on another word: “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.” Man's return to God now depended on his belief of this word, as his departure from God had afore hung on his disobedience to the first word. For all now rested on faith, or obedience to this revelation. Thus we find that Abel, by faith, offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain. All service from man now rested on faith, or obedience to the word or revelation of God. (Heb. 11) So high was the value which the Lord put on His word, making it, as before, the standard and the test of obedience, and the hinge on which man's history was to turn. And Cain's offering was in unbelief, or in despite of God's word about the seed of the woman. He despised God's word, as the serpent had before assailed it. And so, in process of time, in like manner, Noah and Abraham, to instance no others, are called forth from a revolted world by revelations from God, and their acceptance of such revelations determines their path in present peace onward to glory.

But when we reach a larger scene for the energies and acts of God, as in the nation of Israel, we still find that all was made to turn upon the revelation He was giving His people. We read that they were neither to add to it or diminish from it. (Deut. 4; 12) So carefully did He hedge round it, so jealously did He watch over it, that it might not be entangled with the thorns of the wilderness of worldly wisdom, or disturbed by the admixtures of man's thoughts. And having thus protected it, and provided for its purity, Jehovah ordered that His people should bind it round their heart and their soul, and fix it under their eye continually, inscribing it on their gates and doors, making it their morning and evening meditation and the theme of their family intercourse (Deut. 6; 11), so that they should let it in, that it might mingle itself with all their personal and social life, and shed its light on every path, however ordinary, of their daily journey. And if any of them were put at a distance from the more immediate place of the nation and of their religious observances, still the word was to be their rule there. (Josh. 22:4, 5.) And if any of them were called into circumstances which might be extraordinary or unlooked for, the same word of God should follow them there; for if there were to be a king in days to come, the law of his God should go up to the throne with him, and be there before Him as fully as he was before the people. (Dent. 17.) And the history of Israel

as a nation, like that of Adam in Eden and out of Eden, was to be determined by their use of God's word. (Deut. 28.)

What an expression of the value which the Lord set upon His word all this gives us! and with what jealousy does He watch it, that He may maintain it in its purity! and how immediately would He have it bound round the heart and soul of each of His people!

It is blessed to see the Lord thus esteeming His own revelation, and commending it to our esteem; and, as we go on in His ways, it is His word we still find the Lord using and estimating. Israel was disobedient to the word of His law; and what He does is to send them the word of His prophets. If they refuse one testimony, it is only another they must get. God will still use His word, and still make their history to rest on their use or abuse of it. And, therefore, we find that their final dispersion and bondage in Babylon came of this, that when the Lord had even risen up early to send them His prophets, they did but despise those prophets, and the words which they brought; so that wrath came on them to the uttermost, and there was now no remedy. (2 Chron. 36)

There is however a return to Jerusalem out of Babylon; and return to God then is marked very clearly by a return to His word. The captives are obedient to the word. Ezra, for instance, makes it his meditation, the theme of his intercourse with the people, and the rule of his ways and acts in the midst of them. (Chap. 7.) So Nehemiah and his companions. They read it, they own the power of it over their consciences, and they set themselves to walk and act in the light of it. (Chap. 8,; 8.) As long, or as far, as those returned Jews were obedient to God, so long, and so far, were they attentive to the voice of His truth, both trembling at, and rejoicing in, His word according to its spirit in addressing them. They had returned to God, and must, therefore, return to His word; and while this was so, blessing was theirs, and latter day blessing is made to depend on this also. (Mal. 4:5, 6.)

When we open the New Testament, after all this, we find the word, or revelation of God, in this accustomed place of honor and value. It is put into the lips of the Baptist; no power lies in his hand, but the word of the Lord breaks from his lips. “John did no miracle,” but he was a “voice” from God, acceptance of which was again to determine the history of Israel. So the Lord's own ministry, which this of John introduced, was not only a fresh ministry of God's word (on the value of which I will not speak), but it did itself greatly honor the precious word; and this still shows us what value in God's esteem His word holds. Thus, in His acts, the Lord Jesus was ever fulfilling that word, as the Evangelists are careful to tell us; in His conflicts with the devil, He uses that word, as the gospels again tell us; and in His teachings, He is ever referring to that word, rebuking the Jews for their value for anything else, for their use of traditions, and their neglect of it, and giving them to know that not a jot or tittle of it can in any wise fail; that the scripture cannot be broken; and that if Moses and the prophets be not heard, even one risen from the dead would not avail to lead to repentance.

This is much to be observed; and thus did the Son, in His day, honor the word. The Holy Ghost, in like manner, is a Spirit of revelation in the apostles, and fills up by them the word of God. But not only so, but in them He does continually, clearly, and fully, express His high divine sense of the value of the scriptures. If man dare not add to it, God need not. It is perfect, able, as the apostle tells us, thoroughly to furnish the saint to all good works. And no authority stands, or can possibly stand, on equal ground with it, so that even if an angel were to gainsay it, he must be cursed. It

matters not who it may be, all must sink below the voice and authority of that gospel or revelation of God which had been delivered.

Thus do we see, from the beginning to the end, the Lord's value for His own word—how He has made a hedge about it, that no rude hand may guiltlessly touch it, and also has appointed it to be the great standard at all times, on which the history of His people, either for blessing or for curse, was to turn: and has bound it round the heart and soul, before the eyes, and on the palms of His people, and given it an authority which nothing is to be allowed either to gainsay or to rival. God of old, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, each in His day, attests this. And all this is precious to the soul. God and His word are joined together. To give up His word is to give up Himself. For He can be known only by His own revelation.

But if we thus see the divine estimate of the word, with equal clearness and sureness we may see our title to that word, and how the Lord has joined us and the word together also, and that no man therefore can put such asunder.

By one short sentence the “ready writer” has given all saints an immediate personal interest in all the old scriptures. “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning.” This one sentence writes our title to this most precious inheritance. The old scriptures are God's gift, and this word from Rom. 15 is the deed of gift, entitling all saints to a common property in it. The title is short and clear and simple, as the inheritance conveyed is invaluable.

But with equal simplicity can we make out our title to the new scriptures. Luke addresses his gospel to a private Christian friend as we may speak, hereby sheaving that it was written for the saint in the most ordinary circumstances—not committed to any elect order of persons, or persons in authority, but to a private Christian friend, who bore no office or distinction of any kind, of whom, indeed, we hear nothing but in this address of the evangelist to him. But this shows that this Gospel is given to us all. And if Luke be thus part of our inheritance, so surely are Matthew, Mark, and John. We ask no favor from any one to allow this: the title is so clear, so simple, so beyond all question: and on the very same ground is our title to the book of the Acts. This was the property of the same private friend, the same Theophilus: any “lover of God” may deem himself in fullest possession of it, as a further part of his inheritance, and use it without reserve.

The Epistles, in their turn, not only convey their rare and valuable treasures to our souls, but at the very outset tell us of our title to them.

They are addressed (saving in personal cases, as Timothy, Titus, or Philemon), to the saints, or the churches in the different places to which the Spirit by His apostles sends them: and the book of Revelation (which, following the Epistles, closes the volume of God) is sent to the seven churches in Asia; and thus we read the title of all saints to these words.

They are not specially committed to any separated order of men, but cast upon the hearts of all the saints, as Moses had done with all the statutes and judgments of Israel. And I may add, “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” would never have been written to the saints at Colosse, if they had not title to the immediate personal enjoyment of that word. But so it is, blessed be God. He has as simply joined His word and the heart of His saint together, as He has joined Himself and His word together. And we say again, what God has joined together let no man put asunder.

And if any do so violently—if any take away the key of knowledge, they are falling under the direct judgment of the Lord; “woe unto you, lawyers, for ye have taken away the key of knowledge.” (Luke 11:52.)

Such is God's estimation of His own precious revelation, and such His care that it should be kept pure. But in connection with this, I would for a little moment look at 1 Kings 13.

The kingdom of the ten tribes under Jeroboam was at this time an unclean place. The calves of gold set up at Bethel and at Daniel were the confidence of the people, obedient to this word of their king, “Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of Egypt.”

The Lord sends a missionary into that land with words of judgment. His commission, his ministry, and his conduct in his ministry, were all specially ordered by “the word of the Lord.” He comes out of Judah to Bethel “by the word of the Lord” (ver. 1); he cries against the altar there “in the word of the Lord” (ver. 2); and his behavior, while in that place and doing that service, is prescribed to him “by the word of the Lord” (ver. 9). And thus, as we said, his commission, his ministry, and his conduct—all are under the light and authority of God's word. This provided for everything: he had only to observe it.

This is most particularly marked by the Spirit of God in this narrative. And at the beginning, the Lord's missionary, “the man of God,” acts accordingly. He pleads “the word” as the warrant for his ministry of judgment upon the altar at Bethel, and also against the offers and invitations of Jeroboam, making it the only light and guide of his path while in his country. And this was all safe and happy. The Lord had given him a very simple directory, and in the observing of it his path was maintained in security and peace.

But that old serpent who, in the garden of Eden, made “the word of the Lord” the object of his attack, and has ever since been seducing the heart of man from it, tries with this man of God something further, since the offers and invitations of a king are resisted.

There was “an old prophet” in Israel at that time—another man of God, I doubt not, but, like Lot, found in a place where he ought not to have been, and where he could not act in character as a prophet; for how could he reprove the darkness with which he was more or less in fellowship?

Such an one is easily used by the enemy, and so it proves here. The father of lies employs him to do his work, and he tempts the Lord's missionary to eat and drink with him, contrary to “the word” which he had received, under the pretense that “an angel” from the Lord had spoken to him. And the temptation prevails: the path of simple obedience to “the word of the Lord” is deserted, and the servant of God dies under the judgment of God—a kind of pillar of salt, a kind of abiding witness and warning to us all, that our souls may ever hold to this— “let God be true, but every man a liar.”

Deep and serious, and for the present evil day well-timed is the instruction of this little narrative. The man who withstood the invitations of a king, and had determined on cleaving to “the word of the Lord,” though against the offers of a man in power, falls under the pretenses of a man of religion. A religious guise seduces one whom the splendors of a court had tempted in vain. And so it is still and will increasingly be. The devil is still practicing by what the world judges to be religion, as it judged and estimated the traditions and observances of the Pharisees of old. And he succeeds if he can but withdraw from subjection to “the word of the Lord.” That is what God

opposes to everything “If they speak not according to it, there is no light in them.”

Clearly, then, do we trace in the scriptures God's value for His word or revelation, and the believer's title to it. If God's word be deserted, He Himself is given up, for He can be known only by the revelation of it. There is no light in the soul” They have taken away the key of knowledge” —and our Lord joins this with not entering into the kingdom of God. (Luke 11)

There is an opposite error. There is the taking of this key, and using it to one's own destruction. The untaught and unstable do this. (2 Peter 3) The mere human or intellectual man, in the confidence of his own strength, takes this key, and injures, all he can, the door of the treasury of wisdom and knowledge through his awkwardness or violence. This is very true. And the danger is, lest, being offended by this as the saint should and must righteously be, he is cast on the former error, and tempted to let the key of knowledge be taken away, and deposited in some sacred hand, as is thought. But one error is not to be corrected by another: the key is neither to be taken away, nor used unskillfully.

I fully however allow, and it is to be deeply remembered by our souls in a day of intellectual pretense like the present, and of much activity of human thought and wisdom, that the book of God is not to be subjected to the mere acuteness of man's mind. Far otherwise indeed. It demands, in the name of God, our full subjection to itself. Nor is it written, as one has said, for critics, for scholars, or for judges, but for sinners. “It is not an interesting exercise for our faculties,” that we are to expect in it. And it is by laying aside malice and envy and hypocrisies, and by simple desire after the living God Himself, that we are really to grow by its sincere milk or strong meat. (1 Peter 2:1, 2.) I would indeed add this to what I have said on the value of the scriptures. The Lord forbid that we should say anything that would appear to treat it as only one of the many books of the schools. For the Son of God is not the mere master of a new school, but the living Head of the church to minister nourishment through joints and bands to the whole body. And let me add the striking and seasonable language of one of other days. “Wouldst thou know that the matters contained in the word of Christ are real things? Then never read them for mere knowledge sake. Look for some beams of Christ's glory and power in every verse. Account nothing knowledge, but as it is seasoned with some revelation of the glorious presence of Christ, and His quickening Spirit. Use no conference about spiritual truths for conference' sake, but still mind the promotion of edification.”

This would help to put the soul into a right attitude, when purposing to learn the secrets of God's most precious oracles. And when the apostle prays for the saints (as in Eph. 1 and Col. 1), that they may grow in knowledge, he does this after he has sought for them that they might have a spiritual understanding; and this tells us, or intimates to us, that mere acquaintance with, or information about, scripture, would all be divinely nothing worth, and that we should be careful not to pursue inquiry into revealed truth by the light or skill of the human mind, but by the exercise of the understanding given to us in Christ Jesus.

All this surely I would uphold before my own conscience at all times. But all this leaves untouched the great truth we have been mainly considering—the value of the written word with God and to us, and that it is the great one standard for the testing of all our thoughts, and the common inheritance of all the children. It is even the delight and commendation of an inspired apostle, that Timothy, the child of a child of God, from his childhood had known that word. So surely has God

bound it about the heart and soul of His people. Therefore, again we say, let no authority divorce them or put them asunder, neither let any one use it, but in that holy obedient mind that is due to a gift of God.

The Spirit, in a very large sense, gives the scriptures to all. For in the inspired penman of the Acts, the Holy Ghost commends the Bereans for their candor, their nobleness, in searching the scriptures, whether what even an apostle was teaching was according to them. It was grateful to the mind of the Holy Ghost to have His word thus used and honored by these poor private Jews. Bereans they were, of the synagogue in that city; and the Spirit rejoices at seeing the scriptures in their hands, making them the standard, even though an apostle was preaching unto them. This surely puts the written word in high places. And so the same apostle, as quickened by the same Spirit, reasoned with the Jews out of the same scriptures, from “morning to evening;” as Jesus Himself restored the minds of the two disciples by leading them through all the scriptures. Peter also commends the disciples to the light of the prophetic word, and by his own word would ever have them bear in mind all that was needful for them, whether for past, present, or future truth; and never (as another has observed) thinks of commending them to any official or apostolic successor of his, but to that word which the Holy Ghost by him was then delivering. As even teachers, feeders of God's flock—as spiritual elders set over them are commended to God and His word, and not to anything else, in order that they might be kept and edified. (Acts 20; Luke 24 Peter 1)

This, and more than this, which we have, is more than enough to make our souls prize this precious, precious, gift of God—much more precious to our souls by the attempt there has ever been made to take it from us as not belonging to us, and to deposit it in some dark and distant corner. They have sought to put asunder what God has joined together—the heart of His wayfaring saint and the light of His word.

God's word may be given up by the infidel who rejects it; but it may be given up, though in another way, by him who would join other words with it.

Traditional Christianity is real infidelity; for it denies the scriptures, which assert their own sufficiency, and make themselves the standard. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because they have not light in them.” And again, “The wise men are ashamed, they are dismayed and taken; lo! they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?” “A betrayer of the book, in purer days, was judged as wicked an one as the denier of the faith.” But the one is profane infidelity, the other is religious infidelity, and man by much chooses the latter. It enables him to keep God at a distance, which is the desire of man, or the flesh, and at the same time to keep a conscience at peace with religion still, which is equally his desire.

Sorrowful is the sight that man still prevails—prevails in the religion of the world, as well as in its kingdoms. But blessed, blessed indeed, the prospect of entering a sphere, where Jesus shall prevail, and that forever. The light of God's thoughts shall shine there, the righteousness of God's power shall be felt there. Times of restitution indeed—times of refreshing; because times of Jesus' presence.

It is not merely thoughts of God that our souls need: all religion, divine or human, that is, true or false, will teach us to think of God. But it is the thoughts of God we need to have brought into our

souls—and those thoughts are to be learned only, authoritatively and unmixedly, in the word. The scriptures are these thoughts of God conveyed to us. And the Psalmist can say of them, “How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God, how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand.” O that we may thus prize them! Then shall we be wiser than the ancients, having respect to God's testimonies.

I would add, in the words of another, “The malice of Satan has raged no less against the book than the truth contained in it.” This we might expect. For what is the book of God? In the words of the same, “God's merciful and steadfast relief against all that confusion, darkness, and uncertainty, which the vanity, folly, and baseness of the minds of men, heightened by the unspeakable distractions that fall out among them, would otherwise have certainly run into.” And this book, like every work of God, manifests itself. It is its own witness. “Is not my word like a fire? saith the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” And in contrast with all other words—with all words or writings which are not His—the Lord says, “What is the chaff to the wheat?” (Jer. 23) Such things do we learn of the word, or the scriptures.

And in closing, I would just say, that we need the whole of it, but nothing supplemental to it. This is intimated both by the Lord and Moses: “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.” (Deut. 8; Matt. 4) This testimony is strong. These words tell us that nothing less, nothing more, is needed as food for the sustaining and strengthening of divine life in our souls, the Spirit most surely being alone able to make it effectual. The soul does not know what portion of the precious word, in its conflict with various darknesses and subtleties of Satan, it may not need, but it can live by that. Its life will not need aught beside, but it is not to spare any of it. These two thoughts are clearly intimated in these words. And thus, for our blessing as for the divine giver's praise, we are not to add thereto or diminish therefrom. We may and shall attain different measures in the knowledge of it, according as there is gift of God, and the exercise of the spiritual senses; but we are to make it the common standard in the camp of God. And the standard-bearer of the Lord must not faint in the day of battle. A firm hand and a broken heart are to give character to us.

Chapter 264

The Servant for Ever

Ex. 21

Is the statute law of the Hebrew servant, which is recorded in Ex. 21, there is a striking type of Him who is the only perfect One in Himself; and in all the relations which connect Him with God and man. “If the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever.”

We ought to be always so sufficiently alive to the grace of God, in giving us figures and types of persons and things (which otherwise we should never be able to understand), as to refuse to take the smallest liberty with the subjects which He thus brings within our reach, and about which He desires to interest us.

Nor is this enough to say—for if the Lord teaches us in this way, they are His own deep thoughts and purposes in Christ His Son. It is not that we should reduce these things to the level of our own ideas, but that our minds should be helped and lifted up out of their own littleness, so as to comprehend the ways of God towards us, and the principle of His actings in grace now, or in the glory by and by. The Hebrew servant is one of the lessons, given us by divine wisdom and love for this end, and shows us the Christ, in His faithful and devoted service to God, and in the midst of the relations which brought Him into this world.

It is a precious thought for our hearts, that the objects of Christ's affections are here, and that His love for the Eve, the bride, the Lamb's wife, which the wisdom of God had counseled from everlasting for a helpmeet; and His delight in the children of His adopting grace, brought Him down into our midst. By unmistakable words and deeds He proved, “I love my master, my wife, my children; I will not go out free,” and in acts of continuous and devoted service has He not with equal plainness accepted the alternative, and become the faithful servant forever? What was thus given out to our faith in the type of the master and the wife and the children; or in the figure of the servant, the ear, and the doorpost; has become fact to us, and is the recorded witness of a love that was stronger than death, and which found its delights with the relations which it had formed. This is the picture of the living love of the Lord Jesus, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church. Indeed so short does the type of the Hebrew servant fall of the antitype, that when the Lord Jesus departed from this world to the Father in John 13, He only laid aside His garments to gird Himself afresh for His present service of the water and the towel, that “His own might have part with Him,” where He is gone for awhile!

And so when He returns a second time to the earthly objects of His affections to renew His intimacy with them in the millennial age, He will again come forth and serve them, yea, gather them around Himself as He said, “that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

May we not add to this, that when He appears in His own glory, and the glory of the Father, and of the holy angels, and sits upon His own throne as “the Son of man,” He will connect all these acquired titles and honors with His own person, as the obedient servant, the faithful and true witness; and come forth in the power of God to bring everything into subjection to Him that appointed Him? In the new character of servant-King will He not take His place in the kingdom of God, and reign therein till He hath put all enemies under His feet, even to that last enemy, death itself? So “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 be all in all.” Thus the early types of the doorpost, and the bored ear, and the faithful servant, who loved his master and his wife and his children, who would not go out free but be a servant forever, has been more than fulfilled in generations that are passed away, and in the dispensation which is passing, and will only receive their full accomplishment in the ages that are yet to come, when we shall “be filled into all the fullness of God.”

Another character of Christ will open itself to us, if we add to what He was as the faithful servant, (whether by incarnation or by resurrection) the value of the life He laid down in substitution and death. Psa. 40 presents prophetically our Lord as “brought up out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay,” connecting itself with Ex. 21 though leading on to that further and deeper work of suffering and expiation, on account of the iniquities of those whom (as we have seen) He loved better that His life. As the faithful servant, the Psalm opens by “waiting.” “I waited for Jehovah and he inclined unto me and heard my cry He set my feet upon a rock and established my goings.” Our consciences, set at rest in the presence of God by the blood of Christ, readily tell us the difference between the love that brought Him down to us, and the dying love which led Him to give Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor—the difference between the bored ear, and the awl, and the doorpost of Ex. 21, and the opened ear (or the ear digged) and the horrible pit, and the cry of Psa. 40. Some other references to these two scriptures may make the difference still plainer.

The Hebrew servant's devotedness kept him in the midst of those he loved better than himself, so that he would not go out free, or alone. He was in the circle of his own affections, and there was neither blood nor death required; for the question of expiation for sin was not there raised, but the love to “His own which were in the world,” with which “He loved them unto the end!” This Psalm speaks of sacrifice and offering for sin; and the Spirit of Christ leads us on from the doorpost to the cross, and Him who hung upon it in that day, when innumerable evils compassed Him about—the hour, where in a love stronger than death He made our transgressions His own, and said, “Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head, therefore my heart faileth me. Be pleased, Oh! Lord, to deliver me: Oh! Lord, make haste to help me.” The state and condition of those He loved was now in question with God, and according to the holiness of His nature; and it is to this Psalm the Holy Ghost refers, as regards the person of our Lord: “wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. Lo, I come to do thy will, O, my God.”

In this vast circle of Christ's affections, by the sacrifice of Himself He made atonement for all in us that was inconsistent with His own love; and in order to establish the righteousness of God (whose law was within His heart) we see Him living, acting, and dying, that He might glorify God and finish the work that was given Him to do. As the center of this circle, and forming the way to the

blessedness of which the Psalm speaks, He says, “Blessed is that man who maketh Jehovah his trust; and respecteth not the proud nor such as turn aside to lies:” and, as the faithful witness from God to men, adds “Many, O Jehovah my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee.” Moreover, as the obedient servant in testimony, He stood in the midst of the great congregation, and declared, “I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart,” nor have I refrained my lips, O Jehovah, thou knowest. In result He connects all those whom He thus loved, and on whose account He thus died, with Himself in His own delights with the God whom He so glorified; saying, “Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee; let such as love thy salvation say continually, Jehovah be magnified: while He who wrought out the work which brought “His own” so nigh to God, takes His own place of distance on our behalf, and adds, “but I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me. Thou art my help and my deliverer, make no tarrying, O my God!”

There is another character of service on which the Lord entered for the wife and the children whom He loved, which the prophet Isaiah describes as between Jehovah and the nation of Israel in chapter 1. “Thus saith Jehovah, Where is the bill of your mother's divorcement, whom I have put away? or which of my creditors is it, to whom I have sold you?” The devoted loving Hebrew servant of Exodus, or the self-sacrificing servant of the Psalm, “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” has no other rule between himself and the master be served, than “Lo, I come to do thy will: in the volume of the book it is written of me.” My meat and drink is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work. The opening chapters of Isaiah describe Israel's condition as viewed in connection with “the throne of the Lord, whose train filled the temple;” seraphim cried to seraphim, Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of hosts; and the posts of the door moved at the voice, and the house was filled with smoke. Prophet and people, judged in the light of this holiness, cried, “Woe is me, for I am unclean, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips:” but the emblems of the live coal, and the tongs, and the altar, disclosed to him the secret of what had taken away his iniquity, and purged his sin. The prophet thus strengthened for his own particular service in that day, could, by the spirit of prophecy, point the faith and hopes of Israel onward, as in this fiftieth chapter, to the great Prophet and deliverer of His people, who has since come in as the faithful servant in their midst. The estrangement of the nation from Jehovah, and its bill of divorcement—as well as the yet deeper punishment of the veil upon their hearts, and Lo-ammi written by the finger of God upon them, and upon the city of Jerusalem to this day, have all been taken up by the “servant forever,” and form part of that wondrous work which was given Him to do, and which He finished on the cross. Long ago He took the place in His ministry to Israel, throughout the length and breadth of the land of Canaan, predicted in our chapter, “The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. He wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. And I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.” Nor was this all, but faithful to Him that appointed Him, He set His face like a flint, and gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: nor did he hide Himself from shame and spitting. The confidence of Christ was unshaken in God, even when dogs compassed Him, and the assembly of the wicked enclosed Him, and He was brought into the dust of death.

The Spirit of prophecy in Isaiah thus sketched in outline the coming One, till really, born of the virgin, the Spirit of God like a dove rested upon Him, and He identified Himself with the children

whom He loved in the depths of Jordan, as the fulfiller of righteousness. Jesus “led of the Spirit” passed over in His life all that was signified of Him, whether in types or psalms or prophecies; and by His death and resurrection gained a title to break every yoke, and set the captives free. His love for His own brought Him by incarnation into the place of service forever, signed by the ear, and the doorpost, as we have seen. His dying love brought Him to the cross, that by redemption through His blood we might be made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; By His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension to the right hand of God, He has been crowned with honor and glory, and can thus set aside the bill of Israel's national divorcement, in the future day of His service as mediator, when He will put that people under the new covenant, and God shall be their God. “At that time Zion will be no more termed forsaken, neither shall her land any more be termed desolate; for it is written, Jehovah delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married.” “Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of Jehovah, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.”

There remained yet another service for the faithful and obedient servant. The wife and children of His devoted love must not only be met in their very worst state, and redeemed out of it by the shedding of His own blood; but through His effectual work of service towards God in death and resurrection will be caught up in triumph, when He shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God. The Master too, by the work of His obedient servant, who would not go out free (and because of His own glory, which was brought out, as well as our deliverance) has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow. The servant-Savior, who will be also the servant-King, was in His own nature a Son, though a servant; and when looked at in this light, is owned by us as such, in His own essential deity, as “the image of the invisible God,” who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. The secret of His marvelous servantship is further unveiled to us (when in the days of His flesh) by Heb. 5 “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; and being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him; called of God an High Priest after the order of Melchisedec.” The master in type, the Jehovah of Old Testament language, is revealed now as the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Moreover, by the Lord's departure and entrance upon His offices and services of priestly intercession and advocacy in heaven with the Father; another Paraclete is come down to abide with us, that the wife may know she is not a widow, nor the children left orphans, in this world. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, which proceedeth from the Father and the Son, is the witness to the bride of the unchanging love of the absent One, and of His return in the day when the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife path made herself ready. The Comforter is known to be such by the heart of the bride, as He assures her of the Father's delight in the Son; and that all things that He hath have been given into His hands, as the appointed Heir, by whom also He made the worlds. The Holy Ghost thus satisfies the heart of the bride, as the witness of Christ's love, and the revealer to her of the glory of His person. He also wins her affection for her coming Lord, and draws her onward in hope of the day, when He will appear, and present the Church to Himself, a glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Afterward, and in the day of His

heavenly glory, the Lord as Bridegroom will display His wife and children (for whom in His faithful love He served, and gave Himself) descending from above into the Father's kingdom, and the Son's inheritances—to be glorified in His saints and admired in all them that believe. “And I John saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.”

In that day the purposes and counsels of God will be manifested, in accomplished blessing, through “the servant forever.” In that day the faithful and devoted One who would not go out free and alone; that He might by His obedience and death deliver and free every creature from the vanity and bondage to which it was subjected by the fall; will satisfy “the earnest expectation of a groaning creation, at the manifestation of the sons of God,” with Himself, The introduction and display of the wife and the children—the bride of the Lamb, and the sons of God—is the appointed hour by Him who is sovereign, and works all things after the counsel of His own will, for the emancipation and deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption, into the liberty of the glory of the children of God.

The faithful servant-Son said, before He changed His place of service from the earth to the heavens, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now what remains for the Father, but to own by act and deed that the consequences of sin must no longer flow forth in sadness to men, as the causes were borne by Christ—atoned for in His blood—and put away through righteous judgment? It is God Himself who says, There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

“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 this is the new “volume of the book” of the new heavens and the new earth, about to be filled by the same loving and obedient servant who, when on earth said, “I love my master, my wife, and my children, and I will not go out free.” I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished. It is such a love as this that we know—a love that no difficulties could weaken—a love that many waters could not quench—a love that was stronger than death—a love that only found its liberty and its delights in being with the objects which made life worth living for, and gave a charm to it. The ear and the doorpost; the broken body, and the cross; the baptism, and the sepulcher; were the new measures of a love that passeth knowledge. An unwearied love of self-sacrificing devotedness, that could lay a life down in sufferings and death to glorify the master, and by which to get a new title to the wife and children! A love in fact so unselfish and divine that it would only take up this life again in resurrection, in order to gird itself afresh, for other displays of devotedness and attachment to the objects which it loved better than itself, in a new heaven and a new earth, where the former things will have all passed away. “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, 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 be their God.”

Chapter 265

The Sin Offering

Leviticus. 4

I would not now make many remarks on this instructive type of our Lord Jesus as the substitute for our sins, but would content myself on such an occasion as this with drawing attention to a few points of great interest which might be overlooked. In the sin-offering the grand matter was this:—the removal of the sin from the offerer to a sacrifice that was able to bear it and suffer in his stead. It was the contrast of the burnt-offering. Hands were laid upon the head of the offering in both cases. But when a Jew brought his burnt-offering, the point was that the acceptance of the victim should be transferred to him. Thus as that unblemished offering ascended up to God, the sweet savor in which it arose before Jehovah was to be accepted for the man who had none of his own—who was nothing but a poor sinner. Hence we see the value of the offering in that case was transferred to the offerer; while in the sin-offering the converse appears—the offerer's evil was charged on the victim. His hands too were laid on the offering; but the guilt of the offerer was transferred to the victim—not the value of the victim transferred to the offerer. The consequence of this was that the victim when offered for sin did not as such rise up before God; because if the sin was transferred to the victim, the victim must be dealt with in judgment to the uttermost. Both are true to faith in Christ. But the result was very striking in this latter case, for God would show that the evil which was taken away from the sinner who offered (and yet more what was laid on Christ) involved the gravest consequences. Grace, righteousness, obedience—nothing in Christ, could hinder the effect of this substitution in the judgment of God. His was a real suffering for sin. If sin was a real thing, the judgment of it was no less real; and God has marked this.

Now there was just the difficulty—to maintain the proof of Christ's perfectness, even where God shows the consequences of our evil laid to His account.

These two conditions had to be met, and equally met in the sin-offering. Man never could have done it; indeed he is uncommonly slow to learn it even where it has been written by God before his eyes. We have all read and have all passed by these most striking lessons; but let us now notice that in the sin-offering where the victim was identified with the guilt of the offerer, this was provided; “the skin of the bullock and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, even the whole bullock (the animal as such with a very slight exception), shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire, where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt.” There was this sign in taking it without the camp, that the victim identified with the evil of the offerer had to be put away far from God. The camp was the place where the people of God were, as the sanctuary was where He Himself dwelt. To express thus the holy abhorrence of evil, not only could the sin-offering not be burnt near the sanctuary in the court but not even in the camp. It must be taken without the camp and there burnt solemnly in a clean place. This surely shows the transfer of the evil of the offerer to the victim in a most striking way.

But how is the sense of the perfectness of Christ kept up here? It would be an awful thing if, through any thought of deliverance from guilt by its transfer to Him, Christ got lowered in our souls. All the wickedness that man is capable of doing to his fellow is nothing like so bad as allowing the smallest injury to Christ. Beware of lowering the name and glory of the Son of God! God could easily replace all the men that ever were; but God Himself could not replace Christ. He is nearer to God than all the creatures of His hand and will; and He ought to be so to us. Anything that sullies Christ is in itself fatal. Now scripture in this most remarkably guards the honor of His name; for not only was there the greatest care that the sin-offering should be without blemish, but the blood of the bullock for sin was brought in, and put on the horns of the altar of sweet incense before Jehovah. Some was carried thus into the sanctuary, as well as the rest of it poured out “at the bottom of the altar of the burnt offering, which is at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation.” The object was to give the assurance to the offerer that his sin, being atoned for righteously, was forgiven.

In the first and second of the cases mentioned in this chapter (i.e., for the anointed priest, and for the whole congregation), some of the blood was put upon the horns of the altar of sweet incense. Thus it was manifest that not a priest could enter there without being able to see the witness that communion was restored.

Its blood was put upon the horns, the most conspicuous part of the altar. But there was another provision also, “He shall take off from it all the fat of the bullock for the sin-offering; the fat that covereth the inwards, and all the fat that is upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that is upon them, which is by the flanks, and the caul above the liver, with the kidneys, it shall he take away, as it was taken off from the bullock of the sacrifice of peace offerings: and the priest shall burn them” —where? outside the camp? Nay, “the priest shall burn them upon the altar of the burnt offering” —the altar, where whatever was for acceptance with Jehovah, whatever was a savor of rest to Him, was burnt. Thus we see God intimates how far from the truth it is that the offering was not intrinsically acceptable, for part of it was burnt upon the altar that speaks of acceptance, as certainly as the rest was taken without the camp and burnt there.

But let us remark another point. The part that was burnt was exceedingly significant, “the fat that covereth the inwards and all the fat that is upon the inwards.” If there is anything wrong with the creature, it is sure to be found in the inwards. There may even be a fair outside, but wherever there is thorough corruption, the more you go within, the more you find the evil core. On the other hand, where it was meant to show the good condition and the acceptability of a victim, it could not be done more expressively than by the burning of the fat of the inwards on the brazen altar. So with Christ. Outside He might be treated as the object of God's judgment, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; but His blood was ever fit for God's acceptance and that which expressed the energy of His most inward feeling could not but rise as a savor of rest before Him. Never was Christ more the object of God's delight than at the moment when God abandoned Him for our sins upon the cross.

But another feature of the chapter may be noted before I close. There is no case except one where the sin is not said to be forgiven and an atonement made for it. When the whole congregation sinned and brought a bullock for the sin-offering, the sin was forgiven; when the ruler brought his sin-offering, the sin was forgiven; when one of the common people sinned and brought

his offering, his sin was forgiven. Observe too, it is only in the case of a private man that God made an alternative. Only such an one might bring a kid or a lamb. When the high priest or the congregation sinned, it must be a bullock: nothing less sufficed. When the ruler sinned, it must be a he-kid and nothing else. But when one of the common people sinned, God's tender mercy provides for their need. They might happen to have only a kid or only a lamb: and God would take either. Such was His way of dealing with the poor, even under the law: what is it now in grace through Jesus Christ?

Now in one case it is remarkable that forgiveness is not stated, and in what circumstances is this? The priest that is anointed. Can there be anything more striking? The great point was both to provide adequately for one like Aaron, and to set forth Christ without dishonor to the spiritual mind. Now inasmuch as Christ had nothing to be forgiven, we can understand that this should be left out. Yet as Christ made Himself responsible for our sins in this sense He could not be forgiven, but must go through the judgment of God for the sins He undertook to bear. Thus in a twofold way the absence of the mention of forgiveness in this instance only seems most notable. In His own person He had of course no sin to be atoned for or forgiven; whereas, becoming responsible for us, He must bear all and could not be forgiven. He must suffer for sins, the just for the unjust. Thus the Spirit of God has united the fullest guard of the glory of Christ and the fullest comfort for the soul that believes, so that we may know our sins put away by a true atonement for them and ourselves forgiven. Grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

Chapter 266

Sinai MS and Tischendorf's English New Testament

My dear brother,—As many are now interested in such researches through the recovery of the God. Sin., I send you a word upon it. It has naturally been a pet child of Tischendorf's as he found it, and no one can question its value as a witness of importance. But it seems to me, as far as I have examined it, that it is overrated. The Vatican MS. is much more correctly written, and in every respect it seems to me superior. There is a considerable number of serious mistakes and omissions in God. Sin. I do not know whether I have been more observant from having remarked this somewhat in the synoptical gospels; but it is particularly faulty in John, or at any rate I have observed the faults. It agrees in a good many readings with D, when D has been alone. The variations in ο■ν, δ■, κα■, are innumerable, but it may be right here. So in the presence and absence of before proper names. But there are many readings which are clearly wrong. Its family is the same as B, still B stands alone. Of all MSS. for beauty and correctness the Dublin one is the best: I found but one fault in it. It agrees with td and B in character but is superior to both. Whether all its readings be correct is another question. But according to this family it is the first in correctness. 24 very often agrees with Vercel. among the Latins. I would mention another fact. Brixianus as a rule always agrees with the ordinary modern text as A in gospels. I do not pretend to account for this and other facts connected with the history of the text as one learned in such matters; but I thought the facts I have observed might be interesting to some of your readers.

As many have been disposed to think they could judge of the text by Tischendorf's publication in English, let me add that, much as we are indebted, as everyone knows, to Tischendorf for his diligent and careful labors (which I should be the first to acknowledge), this publication seems to me an unhappy one. We have the text according to that ordinarily received (T. R.) and then three ancient MSS. to throw doubt on all and decide nothing. Ordinary facts, such as A being not Alexandrian in the gospels, are of course unknown to ordinary readers; who are then in uncertainty without resource. Now while the most ancient MSS. will as a general rule have the most weight, and where A and B agree (in gospels) go far to decide a question, yet the simple fact of diplomatic or documentary evidence cannot decide everything. Some of the MSS. which exist were made before so large a destruction of Bibles took place in the last persecution, and versions earlier than any come in as a check on MSS. There is nothing to make any serious person uneasy as to the text, but it is laborious care, not rapid decision, which secures what is right. When I find such facts as this—two leaves torn out of Veronensis, a translation made in the second century, and a MS. as early perhaps as any we have, so that what precedes is lost too, in order to take away John 8:1-11, gaps left in others designedly, and Augustine telling us that copies of little credit leaving out for the sake of morality, these documentary evidences do not suffice to show it an interpolation. So in the end of Mark it will be found that Matthew takes the disciples to Galilee and there is no ascension, Luke on the other hand gives the ascension, the Lord leading them out to Bethany—introducing two distinct and important characters of Christ's connection with His disciples. Now Mark up to the end of verse 8 gives us the view found in Matthew; from verse 9 to the end, the heavenly associations of Christ with His disciples. I am not prepared to say as to the

history of the text how this was so arranged, nor do I (to say the truth) find that others can; nor do I blame them. But while MS. authority must be our main resource, no one can deny that tendencies that vitiated the text were as early as any MS. and such we have to watch. God. Sin. is in one place evidently changed to avoid a question as to the Virgin Mary's having had other children. Let not the simple reader be dismayed at this: other MSS. are a counter check; and while there is the imperfection of copyists, there is not the uncertainty which many would gladly say there is, and which the absence of research would lead persons to fancy. J. N. D.

Chapter 267

The Sinaiticus Manuscript: Brief Account of Its Discovery and of Its Character

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF ITS DISCOVERY AND OF ITS CHARACTER.

In May, 1844, Professor Tischendorf, when traveling in quest of ancient manuscripts, saw a basket of waste paper devoted to lighting the stove in the convent of S. Catherine on Mount Sinai. From these be picked out and was allowed to take forty-three vellum leaves, fragments of an ancient MS. of the Septuagint, parts of 1 Chronicles and Jeremiah, with the whole of Nehemiah and Esther. He did not disguise the extreme antiquity of these remains from the monks, who let him know of more, containing Isaiah and part of the Apocrypha; but he was not allowed more than to copy two pages, consisting of the end of Isaiah and the beginning of Jeremiah. But he published two years after what he had thus rescued under the title of the Codex Friderico-Augustanus (in honor of his sovereign the King of Saxony).

In 1853 Tischendorf visited the convent again, but learned no more of the MS.: so that he could add nothing to the two copied pages, which he published in the first vol. of his Monumenta Sacra Inedita.

Early in 1859 a third visit was paid; and on Feb. 4 he was preparing to leave the convent when, after walking with the steward and conversing on the interpretation of the LXX., they entered the steward's cell, who produced a book in a red cloth, which Tischendorf on uncovering immediately recognized as the very document for which he had long been so eagerly on the watch. He did not fail to give God thanks: but spent the night in transcribing the Pseudo-Barnabas which was here for the first time found in Greek, and a considerable part of Hermas' Shepherd too written in the same volume. The MS. contained not only more of the Septuagint, but the entire New Testament, written with four columns on each page, and confirming very fully his judgment of its age, founded on the rescued fragments of the so-called Frid.-Aug. MS. Leave was procured to copy the manuscript at Cairo, whither it was brought before the end of February, and Tischendorf spent a couple of months with two natives, but not competent assistants. He did not copy it, as I understood from the discoverer, but collated it on the pages of the seventh edition of his own Greek Testament. No one need wonder that there were not a few oversights in so vast a work done in such a hurry and with such inefficient help.

But this was not all. Tischendorf urged on the monks the desirableness of their presenting such a manuscript as a worthy gift to the champion of the Greek church, Alexander II., Emperor of Russia. Because of the death of the archbishop it was not possible for the brethren at Sinai to do so yet, though done since I believe. Meanwhile Tischendorf was allowed to carry off the MS. and show it to the emperor, who entrusted him with the task of preparing an edition of 300 copies, in four volumes folio, to be defrayed by himself and appear in 1862, on the thousandth anniversary of the Russian Empire. In 1863 appeared at Leipsic the text in a single 4to. vol. (as also in 8vo.) for more ordinary use.

It appears that during the interval between the rescue of the leaves in 1844 and the delivery of the rest to Tischendorf for collation in 1859 two persons are known to have examined the manuscript. About 1845 or 1846 Porphyrius, a Russian Archimandrite, saw it but to no great purpose, judging by the remarks Tischendorf quotes; as did also a Major Macdonald, whose description points to it alone.

The Sinai MS. (à,) stands alone in presenting the entire new Testament, All others of nearly equal antiquity are more or less defective. Thus the Alexandrian (A) wants the first twenty-four chapters of Matthew, a portion of John's Gospel, and the central parts of 2 Corinthians: and the Vatican (B) has only to Heb. 9:14 (save that the Catholic epistles precede) and hence has neither the four pastoral Epistles nor the Revelation. The Ephraim Palimpsest of Paris (C) is a mere collection of fragments; and the Cambridge MS. of Beza (D of the Gospel and Acts) has only the first half of the New Testament in Greek and Latin. Others are as deficient or more so; many contain only some few leaves.

The faults of the Sinai MS. on the other hand are better known than those of any other MS. For it alone was thoroughly exposed to view as soon as possible after the date of its discovery. All the other great MSS. were renowned for years before they were accurately collated. Indeed it is only since the publication of the Sinai manuscript that we can be said to have a trustworthy knowledge of the Vatican, though its existence has been known since Sepulveda's correspondence with Erasmus. Again, on no MSS. whatever have the same minute pains been bestowed, though the same diligent Editor did beyond all his predecessors for the Codex Ephraem Rescriptus and many other MSS. of very great importance.

Hence we know what are called clerical errors to an enormous extent in the Sinai MS., partly because, though beautifully written, it abounds in slips ocular and orthographic. Not only is there the very frequent fault of confounding ο, ου, υ, and ω, ει, η, αι, and ι, but in repetition of letters, words, and whole sentences, sometimes left, often canceled. Mr. Scrivener mentions that the blunder technically known as Homeoteleuton, whereby a clause is omitted because it happens to end in the same words as the clause preceding, occurs not less than 115 times in the New Testament, though the defect is often supplied by a more recent hand.

But there remains the other cause already named why these errors are in the minds of all students. The MS. from the first has been scrutinized to a degree beyond all previous example. So microscopically close is the attention Professor Tischendorf has paid that be gives it as his judgment that at least four hands were employed in writing it; that a scribe whom he distinguishes as A wrote the whole of the New Testament with a slight exception, with part of the Septuagint and Pseudo-Barnabas; that another (B) wrote the Prophets and Hermes; that a third (C) wrote the poetical books of the Old Testament in verses clause by clause according to the sense; and in two columns (just as in the Codex Vat. which has elsewhere three but there also only two columns); that the fourth scribe (D) wrote the rest of the Apocrypha and some the leaves here and there from Matthew to Revelation. But this is the more precarious as A and B are allowed to resemble each other closely, and C and D. But very competent judges of this do not draw such a conclusion, which is not unusual with collators and not always correct. I mention all this, not because it much affects the value of the MS. (for no one doubts that, written by one or two, or more, it was all done about the same time and from the same copy), but to show why we must not wonder at a vast

number of faults in transcription coming to light when a manuscript was subjected to such an investigation as this.

Again, like most of the remains of high antiquity, there were not only several correctors of the manuscript but correctors of the corrections. At least ten such revisers have been deciphered, some everywhere, some only occasionally, and this from the time of the earliest scribe, but most two or three centuries after, and a few comparatively late. It is needless here to go into the minute details which prove the distinctness of the services of these numerous revisers from the scribe himself to the last corrector in probably the twelfth century.

But these marks varying in character as well as in shades of ink serve to confirm the remote age in which the manuscript was originally written; as its own chastely neat forms of letters, its punctuation, its simplicity in titles, and subscriptions, and other marks, akin to the Herculanean Papyri, point to quite as early a date as the famous Vat. MS.—about the middle of the fourth century. Thus the absence of larger letters at the beginning of sentences or paragraphs is peculiar, among New Testament documents, to Codd. Sinait. and Vatic. unless we add Evan. Nh. a fragment of John written in the same fourth century. The Sarravian Octateuch of the LXX. attributed to the fourth century confirms this; and some other witnesses quite as early. Then the four columns in each page is a strong indication of an age at least as great as Codd. Vat. 1290, the oldest rival known; for if Palaeologists have ever argued on the three columns in each page of it as a sign of its antiquity as compared with MSS. of two columns or only one, one may yet more confidently reason from the four columns Of the Sinai MS., not to speak of the fineness of the skins. Nor is the accompaniment of Pseudo-Barnabas and Hernias a just ground of prejudice against the antiquity of N, for in the fourth century such an arrangement was probable, just as we know that A. (or God. Alex.) contains the famous letter of Clement to the Corinthians. Other external points of correspondence have been remarked between the Vat. and the Sinai MSS., but I only state the fact without descending to particulars.

As to peculiarity of internal character Tischendorf long pointed out the sameness of Codd. Sin. and Vat. as to Mark 16:9-20, and Eph. 1:2; and Mr. S. adds Matt. 10:25 Cor. 13:3; James 1:17 where this coincidence can scarcely be deemed accidental. The same blunder in the last text, found only in N and B, is very notable. In other instances it agrees with no other single ancient copy (as A, C, or D) against the rest. Sometimes also it stands supported by one ancient version only, or the express statement of an early ecclesiastical writer. These facts I mention as proofs, not of its accuracy in these cases, but of its independence and antiquity.

Enough has been said to expose the falseness of Dr. C. Simonides' claim to have written the Sinai MS. thirty years ago, and this not with a view to impose on any one, but simply as an honest present from his uncle Benedict to the late Emperor Nicholas! It is true that he was already notorious for his efforts to palm off certain MSS. as of the highest antiquity, which can scarcely be imputed to any other source than his own admirable skill in calligraphy. His statement is that the Moscow Greek Bible, published at the cost of the brothers Zosimas, in 1821, and collated with three ancient manuscripts and the printed edition of God. Alex., was what he had to transcribe; and that, his uncle being meanwhile dead, he gave the work, in 1841, to Constantius, that very Archbishop of Sinai whose death early in 1859 or before it caused a delay, when Tischendorf saw the MS. as a whole and sought to have it presented to the Emperor of Russia. He added that he

found it at Sinai, when visiting the convent in 1844 and 1852. This last has been formally denied by one of the monks for all, who declares that no such person had ever been there. The rest of the tale is equally suspicious. Certainly it could not be the God. Sin. that he wrote for his uncle. The Moscow Bible is simply a copy of the Textus Receptus. Why the clerical errors? How the singular and most ancient readings not there, nor even in God. A., not to speak of the heaps of corrections over a work of such vast extent? Even the specimens of Simonides, designed to impose on the credulous (the history of Uranius, and the Mayer papyrus fragments of S. Matthew, James and Jude), though proofs of unscrupulous ingenuity, were curt compared with the task of producing, when a mere lad and in a few months, a volume containing near 4,000,000 of uncial letters with the other striking peculiarities named before, and this without fraudulent intent.

It may be interesting to some to know that in the judgment of Tischendorf the Vatican MS. was written by one of his supposed four writers of the Sinai MS., namely D, the fourth. The reasons would hardly be suitable here. At the same time he does not think, as indeed is certain, that they were copied from the same manuscript, older than themselves. On the other hand, he gives ingenious reasons for the opinion that, not the Vatican, but the Sinai MS. was one of the fifty copies of scripture written “on skins in ternions and quarternions” (Vit. Conat. iv, 37), which Eusebius prepared, A.D. 331, by the emperor's direction for his new Rome in the East—Constantinople.

Chapter 268

The Smoking Furnace and the Burning Lamp

Gen. 15

I desire to express a few thoughts to your readers on some of the various groupings of the scriptures. Every one, for example, must have been struck with the family circle at Bethany, and the outflow of divine and human affections which made that scene of resurrection, power, and life, what it was—but that Lazarus, was a man who came forth from death and the grave. What was true and suitable, when the time was come for Jesus, as “the resurrection and the life” to form the center of that circle was equally in keeping with the ways of God as Creator, when the man and the woman were originally introduced into the world, as the heads of the whole human race, and when God walked in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day. This man came out of the dust of the earth, and was called therefore Adam. The woman was formed out of the man and was called Eve, or “the mother of all living.” How different!

Another and a very distinct group came out from the ark with Noah upon the world that now is. These had typically “seen the end of all flesh,” by the waters of destruction, for man had corrupted his way upon earth and filled it with violence. These close up the history of Adam and the creation, and begin another from the ark as the witness that all who were therein had passed through and over the death and judgment which had swept all else away! Every one must have lingered in company with this new group of Noah and his wife, and their sons and daughters, and two of all kinds of cattle and fowls and creeping things—all these “found grace in the eyes of the Lord;” and the altar with its cloud of sweet savor, in fellowship with which the rainbow of the covenant encircled the horizon of their faith, unmistakably reveal the new ground of their intercourse with God. The Creator, who walked in the garden in the cool of the day, has come forth from the thick darkness—not of original chaos, but of death and righteous judgment at the flood—to bless this second group through “the sweet savor” which He smelt.

“The God of glory” came in (after Babel and the confusion of tongues) to call out Abram from the whole world besides; and it is with this patriarch as the head of the family of faith and those grouped around him with whom we shall have particularly to do in what follows. Gen. 14; 15 may give us the diameter of our circle.

Here and there we find in the Old Testament some illustrious stranger introduced, such for instance as Jethro, “the father-in-law of Moses,” who seems for the moment to be a leader and commander of the whole scene and then withdraws. So here in these chapters, Melchizedek, the king of Salem and priest of the Most High God, is the prominent person in action, and takes precedence of “the friend of God;” so that for the time that then was, and for typical purposes (as we know from Heb. 7) he met Abram returning from the slaughter of the kings, and brought forth bread and wine and blessed him. The comment of the Holy Ghost upon this illustrious visitor is remarkable. “Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.... and without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.” But this group in Genesis will not get the commanding color unless we add, “For this Melchizedek, being

by interpretation king of righteousness, and after that also king of Salem, which is king of peace; without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually." The patriarch thus met and thus blessed was in himself the separated one unto God—the only one upon earth with a "calling" —called out from the whole world to walk with God, and that too in the character of the God Almighty.

What a delight to see the head of the family of faith—and in this sense "the father of us all" —thus encouraged and so distinguished! How truly is be the representative man of the new race of men, who are partakers of that faith, without which it is impossible to please God—a faith which identifies them with their calling and with Him who calls, as well as with the blessing wherewith they are blessed, and puts them consequently into a place of separation while in the world, out of which they are called as pilgrims and strangers. Melchizedek blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram of the Most High God, possessor of heaven and earth; and blessed be the Most High God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all." It is instructive and encouraging to see "this head of the family of faith" wrought upon by the double power of the calling and the blessing—when in the place of real separation—so that by faith he put to flight the armies of the aliens, and wrought deliverance for." his brother Lot and his goods, the women also and the people" who had been attracted into another and a very different path, by the well-watered plains of Sodom. What a warning, or else an example, for all of us! Nor is it merely in victory and rescue that Abram is a witness, but likewise in his steady refusal to the king of Sodom to accept from a thread even to a shoelatchet (or anything that was his) lest he should say, "I have made Abram rich." Thus early do we get an example of one who would not morally defile the head of his Nazariteship It is to such an one that the word of the Lord comes in chapter 15 saying, "Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward." Nor is the faith of our father afraid to put God to the proof, according to this announcement. "And Abram said, Lord God, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus?" One of faith's earliest lessons is here before us—the faith which gives glory to God, by letting Him in to take the place which is according to His own mind. God had made Himself known in calling as the God of glory, and in blessing through the priest of the Most High God as possessor of heaven and earth: He had also proved Himself stronger than all that was against Abram. What could faith say to the possessor and doer of all things, but "What wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless?"

Abram's faith puts God into the place of a giver, and this is what the living God is, and this is the way to give glory to Him. Moreover "the bread and wine" brought out to Abram by Melchizedek is a great warrant and foreshadowing to us in all our intercourse with God. Nevertheless that which is first in order for our communion with the Father in His own thoughts is often last in manifest and outward accomplishment. No doubt this order has been observed by many in the types of Leviticus, where the burnt offering takes the precedence of all others, though in the actual experience of our souls, when first awakened, we began with the sin offering, as requisite for a guilty conscience. In these two chapters Abram seems growingly alive to the fact that this must be God's order, if He begins to act from Himself towards the man who is His friend I Indeed we (in our day) may well say that some of the profoundest secrets are here coming out; for what is the setting aside of Eliezer the steward but the making room for a child of promise, the son in the house? Just as we find in chapter 16 with the realities of Sarah and Hagar, or Isaac and Ishmael, and the yet

further reality that the “son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman,” which things are to us (in New Testament language) “an allegory,” of yet deeper mysteries touching Mount Sinai and Jerusalem which is above! In short the external ways of God are but the history of the steward and the stewardship, for this is what man under responsibility to God, from Adam downward, surely is, and therefore the time must come when the unjust steward must be “put out of the stewardship.” As those who know the Lord Jesus Christ, we begin with the Son in the house. The Old Testament is in this way the history of the stewards, and “the kingdom of God taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

The New Testament is the revelation of the Son, and the Father, and the Father's house: and it was into this path in principle and type that Abram was being led, though in his lessons he had to offer up his son Isaac, symbolically on Mount Moriah, and receive him back from the dead again in a figure; for the time was not yet come nor the true son of Abraham born into the world. Another thing to be noticed is, that when Abram measured himself by himself he was childless and had no heir; but as soon as he viewed himself in the vastness of God's thoughts, all similitudes and comparisons by things around him fell infinitely short of the Lord's intentions. So “he brought him forth abroad and said, Look now towards heaven and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be.” A most important fact springs out of this look toward heaven, for the Spirit says, “He believed in the Lord, and it was counted to him for righteousness.” He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform. This is what God imputed to him for righteousness, or giving God His right place and Abraham taking his—as it is written, “who against hope, believed in hope” that he might become the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, “so shall thy seed be.” Indeed we may add, that the whole family are justified on the same principle as their head; “now it was not written for his sake alone, but for us also to whom it [righteousness] shall be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification.”

The “God of glory” likewise proclaimed Himself to Abram, as “I am the Lord that brought thee out from Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it. And he said, Lord God, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?” An Isaac had been substituted in the house for Eliezer, and now heirship is to be established in the son, instead of a steward; and the inheritance itself grounded upon a covenant of which “God is one,” and the only one, and therefore unconditional, because based upon sacrifice and promise. “And he said, Take me an heifer of three years old, and a she goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon,” and he divided them in the midst, and laid one piece against another, but the birds divided be not. Abram as head of the family of faith, and made righteous by faith, stands before God as the exceptional man, called out to be blessed and to walk with the Almighty, on the ground of covenant and promise; and now he must needs pass through, by types and shadows, the ways and methods by which God will establish all to him and to his seed in the latter-day glory. The “God of Abraham” exercised his soul according to truth, as well as in grace, and so “when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and lo, an horror of great darkness fell upon him.”

The “friend of God” in Genesis, and “the man after God's own heart” in the Psalms, are alike instructed by the Spirit to look beyond their own histories, and those of their respective sons

(whether an Isaac, or a Solomon), and to see by faith in the far distance, a greater than either; so that when Jesus was on earth, He could say, “your father Abraham saw my day, and he saw it and was glad.” The Holy Ghost in the Acts witnesses as the Spirit of prophecy in David, that the sweet Psalmist of Israel being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit upon His throne; “he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.”

Abram in earlier days passed through “the horror of great darkness which fell upon him” and into which his younger son David, both in the flesh and by faith, likewise entered and perhaps yet more fully. The heifer, the she goat, the ram, the turtledove, and the young pigeon, had each a voice to the faith of Abram, and a deepening voice; a horror, as he took unto him all these and divided them in the midst, and laid each piece one against another! Who was to walk in this new pathway of life, and death, and substitution, but “the burning lamp?” and who was to be justified as the Giver, but “the smoking furnace in type? and who was to learn the security of the inheritance, and indeed of all covenanted blessing by such means as these, but “the man in a deep sleep, under the horror of a great darkness?” and who had asked, “Lord God, how shall I know that I shall inherit it?”

And may we not (upon whom “the ends of the ages are come”) pause here to speak to one another of Abraham's greater Son and David's greater Lord, the Son of man and Son of God, who in the days of His flesh poured out His soul unto death, when this “deep sleep” was before Him and “the horror of darkness” really come? “And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy, and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here and watch. And he said, Abba Father, all things are possible unto thee: take this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.” “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.” “But this is your hour and the power of darkness.”

Our souls well know that beyond Gethsemane (the last Adam's garden) lay the cross, where the Lord Jesus our Savior took up more than remained in the deep sleep of the patriarch. The hour that could not pass by was come and He who alone could enter into that horror of darkness did. Then and there He was in fact what “the divided pieces” were in type; for He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, suffered the Just One for the unjust. His own self bare our sins in His body on the tree, that we being dead to sins should be alive unto righteousness, by whose stripes ye were healed. On the cross, too, He submitted to “the smoking furnace,” and under the searchings of that fire vindicated the righteousness of God by the wrath which He endured, whilst the offended holiness found its food and satisfaction in the perfection of the offering, which it consumed. “And it came to pass when the sun went down and it was dark, behold a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces.” The furnace and the lamp have each done their respective work at the cross and the sepulcher, for “from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour, and about the ninth hour Jesus cried, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” The Lord who had trodden this fiery path and come up out of it, when He rejoined His disciples, reproved them: “O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into his

glory?”

The bread and wine to the head of the family of faith, in type from the hands of Melchizedek; the victims and the divided pieces in Abram's deep sleep, and the ground of all promise and covenanted blessing in the shed blood, culminate at the Lord's supper, as we sit now around His table to show forth His death till He come. These are handed out to us in their new fulfillments by the glorified Head and Lord from the heavens, where He now sits as the real Melchizedek, in their true and accomplished meanings. The man from the third heavens, “caught up into paradise” says, “I have received of the Lord that which also I have delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks he brake it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which was broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.” After the same manner He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” “It is finished” closed this work of the burning lamp, and “the rent veil” by the hand of God superseded the smoking furnace; and when the fowls came down upon the carcases, Abram drove them away.

But the first man who was created in the image of God had also a deep sleep, though of course no horror of darkness nor offerings, for there was no sin. “The Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh instead thereof. And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man made he a woman and brought her unto the man.” We shall do well to contrast this deep sleep that fell upon Adam with the deep sleep which fell upon Abraham, and what issued from both under the mighty power of Him who is wonderful in counsel and excellent in working. It was before the fall, and while Adam was still in “the image of God,” that the typical Eve was formed from his side and brought to him, the product of that deep sleep, during which the help meet for the man was created, the one only good thing lacking where all else was pronounced to be “very good” to the eye and heart of Him who had created all things. “And the Lord God said, It is not good that man should be alone.”

We all know from the Holy Ghost's teaching in Eph. 5 to whom this one only paradisiacal symbol pointed, since the very words of the first Adam are quoted in application to the coming marriage of the Lamb, “for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh: this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.” We may well remind ourselves, how close we must be upon the second coming of our Lord, seeing that He has Himself passed through in fact the deep sleep of death and the grave whereby to gain His Bride, the Lamb's wife; “except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” The Lord repeated by His death what God had said at creation, “it is not good for man to abide alone;” so He bought His Church by His own blood, and brought her out by redemption-title into the new creation of which this Second Man is the beginning, and Lord; and into which He is about to come with His Eve! So likewise (as we have noticed) the horror, and the darkness, and the deep sleep of the head of the family of faith, have been gone through in fact by Him in whom all types and symbols concentrate. The blood of the everlasting covenant has been shed by Christ, and accepted by God; a pathway by which He can be brought back again in the day of the Son of man's glory, not only as the possessor of the heavens and the earth, but according to His promises to Abraham, and to his seed, and the inheritance, and to fill the whole world with His glory. “It shall come to pass in that day I will hear, saith the Lord, I will hear the heavens, and they shall hear the earth, and the earth shall hear the

corn, and the wine, and the oil, and they shall hear Jezreel."

There is yet another thing to be remarked in the grouping of Gen. 15 "And he said unto Abram, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them: and they shall afflict them four hundred years: and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge, and afterward they shall come out with great substance."

Other important principles are introduced here, such as the government of God in connection with His people, and His promises, and the time of final blessing, as well as the judgment of God amongst the nations and their overthrow. No doubt this was typically carried out in the record of God's actings by Moses, in the land of Egypt, when Pharaoh would not let the people go. "Now the sojournings of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years." And it came to pass, "even the self same day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt. It is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out." "Thus the Lord saved Israel out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea shore."

It may be needful to say a word perhaps upon verse 16, "for the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full," seeing that so many of the Lord's people of this day have no idea of God allowing iniquity to come to the full; but on the contrary, are expecting evil to diminish and gradually to cease. If we transfer this principle of the growth of evil from the Old Testament to the New, or even from Gen. 15 to 2 Thessalonians, we shall perhaps discover what a measure of insubjection of mind still exists in reference to the character and growth of the evil described in chapter 2. "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way, and then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming." For, "God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Indeed it is difficult to conceive how a revelation from God, closing as the New Testament does with the Apocalyptic woes and vials and trumpets and plagues, can be understood in any other way than of the coming judgment upon a widespread apostasy, or as Abram in his day was taught in the fact that the "iniquity of the Amorites was not yet come to the full."

It will have been seen by these sketches and groups and their applications, whether of Adam, Noah, Abraham, David, or Solomon, in the ancient chronicles, that they have each and all found their common center in the Lord Jesus Christ. Types, prophecies, and promises have all been made "yea and amen in him unto the glory of God by us." All covenanted blessing for the earth and for the heavens, which have thus concentrated in His person and work on the cross, wait only for the second coming of the Lord; when they must all as truly emanate from Him in the day of His glory and shine forth like the brightness of the morning to chase the darkness away and fill every heart with gladness and all tongues with rejoicing.

The blessed hope of the Lord's coming, and our "gathering together" to meet Him is full upon many a soul as the present and peculiar calling of the Church. When the heavens have received us, with our Lord, who is to introduce us to the Father and to "present us holy, and unblameable, and unreproveable in his sight," all will then have reached the climax and be in position who are to go upward, as truly as all below will rapidly form into crisis under the imperial beast and the antichrist,

who are to go downward into the lake of fire!

“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 shew thee the Bride the Lamb's wife: and he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” In the order of the new creation, everything is seen to come down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God; whereas in the order of the old creation everything was made out of the dust of the earth, and proceeded from man the creature, to the Creator. God's order is changed. The steward is outside the new creation, and the Son of God, once manifested in the flesh, is become (according to everlasting counsel), in “the dispensation of the fullness of times,” the new center, around whom all things are gathered together, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

J. E. B.

Chapter 269

A Test and a Confession

(Rev. 5)

God appeals to His people in the prophet Isaiah to remember the former things of old, for He is God and there is none else. He is God and there is none like Him, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, “my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” (Isa. 46:9, 10.) None then can frustrate His counsels, however long He may delay their execution, nor will His purposes fall through from change of mind on the part of Him who has conceived them.

“The earth hath he given to the children of men” (Psa. 115:16) is a thought which will comfort the remnant when taunted by the heathen with the nonappearance of their God, announcing to them and to us God's purpose about this world. Generation after generation has passed away; but the earth was formed for man, and man shall yet enjoy it as a grant from God. This purpose, first disclosed when Adam appeared on the scene as the lord of creation, Psa. 8 assures us God has not foregone. And that which John witnessed through the door opened in heaven tells us under whom, and by whom, it will be made good. In the hand of God on the throne was seen a book, written within and on the back side, sealed with seven seals, which when opened disclosed the destiny of the earth. Beheld by John as a sealed book, who should open it? To this a strong angel now addressed himself, proclaiming with a loud voice, “who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?” The proclamation met with no response from any of the children of Adam.

Had God's purposes as regards the earth changed? He is unchangeable in His purposes. Why then was there no response? The angel had asked “who was Worthy:” hence all were silent. And this silence was most expressive, proclaiming the irremediable condition, as far as man was concerned, into which Adam and his descendants had got by the fall. That Adam had forfeited his place by the fall all will admit; but is the unwelcome truth accepted by all, that none can rescue themselves from the condition in which they are placed by it? Why then do we hear of attempts to merit God's favor, or to earn a title to stand in His presence? Whence spring the thoughts of regenerating the race by education and intellectual culture, but from the unwillingness of the natural man to believe that he is hopelessly corrupt, and utterly ruined by the fall? Have not most of the children of God found this lesson a very difficult one to learn? There is however a time when all must be truthful.

So the angel's question no one answered. Had he asked if any wished the book to be opened, surely multitudes would have responded in the affirmative; but the question being who was worthy to open it, and to loose the seals thereof, the silence which succeeded the loud voice of the angel remained unbroken. Man is a fallen creature; his conscience, if allowed to act, tells him of his condition; his efforts at amelioration only attest its continuance. Man in his nature is no better than he was when Adam and Eve passed out from the garden of Eden, for a nature cannot be changed, and the flesh cannot be made subject to God's law. (Rom. 8:7.) All heaven heard the challenge,

yet no one took it up. The elders, symbolical of redeemed souls who will walk with Christ (Rev. 3:4) arrayed in fine linen white and clean, expressive of their righteous acts (Rev. 19:14, 8), and whom John saw seated on thrones, and unmoved at the tokens of God's majesty, were unable to stand the test to which the one who should open the book must conform. John the beloved disciple heard the angel's words, and was silent. For “no one in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.” How completely man was silenced by these simple words of the angel, “who is worthy!”

Man, whether sinner or saint, is equally unworthy as regards himself to disclose earth's destiny; could an angel then take the book and open it? No, for unto the angels hath God “not put in subjection the world to come.” (Heb. 2:5.) It was never God's intention that angels should lord it over this creation, and such a sight would never have been witnessed had man continued faithful to God. It was Adam who opened the door to Satan, to have power over the scene, in which the Lord God had placed man. It is therefore, and must be, an abnormal condition of things on earth, so long as Satan is the god of this world; for, when things shall get into their right places, man, not angels, will be found ruling here below.

But where could be found the man worthy of this place, which Adam had forfeited and no saint could acquire? John wept, and we can surely understand it, because no one was found worthy to open the book, neither to look thereon. Amongst those represented by the elders will be apostles, prophets, patriarchs, martyrs, all of whom had failed to come up to the required standard, for the taint of the fall had infected them all. How Satan had apparently triumphed! Man's ruined condition was here acknowledged. A man, but one not involved in Adam's guilt, alone could answer to the challenge. This one the elder introduces, as he speaks to the apostle who wept, “weep not, behold the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book” (or as some would read, “hath overcome, who opens the book) and the seven seals thereof.”

Let us mark well the language. The angel had asked, “who was worthy:” and the elder introduces One who had overcome: a term most significant, telling of victory over Satan who had assumed domination over the earth. It is not what He was in Himself, His intrinsic excellency, of which the elder speaks, but of what He had done, and of His relation to the government of the earth. He had overcome, ■ν■κησεν. Such language applied to Adam before the fall would have been unsuited, and surely unintelligible. He had to maintain his position by obedience; this one had to contend with powers arrayed against Him. He had done so, and was victorious. All Satan's efforts to get this earth for himself had been baffled. He, who had overcome Adam, was overcome by the woman's Seed. This designation, the overcomer, tells of His work, but tells of the fall likewise. This characterizes the man of God's purpose, and it will characterize all who shall be associated with Him in His kingdom.

To this characteristic the elder links two titles, descriptive of His relation to earth, the lion of the tribe of Judah, and the root of David. But these names are suggestive of the unchanging purposes of God, for they carry us back in thought to scenes of ancient date. The lion of the tribe of Judah recalls to our remembrance Jacob's dying bed, and the root of David, Nathan's visit to the king. Under the protecting shield of Pharaoh's rule Jacob found a resting place and was fed, whilst the famine pressed sore on the land, and, led by the Spirit of God, he looked beyond things present, and spoke of One to spring from Judah, to whom should the gathering of peoples be ■■■■■■■

(Gen. 49:10). To sense nothing seemed more unlikely, to faith all was plain. Indebted to Pharaoh's kindness for a place of sojourn in Goshen, he predicted that one descended from himself should lord it over Egypt, the powerful kingdom of that day, and be the acknowledged center for the whole world. The lion of the tribe of Judah speaks to us of power, which man cannot withstand, for What, said the Philistines to Samson, is stronger than a lion? But it is power, called out against enemies for their destruction, when opposed to Him who will wield it. This then takes us on to the future, whilst the root of David takes us back to the past. As the first of these titles tells us what He will do, the second takes us, as it were, behind the curtain to disclose to us the source of kingly power at Jerusalem. He will sit on David's throne as David's son (Psa. 110:1; Luke 1:32), yet He is the root from which that kingly power sprung. Just the opposite of Isa. 11:1 is this announcement of Rev. 5:5. There He is described as a rod out of the stem of Jesse, that which He will appear to outward eyes; here we learn the real nature of the sovereign power which David was the first to wield. Thrones on earth are overturned, and dynasties change, but on David's throne no dynasty but one will ever sit, and He who is its last occupant in point of time is the root of David in reality. For years that throne remained untenanted, to the eye of sense it is still vacant; but we know to whom it belongs, and where He is who will openly sit upon it. John saw Him in heaven, and the elders proclaimed Him as its occupant, and the source of its power. Unchanging then are God's counsels, and, while we wait, their accomplishment, we know that the Lord Jesus awaits in heaven the hour for His reappearance on earth. Are men satisfied with the balance of power and arrangement of sovereign rights as they now exist on earth? God, we may say, is not; for, till His Son occupies the throne of David, which He has given to Him, the due adjustment of things on earth will not be effected. Are we then to wait for an unknown person to rise up and do this? No. God's king is now in heaven, and those whose hearts are in unison with God's thoughts will own it and wait for Him. The second man has been on earth, and is in heaven, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

The words of the elder gave a new direction to John's thoughts. “I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth.” The elder had spoken of the relation of the Lord Jesus to earth as God's king. John tells us of His intrinsic excellency. From each comes the suited testimony. The description of the elders, as crowned and on thrones, connects them with the kingdom of which they naturally speak, but the saint, whilst still on earth, should discern the excellency of Him who is both God and man. “A Lamb as it had been slain” speaks of His humanity, the horns and the eyes are connected with His divinity. Perfection of power and perfection of vision, suited to take in all that goes on earth, belong to Him. The four living creatures were full of eyes within, but the Lord Jesus has seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God. Nothing an escape His sight, and none can withstand His power. Universal supremacy therefore belongs to Rim, and He will maintain it. But is this what men think of, and what the world looks for? John in Patmos was a witness to the power of the Roman Emperor, to whose decree he had to bow; but whilst there he saw One in heaven, whose power all on earth shall one day feel and acknowledge; nor those on earth only, for Satan too will be subject to Him who is characterized by the possession of seven horns. How different are God's thoughts and ways from those which man would connect together! How often have pride and ungoverned temper been found in those entrusted with power over their fellow-creatures! Gentleness and a subject will are here associated with perfection of power and of vision. The One who bore the

horns and had the eyes John saw “as a Lamb which had been slain.”

Here too may we not ask ourselves, Are our thoughts in unison with those of God? The great events which occupied men's minds when the Lord was on earth who now thinks of? The grandeur and wealth of the Caesars have long passed away, their remembrance survives only in history. Who is now grateful to them for favors received? who speaks of them as those in whom they are personally interested? Their works may some day be quite forgotten, but a work done when Tiberius was on the throne will never fade from the memory of those in heaven; one born, when Augustus ruled at Rome, will be had in everlasting remembrance. John beheld a Lamb as it had been slain. The marks of His passion were seen even in heaven, for what He suffered on Calvary will forever and ever be remembered. Surely one must feel in the presence of such a fact as this, how trifling are the great events which men commemorate in comparison with that which they well nigh forget; another witness to the condition of man's heart; for what God remembers and His saints will ever celebrate, is just that in which man often feels no interest. As creatures, things around will make some impression, but as immortal beings; should not the Lord's death for sinners make the deepest impression? May it be that, what in heaven is always remembered, is that to which we can always respond!

From the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, the Lamb came and took the book out of the hand of Him that sat on it; and all heaven was moved to worship. The angels pronounce Him worthy to receive all power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory, and blessing, for He has been slain; all creation joins to pay Him divine honor in company with the Lord God Almighty sitting on the throne; but the elders speak in a different key, for they own Him as the Second man, to whom it belongs to disclose the destiny of this earth. The first Adam had failed. To the challenge of the angel none could reply. By silence man's ruin was admitted. Now the elders speak of His fitness to open the book, and thus become witnesses, by their language, of what the fall has done, as well as of the unchanging purpose of God. All eyes and thoughts are directed to the Lamb, who stands out by the admission of the elders as the acknowledged head, under whom alone, and because of what He has done, God's plans for this universe shall be carried out in all their completeness. “Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou roast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made them unto our God kings and priests, and they shall reign on the earth.”

Here again we may note how all is in keeping. For as the government of the world was not originally committed unto angels but to man, the angels say nothing about the opening of the book. That comes from the elders, and rightly so. The faithfulness of the Lord Jesus to God the elder had spoken of, for He had overcome: of the result of His obedience, as it affects man, the elders in a body bear witness. All of them had been involved in the consequences of Adam's transgression, all of them share in the fruit of the death of the Lamb. “Thou hast redeemed us by thy blood” is a plain acknowledgment of their condition by nature, and of their standing by virtue of the atonement which He has effected. If we retain the pronoun “us,” in chapter v. 9, we have two classes of saints referred to; those already in heaven, and those on earth, not forming part of the Church, but destined to share in heavenly glory, whose prayers the elders hold in the golden vials full of odors. “Thou hast redeemed us, and made them.” If we omit the pronoun “us,” the elders must be understood as occupied wholly with saints in trial on earth. All here, however, is ascribed to the Lamb. Honor, wealth, dignity, belong to Him, because He was slain; dignity and power the

redeemed ones in heaven will enjoy, because of His finished work for them. No works done on earth have earned them this dignity of kings, or this place of priests; the Lamb has done it all. “Thou hast made them kings and priests unto our God.” From Adam, from themselves, they look away, and, proclaiming what the Lamb has done, put their seal to God's judgment of us all as descendants of the first Adam, begotten after his likeness, and await the full accomplishment of all His counsels by the man of His choice, His own well-beloved Son, the Second man, the Lord from heaven. C. E. S.

To Correspondents

More than one draw attention to Mr. E. White's extracts from the second edition of Mr. J. N. Darby's “Hopes of the Church,” which I here reproduce:-

“With the immortality of the soul man can still connect the idea of self—of power in the body; but where the leading truth is the resurrection of the body, and not the immortality of the soul, man's impotency becomes glaring.” p. 30. “Before coming to direct proofs, we would express our conviction that the idea of the immortality of the soul has no source in the gospel; that it comes, on the contrary, from the Platonists; and that it was just when the coming of Christ was denied in the Church, or at least began to be lost sight of, that the doctrine of the immortality of the soul came in to replace that of the resurrection.” p. 32. “And finally (says Mr. W.), there is this note on p. 66, commenting on Matt. 25:46, in order to show that that passage does not refer to the judgment of the dead, but of the living: ‘That which has given rise to the supposition that it is the judgment of the dead are these words—These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal; but this only means that the punishment of the living will be final, like that of the dead.'“

It is plain that it is the second extract (from p. 32) which most suits Mr. W.'s object. But would it not have been more candid if he had extracted the next few words which contradict, not Mr. D.'s previous statement, but his own object? “This was about the time of Origen. It is hardly needful to say that we do not doubt the immortality of the soul; we only assert that this view has taken the place of the doctrine of the resurrection of the Church, as the epoch of its joy and glory.” I quote the same paragraph from the same second edition; and I appeal to Mr. E. W. whether it was upright, by omitting words, bearing on the point immediately after, to give the appearance to the readers of the “Christian World” (who are very unlikely to know or to take the trouble of examining Mr. D.'s writings) that he ever held the mortality of the soul, when in fact he has invariably maintained its immortality. Nor is it correct that these paragraphs have been quietly dropped, or any one of them, out of later editions. I have before me now the latest form in which the work stands in his “Collected Writings,” and I find that all three appear, the first and third unchanged, and the second only so modified as to render such an effort as Mr. W.'s no longer practicable: “The idea of the immortality of the soul, although recognized in Luke 12:5; 20:38, is not in general a gospel topic.” Otherwise all remain as before; and this, which was always the author's conviction, he no doubt put in to cut off a phrase misused by others, whether consciously or not, so as to insinuate or commend a notion which he from the first abhorred, and more than ever now that its frightful accompaniments and consequences cannot be hid.

Chapter 271

To Correspondents: Numbering of Verses in Psalms

The numbering in the verses of the Psalms is correct in the new version, not in the Authorized Bible. If the reckoning were kept up as in it, the tendency would be to perpetuate the common error that the titles, where they exist, are not an integral part of the psalms. From not beginning with them the great majority of readers are apt to forget that they are part of what the Spirit has given us. Hence in reading the book even publicly they are commonly passed over, as if they were only human, like the headings of the chapters in the English Bible.

Chapter 272

Two Letters on the Greek Aorist in Translating the New Testament

I.

My dear brother, Mere grammar will not do without the usus loquendi. Nor do languages answer to one another in their habit of thought. I had purposely put “has,” “have,” &c., where aorists are, very often, and as yet I think I am right. I have seen —— 's book, not read it through; but it is grammar, not Greek. Take ■στα■ρωσαν, page 16, as an example. He spoils the whole matter by his principle. The aorist means very often the future as no one can doubt. Again, in many cases the imperative aorist has a sense impossible to give in English. The present is Do or do not something now; the aorist, Do not be in the state of one who has done it. Perhaps I express it imperfectly, but it is the idea. Aorist is of no time, but we have not properly a tense with no time. Hence we must put the aorist often into a time tense in English, future, historic, or what is called perfect; but the Greek perfect is much more defined than the English—more distinctly the subsistence of what has been done. A Christian crucified the flesh is not a present continuance, and indeed has no sense. It is about some Christian somewhere. It is more the French perfect. Je fus a Paris. They that are Christ's crucified the flesh. What does that mean? I repeat there is no aorist in English. In the participle you must often say “having.” It is the fact with undetermined time; which, where it is instant, may be translated present; when consequent on another, must he future in English, and when it is not simply a past historical fact, in the air, but brought into present bearing and relationship, must be “has.” συνεστα■ρωμαι “was and am;” ■στα■ρωσαν, “they have” done it. In John 15:6 the sense is future, but, as it is a constant fact, present would serve in English. A certain fact is looked at as a fact, so James 1:2; but there are cases where you must in English translate it in the future. In Mark 10:3, 4, I prefer “has,” because it is a present obligation, but in the two last you must make it present—habitual without time. In Matt. 10:4; ■ κα■ παραδο■ς α■τ■ν. It is mere description and one can say, in English, who also betrayed Him; but we say it in English because it is passed now or supposed so to be. Nor do I think that the aorist means simply a future as such; but there are cases where in English we must put a future because English cannot always abstract and put it in no time.

So it is of the present participle with an article, Matt. 2:20, οι ζητο■ντες, “the seekers:” we must say, who sought. They were not seeking them, for they were dead.

In page 15 (2 Cor. 5:14) the Authorized Version gives the right sense, but freely, the “five” no sense at all. All died because Christ died—and it is not all believers, for those who live are distinguished; but I question if he be not right as to the τ■, verse 15, applying to both. But I have not had time to examine it. Died, as to Christ, is an historical fact, one died: so rightly. ■π■θανον is a consequence. Perhaps “had died” were better than “have.” I cannot say, judging this is an historical fact in itself.

I think in result the making the aorist a mere historical fact, as “crucified,” a great mistake in grammar and in intelligence.

I cannot at this moment give you an example where in English, the aorist must be given as a future, but I met one the other day. I am glad, I trust, to learn anything and willing to learn from anybody. But my critics, — amongst them, have not as yet convinced me. In looking over John and part of Matt. 1 have put out “has” in one case, and put it in another.

As to James 4:5 I cannot search it out now, but I have found it so difficult that I shall be glad of light from anyone; weigh it I did, but never was satisfied. Forgive haste.

Your affectionate brother in Christ.

II.

Dear —

— had proposed to me to do what you suggest. I have no objection. Since this question was raised, I have paid attention as I passed along preparing for the new edition of the New Testament; and it is clear to me it is wholly impossible to make an English aorist which has no time. It may be very often translated as an historical tense, and here I have often hesitated between the historical tense and the auxiliary verb. In the passive form it is often impossible to use either. Sometimes the perfect future, “will have,” may serve. But see Matt. 24:2, ■φεθ■, still it is the aorist. But the English looks at it from the time of the speaker. It may be alleged that a prophecy looks at fulfillment as already there; but you must say “there shall not be left one stone upon another.” When another event is named or supposed, it is imperfect in its sense and so has to be expressed. Very often, as I have said, the historical sense is in the participle; in English you must put the perfect form or present; “having called” (or “calling”) the disciples he said to them. In the imperative I have no doubt there is a difference of sense; but how to be expressed in English? “If thy hand offend thee, cut it off” is an aorist; have it cut off, have it in that state, not properly do it. This is very common, so of the eye, “pluck it out and cast it from thee.” In English, present and aorist are alike, το■το ■λον γ■γονεν “took place.” There is a perfect which in English must be made what they call an aorist, because it is historical.

Take Matt. 1:24, 25; you have a row of tenses where the imperfect becomes historic: no doubt in Greek it is habitual in sense, but in English must be historic or aorist. In chapter 22 “we have seen” is far better in English than the historic tense “saw.” Then you get a whole string where it is historical, as to which English uses imperfect or aorist, “saw,” “came,” &c., in verse 2 ■λθομεν is “have” or “are come.” If I say, “came” it is a history of what had happened before. In the passive, nothing at all answers in English to aorist. Chapter 2:16, “was mocked,” “had been mocked;” so verse 17, ■πληρ■θη “then was” is imperfect, so verse 18 ■κο■σθη. What tense in English is verse 19, τελευτ■σαντος? But the Grammarians say it is used. Thus Jelf. The aorist in all the moods, except the indicative and the participle, is usually expressed in Latin and English in the present, &c. And the consequences of aorist are often supposed to continue, i.e., where it is not merely historic, and then we must say “has,” or the like. So with participles of time, when, &c., he says, as I have already said, it has the sense of futurum exactum. John 18:24: it is pluperfect, which is very common. John 15:6: it is present, or future. Luke 1:1: it is far better as “have.” Mark 3:21: ■ξ■στη it is perfect, or present; “he has gone out of his mind or is beside himself.” So in infinitives (and imperfect) it has no past sense, as here κρατ■σαι. Mark 3:26: ■ν■στη, “have,” or “be,” or “rise up,” στ■αι in English present. I have no doubt to a Greek mind there is a difference,

and when I read Greek, I feel it. The mistake is in thinking that we have an aorist.

I repeat, habitually the historical tense answers to it. “He saw,” “went,” “came,” but when? The rest of the sentence requires to an English mind a time: we English are obliged to give it. Nor do I see that it is in this sense less future than perfect or pluperfect. It is never any of them really; it is the rest of the sentence attaches its time force to the undefined fact of existence which the aorist expresses. In general in English we date grammatical time from our speaking, pluperfect, imperfect, future perfect (exactum), from some other noticed event. These always refer to, and compare the act as to time with, some other stated or supposed fact. “He was doing it when,” &c. He had done it already then. He will have been at Rome three weeks to-morrow.” This seems to me the secret of so-called tenses in Hebrew. They think from the first fact mentioned, “he went and ate,” “ate” goes into so-called future, because it is after “went” and then a vau conversive: only it goes out into details. All, save as excepted, apply time to present time of speaking.

Excuse such a long grammatical disquisition, but it is in reply to your suggestion as to the elements of the case. At any rate, you will see that, though more instinctively than from grammatical research, it has not been overlooked; and the researches made did not find me without a judgment, though of course I may have failed in applying it, and in some cases have much hesitated. But the sense is different. “We saw his star in the east and came,” is historical of the past; we “have run,” is a fact (and much more an aorist than “saw,” though the fact of “having seen” cannot cease, and so far hence perfect). Then you must say, “and have” or “are come,” and it is really a present, even if I say “have;” and “have” and “are” are the same—both perfects in Greek. You will find, let me add, the tenses, aorist or future or perfect, interchanged in the same sentence. For this reason the mind may define more naturally or purposely.

I will send you a line when I have looked through—'s book, but fear I shall be slow. A glance makes me suppose he confounds with the Spirit conscience, which none of them see was acquired by the fall.

Ever yours sincerely in the Lord, J. N. D.

(I should fear a little for use a perpetual marginal calling in question of text.)

Chapter 273

The Two Ministries

Notes of a Lecture on 2 Corinthian's 4, 5

The apostle speaks here of the ministry that he had received. A man of like passions with us, he was one who in a wonderful manner lived with God so as to carry out this ministry; he labored more abundantly than they all. Still, what he ministered we receive; only he was a vessel filled in a more than ordinary degree. But this same blessed truth, as it especially regards the testimony, is committed to us, whatever the sphere, whether the greatest as an instrument or the least, and therefore the thing that he ministered is ours; so that we are vessels each one in his own little measure of that with which He was filled.

The ministry of the Spirit, contrasted with that of the Old Testament prophets, shows that the things must be possessed for ourselves before they can be ministered to others. Now this is not characteristic of the prophetic ministry; for the prophets found that it was not to themselves that they ministered. There are three steps in 1 Peter 1:10-13 as to this. First, the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glories that should follow. Next, these things are now reported unto us by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, that is, after Christ was glorified. Then we are to have girded loins and “hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” We stand between the sufferings and the glories, with the Holy Ghost sent down, waiting for the revelation of Jesus Christ, in the distinct confession therefore of what the sufferings of Christ have wrought; and our loins are to be girded while here.

The apostle here shows how the testimony is carried out; it is not “thus saith the Lord,” but it is carried out in the place in which we stand as possessing the things ministered. God, who commanded, &c., hath “shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” Paul had had a revelation of Christ in him, “when it pleased God to reveal his Son in me.” The revelation of Christ in him was that by which he might preach Him, and it was not only to him but in him—this latter of course in a remarkable way; but in every one of us according to our measure. To Paul it was the revelation of Christ in glory; but He was revealed as Son of God, and that is the character of the testimony. It is the expression in the power of the Holy Ghost of what we have in Christ. It is the ministry of the “gospel of the glory of Christ,” “the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” We may see its character and where it sets us. God speaks from heaven; it is not law. His voice then shook the earth; only once more He will shake not earth only, but also heaven, so that now we have the last things. It is the glory that he is speaking of in contrast with Moses who put a veil over his face. His ministry was of death and condemnation, and even that reflection of glory man could not look at, because it came as a legal claim upon man, a demand or exaction from God. If it had come alone, man might have thought he could stand it; but, accompanied by the glory, it was impossible. The moment the glory of God, the light of God, shines into a man's heart, the conscience. is awakened: the light once there, the man cannot stand in God's presence. Mount Sinai was the administration of it. The

ministry of the law (2 Cor. 3) was but the glory of the reflection; all condemnation, because it was God requiring from men what they ought to be. Man must either hide himself from God when he hears His voice, or hide God from himself.

The “glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” is not a little bit coming down with Moses, but it is a man in heaven who was just before on the cross. Such is the great groundwork of the whole standing of this ministry. When we see the glory of God, we see it in the face of Jesus Christ who hung on the cross—it means that. Sin and death and the grave and the power of Satan are all put away together; and now He who has done it has gone far above all heavens. It is not that God is requiring from men what they ought to be, but God is giving to men from Himself. All passes exclusively between God and His Son on the cross. The only part we had in it was the sins that He bore and the hatred that He met with. That is our sin, our comfort too. There sin had reached its climax in antagonism to that blessed One, and there I see God putting away sin; the work is done, death left behind, and from the glory where He has been received comes the testimony that sin is gone the work accomplished. Man can now be in the glory, and I get the witness of complete redemption—the glory of God. My sins and my sin are cleared away. I have a poor body of humiliation here, but this glory of God is ministered to me by the gospel of the glory.

I see the person who was made sin for us, who bore Himself the wrath of God. He has passed out of it all and is in glory by the work He wrought. He, the Son of God, was there before the world was, but He is there now in virtue of the work He has accomplished, and the testimony that comes forth is this, “The man that bore all your sins, the man that Satan did his worst against, is in glory!” These sufferings of Christ are over, and over with God's testimony to their worth. I have His estimate, for He has set Him at His own right hand in glory; and when I get there, I see it “in the face of Jesus Christ.” This gives a very distinct character to the ministry and to the position we are in. We are brought by Him to believe in God who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory. There, when I was only in the energy of sinfulness, God has wrought a work by Him so effectual that He who did it is at God's right hand, and now I can see the glory and delight in it. Instead of seeing the glory of God as in Moses, “We all, with open face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed.” Oh let me see that! The glory is the proof to me that sin is put away. My sinbearer is in glory. Of course I delight in that. The Holy Ghost comes down because of it, and I am sealed. The Christian stands with the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, and looks back at the sufferings of Christ, resting in the efficacy of the accomplished work, and forward to the glory. He knows God's acceptance of the accomplishment of the work, and what it leads to, because Christ is in it as a man. It is not only that the man who bore my sins meets me as a poor sinner, but He treats every Christian as Himself. When He revealed Himself to Paul, He said, “Why persecutest thou me?” If Christ owns me as Himself, what am I waiting for? I am waiting for Him to come and take me to Himself, for I have the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost, and my title to glory is the Son of God in heaven. If I die, I go to Christ, but I am waiting now for Him to come, and bring me into that which He has given me as mine, for the Holy Ghost is sent down to tell me that it is mine. He being in the glory will have me there. “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.” He has done the work that saves, He has redeemed me to God and sent down the Holy Ghost, and now I am waiting for Him to come to take me up to be like Himself and with Himself forever.

In the early part of chapter 5 the apostle speaks of the power of life, that has so come down into the place of death, that he can say, I do not want to die, to be unclothed—I see a power come in by which I can be changed into the glory without dying at all. Of course he did die, but it is important to see it as a present living power: so he says, “We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.” The power of death is broken. If I die, says the apostle, it is all gain. “Absent from the body, present with the Lord.” My spirit will be with Him, and I shall be raised when the times comes. He brings in this blessed truth: the testimony being of the glory of Christ, and Christ in glory the proof that the work is perfectly accomplished, and He sitting down because it is finished; we being sons of God; and the Holy Ghost come down to dwell in us, and make us understand that our sinbearer is in the glory. The only thing we have to wait for is, that He should come and take us to Himself. We are delivered from this present evil world and we belong to Him.

It is very striking the way in which the Lord speaks to Paul in Acts 26 “I have appeared unto thee to deliver thee from the people (Jews) and from the Gentiles.” That is, he was one completely connected with Christ as a living hope; and, seeing the One that was in glory, he was neither Jew nor Gentile. He belonged to Christ in glory. So do we. Of course we have not had a vision, but what he testified we receive and the gospel has associated us so completely with Christ in glory, that we lead the life of Jesus here. Our forerunner has gone in, and He sends down the Holy Ghost to be the seal of each person in this very position. “He which stablisheth us with you in Christ and hath anointed us is God.” The establishing was in Christ, and the anointing was with the Holy Ghost, giving Him as the seal upon our persons and the earnest in our hearts. “To them that look for him will he appear the second time without sin unto salvation;” that is, He will have nothing more to do with sin, because He came once to put it away—the first time. That work is finished. Those who believe not on Him will die in their sins. “To those who look for him” will He appear with nothing to say to sin: it is a resurrection unto life. “I will come again to receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.”

If I go up before the judgment-seat of Christ, in what state do I go? Why Christ has come and fetched me! If I think a great deal of any one who is coming to me, I go and meet him at the train myself. That is the way I go up before the judgment-seat of Christ: Christ has had such delight in me that He has fetched me! Another thing is: in what condition do we appear there? “Sown in corruption, raised in glory.” We shall be before the judgment-seat of Christ glorified already! Nothing can be simpler. “Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.” Did you ever think of this? It is a very great blessing. There we shall have the unceasing grace that has followed us and cared for us all the way through, and at last brings us there glorified like Christ. Of course in looking back I see it in measure, but then I shall know even as I am known. Do you simply read the fullness of redemption in that way? Now that my sinbearer is at the right hand of God in glory, what need I fear when I come before Him? I shall bear His image. Blessed thought of God! Therefore we wait for Christ. He is Himself our hope, and we have life in Him.

When a Christian dies, he is “absent from the body, present with the Lord,” his spirit goes to Christ; but he is not looking for that, he looks to be conformed to the image of His Son in glory. The whole condition is met there. Christ then sees of the fruit of the travail of His soul, because He has made us perfectly happy and satisfied. He was entirely alone upon the cross for us; it was God dealing with sin. Now His sufferings are over and we are looking at the glory of God. I see Him there—I am

here upon the earth. He is sitting on His Father's throne, and we are waiting “not that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” He has done the work that makes us individually fit to be together with Him in His glory. That is what makes the coming of the Lord so precious. “Every one that hath this hope in him purifies himself, even as he is pure.” Thus the position of the Christian is distinct—we are standing between the sufferings and the coming of Christ. Soon we shall see Him and be like Him.

The hope of the coming was the first thing lost in the ruin, leading to the practical state of Christendom at present. “If that wicked servant [he is a servant still] say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming.” What made him eat and drink with the drunken was just this, “my Lord delayeth.” He did not say He would not come back when the end of the world comes, and He sits upon the great white throne, and earth and heaven shall flee away—which is not His coming!

How is it that saints do not see the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ? People wonder that godly men do not see it, though the wise just as much as the foolish virgins went asleep. What then changed the state of things? “At midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.” There is a positive revelation that the thing that wakes them up is the testimony that the Lord is coming. The separation took place then. “Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps.” The wise virgins had oil still in their vessels, but they had given up expecting the Bridegroom, and gone to sleep in some comfortable place. Once in the comforts of the world they slept more or less, and the Lord wakes them up with “Go ye out.” Do you think that if the Lord were to come to-night, you would have bright well-trimmed lamps?

Just one word as to the full effect of the evil of these last days. I must warn you that we are in “perilous times,” though they are blessed times for all that. I say it because it is of such moment, now that we are in 2 Timothy times. He speaks of the state of things and says, Where am I to look? It is the scriptures that direct the Christian, and knowing too of whom they are learned. “Continue in the things that thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them.” Then he adds, “And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith that is in Jesus Christ.” If I go and learn of Paul, then it is all right; but if you say, The Church teaches, then how am I to know? for you all know how the scriptures are called in question now.

The word of God is a two-edged sword; it has no handle: all is blade. It is the word that judges people, and they cannot judge it. “It is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.” A man comes to me and tells me about various readings and the like: I say, How do you like “a man that tells you all things that ever you did?” The word of God does not talk about all sorts of fine bits of learning, but it deals with a man's conscience. That is the way that the word of God is known. Nathan comes and tells David a beautiful story of a little lamb. “Oh! he deserves to die.” You are the very man! Just look at that Samaritan woman. The Lord had been talking to her about wells of water, and never said one word about the rest, till at last comes, “Go call thy husband.” What is to be done with such a person as she was? “I have no husband.” She tells the truth to bide the truth. The instant the conscience is reached, there is intelligence of the word of God.

One of the very first things that struck me fifty years ago was that, if the truth is made subject to materialism, that is not having to say to God. When I get into the presence of God my conscience is there. Faith's roots are in the conscience. The place where the word of God gets is never in the

intellect, always in the conscience; and this must be and ought to be, because it is God's word. If I question, it is at once starting a lie in order to know whether God's word is true. When God comes with the point of His sword, He reaches the conscience, and I know very well that the sword has a point. When the Lord, the Second Man, goes to meet the whole power of evil, when Satan comes and tempts Him, what is the Lord's sufficient argument? He comes to bind the strong man; what is His weapon? He quotes a text out of the Old Testament, a book that men think so little of— “It is written.” That was sufficient wisdom for the Lord and sufficient answer for the devil. He had not a word to say. The Lord Jesus coming as a man, everything depended on His getting the victory.

When I look at 1 Cor. 2 I read, “Now we have received not the spirit that is of the world, but the Spirit that is of God; that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God.” I find “the natural man understandeth not the things of the Spirit of God.” “What man knoweth the things of a man but the spirit of a man that is in him?” No one knows what is in my heart if I do not tell it. “Even so the things of God knoweth no man but the Spirit of God.” There are three things. The Spirit unfolds and reveals the things. By words given of the Holy Ghost we communicate them, and by the Holy Ghost too they are received. The word consequently is the resource in the time when people know not what to say about the Church.

People speak of “apostolic succession.” There is no “succession” in the truth. It is such a comfort that what I have is straight from God. The truth is the expression of what is in the blessed heart of God. I have the truth. Such is the very character of those who walk correctly. You see the blessed testimony of it in Rev. 3: “Because thou hast kept my word and hast not denied my name.” An open door He set before them: none could shut it. “Thou hast a little strength.” There was not a great deal to say, but what characterized them was what God delighted in, “thou hast kept my word.” The name of Christ was valued in the soul, and the word of Christ had its authority for the conscience, and was treasured in the heart. He kept the heart in grace. He tells them, “Behold I come quickly.” He is waiting till His enemies are made His footstool, and meanwhile He is sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God. He is set down with His Father on His throne. What about His friends? They are waiting for Him to come and receive them unto Himself. The power of evil He will set aside, He will come out of heaven.

Christ does not take the inheritance alone; all things are to be gathered together in one, and He Head over all. In Phil. 2, when speaking of subjection, we hear, “Of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth;” but when of reconciliation [Col. 1:20.],” of things in earth and things in heaven” only.) But there is a bride—we are like Eve, who was the spouse, the helpmeet, for Adam in the creation he was lord of: she was associated with him who was lord. “Christ is given to be head over all things.” It is not only that Christ is Lord of all things, but there is a holy bride made ready—the Lamb's wife.

What I desire is that your souls may see that the accomplished work of Christ has set Him in the glory. Then the Holy Ghost having come gives us the consciousness of this, and puts us into association with the glory that is coming. It shows us that our place is where Christ is: then there is the patience of Christ. “Thou hast kept the word of my patience.” He says, I am expecting that day. If I wait for the glory, I know that He is waiting for it too. Then, when we do go before the judgment-seat of Christ, we go there glorified.

We are passing through this world, and we have this treasure in earthen vessels. I turn now to the practical effect of it. How are we to walk according to the power of the grace He has put us into? We are poor feeble ones, yet Christ's members, and through this revelation we know we are to walk in this world according to the power and grace of Christ. We have seen what the ministry we have received was. There is no veil at all, there was a veil before, “The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest;” but now we have “boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” Christianity is the unveiled glory of God. It is the wonderful and blessed truth that there is no veil; the glory of God is unveiled, but it is in the face of Jesus Christ. “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.” “By manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.” The veil may be on a man's heart, but there is no veil on the glory. That was the case with the Jew—the Jew might spit on Christ's grace. We are all lost in our natural state; but if this remains hid, there is nothing to go back to, nothing remains but fiery indignation.

Then you come to the men who have received the truth. “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts.” It is the light of the knowledge of the glory of God. The full glory is revealed; that glory thus given shone in our hearts by the power of the Spirit of God, and I come to the person who exhibits it. “In the face of Jesus Christ.” “The grace of God that bringeth salvation to all men hath appeared.” I have the fullness of the gospel—the gospel of the glory of Christ, for that is the full force of the word. The only thing to wait for is the coming of the Lord to make it good to us.

Now we come to the walk meanwhile. Grace has brought me salvation, and I am looking to the glory to put me into the full result. I know Christ is there in the glory of God. I know the righteousness of God and where that righteousness brings me. But “we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.” “Troubled on every side [that is the vessel], yet not distressed [God is there]; perplexed, but not in despair [God is there]; persecuted [that is the vessel], but not forsaken [God is there]; cast down [that is the poor vessel], but not destroyed.” What God has done is to take all this perfect salvation, this glory of His Son, this treasure, and put it all in a poor earthen vessel that feels all the difficulties and trials of the way, but has the grace of Christ.

So the more of the glory Paul had, a great deal the more be had of trial: he despaired of his life. “I had the sentence of death in myself.” Why so? “That we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.” He was there in despair of his life, so what is bringing death to a dead man? He held himself really to be dead to the world, be had the treasure in an earthen vessel. God was with him in the vessel's weakness. There I find the Christian's path. The salvation is complete, our sinbearer is in the glory. Paul had this treasure in an earthen vessel; he held himself to be dead to sin and everything, though he was not insensible to the trial, yet God was in it; and there he learns that the treasure is not here but there, and that there is no possessed power, but a possessed treasure in a dependent man. The treasure is never touched, and I learn continual dependence. If it is even an apostle, the vessel of the treasure must be a dependent man; and that is how we must walk. When you come to giving out the light of testimony or anything else, the treasure must be there or you have nothing; and the vessel must be nothing, or else you get treasure in the flesh. If I am alive as to the flesh and let it act, it spoils the treasure; if the lantern is

not clean, the light will not shine out. I have Christ revealed in my soul; but if flesh comes in, it spoils the testimony.

Every Christian gets the sentence of death on the old man. “Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The old man was crucified with Christ, but all the treasure of the glory of God is in this vessel. If I am not to spoil it, I must hold myself a dead man. If I reckon myself dead, and a man comes and asks me to amuse myself, why I say, I am dead! I have lit the light in the lantern: if the lantern is perfectly clear, it will shine out. I must have my body and my flesh kept down. I have a glorified Christ; I have the Christ revealed in my soul. The flesh is in me; but it is my privilege for my own sake as for His to give it no place. I say I am not a debtor to the flesh to live after the flesh; I reckon myself dead. Before God a Christian stands only a new man, “crucified together with him;” Christ lives in me. Suppose temptation or persecution comes, I quietly reckon myself dead: if I do not, I am frightened at all sorts of things. I am not afraid of my own reputation. “I have the sentence of death in myself that I should not trust in myself, but in God that raiseth the dead.” He takes up “Christ in me:” he says, “always bearing about in the body,” &c. he was associated with Christ. Christ has really died for us on the cross; so Paul takes up death in Christ practically and says, “always bearing about in my body,” &c. He realized his place. That is, I reduce it to practice, and learn that flesh is flesh and must not stir, and if I am full of Christ, it will not. The flesh is not one atom changed, but I am not following it.

The first thing Noah does after God had blessed him is to get drunk. Aaron's sons at the beginning offer strange fire! Christ—man crucifies! If Paul is taken up into the third heaven, the flesh will be puffed up about it. If it be under the power of the cross in death, that will do— “Always bearing about.” If a Christian is full of Christ, he is not distracted by the things that the devil puts before him. Suppose a mother heard that her child was run over at the other end of the town, do you think she would look at the fine things in the shops as she went along? No, she would not know that the things were there, she is full of her child. “This one thing I do.”

Many of you have sorrows, trials, difficulties. “We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in our mortal body.” I see you are in earnest, you are carrying about in your body the dying of the Lord Jesus, you must realize it. Paul was in earnest and the Lord comes in and helps him and brings him within an ace of death that he may realize it. That is his way with us if we are in earnest too. If there is any tendency in the flesh to spring up, put the red hot iron on it. “Death worketh in us.” Christ's death so wrought in Paul that nothing but life wrought from him in the Corinthians: that is testimony. That is, there should be such truth of death in us that nothing but the life of Christ should be seen from us. I see a man entirely superior to circumstances. This death I have been brought close to was nothing to me. He can say, “God which raiseth the dead.” “When we were evil entreated at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak the gospel of God with much contention.” It is complete superiority to circumstances. There were the stones flying around Stephen and killing him; yet “Father, forgive them.” Jesus said, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” Stephen is the copy of Christ; in the midst of death he is completely superior to circumstances.

Now mark this is directed to you. “All things are for your sakes.” Do you believe that? Everything. You are so beloved of God: Paul for your sakes, Peter for your sakes, Christ for your sakes, the object of God's delight, the Son, the gift, the glory, all for your sakes. God gave His Son to death.

“All to the glory of God by us.” Oh if we only saw it, we should get out of the little narrow path of minding our own things. It would not be subjection to circumstances, the instant that was seen. “Though perplexed, not in despair,” made to feel our powerlessness, what the powerlessness of my poor wretched flesh is as a man. “All things for your sakes.... for which cause we faint not; for though,” &c. You have this treasure, if God puts you through the circumstance which puts down the entire man, He makes everything work together for good. And remember “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous,” no, never for an instant. It is only the outward man perishing.

Beloved friends, this is the place He has given us in the circle of His thoughts. Well, if my outward man perish, it is only that the inward man may be renewed day by day. Look at Israel going through the wilderness; why their clothes did not wax old upon them, nor their foot swell those forty years. The Lord was thinking of the very nap of their coats. They were exceedingly evil and naughty; they would not go up. They feared the people of the land and heard that the cities were very great and walled up to heaven. It is all unbelief. What does it matter about a city being walled up to heaven, if the walls fall down when we blow a ram's horn! But the children of Israel would not go up, so God says, If you will not go up, you must stay in the wilderness, and He turns back with them! There is His faithfulness to be leaned upon. “He withdraweth not his eyes from the righteous.” The inward man is renewed day by day. We get difficulties, still there is God's eye upon us; but I never could spend one instant fearing them, if my heart would only recollect, when I know not how to meet them, that the power of God has been in exercise to lead me through the trial and everything, and His eye is upon me. If we only could remember it! “Our light affliction which is but for a moment,” &c. I may have to be afraid of my life: no matter, it only touches my outward life. Everything that kept the flesh down, in a certain sense, he has reward for: verse 17 is the effect. The glory had been put into an earthen vessel, and the vessel has been dealt with in death, and now it is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. If testimony, it is through this process. “Our light affliction worketh for us the things seen are temporal.” The mind is all fixed on that which is eternal. He is breaking down the vessel, and soon he will have the glory, and then there will be no vessel seen at all. Now there is the Christian!

But as referring back to the old ministry, there are three things it cannot do. It does not give life; it does not give strength; and what is more, it does not give an object; there is no object presented to my soul. I may believe in God—all right. But I have Christ—well, I have life; but I am a poor weak creature in myself—well, I have strength (by the Holy Ghost); and what is more, I have an object in Christ. It is a totally altered state and condition. Christ is always thinking of me, He is a living person; I have a grace sufficient for me—a strength needed, and He will help me in my circumstances on the way to death; and more, I am going to be with Him and like Him forever in glory. This is Christian standing. Then Paul is brought into the experience of what this poor earthen vessel is. He is learning to reckon it dead every day by having an earthen vessel; if it meddles, it mars the testimony. The power is not in the vessel at all, and if it acted, it brought something that broke down the flesh. I have the blessed word of God revealed in simple purity and kept in the heart of him that receives it. “Always bearing about in the body:” that is where growth is, the sense that all the glory revealed to us is His.

We have heard some of our brethren speak of having knowledge. I must get to know the thing. It is not insincerity, but flesh and blood cannot understand it. “Flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee, but my Father which is in heaven;” still, “blessed art thou.” But in the same chapter the Lord

has to say to Peter, “Get thee behind me, Satan.” There is no question that it was real. God had revealed it to him: “upon this rock I will build my church.” If He was going to build His Church, He must die, and therefore He began to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem and be killed and raised again the third day. “This be far from thee,” Peter said. Though there be a blessed revelation of God, it does not follow that the flesh is practically broken down in the measure of the truth we hold; but it is not insincerity. If I have the glory there, it is the cross that suits it here. The flesh does not like the cross, and if the flesh is not broken down to the measure of the revelation, it must be treated as Satan. There is the practical Christian, placed between the sufferings and the glories; the presence of the Holy Ghost in him reveals the glory of God. Instead of being a terror to me, He reveals all that glory and Christ in it—my delight. Satan's power over me, sin and death, are all gone; and what I wait for now is that I may be with Him forever. Meanwhile He has said, “I am glorified in them.”

Now let me ask you, can you say that you so see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that salvation is settled for you? That you are set down in the very glory which to Moses could not but be a terror, but is now the proof of salvation? Is that what the glory of the Man who is in glory has done for you? Can you say with your heart filled with the Holy Ghost, Well, I have done with the world, I am waiting for God's Son from heaven—the man who has got the victory, to come and take me to Himself? I am like a person here in a poor place, I have sent on all my furniture and everything before me, I am only waiting to be taken into the place prepared; nothing detains me here. Have you been bearing about in your body the dying of the Lord Jesus? Have you seen what this wretched flesh is that you are to be practically delivered from? And it is infinite goodness to put this treasure in an earthen vessel which if it stirs spoils the whole thing. If I look at my place and standing before God in Christ, I say, I am not a child of Adam at all, I am a child of God. Beloved friends, are your souls really believing what Christ has done, and that He is in the glory because of it, and that you are saved by the finished work His Father gave Him to do?

There is no uncertainty about Christ at all. “Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him.” Do you see that, when you stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, you stand there glorified? Has not Paul been in heaven these eighteen hundred years? Do you think God is going to take him out to judge him? There I stand with Christ, my sinbearer: the blessed One who put away my sin and accomplished righteousness is in the glory. I have a full and only hope that this blessed Jesus at a time known to God will come again and receive me to Himself, “that where I am, there ye may be also.” Then I shall be like Him and with Him where He is. And by faith we know this now: the word of God has told it us. And what I have by the word of God and by the power of the Holy Ghost in me is certain.

The Lord give you, if you have not known it, to receive it now, that you may have the stony places broken down, and that the word of God may find an entrance and give you light that you may understand the wisdom of God and see Him who died upon the cross! He has finished everything and is coming again to satisfy His own love; then “he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied” in seeing us in the same glory as Himself. May He give us now to bear about the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal bodies!

Chapter 274

What Is the Unity of the Church?

I should never have spoken of Mr. F. Olivier's pamphlet if it had not contained very decided principles on some important points, and an object which is not seen by all. If it were only a desire to cast contempt upon his brethren that were manifested in it, nothing would be easier than to pass it by. Every one may judge how far Mr. O. has profited by the light of those brethren whom He is pleased to treat with a kind of scorn. It does not seem to me a very noble procedure; but if one will give a kick behind to overthrow the ladder by which one has got up, it is certainly not worth writing a pamphlet, however small, in order to publish it. Mr. O. tells us that he has groped his way along. When we submit to what is in the word, we do not grope along. With men's thoughts one may grope; with the word we may still be ignorant on many points, but if we receive (and that with joy) the yoke of the word, we do not grope.

Mr. O.'s object is to establish or to direct independent assemblies, and to justify laxity in discipline. He understands absolutely nothing as yet of the unity of the body. In a practical sense his pamphlet is directed against that unity. These are the only points that I shall take up, presenting what the word of God says of assemblies, and some fresh light that God has granted me. The latter is not of any great importance, but what the word says is always interesting for the Christian. It is a happy thing to know that, if we take the word of God for our basis, fresh light that we may receive never overthrows the old, it completes and renders it clearer.

First, let me be permitted to say, that the assemblies of those called Plymouth Brethren are so far from calling themselves the assembly or the church of God in a place, that they have always formally set themselves against that title. So little truth is there in the insinuation that this is what has chiefly hindered these brethren from forming part of the Rochat flocks. They believe that they alone meet on the true principle of the Church of God, which I do not at all doubt; but they believe that the Church is in ruins, and that the pretension to be the Church of God in any place would be a false pretension. I add that if all the Christians in a place were to be met together, which would form, in a state of order, the assembly of the place, I would not give it that title, because the universal church is not gathered together, and I do not believe in independent churches. I believe that there were formerly local churches, representing in a certain sense the whole in their localities; but we are very far from that now. All those who have been willing to take the trouble to inquire know or might have known, that from the first the brethren in question have taken as their ground the principle of Matt. 18, as a resource given of God for a state of general ruin. The pretension to be the assembly of God has always been rejected by the brethren in question. Every assembly united by the will of God around the person of Jesus and in His name is an assembly of God, if it be simply a question of the force of words; but when it is a question of being the assembly of God in a place, it is not so in the true sense of the word, and could not be so because of the state of the universal church. It may meet together on the principle of the Church of God, may find the promised blessing, may be the only assembly which is gathered together according to this principle in the place, and it may attach immense importance to it, and ought to attach immense importance to it if it wishes to be obedient and faithful; but it is only God's witness so far

as by its separate walk it renders testimony to the faithfulness of God, to the divine principles which govern its walk and to the real condition that the Church is in as a whole. In this case it would be God's witness: it is certain that it ought to be so.

Mr. O. insists that the totality of churches, that is to say of assemblies, constituted the Church or the assembly. Nothing of the kind. Numerically speaking that is not true. Many Christians were scattered here and there preaching the gospel, converted without being associated with a flock, like the treasurer of Queen Candace, like Paul and Silvanus, and Timothy and Titus in their labors. But, what is still more important, the principle is entirely false, and herein lies the whole question that occupies us. The assembly or the body was composed of individuals and not of churches or of assemblies. These are Mr. O.'s words in page 11:— “Assemblies united among themselves by one and the same faith and one and the same worship, and forming, by their totality, the body of Christ upon the earth.” There is no such idea in the word. The body had members. Now the assemblies were not the members, but individual Christians were the members, and although the assemblies might have the same faith and the same worship, that was not the constitutive principle of the unity of the body; the principle of this was the presence of the Holy Spirit, who united all the believers, Jews and Gentiles, into one and the same body. 1 Cor. 12 makes the doctrine of the word perfectly clear with regard to this. The body of Christ on earth is composed of individuals and not of churches. Now in this case there is only unity in the whole; there is none in any local assembly if that assembly is detached from the whole as a whole.

If one considers that assembly as an independent church, it has nothing to do with the body; it is not in principle an assembly of God. At the beginning of the Epistle to the Corinthians it is said, “To the assembly of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.” Thus the apostle could say, “Ye are the body of Christ.” The assembly at Corinth represented at Corinth that one and only unity, that of all individuals united to Christ in one body by the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Everything had reference to the one body, a body composed of all the members of Christ. There was no action which did not refer to the whole body, no suffering of one member which was not felt by all the members of the body. 1 Cor. 12 leaves no doubt upon this point. The ministries were exercised in this whole. (1 Cor. 12:27, 28.) Their object was first the perfecting of individuals, and then the edifying of the body of Christ. (Eph. 4:12.)

The object of this effort to make independent flocks is the desire of being independent, of doing one's will without submitting to the discipline of the Church as one body. Mr. O. says as much. (Page 43.) Each assembly being independent, united only by one faith and one worship (page 11), has the power of judging the acts of discipline of another assembly. (Page 43.) The unity of the body does not then exist. The action is the action of an independent church, has no reference whatever to the whole, is not binding upon other assemblies or other Christians. A person may be put away by one assembly, and another assembly may receive the one who is put away. This is evident, though it may be disorderly. The without and the within are not the world and the Church of God: all that is lost. It is the within of a little voluntary and independent assembly, which only exercises its discipline in relation to itself. It is very evident that the without and the within of 1 Cor. 5 is not only the without and the within of a particular assembly, so that the wicked person might be outside at Corinth and within at Ephesus. The epistle carefully teaches the unity of the body on earth, and recognizes no local action except in that unity, a unity composed of individuals and not

of churches. Look at disciplinary action from another point of view and you will see the enormous difference of the principles, and how this system of independent churches destroys the truth of scripture on this subject. What is the true force, the true source, of authority in discipline? The presence of Jesus; not that this discipline is the act of a voluntary society which excludes one of its members from its bosom, but it is the act of an assembly according to God, gathered to the name of Jesus and acting in His name and by His authority, to maintain the holiness which is connected with that name. Now the independent church is only a society which acts for itself; another assembly may judge what it has done. There is no trace in this either of the unity or the authority of the Church of God.

Is a flock then bound hand and foot in these cases if another assembly has acted hastily? Not at all. Just because the unity of the body is true and recognized, and that with regard to discipline the members of that body which are gathered elsewhere take an interest in what passes in each place, they are free to make brotherly remonstrances, or to suggest some scriptural motive; in a word, they are capable of all brotherly activity with regard to this. If it be an independent assembly, it does not concern it; it has nothing to do with looking into it. If these things are done in the unity of the body, every Christian is interested in what is passing. It may happen that the discipline of an assembly is not recognized; but then it is rejected as an assembly and the presence of Jesus giving authority to its acts is denied—a very grave thing, but one which may happen. Mr. O. has entirely falsified the unity of the body, and wishes for independent churches and a unity of faith and worship, the whole of the churches forming, according to him, the unity of the body. The word knows nothing of this system. The reader may judge of it by reading 1 Cor. 12.

But another object is proposed wherever this half-Plymouth-Brethren half-Independent system is adopted; for it is not in Switzerland only that they have wished to take this ground. They wish to be free to support the discipline of Bethesda or of the Neutrals, of those who condemn “absolute exclusiveness” as Mr. O. calls it (page 41), an expression which, I confess, I do not understand. Every one is not excluded, I suppose. Some persons are excluded in Mr. O.'s independent churches. The assemblies of so-called Plymouth Brethren also exclude some.

The question is whether the limits that have been put to exclusion are scriptural. The expression, “absolute exclusiveness” may serve to cast reproach upon assemblies with which one does not agree: it is nonsense. But we have some expressions which are rather more intelligible: “Disciplinary ways which go far beyond scripture.” (Page 42.) Again, “in order to oppose such teaching we do not excommunicate in large masses Christians who are strangers to it.” (Page 43.) One cannot be mistaken about it. Mr. O. condemns the discipline of the so-called Plymouth Brethren, and he wishes the discipline of Bethesda or the Neutrals. This is the object of his pamphlet and of the support he gives to the independent churches.

I will not weary either my reader or myself with the history of this question, but the point which is really at issue is of great gravity for the Church of God: Can an assembly be corrupted? We have broken with what we have considered insults and blasphemies against Christ. Up to that point there had not been any great difficulty; some painful things, but decided without much delay. But here is an assembly which receives those that we had excluded as being blasphemers. Could one go on with that assembly taking the Lord's Supper with those excommunicated people?

This is the first question. For my part, I could not do so, and those who received them, knowingly and willingly, were not a “new lump.” (1 Cor. 5) That raised the question, Is an assembly corrupted when knowingly and willingly it admits sin or blasphemy? Our adversaries have maintained that an assembly cannot be defiled; that the individuals who are in sin are defiled, but that the assembly could not be so. They have insisted upon this in many tracts. Not only so, but the principal brothers of a so-called neutral meeting signed a printed circular, affirming that, if an assembly admits fornication knowingly and willingly, we ought not the less to recognize that assembly and receive letters of recommendation from it. We have judged that if an assembly, not taken by surprise, which may happen anywhere, or by carelessness, of which we are all capable, but knowingly and willingly admits sin or blasphemy, it is not a new lump; that in order to be a new lump it must purify itself from the old leaven (1 Cor. 5:7), and that it is by doing so that the other members showed themselves pure in that matter (2 Cor. 7:11): otherwise they would not have been so. This is the principle in question. Many individuals have gone farther, maintaining that in no case could blasphemy or any doctrine give occasion to discipline.

The effect has been, to my mind, most fatal; but I limit myself to proving the question, except that I shall communicate the result in a case that may arouse Swiss consciences. The doctrine taken up in the United States has not been Mr. Newton's, but the denial of the immortality of the soul. There is a meeting at Philadelphia (and there are even two) on the neutral principle, which does not follow the so-called exaggerated discipline, and blames the severity of Brethren. Those who deny the immortality of the soul were admitted into the meeting; then the doctrine was taught in it. We broke with, or rather refused all connection with, those meetings. Those persons who blame our severity were not willing to keep themselves thus apart, and now the chief instruments of the Swiss mission or of the “Grande Ligne,” deny the immortality of the soul. I hope that all have not got to that: God knows. I will not enter into farther details; it would be too painful and of little use. It is certain that the want of faithful discipline, the lax system, cried up by Mr. O., the lack of absolute exclusiveness, with regard to that which is false and evil, have thrown the Swiss mission into the doctrine which denies the immortality of the soul. It may be that they say, We do not preach it, but the doctrine goes on: they go and ask the minister what he thinks of it; he thinks it is the truth and souls get into it. Well, we refused those who were not willing to break with this system, and I bless God for it. There is a fine field of labor ruined precisely by the system Mr. O. extols. Neutral meetings, taking advantage of the absence of “absolute exclusiveness,” and approved in that by Bethesda and by the Neutrals, and by such as Mr. O., are traps for simple souls who go to New York and to Philadelphia. The question is no longer Bethesda, but Can an assembly which knowingly admits grave errors be recognized as an assembly of God? and can those who are accomplices in the matter be regarded as innocent, although they support evil, because they are not themselves blasphemers? In 2 Tim. 2 we are charged to purge ourselves from vessels to dishonor. Do we purge ourselves if we are in full communion with them? 1 Cor. 5 and 2 Cor. 7 decide the question for me as to the condition of those who support evil without being personally guilty.

There are many things I might lay hold of in Mr. O.'s pamphlet, but that is not my object. When it is said (page 2), “the Church is begotten of God;” none of the passages quoted speak of the Church: it is not begotten of God. Individuals are. It is not being begotten that makes them members of the Church, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit. I do not know in what sense Mr. O. thinks the apostle

said to the church at Corinth: “Ye are the body of Christ.” But I do not occupy myself with these things. My only object is to prove that the tract is a program of adhesion to a system which denies the true unity of the Church, which establishes independent churches, and which justifies a discipline, or rather a want of faithfulness to Christ, which turns what are called holy assemblies into a snare for the simple to entangle them in false and injurious doctrines and to destroy the integrity of their conscience—the certain result of all false doctrine.

I do not think that the open apostasy has arrived, but I believe that in the spirit of the thing it has existed for a long time, as there were many antichrists, although the Antichrist was not there. Now, the Antichrist, at least the man of sin, is connected with the apostasy. Mr. O. wishes for dismemberment. It would be impertinence on my part to contend with Mr. O. about the value of French words, but in the things of God there is more than words. I find the word that he has chosen the most unfortunate possible. The proper meaning of that term is the act of plucking oft a member from a body. It is used for the division of a state, of a kingdom, &c. But, figuratively used, something of the original meaning always remains. It is superior strength, coming from without, which divides. Poland and Bavaria have been dismembered, and if one speaks of the dismemberment of a society so that it is divided into several parties, still the idea always remains of an effect produced upon the society. It is of little consequence that the members understand one another about it; the society suffers violence through it: something of the original idea always remains. Now I admit that the apostasy in the full and entire sense of the word is not come, and that the application of this term to the Romish system, an application made by the mass of Protestant writers, went beyond the true force of the word. But observe that the apostasy is the fault of the church on earth. It had lost its first love; it had had time to repent, and had not repented; it had a name to live, and was dead; it was about to be spewed out of the Savior's mouth. This was a moral condition for which the church was responsible, and if the apostasy has not arrived, things have gone so far in that direction, that the distance which separates us from it is scarcely appreciable; only the Spirit of God is acting in a remarkable manner. Finally, Mr. O. admits now the fall of the church which is the important thing.

But the dismemberment, a terrible word when it is a question of the body of Christ, and one which Mr. O. can make use of, because the true idea of the body has no place in his thoughts—the dismemberment is only a fact. The apostasy, or the tendency to apostasy, expresses the thought—crushing if the grace of the Lord were not revealed—of the unfaithfulness of the Church to the one who has so loved it. But there is another thing. If it is a question of the body of Christ and of members united to the Head in heaven, the dismemberment of the Church is a dreadful thing. If the church on earth be simply a society, then it may become dismembered, or divided, or dissolved. Now Mr. O. has not the least idea of the unity of the body, nor of the responsibility of the Church to maintain that position which it has never had in his eyes. It was a society composed of several local societies. To divide was perhaps an evil, but an evil which happened to an earthly society. The church at Corinth, in spite of its disorders, was not dismembered in the time of Paul and be could still say to them, “Ye are the body of Christ.” (Page 3.) If Mr. O. had the least idea of the body of Christ, this sentence would have been impossible. It has no meaning for any one who understands what the body is.

I must add a few words with regard to the two points of view, in which the word looks at the house. Christ (Matt. 16) builds the house, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. It is Christ who

builds, the house is not yet finished. In 1 Peter 2 living stones are added, there is no human architect. In Eph. 2 “the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” But in 1 Cor. 3 we find another thing altogether. Paul is a wise architect. Every man must take heed how he builds. This is man's responsibility, although the building may be called the building of God. He who, being a Christian, builds well has a reward; he who, being a Christian upon the foundation, builds badly will lose his labor, but he himself is saved. There is a third class. He who corrupts will himself be destroyed. Now popery and the ritualistic system have confounded the temple that Jesus Christ builds, which is growing into a temple, with that which depends on man's responsibility—a grave and fatal error. They do the same as to the body. But there was the responsibility to maintain the unity of the Spirit and thus the manifestation of the unity of the body, and the church has failed in it; then it confounded the body with that which man has built. The unity of John 17 is not the unity of the body. John never speaks of the Church. It is a question there of a unity of brethren or of disciples, which would in fact manifest the power of the Spirit of God.

Mr. O. refers us to another pamphlet on elders, &c. He wished to appoint some when the minds of brethren should be prepared to receive them. As an authority for this, having rejected the old dissenting principles, only this argument remains to him, namely, that the apostles must of necessity have provided for the future of the Church, a point already discussed with M. de Gasparin. It is nothing but reasoning and a false reasoning, for it supposes that God meant Christians to know that the Church would continue for a long time on earth; that is to say, to destroy the present expectation of the Lord, which His word avoids in the most remarkable manner, insisting upon such expectation. I believe with many Christians that the seven churches give a history of Christianity; but God chose churches which were then existing in order not to take Christians out of this continual expectation. The virgins who go to sleep are the same as those who awake. The servants who receive the talents on their master's departure are those who are judged at his return. The duration of the delay does not go beyond a man's lifetime. “If I will that he tarry till I come,” says the Lord. “We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord,” says the apostle; and, “Ye yourselves as men that wait for their lord,” says the Lord again. An expectation of every day was not merely an idea, but what characterized the first disciples. They were converted to wait for His Son from heaven, and God is not slack concerning His promise. But as to any arrangement which supposes a long continuance of the Church on earth, there is not a trace of it in the word.

To support this false idea Mr. O. has recourse to a passage from Clement of Borne, a fatal sign when one must go outside the word to support one's thesis. But the sentence by which Clement seeks to explain his views on this point is most obscure. One of the terms employed is an unknown word, except in quite another sense in Plutarch, and is not found at all in the dictionary of Alexandre. The force even of the phrase is disputed. In general it is applied to the death of the elders appointed by the apostles; but there are grave theologians who apply the words “when they should have fallen asleep” to the apostles and insist upon the passage as a proof of episcopacy, admitting there is nothing of that in the word, but that the apostles in view of their departure arranged that other proved men should succeed them in their authority, a position which Mr. O., if I have rightly understood arrogates to himself, by putting himself among the number of those who have replaced the apostle as ■λλ■γιμοι ■μδρες. I do not accept this interpretation of the passage from Clement which they support by the δε■τεραι διατ■ξεις of a passage in Irenaeus (if indeed

the fragment is his), and of the nomination of Simeon as the successor of James by an assembly of the apostles who were still living, of which Eusebius and other authorities from among the fathers speak. But what a poor foundation is all this in comparison of the word of God given for all times by God Himself, the divine light in the midst of the darkness of this world!

This then is the main point of the question. What gave rise to the so-called Plymouth Brethren is the great truth, the great fact of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost to form the body of Christ into one; then the coming of the Savior as the continual expectation of the Christian. Mr. O.'s pamphlet denies these two truths. There are three prominent positions of Christ as Savior: on the cross, accomplishing redemption; at the right hand of God, whence He sends the Holy Spirit; returning to fetch us and to judge the world. The first truth is the gospel that is proclaimed to man as a sinner. The two latter have been brought out again in these last times; and it is these which arrested attention and which placed the so-called Plymouth Brethren in the position they now occupy. They also throw immense light on the first truth. The evangelical world will not receive them. From that time there has been conflict and shame, as is always the case with truths newly brought to light. Mr. O. admits many consequences of detail, but his pamphlet completely denies the ground of the truth on these points. He wishes for a unity formed by local and independent churches, having one and the same faith and one and the same worship, and he wishes to prove by arguments, or rather to suppose, that the apostle taught Christians to expect a long continuance of centuries before the Lord should come. That is to say, he again denies the great truths necessary for Christians in these times. I state the fact because I believe it to be important for Christians, begging Mr. O. to be assured that there is no trace of enmity in my heart. When the tide of evil rises high, it is not the moment for Christians to tear one another, however firm one may be in maintaining the principles one is sure of having drawn from the word.

Chapter 275

The Vaudois

Dear Mr. Editor, I know not whether your readers are interested, as I have been, in the hunted remnant of the middle ages, both east and west, during the time that ecclesiastical corruption and wickedness were on the throne of their power. They labored under a double disadvantage. They have no historians but their enemies, alike bitter and unprincipled, who would stop at no calumny to blacken them, their own stupendous wickedness making the accusation of it a natural weapon. This was one reason why we know so little truly of them, and that little to their disadvantage.

But there was a second disadvantage under which they labored; they were thrown, by being separated from the public professing body, into the danger of following their own ideas instead of the abominable and senseless traditions in which they had been nurtured, and so much the more because they had (though the first that largely used them after darkness set in the church), comparatively speaking, very little the opportunity of availing themselves of the word of God. And further they were in danger not only from the working of the human mind as we all are, but of coalescing with various heresies and works of Satan which moved about in the dark, but hated the ruling religious powers for the truth they preserved more than for the corruption they were guilty of. You will always find Edomites that would rase Jerusalem, not because it is corrupt, but because it has the standing of the city of the great king, as well as those who say “The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these,” while they are only bringing ruin on it by corrupting it and dishonoring the Lord of the temple.

The Waldenses have this advantage—they are attacked by both. Roman Catholics and Ritualists attack them of course; and free-thinkers, who would have error free because it is free-thinking, will never bear subjection to the word of God, nor holding fast to the truth because it is the truth, for then man cannot be a freethinker. Another very serious disadvantage under which the Vaudois have labored is, that those who in the seventeenth century furnished their documents or copies of them to the Protestant world in England and France tampered with them—that is, Leger and Perrin, or at least Perrin. Critics and Ritualists settled on this, as flies on a sore, and sought to cast on the Vaudois the sins of their historians and furnishers of documents. There was no serious effort to investigate the truth, but the greatest delight in detecting what was false and thereby discrediting the Vaudois or Waldenses. Even Morland, who deposited the MSS at Cambridge, did not escape; he, it was said, must have stolen them away after putting them there, that they might be in some safer Puritan place and detection avoided. Quite a theory as to this was built up by Mr. Algernon Herbert in a very vulgar-minded detective-police article, quite worthy of that class of religionists, which is now proved to be all false. The MSS are in Cambridge, and have always been there, overlooked though close by the rest.

Nor was the spirit of Dr. Todd much better, who anxiously insinuates they held Popish errors, in the very pieces which relate their being tortured and delivered to the secular army by Romish prelates. Some of the MSS are of a later date than the warm advocates of the Vaudois have supposed, and some falsely dated by the copyist for Perrin, or by Perrin himself—very likely the

latter. I know not why, but the French Synods were dissatisfied with his work, but at last accepted it. The Nobla Leycon is a genuine and ancient document, but their manipulations had sought to give it an earlier date than was the real one, and we have a large body of documents genuine, though some have been meddled with, and some probably very ancient; and Gilly has pretty well proved the most ancient European translation of the New Testament found in any language is the Romaunt or Gallic. The copies we have are written with chapter and verse, but scripture is quoted in some treatises without either, proving the quoted passages to have been written early in the thirteenth century at latest (Gilly's Introduction to Romaunt version of John, 41.)

It appears that the Nobla Leycon reads really 1400 years are fully accomplished, not 1100. This was Leger's doing, or some other, who furnished the MSS. But the poem is genuine; and long before the Reformation the early French translations were to supplant the Vaudois scripture. Such is the evidence of documents now afforded. We have the testimony of a letter of Pope Innocent III. in 1199 of a Gallic translation, circulated in the diocese of Metz in 1229. The Romaunt version was prohibited in the Council of Toulouse. Other acts of the inquisition and councils to prevent people reading this version it is unnecessary to speak of.

Simon (Hist. Crit. de l'An. Test.) informs us that the first Roman Catholic translation was made to hinder the people reading these. They were evidently widely spread in 1250. The inquisitor Reinerius Saccho states distinctly that he knew poor people who knew the whole New Testament. The use and quotation of it subsequently is beyond all question. As to the antiquity of the Vaudois themselves, some remarks may be useful.

Waldo's history is well known. He appeared about 1170, was at first well received by the Pope, but forbidden to preach; he did however and was driven from Lyons. He had nearly all, if not all, the Bible translated, and was very active, having given away all his fortune. The upholders of Popery have taken great pains to show that the Vaudois were in many points conformed to the followers of the Pope. Now there were many points as to which they were in the dark. The infamy of the clergy, degraded by species of vice which none can call in question, had roused the conscience of many, and more as to practice and the acts by which they made money than as to dogma. But purgatory, consecration to the priesthood and indulgences, confession to priests, prayers for the dead, were all rejected. They are charged by ritualists with recognizing penances of prayers, fasting, alms. There is truth in this; but it appears to have been as opposed to indulgences which had obliterated all true discipline. They rejected oaths on confession extorted by torture. Andrinus Crespini, or Valoy, said there was no purgatory but in this world; he denied the spiritual power of the Pope, prelates and clergy, disapproved of the invocation of saints, kept no feasts or fasts of the church, gave no honor to images, had no faith in holy water. This was half a century before the Reformation. The superstition and vices of the clergy and church of Rome—that they rejected; holding the common faith of the church at large, without any apparent Protestant doctrine of justification by faith. This was the case also with the revival in Moravia and Bohemia of Hussitism before the Reformation, closely connected as it was with the scattered Waldenses, as their history plainly shows. They did not then like the doctrine of justification by faith when brought from Luther. Todd seeks to insinuate that they held the seven sacraments; but his own quotation proves that they did not hold extreme unction as really such, though he speaks of Perrin's only giving what refers to the abuses of the Roman Catholics. Nor, it is clear, did they hold priestly ordination at all.

And now as regards the origin of Vaudois. Of Waldo I need say nothing. The facts as to him may be found in most church histories, and with a trifling difference the date of his coming forward as a herald of what truth he knew, and getting the scripture translated. He was forced to retire from Lyons, but it is admitted that the Vaudois sect was spread over all Western Europe. It is said Philip Augustus of France in the earlier part of the thirteenth century rased three hundred castles of Vaudois Seigneurs. This could hardly be from Waldo, who only began to preach at the end of the twelfth. But, further, Waldo first received serious impressions from a Troubadour, of whom many carried piety and anti-Roman doctrines around where they penetrated with their songs, and it is expressly said by Stephen of Borbonne that when driven out Waldo went and joined other heretics of Provence and Lombardy.

They were therefore already there. And this question then arises, were these simply Albigenses or Manicheans as is alleged? That there were Manicheans spread from Bulgaria, originally from the east of Asia Minor, on into Spain itself can hardly be questioned. But not even the inquisition ever charged the Waldenses with this. The archives of the inquisition of Toulouse published by Limborch demonstrate this; and the well known testimony of Reinerius Saccho which declares that they live justly and believe all the articles of the creed which makes them, he says, so dangerous. But, if we are to believe Mosheim, there were two parties even among these Bulgarian teachers who filled the whole south of Europe, and particularly Lombardy and the south of France, the latter being exterminated by the crusade of de Monfort, for which the inquisition was invented. The one, or Albenanses, really held the doctrine of two principles, were really Manicheans; the others Baioli, of whom came the Albigenses, held nothing of the kind, but that there was one God the Creator Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, but that Satan, after his fall, had ruined the earth, making the four elements. So they were divided into three parties as to the flesh of Christ, some holding He took flesh of the Virgin Mary, some not; others that He took it really and suffered in it, but did not take it to heaven on His ascension. The sacraments of the Roman body they wholly rejected. They had a certain but unsatisfactory faith in the Trinity. All this has nothing to do with the Vaudois.

We have clearly then, I think, three parties. Waldo's followers, who amalgamated with the Vaudois, and the Cathari, of whom there were two parties, Manicheans, and non-Manicheans though of unsatisfactory doctrine. We cannot be surprised, as all were opposed to Rome, at Rome's burning all together. She did not care for truth but for authority, and pulled up some tares contrary to Christ's direction and much wheat (as the blessed Lord foretold) with it. She will have to answer for the blood of all saints. But if we seek to trace out the history of the Vaudois proper, those of the values of Piedmont, it is not very difficult.

It is well known that Claude of Turin resisted what they resisted. He was Archbishop of those very vallies. This was in the ninth century. But it is certain that before that the same opposition to superstition was found there. In Jerome's famous letter to Vigilantius, in which he rages with his accustomed abuse and violence against him for resisting superstitions then coming in, he refers to these very districts and stares in the most insolent language (the custom of Ritualists when opposed, however they fawn on superiors when it suits them), that the bishops there sustained Vigilantius in his opposition to the growing superstition. Thus from 406 and then in the middle of the ninth century the same opposition continues there; and then we find 300 years after the same opposition still and them and their adversaries tracing it to some seventy years before we find it established there, as proved by Jerome's letter. It was a protest, not there only, but which survived

there against the corruption of the professing church after Constantine, when it borrowed the rites and doctrines of Paganism and thus supplanted it. With the testimony we have from Reinerius Saccho and others it is utterly impossible to think the Vaudois commenced with Waldo of Lyons, though it be very likely their tenets received a very great extension through his means. Reinerius Saccho's inquisitorial activity was sixty years after Waldo's activity began, and he states there were three reasons why the Waldenses or Vaudois whom he was sent to reduce to the obedience of the Roman Church. The first was they were a great deal older (diuturnior) than all other sects; adding, some say from the time of Pope Sylvester, others from the apostles. It has been attempted to say this is merely “some say,” but it is Reinerius who says they were older than all sects; and it is important to see that it was they themselves who thus held it to be from Sylvester at least, soon after whose time we find traces of it in these districts, the evil having really begun in his time by the christianizing of the Emperor. Next, that they were more universally spread, there was scarce any land where it was not received. This could not have been in some fifty years. The third was that they lived justly and held soundly all the articles of the creed.

The Vaudois then were a people, a religious testimony with their Barbes (uncles) or pastors spread over Europe. Reinerius does not speak of Albigenses who were treated as open heretics, but the Vaudois; and the history is well known, how they had been sought for their integrity by the feudal lords in Calabria and, after being settled there some time and visited by their Barbes, were subsequently all utterly exterminated at the instigation and under the direction of the Roman Catholic Clergy.

That the Vaudois had sunk very low at the time of the Reformation is quite true. They went to mass and were afraid of holding separate meetings. But we have even then the unexceptionable testimony that they had lived wholly apart from Rome. Seyssel, Archbishop of Turin, declares in a book published in 1520, only three years after Luther's theses, that within memory of man no Romish prelate had been in the vallies. He declares that they pretend to date from Constantine but in an ignorant way calling themselves Leonists, from a Leo of Constantine's time who was disgusted with the largesses bestowed on the prelates by the Emperor.

The Reformation roused them up, and Ocolampadius blamed them much for thus yielding to Popery and not having separate meetings. But at this epoch we have Seyssel's testimony that no prelate had dared to go there within the memory of man, and that by faith he ventured there. As we might suppose, oppression and persecutions came with the Roman clergy. Since the Reformation they sank down, with the rest of the reformed, into Socinianism; but with the rest God has graciously revealed the truth amongst them, though of course they have not got beyond the principles of the Reformation which they received from CEcolampadius and Bucer at the time, by the intervention of Masson and Moul their Barbes.

Recently Dr. Meila, a Roman Catholic clergyman, has sought to use the efforts of Todd and the recent discoveries (by Mr. Bradshaw) of the Cambridge MSS to attack their antiquity. The body of the book is simply exposing what was already exposed, the unreliableness of the statements of Leger; and then seeks to prove that the Vaudois were persecuted for rebellion and not religion; but qui s' excuse s' accuse. The oppression is certain; and in another way the answer is no answer at all. There were Waldenses outside the vallies. They were all exterminated in Calabria and brought before the inquisition everywhere. Rome is drunk with the blood of the saints.

He has brought forward only one document of any importance. In 1220 the corporation of Pinerol forbad any one to open their houses to Waldenses. He adduced this as a proof that it was then new. This was some 30 years after Waldo's public activity. This may very likely have awakened the activities of the authorities against the Waldenses, but is no proof one way or other of their existence or otherwise. Reinerius' testimony, which Dr. Meila entirely misrepresents and which was only 30 years after this decree of the local authorities, makes such an idea impossible. Nay the decree rather confirms the importance of the statement. Reinerius' own words are that it was of much older date than any sect. The particular alleged dates he quotes from others; but that it is “diuturnior omnium” is his own statement. He had been a Vaudois himself before the time of the decree and knew what they said and turned Dominican and inquisitor. How was it possible, if it had only begun 30 years before in the neighborhood? could he say that it had existed longer than any sect?

The decree of Pinerol is easily accounted for, the condemnation of Waldo and the Waldenses having just taken place at Rome. Not only so, but in the year 1127 there is a treatise of Peter of Clugny against the heretics of the diocese of Embrun, and in 1164 the mountains are said to be infected with heresy. At the very end of that century 1189 the Pope had embraced Waldo, only bid him not preach unless authorized by the priesthood. Subsequently not obeying this order he was driven from Lyons and went over to the Italian side of the mountains and sowed and drank in heresy, says Stephen de Borbonne. That then the decree of Pinerol should have been made, the Pope in council having now condemned them, thus active in spite of popes, is perfectly natural, but proves nothing as to the date of Waldensian principles which the contemporary testimony of Stephen de Borbonne and Reinerius Saccho prove. One expressly he found already there; besides testimonies of an earlier date still which say the heresy was there.

My paper has greatly overpassed the limits I had thought of; but it may not (in the presence of these attempts to discredit an oppressed and persecuted people, without any honest search into the truth of the matter) be without interest to some of your readers. It is quite true that Leger and Perrin are not to be trusted, and the attempt to ascribe reformed doctrines to the ancient Waldenses has no foundation. But neither is Dr. Todd to be wholly trusted, and Mr. Herbert's ingenious and prejudiced theories were false. Dr. Todd is obliged to admit it was a monstrous charge, but neither has anything to do with the real history of the case.

Jerome's letter to Vigilantius is of all importance as to the historical facts and the labors of Claude of Turin to keep image worship and superstition out of his diocese. It is also important not to confound the Albigenses and Cathari with the Waldenses, though there is much that is interesting as to the former too.

I may just add that the discussions as to the origin of the term Waldenses, Vallenses, &c., have proved nothing. The Canton de Vaud is spelled with a d;' but east of Lausanne there is a commune in the height above the lake which is called Grandvaux with an x.' I doubt that Canton Waadh is the same as Wald.

Chapter 276

Victory

It is striking to hear how the Holy Ghost brings in for us triumph over both sin, death, and even the law itself, holy as the law was and therefore entirely different from sin, as indeed death is. For the law was a moral judgment of sin, as death was a present governmental judgment of it. But resurrection is God's triumph for the believer over everything that can be against him, sinner though he has been. For we must carefully remember that on God's part there is nothing against us really as believers. Once everything connected with self was against us. Satan of course, and even God Himself, though love, was obliged to be against our sins—and what else had we? Thus sin disorganized all things. It set us against God and made it imperative that God should judge us. And all was hopeless till one person appears: but that One, risen from the dead, changes all else for our souls.

The remarkable thing that I would in passing observe is this: it is not said, “Thanks be to God that will give us the victory,” as if it were something entirely future and not yet brought in; but, “Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” No doubt the victory will not be complete till we are risen. But then the victory was won when Christ rose. And this is the present joy of faith. Why should the believer wait till he actually sees the accomplishment? “What a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?” Now we do hope and wait for the full, complete, everlasting victory over everything that is against God and therefore opposed to us. But then we have got Christ risen now, and we have in Him the essence and substance of all. We have not its complete application doubtless, but just as surely we have what secures all in Christ; and “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” And we have Him thus from and with God, who “is not a man that he should lie, nor the Son of man that he should repent.” It is no wonder, if this be so, that the apostle would have the saints to be full of strength, courage, and thankfulness of heart. What a joy it is to know that it is not mere men endeavoring to inspire one another with hope and courage! On the contrary, we know that if there is that which casts us down for a moment and brings a cloud over our joy, it is what springs from self.

Do you suppose that God ever doubts the victory that has been won by His beloved Son? Do you believe that God has a single cloud as to the result? And faith looks at things as God looks at them. That is the secret of all strength and courage. Why has God given us His revealed word? That we may think the same thoughts, have the same feelings, in our measure, as Himself. There is not a thought or feeling that arises out of our own hearts but what is false. Everything that flows from our old nature is evil. But we have got a new nature capable of receiving and delighting in the thoughts of God; and this is why we are so happy, and why we should never be anything else, because we have Christ and all in Him. I do not say that we ought to have no feeling but a happy feeling; but whatever may be the sorrow of outward circumstances, we ought never to lose confidence of love and enjoyment of God, for “we joy in God.”

There may no doubt be special occasions where we are conscious of having failed through heedless words or evil tempers. But we should never give up our secret of happiness, never allow

a doubt, because of having to judge ourselves for that which we see in us, or which may have slipped from us. We shall only be the more willing to confess our faults, if we hold fast our perfect sense of victory. For nothing more enables a man to enjoy the truth than being thoroughly happy. When one is unhappy, we know how unfitted he is either to do or bear; everything else goes wrong where the heart is wretched. Even the shining of the sun seems unpleasant, and sweet sounds sometimes add to the irritation. But when our hearts are bright and free, do not we know the power this has to make all around another thing to us? God intends that we should be satisfied with this full victory which grace has given us. He has given it to us through Another, in order that we may with simple adoring hearts rest in His beloved Son, in the communion of His own love, knowing that He who gives us the victory now will never give us anything short or unworthy of it by and by. On the contrary, He is the God that giveth us the victory, that does give and will give the victory, as it is said in 2 Cor. 1, “who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us.”

Chapter 277

The Watcher and the Holy One

Dan. 4

The present is a moment of great significance in the world's history. We often speak of other days as having been strongly characterized, and as of high importance in the progress of the way of man, and in the unfolding of the purposes of God. Were we but in the due position, so as to look at them aright, the present would be seen by us as equal to any of them in importance and in meaning.

Man is preparing that great exhibition of himself, whereby the whole world is to be ensnared and deceived to its final utter ruin. Such a condition of things has already had many a miniature resemblance and nothing has escaped the snare but “the mind of Christ,” i.e., the man of God, led by the Spirit through the spacious and commanding delusion.

There was, in other days, a tree whose leaves were fair and whose fruit was much, the height of which reached unto heaven, and the sight of it to the end of all the earth, the beasts of the field had shadow under it, the birds of the air dwelt in the boughs of it, and all flesh fed on it. It was, after this manner, the admiration and the boast of all: their desire was towards it; and the heart of the man who planted it affected it as his glory and joy— “Is not this great Babylon that I have builded,” said the king Nebuchadnezzar.

Thus was it, this fair luxuriant tree. All flesh was content, and man's heart feasted on it; the ends of the earth gazed at it; and thus it got its sanction from all that was in man or of man.

In a little space, however, heaven visited it: and it was altogether another thing in the judgment of heaven. The Watcher and the Holy One came down, as the Lord Himself had done in the still earlier days of Babel and of Sodom, and this visitor from heaven inspected this tree of beauteous wondrous growth. But with Him it was no object of admiration or worship. He was not moved to desire its beauty. In His thoughts it was not a tree good for food, or pleasant to the eye, or desirable for any end, as it was in the thoughts of all flesh. He looked on it as on a thing ripe for righteous judgment, and He said of it, “Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit.”

This was solemn, in a moment of common, universal, exaltation, when the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, and all flesh, were glorying in the thing which heaven was thus dooming to destruction. But Daniel was one among men in that day, who had the mind of heaven, the mind of the Watcher and the Holy One respecting this tree—but He only. For the saint on the earth has the mind of heaven in him. This is our place. All flesh may feed on that, of which faith, or the mind of Christ in us, sees the end under the sure judgment of God.

This is so; and may we experience it! But moral danger and temptation beset our hearts. “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” And the saint, in these days, is in great danger of having more of the mind of man in him than that of God. Look at even

such an one as Samuel. When Eliab stood before him, he said, “the Lord's anointed is before me.” But he looked where the Lord did not look. He eyed the countenance of the man, and the height of his stature, while the Lord eyed the heart. And we are in danger (in these days of both religious and secular attractions) of mistaking Eliab again for the Lord's anointed. Paul was held in some contempt at Corinth because of his “bodily presence,” which was “weak.” He was no Eliab. He was wanting in “outward appearance (see 1 Sam. 16:7; 2 Cor. 10:7), and even the disciples at Corinth were beguiled away from him.

All this is warning to us in this solemn and significant day, when man's exaltation of himself is growing apace, and things are judged of by the mind of man, and in their bearing on the advancement of the world.

But, again, when the disciples were held in admiration, religious admiration, of the buildings of the temple, we have a like occasion of the rebuke which the mind of man met from the mind of God. “As he went out of the temple, one of his disciples said unto him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here and Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another that shall net be thrown down.” (Mark 13)

This has the same moral character in it. It is the erring judgment of man, spending its delight and wonder on what the righteous judgment of God has already and solemnly renounced. The Lord (may I say?) was as the Watcher and the Holy One of the prophet, delivering the sentence of heaven upon the boast and pride of the heart of man, found too in the place of religion. And again, I ask, has not this a voice in the ear of this present generation?

The case, however, which above all has fixed my mind at this time, is that in Luke 19, where the multitude are following the Lord on His way from Jericho to Jerusalem. We are there told of them, that “they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.”

This tells us again of the expectation of man's heart. The people judged that the present scene, the world as in man's hand, could get its sanction from God. The kingdom they thought would be set up at once. But this can never be. Christ cannot adopt man's world. Through repentance and faith, man must take up with Christ's world, and not think that Christ can take up with his. The kingdom cannot come till judgment shall have cleared the scene of man's iniquities and pollutions. But this is not what man calculates on at all. He judges that the kingdom may immediately appear—appear, or be set up, without any purifying, any change: all that is wanting is advancement a few steps farther, as from Jericho to Jerusalem, a little more progress in the growing scene, and all will be the kingdom fit for God's adoption.

This is the mind of this present generation—like those who, in this chapter in Luke, “thought that the kingdom of heaven should immediately appear.” Things are so advanced, so refined, so cultivated by a multitude of fresh energies, moral, religious, and scientific, that under the success and progress of such energies, the world will do for Christ in a very little while. But no, it is man's world still, and this will never do for Christ. You may sweep and garnish the house, but it is the house of the old owner still, and, for all the pains spent upon it, only the more fit for the old owner's designs, and in no wise one single bit more suited to God's great and glorious purposes.

Jesus goes up to Jerusalem. But He finds there a field of thorns and briars; there were moneychangers, and sellers of doves in the temple of God. The house of prayer was a den of

thieves. The rulers, chief-priests, and scribes, were seeking to destroy the Just One. The religion of the place was chief in the offense. Jesus wept over it. Instead of all being ready for the kingdom appearing immediately, all was but ready for judgment, for the stones crying out immediately. And thus, the city, as Jesus said of it, was soon to be entrenched and encompassed, and laid even with the ground, instead of being the habitation of glory, and the witness of the kingdom of God.

I ask myself, has not all this a voice for our ears in this generation? “That which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” Jesus, as a Holy One and a watcher again, on this occasion, as in Matt. 24:1, 2, inspected the fair tree of man's worship and joy, and in spirit said “Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves and scatter his fruit.” And so is my soul deeply assured he is doing at this moment, touching all the progress and advancement and boasted toils and successes of this present hour. He that sits in the heavens has another thought of it all than men vainly imagine. He is not about to sanction, but to judge, the world in this its day (a day near at hand) of loftiest advancement and exaltation.

J. G. B.

Chapter 278

What Is Man?

Heb. 2:5-18

A wonderful inquiry this is, which is quoted from Psa. 8: “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” It is an inquiry founded upon his nothingness in himself, but bringing out, in God's answer to it, all His own counsels in Christ. “What is man that thou art mindful of him?” Such is his littleness; yet, when it comes to be answered, not according to what man is, but in the counsels of God, we find him to be the one in whom all the wisdom of God is displayed. Nor is it the display of power merely—creation shows that—but all those qualities in God where His nature comes out, which are more than attributes. Power can say a word, and the thing is done: very wonderful, of course; but there is a great deal more than this. Man is the one in whom angels have to learn what God is in His ways and counsels, for the simple reason that the Word of God was in those counsels to become a man—that He who created angels did not take up angels but took up man.

Thus necessarily all the ways and qualities of God (I use these words as distinct from mere attributes, such as of power, and the like), His holiness, love, and righteousness, all these come out in man; because they were associated with the Lord Jesus Christ. It is this that gives man such a wonderful position. And then it is not like the angels—glorious creatures, but preserved by the power of God unfallen, while that shows His ways in this respect, His power to do so, and the like. But men are taken up when they are sinners to display the glory of God in them; and this is another matter. Things that are in the highest, a revelation of the character of God, do not come out in angels. No doubt angels in a certain way want mercy; no creature can even stand without being sustained. This is quite true, as I am sure we all know; but they do not want redemption, and as regards grace, mercy, love, all these come out in man. As Paul says, We are a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men. In carrying all this out, we have the special testimony of the responsibility of man as an unfallen creature, one who was made in the image of God, which is never said of angels; but in that, when he did fall, we find grace and power coming in and connecting him with the Creator Himself, so that He is not ashamed to call them brethren.

This is what is brought out so wonderfully by the question— “What is man?” It was a testimony to man's lowliness, taking him in himself, crushed; but the moment we have the thoughts of God (ver. 7-9), this puts us in a wonderful place. Angels excel us in glory and strength; but they are not said to be in the image of God, and there never was any being set up to be the center of an immense system, that was to turn round himself, till man was (Adam of course I mean); but this is fallen now, and every one is seeking to be a center for himself. The whole system therefore is under the bondage of corruption now. But in the Lord Jesus man will be the center of everything that God created. He has put under the Lord all the works of His hands; yet when He said “All things,” it is manifest that He is excepted who put all things under Him: God alone is the one exception. The statement of the exception proves that all else is put under Him. But man in the person of Christ is Lord of all.

Thus the Lordship of Christ over everything is not only dominion, but this in a Redeemer, in One who keeps it safe, One who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, to death, but who descended that He might ascend up far above all heavens and fill all things. But He fills all things in the power of the redemption He brought out. God will gather together in one all things which are in heaven and which are on earth in Him, even in Christ. They were created by Him and for Him, but while presently He becomes Head, He does not take them until He can take them as man. And then too what is brought in is that we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ; as He says again in John 17, “The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one even as we are one.” These are to come in, though of course He is the firstborn amongst many brethren. He brings us in every respect into the relationship in which He stands Himself as man. Son Himself, He makes us sons, and He takes His place in resurrection that it may be made ours: for He tells us, “I go to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” Then there is another thing that is so wonderful—it is all by redemption. How could He take sinners and put them in such a place with Himself? Not as sinners; and so He comes down where the sinners are, and puts Himself (sinless of course) in their place: and in this I learn where I am. “If one died for all, then were all dead.” God “made him to be sin for us;” He came down to the place of death and judgment, passing through all the toil and difficulty of this world as we do, but perfect in it all, that He might take our hearts up where He is, giving a title by redemption and a condition by grace in which we could be associated with Him as the firstborn among many brethren. It is not merely the fact that I am saved, which is true; but He has associated Himself with us down here, in order that He might take up our hearts there by the love He has brought down into them—up into the very place where He is gone, making all the Father's love known to us, for the word is “Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” It is not only that I have a place in glory in consequence; but Christ is come for the purpose of associating us with Himself in heart and spirit and mind, so that He should not be ashamed to call us brethren. He might well be ashamed, if He took us as we are.

We see the various characters of the way God brought Him through, and He could say Himself, “Now is the Son of God glorified, and God is glorified in him.” He was in Himself a sweet savor to God, beyond the putting away of our sins. In this chapter are given the various grounds upon which He had to go through this place of sorrow in order that we might have this blessing with Him. “It became him in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” The truth upon which it is all founded is this—the great original truth—that He was rejoicing in the habitable parts of God's earth; that is, Christ Himself was wisdom in Prov. 8, and “his delights were with the sons of men.” Thus Christ is the wisdom of God, and He was God's delight from all eternity. “I [Christ] was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him.” There I get the link formed with the eternal objects of the Father's delight. Where did His delight go out? Into the habitable parts of the earth before even they were made. “I was by him as one brought up with him;” and if we look where His heart went out, it was into the habitable parts of the earth and with the sons of men.

Also in due time He became a man: that is the source and foundation of it all to us. He took up the seed of Abraham, who are the heirs of faith. Then comes the purpose and plan, His gathering together in one all things which are in heaven and earth put under His hand as man. The ground given in Heb. 1 is that He is Son; in Col. 1 it is that He created them; and in Psa. 8, Eph. 1, as well as Col. 1, it is that all things are put under Him according to God's counsels and plan. As Son, as

Creator, and according to God's counsels, He takes all. “To the angels has he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak;” but “thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” “But now we see not yet all things put under him.”

Such is the purpose and intention of God. There comes in the additional notice that “we see not yet all things put under him.” Thus is not yet half of the Psalm fulfilled. He is crowned with glory and honor; but the things are not yet put under His feet, for He is waiting for His joint-heirs. The time now is the gathering by the gospel the joint-heirs, that He may take His power and reign. As Paul says, “I would to God ye did reign, that we also might reign with you.” There was another set of promises belonging to this earth, and this we get in Psa. 2, where God sets His king in Zion, and says, “Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.” This will be “the world to come;” but it is not the higher position of Him who is to have the world to come; and therefore, in that connection we read of Christ's rejection, “why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against his anointed” —the very passage Peter quotes in Acts 4 But, being rejected, He takes another place—upon the Father's throne, where He now is: He is not on His own throne yet, but as He says, “to him that overcometh will I give to sit with me upon my throne, even as I also overcame and am set down with my Father upon his throne.” He sits as man at the right hand of God, not having taken His own throne, and He does not take this until the joint-heirs are ready: Psa. 8 comes in (verses 6-9). Nathaniel owned Him as Son of God and king of Israel; but to him our Lord replied: “Thou shalt see greater things than these, henceforth [so it should be] ye shall see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. It is a small thing my title in Israel; but you shall see Psa. 8 fulfilled. He was rejected as the king of Zion, but He was cast out of the world that God's righteousness might be accomplished; and He was answered according to the value and virtue of what He had done in God's setting Him at His own right hand, and so, He says, “Sit at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” This has not yet come; and therefore we must suffer with Him, because His enemies are not made His footstool. The world is round us, and Satan is not bound, and everything has been spoiled that God set up good; and so it will be until Satan is bound. So that plainly Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, not having taken His own throne, but with title over everything, not only as Creator but in redemption, having first descended into the lower parts of the earth: I say, with title over all things, but having taken none, with His enemies still in power and to rise up more dreadful than ever; and then all will be put down.

Now here it is that people are so deceiving themselves—Christians too. They are going to improve man and improve the world. Why, He was in the world and could not improve it; but Christians are going to try! This is the folly of even real Christians: when Christ has been rejected by the world, they will make it all right. But it is only the time for gathering those who are to be Christ's companions. Of course light does improve the world in one sense: men are ashamed to do in the light what they would do in the dark. But this is all. They are themselves the same, no better.

Now we find this Blessed One, of whom Adam was a figure, going to be center of all things, though not yet. We find Him made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor. Then we find the next point—the way in which He was bringing others into full association of heart with Himself. All the glory was His; but He does not go and take His place at

the right hand of God as man until He has accomplished redemption, tasted death, gone down to the lowest place and condition to which man can go. I speak now of sufferings rather than atonement, though this is in the chapter. But He tastes death. He goes down to that in which the curse was expressed on the first man, and a great deal more, as we shall see. But it is here the great and blessed testimony to the way in which He took man up to glory. He came into the world and left it to go to the Father, but not by the aid of twelve legions of angels; but He as man goes through where we are on His way as man to glory. I speak of the road He took. He tasted death. The great general fact is that He who created everything, and who is now sitting at the right hand of God, did not take that place until He had gone down to the lowest place, down to death; and this without speaking of atonement. Two things are there: the fact of the death and the life spent where hatred and death reigned. He came to destroy Satan's power; He came to glorify God; He came to be able to sympathize with every trial and difficulty and sorrow of my heart while trying to walk rightly. There are therefore objects, the glory of God, the propitiation for sin, the overcoming the power of Satan, and the entering into all our sorrows. This is what He does as Priest. He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We see Him “who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor.” “It became him (i.e., God) in bringing many sons unto glory to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” He was perfect Himself. He came from God, and went to God, and still was the Son of man who is in heaven; but He had come to obey, to serve us, and bring us there also; and if this were the case, He must take the consequences. The moment our blessed Lord had undertaken our cause, it became God to deal with Him according to the place He had taken. The majesty and righteousness of God must be maintained, and none could have vindicated them but Christ; there never could have been security for God's glory otherwise. It became Him to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering— “perfect,” that is, in the full result of glory, to bring Him into the state of a glorified man if He would bring sons to glory. In Himself He was the perfect One; He always is in the bosom of the Father; and all that He did was the Father's delight; so that, if I may reverentially use the expression, the Father could not be silent, but opens the heavens and says, “This is my beloved Son.” But in the Epistle to the Hebrews, it is a question of the majesty of God and we do not find “Father.”

Hence if Christ takes up these sinners, He must take the consequences of taking them up. God's glory must be maintained. If He was to clear us from our sins, He must deal with God about them and be made sin—He must die. It was His own blessed grace to do it, but through the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God. It is not spoken of here as clearing us, but as called for by God's glory; and the more we look at the cross, the more we shall see God could not be glorified any other way. If He had cut off all men as sinners, there would have been no love in it; but the moment Christ gives Himself up for the glory of God, there is perfect dealing with sin in righteousness and perfect dealing with the sinner in love; infinite love in the sacrifice for sin, and infinite righteousness. Of course, all this is in God's nature; only it is here displayed, so that there is nothing like the cross. Nobody in what he is himself could be there in the glory with Christ. Therein is expressed all that God is, every character of His, and Christ giving Himself up in perfect love to His Father, in love to us, and in obedience to God. He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, but He is made perfect through sufferings; He goes through the effect and consequence of having taken up our case, so that He could say, “Now is the Son of man glorified and God is glorified in him.” He has that place, is a glorified man now, and will be displayed in

glory when He comes again. God would straightway glorify Him. Only faith sees this. The world will be judged when He comes again; but faith sees it now and sees it at once, not when displayed in judgment. As He glorified God perfectly on the cross, so He is gone as man into the glory of God. It became God to deal with Him in this way. And what a thought it gives of the depth of the place that Christ was in, that in the depth of the place among sinners He was making good the glory of God! It was amongst sinners, yet He was the sinless One. The first ground here is that, “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 though sufferings. 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, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren; in the midst of the church will I sing praises unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.” (Heb. 2:10-13.) Now we find the association of His people with Himself—Him that sanctifieth and them that are sanctified. It is not simply the fact of incarnation, but this in resurrection. They are “all of one” after death; for He was heard from the horns of the unicorn. He declares His name after He has accomplished redemption. He had said, “Behold my mother and my brethren” in a vague way; but now He calls them His brethren and not before. “I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God.” This name is expressly declared after redemption was accomplished. These then are His brethren, made “all of one” with Him. Here we have it in a poor earthen vessel; but it is so. Those who are His own are all one set before God, they are Christ's brethren, and they are entirely and forever associated with Himself, they the redeemed and He the Redeemer; we the recipients and He the exerciser of the grace, it is quite true; but this is what is done.

We are “all of one.” The more it is looked at, the more striking it will be seen to be. All through the life of Christ He does not once say, “My God.” He lived in the perfect relationship He was in, and says, “My Father;” but on the cross, when He was drinking the cup of wrath, He says, “My God.” This was His perfectness; it was not the expression of relationship; but it was the expression of infinite suffering, and of infinite claim. But when this was accomplished, so that we could be brought in, He uses both names; and on those names of God our whole blessing rests. If we look at God as He is, we can delight in that name; for we are made partakers of His holiness. We are made the righteousness of God in Christ; of course we are so suited to God; while we have also the blessed relationship of sons and say, each of us, He is my Father too. And so we read in Eph. 1:3, “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” so and so. Of course, Christ is a man, and so God is His God; and because He is His Son, God is His Father. Grace has brought us perfectly to God, and this is the blessedness which is wrought for us. Then the whole place is perfectly settled.

I do not say we may not have trembling faith in our hearts; but the place is settled— “my God and your God.” We have not a bit of the full results of it all yet, but the grace which gives us the full consciousness of it, In three ways we have it. If I take John 1 say, Christ is in me and I in Him; if I take Paul, I say I am a member of Christ's body; but if I take the question of coming to God, which the Epistle to the Hebrews takes up, I can go into the holiest. I do not call this priesthood; but it is the place where we go through redemption. And it is important to understand this, because it is often used as if priesthood was to bring us there, and therefore persons go to the priest. Surely He will hear them in His mercy, though they go wrong. But it is not right: we are there, accepted in the Beloved. By one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified.

But is this all? It is not all the truth. Did not Christ live on earth? Was He not perfect on earth? Are you living on earth? Are you perfect on earth? That is another story. It is not all the truth to say, “I am in Christ before God:” it is the foundation of all, but it is not all the truth of what is passing in your hearts. Have you not difficulties? Do you not find you give way sometimes through want of faith? This is not suited to heaven; the more you consciously belong to heaven, the more unsuited you feel it to be. And God deals with this. It is a tremendous mistake to think that, because I have a place in heaven with Christ, God is not concerned in my path down here. In this respect I am present in the body and absent from the Lord; and God deals with us in this condition. He brings practical death on all that is in us (on the flesh I mean), and not only where there is failure (this is met rather in 1 John). And in all the weakness here, I have the blessed sympathy of Christ with my heart in all I am passing through, where I need help, and He obtains help for me. I am before a throne of grace, and there is righteousness truly—grace reigns through righteousness. But what is the confidence I have? “If we ask anything according to his will, be heareth us; and if we know that he heareth us, we know that we have the petitions we desired of him.” I am talking to God, and getting answers from God. This is not perfection. Certainly if there were not perfection, I could not go on; but now, mark, it continues, “seeing we have a great high priest” (Heb. 4:14-16); and so I go boldly and find grace. I have standing there a witness of righteousness and propitiation. He is there; and this because He is both these. Then, in 1 John, “if any man sin, we have,” &c. He is my righteousness, and all that is settled; if not, I should have the sin imputed to me. But I stand in Him as my righteousness before God; and He is there according to the value of His propitiation; and if I fail, He there has taken up my cause. Grace comes to deal with my heart and spirit and restore me, my righteousness never being touched. It is because my righteousness can never be touched at all, that I go on. This is not my highest place, but to be members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones—in one word, to be in Christ; but it is the highest character of His grace now to help us when we are in weakness and infirmity. If God has commended His love towards us, it is when we were sinners, but I learn it all in joy in God. He loved me when there was nothing in me to love; and the grand testimony of absolutely divine love is that God loved sinners. So the grace of Christ to me is not my highest place; but it is the highest place of Christ. It makes me little and Christ great. To be put into Christ makes me great; to find Christ going the same path as myself that He may understand every feeling I have makes His grace great. And this is most precious.

The next point is— “I will put my trust in him” He passed through the whole scene, it was part of His perfection, dependent on His Father; when going to appoint the twelve, He prayed all night, and so on. Then we see Christ treading this path of opposition and insult; and we know that we have not one who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. But in my infirmity, as Paul says, I can glory that Christ's power may rest on me. You know what the Lord does there—He sends a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet him; but He says “my grace is sufficient for thee.” He answers, deals with him, understands him; and this is all he wants. It was the humble weak place of the believer, but the constant and touching exercise of Christ's grace towards him. Another reason why He took this low place (not part of priesthood exactly, though the priest took it) was to annul the power of Satan—in order to be able to die and destroy Satan, that is, his power. First, It became God to lead Christ through this path in regard to His own glory; then Christ was there putting His trust in Him while going through it. Then He destroys Satan's power. And next we come to the more proper and immediate exercise of priesthood, and He says “for verily he took not on him the nature of angels,” &c., vers. 16-18. First, it is, the children were partakers of flesh and

blood in trial and difficulty (it does not say sin, though they might sin). He calls them His brethren and sings in the midst of the Church. Think what it is!—not, you may sing now, for I have accomplished redemption, though this is true; but I will sing! Christ leads our praises; He has associated us with Himself now that He takes up all our thoughts and feelings. It is praise for redemption, but it is every thought and feeling I can express to God. For He is a man; He knows what it is, as none of us ever will know, to bear God's wrath. It is over; it is gone for Him on the cross; and it is gone for us by His having taken it; when risen He declares the Father's name to His brethren, and leads their praises. It is from below the praises go up, founded on redemption and atonement; but the expression of every thought and feeling that can be in my heart, as an exercised man down here, goes up in praise. Christ has gone through all this, enters into it all, and sings in the midst of the Church—a figurative expression, but true. That is, He is the person who leads every feeling and thought of exercised persons, because He has gone through it all.

And when it comes to the accomplishment of the way, it is the same thing, “in that he himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.” He understands it. It is not a question of perfectness or acceptance before God, but the heart of the Lord entering into every trial and difficulty I have. As He might ask, “Do you think I was not tempted and have not gone through sorrow?” He could say “Now is my soul troubled: and what shall I say?” There was the constant passing through this world with all that is in it. And there He is understanding every thought of the exercises through which we pass as belonging to God. He belonged to God, and as such was made perfect through sufferings; and if we belong to God according to His acceptance, we must pass through sufferings. It is in this respect He can help us. He succors them that are tempted. There is the link of our weakness and dependence and exercises and trials we go through here. They have an echo in Christ's heart and are a link between our hearts and His.

It is not a question of righteousness but belongs to the righteous. That is the difference. It is not the question of sin, but it is having our whole heart, as a man's down here, brought into the tune and tone of Christ's feelings, who went through it here that He might call our hearts into the channel of His own. He is a merciful and faithful High Priest. It was a strictly priestly act: the high priest did it. It was not the going between the people and God at all. He was victim as well as High Priest, But Christ did not exercise His priesthood on earth, for if He were on earth He could not be a priest; but the people must have a ground on which they could stand in such a place. Christ made propitiation before beginning His ordinary exercises of priest. He stood as representative of the people. Christ was both. There is this blessed truth in it. There is the perfectness of the work, but the full confession of the sin. Christ was owning all my sins upon the cross. He was the victim and scapegoat that bears them; but the high priest confesses them. And so He charges Himself with them all, the basis of all the rest. “He is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by him” —not only scapegoat, but this thought too (and that even of Christ as man), that He it is that confesses all my sins. He is scapegoat as well as high priest.

Then I learn that He suffered, being tempted. That is not atonement; it was part of His trial, and it enabled Him to succor them that are tempted. It is not atonement but succoring. And, I repeat, though God does not make an offender for a word if the heart is right, it is not that we go to Christ, but Christ goes to God for us, and we go to God by Him. The Spirit of God groans in us. The word “Advocate” is the same as Comforter, The Holy Ghost carries on in divine sympathies, as dwelling in us, and takes up all our sorrows; while Christ takes them up for me in the presence of God, and

the effect of this is that the blessing comes down on my soul by the Holy Ghost. In this connection it is said, “He is able to save to the uttermost,” unto the end. He is talking of all this, of our going through the wilderness. It is not union that we find spoken of here in the wilderness, but exercises and trials. Christ enters into all these, and there is grace to help in time of need. His death has perfected us for God, His life carries on with God until we reach Him. He ever lives for this; and in this we have a blessed consciousness of our weakness and quite right too; so that with the weakness we look to One and lean on One who can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Do you believe that this is Christ's heart now? I do not believe it has its place until we have righteousness, for it is a mistake to think that we go by the priest to get righteousness. Christ is there, and, believing in Him, we are made the righteousness of God in Him. But this leaves us free, in perfect acceptance with God in Christ, to learn all that He is by the way. God is thinking of us too in His own heart; and we have a man sitting at His right hand touched with the feeling of our infirmities, One who takes every sorrow, weakness, and difficulty, as the occasion of ministering grace, bringing us into the presence of His faithful love. It is not mere righteousness; it is a Christ I can trust. And I admit and press it too that it is not our highest place; but it is blessed, perfect, precious grace that we learn. My weakness makes me insist on what the grace and tenderness of Christ are. By Him I am perfect before God; but while I am absent from Him, I never lose the exercise of His heart for me before God to secure for me grace and strength. This carries our souls on with Him. I would have you feel that it is a low place; but it is true. It is your weakness and your infirmity, and it may be a thorn in the flesh; but it is to put you in the place where the grace of Christ can meet you and His strength be made perfect in your weakness. It is a great thing to learn the constant exercise of grace, as it is our highest duty to show the life of Christ; but it is the daily exercise of Christ's grace that obtains for us grace to help in time of need. The time of need is the time of grace. The Lord give us to know it in power!

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