

THE GLORY OF CHRIST

by Gardiner Spring

Spring's theological work on Christ's pre-eminence as the central subject of Christian revelation, arguing that only supernatural revelation presents Christ and distinctive Christian truths with their proper significance.

22 Chapters

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00.01 Introduction

INTRODUCTION. In giving the present volume to the press, the author has little to say but that which is suggested by the importance of the subject of which it treats. Christians should often call to remembrance those truths which remind them of their high relation to Jesus Christ. Such truths are fitted to give vigor and freshness to their hopes, and enforce their obligations not only to avoid bringing religion into reproach, but to hasten its predicted supremacy in the earth.

It was the original design of the writer to make the present work the sequel and counterpart to his last published volumes, entitled " First Things." In arranging his thoughts for this purpose, he found the topics so allied to the glory of his Divine Master, that he selected rather the present title, because without excluding " Last Things," it would furnish him a wider range of useful topics.

It has not been his desire so much to suggest new thoughts, as to illustrate and enforce those that are old. A Christian minister is never warranted, even when writing for the press, to forego the opportunity of addressing the conscience. It may be there is in some of these chapters a redundancy of practical remark; and even a reiteration of thought in urging those obligations and inducements to godliness which result from different truths. Nor could this be well avoided. It is difficult to prevent the same light from being reflected from different reflecting surfaces. When he first announced his topic, some of his friends kindly intimated that the train of thought suggested by it might too closely resemble that which he had already presented in the work entitled " The Attraction of the Cross." He felt at the time, that there was weight in the suggestion; nor has he felt it less in the progress of the work itself. He can only say that he has endeavored to avoid a recurrence of the same illustrations even upon the topic which would most naturally offer them. The theme and the service have been delightful ones to his own mind; fitted to humble and stimulate it, to remind him of his responsibility, and " so much the more as he sees the day approaching." Should this prove his last service of the kind, he is thankful that it has been employed on such a theme. If the reader be interested and profited, he will share in the pleasure with which the work has been prepared, and the gratitude due to the Father of lights in allowing it to be consecrated to the glory of his great name.

G. S.

Brick Church Chapel, New York, March, 1852.

01 — The Pre-eminence of Christ

Chapter 1 THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST, AS THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION

Nature and reason say nothing of Christ. Truths there are which they demonstrate and enforce; they are great truths, truths which underlie the whole theory of revealed religion, and which none but atheists deny. But they are not appropriately Christian truths. They lack the distinctive coloring of Christianity, because they reveal no hope for the fallen, and speak not of the gospel of peace. They tell us of God and man, of law and government, of conscience, and responsibility, and retribution; but they have no consolations for the wounded spirit, when it is bowed down by the burden of sin, and trembles at the apprehension of the coming wrath. They encircle God's throne with light; but they throw no bow of promise around it amid those portentous omens that fill the world with terror. Benighted and desolate world, did not the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, brighten these scenes of desolation, and show us "the path of life"? God out of Christ, is nature, is reason; God in Christ is Christianity. Throughout the Bible "Christ is all, and in all;" his character and work form the great and prominent subjects of this entire book of God. This, then, is the thought with which we introduce the present series of lectures: THE PRE-EMINENCE OF CHRIST AS THE PRINCIPAL SUBJECT OF SUPERNATURAL REVELATION. To a great extent, the Bible is a narrative of facts. It is an historical chart, sketching the events of more than four thousand years, from the earliest times. It speaks of the creation of the world, and of the original apostasy of angels and men. It speaks of the corruption of the patriarchal age and the destruction of the race by the deluge. It speaks of the selection of a peculiar people to be witnesses for the truth, when the world was sunk in idolatry; of their intellectual, civil, and religious advancement; of their bondage and their deliverance; of their internal convulsions and their foreign wars; and of their exile and return. It speaks of the overturning of states and empires; of men who, by their rank, their talents, their virtues and their vices, have contributed to elevate or disgrace the age in which they lived, and who were designated to act a distinguished part in fulfilling the counsels of heavenly wisdom and mercy toward our lost race. It speaks of events, some miraculous, and some in the ordinary course of Divine Providence. We affirm of all these, that they are strongly marked by their alliance to Him who came to seek and save that which was lost. There are facts recorded in these sacred pages which have but an incidental and remote relation to this great personage; yet are they few, unillustrated and insignificant, compared with those which, for their moral influence, their chronological, or genealogical verity, sustain a more direct relation to the "Word made flesh."

Political history reveals the knowledge of man; scriptural history reveals the knowledge of Christ. In the political history of the world, we see so many events which perplex us by their intricacy, that our very knowledge of them confounds us; nor are we duly sensible of our embarrassment until we try to thread out the labyrinth. We are assured, indeed, that infinite wisdom and goodness have never been dethroned for a moment; yet, subduing as this conviction is, doubt and darkness envelop us. From the instructions of the Scriptures we learn, that not only facts that are

inexplicable by us, but the entire series of events in the divine government, have a single aim; while the facts themselves there recorded, not only have a bearing on the method of mercy by Jesus Christ, but unravel that divine mystery, show how the system of providence moves onward in subserviency to this gracious design, and how the great events they speak of are the stepping-stones in the progress of his redemption. As we read them, we are convinced that this redemption is no new thought in the divine mind. We feel that amid all the conflicts and convulsions of earth, God's work has been going on, and that all things work together toward this great end. They all have this great peculiarity, that they are facts which God himself has recorded; and the reason why he has recorded them, and left so many others unrecorded, is found in the special relation they sustain to this great purpose. Events and characters, men and nations there spoken of, though at first view they seem wholly disconnected, are ultimately seen to be bound together by this great centripetal agency.

Higher value would be attached to the historical parts of the sacred volume, if the readers of it were more in the habit of searching for and inspecting the seal of that unsearchable wisdom and love which it is their great object to disclose. They furnish us not only very many of the evidences of Christianity, but an abridgment of its brightest evidences. They constitute the hinge on which Christianity turns. They are not isolated, but form part and parcel of a series which is inseparably conjoined. and of which Christianity itself is the consummation. Everywhere they speak the same language, and bear testimony to God the Redeemer. Christ himself lives and speaks on almost every page. We find nothing in them that diverts our thoughts from the main object of the Christian revelation; while the more severely they are scrutinized, the more are they seen to bear a relation to Christ, and to indicate him as their end and object. While we seem to be conversing with our first parents in the garden of Eden; or with Noah as he builds his altar on the desolated shores of the new world; or with Abraham as he pleads for Sodom; or with Moses as he takes the shoes from off his feet at the burning bush in Horeb; or with Elijah as he contends with the prophets of Baal; or with Daniel in the den of lions at Babylon; or with his youthful compeers as they walk unhurt in the burning, fiery furnace; we are at the same time taught that a greater than patriarchs or prophets is here. It is the liberated and risen Saviour who draws nigh to us, talking with us by the way, and opening to us the Scriptures. Even the more barren parts of this history are not barren of the unsearchable treasures of his grace; they are not unchristian records, but at every step reveal more and more of the great Redeemer. The Christian element is the main element in them all; they attain their object only as they authenticate Christianity, and honor the author and finisher of the Christian faith. The Bible is also distinguished for its teaching by prefiguration's and symbols. We are not insensible that this is a method of instruction which is liable to abuse. Men there have been who have made themselves ludicrous by searching for types and shadows where they do not exist. Inventive minds and ungoverned imaginations have sometimes made fearful havoc of God's word by this lawless process of tracing out analogies between persons, and events, and things, and their supposed spiritual counterpart. But it may not be forgotten that there is error in the opposite extreme. Every type has its ante-type, and every symbol its corresponding truth. The Bible, more than most books, perhaps more than any other book, is distinguished for its symbolical instruction. Nor does it diminish aught from the value of such teaching that it has given rise to interpretations that are purely fanciful, and to exegetical laws and systems of interpretation which have converted the substance into the shadow, instead of making the shadow represent the substance. In this method of teaching, Christ holds a prominent place. It is, indeed, distinctly

recognized in the Scriptures themselves as having its counterpart and completion in him as the great Mediator. The prefiguration's of the ceremonial law of the Jews are so abundant, that to one not acquainted with the Christian Scriptures, it is difficult to perceive their import, or even their relevancy, unless they are typical of Christ. In themselves they were but outward rites and ceremonies; they were even worthless and worse than worthless, a grievous yoke, and not easy to be borne. But they represented brighter and nobler realities, and were " a shadow of good things to come, but the body is Christ." The blood of beasts, the offering of incense, the lights of the sanctuary and its gold and pearls; the holy vessels and the holy garments; the High Priest and the anointing oil: the Passover and the day of annual atonement; the Holy of holies and the entering in of the High Priest alone within the veil, were but the prefiguration of things more spiritual, pure, and precious. The tabernacle and the temple service, the golden candlesticks, the ark of the covenant, and the cherubim were not only typical of the Messiah, but so regarded by not a few even of the later and more learned Jews. It is difficult to conceive how the great doctrine of vicarious atonement could be more impressively taught than by the Jewish sacrifices, in so many of which the offerer laid his hand upon the head of the victim, there leaving the burden of his own offenses, and sacrificing the guiltless for the guilty. Still more impressive, if possible, was that affecting scene when, on the great day of atonement, the High Priest publicly imposed the sins of the people on the head of the " scape-goat," and sent him away into the wilderness. And what was the import of that solemn transaction, when " Moses took the blood of calves and of goats, and sprinkled both the book and all the people, saying. This is the blood of the covenant which God hath enjoined unto you;" if it does not prefigure the confirmation of the new covenant by blood of infinitely greater value and efficacy? Nor are these isolated prefiguration's scattered here and there; they run throughout the whole of the ancient economy, and are imbedded in its institutions and laws. The very existence of the Jewish people, among whom were the sole vestiges of the pure faith for so many centuries, and with whom, even in their lowest estate, those were found who " waited for the consolation of Israel," was itself a foreshadowing of the Messiah. If we ask for the special import of particular prefiguration's, the answer would require a volume. Suffice it to say, that sometimes their object is to identify the great Messiah himself; sometimes to set forth his offices as Prophet, Priest, and King; and sometimes to indicate his mysterious character as God and man. Sometimes they speak of his humiliation, and sometimes of his reign and victories; sometimes they personate his friends and their triumphs, and sometimes his enemies and their overthrow. In some of the books of the Old Testament, and more especially in the Psalms of David and the writings of Isaiah, and the minor prophets, the character and glory of "David's Lord and Son," are presented in such truthfulness and beauty, as to have become in every age of the church the themes of Christian, devotional, social praise. We may safely affirm that the relation which the Old Testament bears to the New, is not more intimate than the relation which these emblematical representations bear to Christ. And it deserves remark, that as these varied prefiguration's were, for the most part, coeval with the rise of the Jewish economy, so they terminated when it vanished away. The oracle of Urim and Thummim was silent: the splendid jewelry in the breastplate of the High Priest became dim; the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom — all ceased when Christ came. They had accomplished their object. God poured contempt upon them in order to honor their great ante-type

If from the typical and emblematic, we pass to the figurative and metaphorical representations of the Bible, we find them full of Christ. Truth is often presented in the Scriptures in the language of

emotion. When the heart is moved, it always expresses itself thus: and never more intensely than on religious themes. They are delineations, rather than lectures; rhetorical, rather than dogmatic views. They are the graphic pencilings of an enlightened and ardent mind, into which truth has sunk so deeply that it is not satisfied without representations that flow from the full fountain of devotional feeling. They have all the elements of poetry and painting, and address themselves not so much to the vigor of the intellect as to the delicacy of a sanctified taste and fancy. And it is a most fitting method of communicating God's truth, and in keeping with the principles of man's nature. It is the genuine language of a well-instructed and fervent piety thus to give utterance to its emotions in metaphors that are bold, and where a single word announces some great and pregnant truth. Devotional emotion finds its way to the soul only through the instrumentality of truth; yet are there other ways of presenting and uttering truth than the calm and unmoved lessons of a sanctified philosophy. There is a language which speaks with logical accuracy to the intellect; and there is a language which speaks to the imagination and the emotions. Both are equally true; but the latter is more free, unembarrassed, and impressive. The former is more definite, the latter is more striking; and while it illustrates, gives beauty to its illustrations. Nor are such representations to be regarded as mere matters of taste, or in more modern phraseology, as the aesthetical judgment of the sacred penmen; but as the manner and style of writing to which they were directed by the Holy Ghost. The inspired writers thus received instruction, thus they communicated it. It was stamped and burnt in upon their own minds; and in order to arrest the thoughts of men that were too sluggish, to be arrested by more didactic representations, they addressed it in " thoughts that breathe and words that burn." And what majesty, what force and adornment, and what alternately bold and delicate coloring do they impart to the unchanging, yet ever-various glory of Him who is their great and predominant theme! I had almost said, look where we will into the sacred writings, and we find these representations in a richness and variety scarcely equaled by the rhetorical drapery of any other book. If there be one that fills the whole circle of this vivid imagery, it is Christ. It centers in Christ; as though genius, and taste, and cultivated piety, and all the objects of nature and art, in all their sublimity and beauty, were laid under contribution by his all-comprehensive and exacting loveliness. It is the melody of the truth, as it is in Jesus, coming upon the soul, sometimes in airs sweet and enchanting as the harp of David; sometimes pensive as the prolonged notes of the weeping prophet of Anathoth; sometimes thrilling as Isaiah's lyre.

It deserves remark that they are the most beautiful objects in nature which the revealing Spirit selects to show forth the beauty of the adorable Redeemer. He is the pure light of heaven, its sun and centre, illumining the whole sphere of revealed truth. He is its bright Morning Star ushering in the day. He is the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys; the lily among thousand the apple-tree among the trees of the wood, everywhere diffusing their fragrance. He is the fairest of the children of men and his garments are white as snow. He is the bridegroom rejoicing over the bride, and his lips drop with sweet-smelling myrrh. He is the Shepherd of Israel, who gathereth the lambs with his arm, and carrieth them in his bosom. He is the fountain of purity and the fountain of life. He is an hiding-place from the storm, and a covert from the tempest; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land, and as rivers of water in a dry place. He is the rock and the stone of Israel, their high tower and the horn of their salvation. He is the bread of life, the tree of life, the vine, the head the purifying fire, the true way, the living temple. He is Judah's lion and the Lamb of God. He is the brother and the friend. He is the angel of the covenant, the surety, and the advocate. He is the

Prince of Peace, the wonderful Counsellor, the conqueror Captain. There are beauties in the Bible, but he is the crown of its beauty. There is rich verdure there, and flowers of hope; but the stem of Jesse is the branch from which they grow. That sacred soil is fringed with trees that yield their fruit every month, and there is a river there pure and perennial, because it flows from God and the Lamb. But he is the life of all this sweet and sublime imagery. The Bible is but the mirror "which reflects his face of comeliness." It is the ocean from whose broad surface the warm exhalations of Jesus love ascend, to fall in showers on the thirsty earth. Its imagery is beautiful; to a devout mind it is so, because it gleams in the light, and is reflected from the brightness of this never setting sun. What an enigma, what a blank were this book without Christ! It is he who imbues these sacred pages with this heavenly atmosphere. His name is as "ointment poured forth," diffusing its fragrance like a bed of spices; while from the green, luxuriant earth, the air rises up loaded with rich perfume, and faith and hope breathe its odors and revel among its flowers.

If, then, in the next place, we take a glance at the prophetic writings of the Bible, we find that Christ himself is the great subject with which the spirit of prophecy is conversant from the beginning of the world to the sealing up and formal close of the prophetic dispensation. His advent and redemption were the great and glorious events towards which the expectations of men were directed by the bards of the Old Testament. They were thrilling predictions which they uttered, because they were full of Christ; predictions which, when accomplished, would make the trees of the field and the little hills and the mountains clap their hands, and which would fill the world with joy.

Prophecy is God's word; it is eminently the preaching of God himself, and in every respect like its author. We may well suppose that it falls in with the design and spirit of the Gospel, and tends to promote its spirituality and power. Hence we are instructed that "the Spirit of Christ" was in the prophets when "they testified beforehand his sufferings, and the glory that should follow." We are told also that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy;" or, in other words, that the spirit of prophecy is the testimony concerning Jesus. When we take a view of the prophecies, from the first prediction in the garden of Eden relating to the "seed of the woman," to the prediction of Malachi concerning "the Messenger of the Covenant," and the prediction of John in Patmos concerning him who is to "come in the clouds of heaven;" we not only find they perfectly harmonize with the spirit of Christianity and the great end for which the Bible was given, but that the entire and uninterrupted series of prophecies is mostly made up of predictions concerning Jesus Christ. Even those predictions which relate to this world, and to earthly things, as well as those which relate to the kingdom of Satan, and the nations and races and rulers over which the Deceiver exercises his sway, stand abreast with predictions which immediately relate to the kingdom of Christ, and derive their only importance from their predicted subserviency to this kingdom. Holy angels and holy men of old were sent by God during the progress of four thousand years to announce him who was "the desire of all nations," and whom "God had set upon his holy hill of Zion." To him "all the prophets gave witness." Sometimes they speak of the time when he should be born; sometimes of the place; sometimes of the dignity of his person; sometimes of the excellence and meekness of his character, the miracles he wrought, the instructions he gave, the beneficence of his life, the time and circumstances of his death, and the triumphs of his resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God. Take Christ from the system of prophecy, and it has no object; it is spiritless and dead, and the whole fabric crumbles and falls. The prophecies can be studied and understood only

at the foot of the cross. There was no other object worthy of this long-continued intercourse between heaven and earth, unless it was to "prepare the way of the Lord and make his paths straight." They are sacrilegious hands that would fain rudely separate the root and the offspring of David from the ramifications of prophecy. Men there are who have done this: nor is it any marvel that their interpretations of prophecy should be bald and jejune, when they have thus abstracted from it its vital element. Piety weeps at this estrangement of prophecy from the testimony of Jesus, and exclaims with Mary at his empty sepulcher, "They have taken my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." A collection of all the prophecies in the Sacred Writings would leave but few that have no respect to Jesus Christ. The prophet that did not bear witness to him would have been counted as one of the oracles of the heathen. Even false prophets were constrained to speak of him; "they saw him, but not now; they beheld him, but not nigh." Heavenly seers were stationed all along the hill-tops of time for the great purpose of announcing Him who was to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel;" while, as their circle of vision becomes extended, and they penetrate the last days, they anticipate the scene, when "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever."

Nor, obvious as the fact is, may we overlook the thought, that of the great truths and doctrines of the Bible, Christ is the sum and substance. In the language of the Scriptures, believing Christ and believing the gospel, preaching Christ and preaching the gospel, are commutable phrases. By common consent Christianity is the very definition of revealed truth. There is no truth in the Bible with which Christ has not such a relation, that if there had been no Saviour, there had been no such truth revealed. God's truth has this one great theme. The Bible is the most perplexing book, the greatest enigma in the world of thought, if the great subject of its instructions be not Christ and him crucified. Natural religion would have consulted all the exigencies of men, had it revealed a Saviour. This is the great and universal want of the race; and where there is no provision for this, there is no truth but that which rebukes, condemns, and destroys. Christ is the "wisdom of God and the power of God," because his unsearchable wisdom and power are in him and by him disclosed. If there is anything by which the glory of God is pre-eminently manifested, it is the system of truth which was taught by his Son, and of which the Son is the centre. Here alone men see "what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." Angels see it here, and will see it in perpetually augmenting manifestations. Nor would there be any difference in the theological creed of men and angels, nor in the now conflicting views of men themselves, if they all had the same views of Christ. The fact that the leading controversies between Christians and infidels, and other heretics and errorists relate, and ever have related to the person and work of Christ, shows that Christ himself is the all and in all to Christianity. Dispute about doctrines as they will, there is no denying the fact, that the system of belief which most excludes Christ and obscures his glory is the farthest from the truth, and ruinous to the souls of men. It is "another foundation" of which Christ is not the corner-stone, and one which he himself has not laid in Zion. Christianity is the same thing everywhere, because Christ is the sum and substance of it, and he is everywhere the same. Incidental differences there are in the church of God, but there are no essential differences where Christ is made of God wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption to the soul. There is neither Greek, nor Jew, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free. All have this great mark of identity, that they are one in Christ. The Spirit of God everywhere inscribes the same truths on the hearts of good men, because he "takes of the things that are Christ's, and shows them unto them." Divine truth receives its consistency and beauty

from Christ; nor is it possible to have just perceptions of it, nor feel its practical influence without perceiving its relations to him. Does the Bible assure men of the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments; where is that assurance made so sure as by the teaching, death, and resurrection of the Son of God? Does it teach the great doctrine of moral obligation: where is there such evidence of the binding force of obligation as in the obedience of Christ to the death of the cross, and in the motives and influences to obedience which his death secures? Do we look for any firm foundation on which to erect the structure of morals; Christ is that foundation, there is no such morality as Christian morality.

"Talk they of morals? O thou bleeding love, The grand morality is full of thee."

Every thought, and word, and act of obedience springs from faith in Christ. Is it the design of the Bible to exalt God and humble the pride and self-sufficiency of man? By what is God so exalted and man so humbled as by the doctrine of Christ Jesus and him crucified? Does this book of God reveal the only test of character? Where is there such a test as the "child that was set for the fall and rising again of many, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed?" We cannot specify any one truth, the faith of which is essential to the Christian character, and which is itself the means of piety and hope to good men, but is contained in that one word, Christ. Are they born again; it is in the image of Christ. Have they pardon and acceptance with God; it is through the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Have they grace, mercy, and peace; it is because Christ has died, and they love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. Or are there any among the sons of men who are anathema; it is because they do not love him. If there be one whom the Scriptures represent it as important to know, it is Christ; one whom all are bound to love, and in whom all are bound to believe; one in whom all who believe are bound to profess their faith; it is Christ. If there be one to whom, to be reconciled, is to be reconciled to God; one who is the Christian's example, the minister's and the church's glory; one who is Lord of the conscience and King in Zion; one who is precious to the good of all names and nations, and before whom every knee must bow and every mouth be stopped; one who, as the accredited Prophet, Priest, and King, is destined to triumph over ignorance, unbelief, superstition, and wickedness, and whose influence is destined to extend to the masses, and by whom humanity is to be ennobled and exalted; it is Christ. If there be one to whom the Spirit is imparted without measure, and upon whom all spiritual gifts are bestowed for the benefit of his people; one who was ordained to this great work from the foundation of the world, and who is himself the inhabitation of the Deity, it is Christ. In all Christian doctrines Christ has the pre-eminence. It pleased the Father that "in him all fulness should dwell." It is he of whom the great Apostle said, "I have determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified." Christ crucified not only gives its complexion to the whole system of divine truth; but apart from this crucified one, there is no truth which is the wisdom of God and the power of God to salvation.

We add a single thought more: the Scriptures not only abound in the inculcation of Christian truth, but in the delineation of Christian experience. And does not every devout mind respond to the remark, that the religious experience, of which we have so full an account in the Bible, magnifies Jesus Christ? In all its forms and varieties, in the love of its espousals, in the vigor of its manhood, in the maturity of its old age, in the meltings of its penitence and the fervor of its zeal; in prosperity and adversity, toil and relaxation, life and death; its most devout and sacred sensibilities flow from enlightened views of Christ, from believing and sanctified contemplations of his glory, from the

life-inspiring relationship which believers sustain to him. The Bible knows nothing that turns men from the power of Satan unto God but Christ.

If we inquire for the great principle of spiritual life, we hear one who was not behind the chief of the apostles, say "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ that liveth in me, and the life that I live in the flesh is by the faith of the Son of God who loved me, and gave himself for me." Do the Scriptures speak of adoption into God's family; their language is, " But as many as received Christ to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name." Do they speak of fellowship with God in religious duties; their language is, "For through Him we have access by one Spirit unto the Father;" " in whom we have boldness and access;" boldness to enter into the holiest of all by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way." When the early Christians advert to the grace that called them, and that made them differ from others, their grateful language is, " Who hath saved us, and 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." Do they speak of their final perseverance, they rest on such truths as these, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." Do they advert to their encouragement in duty, their impulse in love, and the great incitement to a life of devotedness: it is " the love of Christ that passeth knowledge."

When, amid their scenes of trial, they advert to the source of their consolation, they speak of one refuge, one comforter. All their support and all their hopes are centred in One. It were a severance from them all to be severed from Christ. However brilliant the lights which this world casts upon it, clouds and darkness would hang over every path and step of the Christian's pilgrimage, did not he who caused the light to " shine out of darkness, shine in their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." Sweet is the solace which the Christian finds amid those days of depression which visit him, from the assurance that " there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother," and that in the dark night of his adversity, one star there is that turns the shadow of death into the morning. The preciousness of Christ, the attractions of his love, the adaptation of his grace, ever ready, ever faithful, ever full, are sufficient for his greatest need. The conscience may be alarmed, the heart agitated, and the fairest earthly hope may be disappointed and wither; but precious are the hopes which Christ inspires; precious the repose at his cross; precious the refuge at his mercy-seat; precious the joys which cannot be embittered, because he gives them. The life that now is, is but of few days and full of trouble. We feel the burden of sorrow, we shrink from conflict, and we shudder at the grasp of death; and though reason cannot tranquillize, nor sympathy relieve, nor any created helper support us, there is tranquility, relief, support, and perfect peace amid them all, derived from Christ. It is the believer's privilege to say with Paul, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" Sufferings await them; but if they suffer with Christ, they shall also be glorified together with him. Death awaits them, but they sleep in Jesus; the grave awaits them, but Christ is the resurrection and the life, and they come forth from it fashioned like unto his glorious body. The judgment awaits them, but it is the judgment-seat of Christ. Heaven awaits them, and he himself says it is "his Father's house," and that " the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters." It is he who will there " make them kings and priests unto

God, even his Father;" and there their song shall be " unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood!" From first to last, Christ is as pre-eminent in the Christian's religious experience as in the theory of Christianity. The Christian needs no other, he has no other, he desires no other than Christ.

This, then, is the thought which we place at the head of our observations on the glory of Christ. God is not more omnipresent, than the presence of Christ fills the sacred volume. He himself is its author. Prophets were sent by him; apostles were his amanuenses. His light shines on every page; it envelops us whenever we take the Bible into our hands. We live in this illumined atmosphere. It is not as though Christ were in heaven and we on the earth; or as though we were looking at the sun at a distance; or as though we were on the side of the globe on which it does not shine. The mind is not less distant from the body than Christ from the Bible. He is the mind, the very soul of the book itself. He enriches it, he adorns it. He has great and glorious designs to accomplish by it; and not only are they here unfolded, but they comprise all the designs of the divine mind in relation to the restoration of fallen man. It is the instrument of good only as it speaks of him. He spoke in the prophets, uttered the law, and now speaks in the Gospel. He is the cause, and these ample and varied revelations are the effect. There are some striking instances of his glory on which we propose to dwell in the following pages; but his glory shines throughout these divine communications, even though its rays sometimes fall obliquely. His light fills it with truth; his grace and mercy give birth to all the hopes, and his promises form the clue to all the prospects it reveals. His fulness makes it so full of God. Men may not see that the Bible is so full of Christ, yet he is there; they may not believe that it is so full of Christ, yet he is there; they may deny that it is so full of Christ, yet he is there. All their efforts to exclude him are of no avail. It was to reveal Christ that this revelation was given. It is impossible to get at a distance from Christ, so long as we have any true intimacy with the Scriptures. If we go up to heaven he is there; or if we make our bed in hell he is there. And if these things are so, what shall he said of those who instead of giving Christ the prominent place in their preaching indulge themselves in the speculations of philosophy, the researches of science and the obligations of an unbaptized morality? This age of progress vainly flatters itself that it is in advance of the Bible. If we give credence, not merely to modern lecturers, but to the teachings of not a few modern pulpits; we must believe that this apostate world is to be regenerated by other means than the simple gospel of Christ. There is a marvellous falling off from primitive Christianity, in the days in which we live. It is not the object of the writer to rebuke this fault so much as to recall to his own thoughts and the thoughts of others the pre-eminence of his Divine Lord and Master, as the great subject of God's revelation. O that those of us who are preachers of the gospel, instead of thirsting so much for the applause of men, would more steadily seek the honor that cometh from God only! Which of the apostles throws Christ into the shade, or keeps him in the background? Lost men need nothing so much as the knowledge of Christ. It must surely be of great practical importance for the teachers of religion, to seize hold of the sum and substance of this book of God. And what is the Bible to a lost world, without Christ? What concern have men in these rich and varied revelations more than in any volume of sage counsels, if they are denuded of those truths which constitute its excellence and glory? I cannot find that Christ is ever lost sight of in the Bible. The man who would understand the gospel and preach it intelligibly, must carry Christ along with him into the pulpit. He must habitually carry Christ in his mind and heart. Christ must be near him, or his preaching will have very little meaning. That system of theological opinions which has the most of Christ is the true system; that which has the

least is the most erroneous; that which has none is heresy, infidelity, atheism. Do not call us bigots because we war with Antichrist. Be its form however specious, and what it may, we would hold fellowship with our Divine Master; we seek no fellowship with those who have no communion with him. To be indifferent to all religious opinions, when Christ himself is the way, the truth, the life, is not the chantey that "rejoiceth in the truth." True piety has but one author, and that is Christ. It has but one instrumentality — the truth of Christ; one aim and end — the glory of Christ; one image and superscription — Christ himself. We see that Christ takes complete possession of the Bible: so must he take complete possession of the pulpit. Error must not exclude him. Sin must not make this his rightful abode unwelcome. It is his own: the palace in which he loves to dwell. Self-righteousness must not divide the throne with him. The world must not crowd him out; its wealth, its honors, its learning, its science, must not jostle him out of his place, nor rudely repulse him from his own domains. Though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and know not Christ, I am nothing. The world by wisdom knows not God. We glory in the progressive career of human thought. Man was formed for it. We fear no researches that terminate in Christ. Penetrate the labyrinth ever so far, only let it be with the torch of truth, and for holy ends! Let the speculations of philosophers be imbued with the love of Christ! Let the learning of the wise be redolent with his spirit, their most enduring memorials be baptized in the name of Jesus, and their triumphs be his! And then, whether they lead, or whether they follow in the race, the echo of their footsteps falls upon the ear with a sacredness that nothing can inspire but holy ground. When poetry sings, only let it be of Christian themes, and in the spirit of Christ. When fancy plays, let it be around the cross; and when she weaves her garlands let them be to be suspended there. O that the tendencies of human thought, in this our age, were more toward the "simplicity that is in Christ." Beautiful simplicity, and still more beautiful Saviour! Give us, adorable Redeemer, more of thy image, and we shall possess a treasure, which does not become dim like the gold of earth; a beauty that will sparkle with radiance when all that is earthly shall have passed away. Nor may we close this first chapter without asking our readers, "What think ye of Christ?" What is Christ to you? What is he to you, as a child of apostate Adam, as a sinner against God, and condemned by his holy law? What is he to you as one born for immortality, and hasting to his judgment-seat? Do you love him? Do you believe in him? Have you found pardon and peace in his precious blood, and has this blessed hope shed its purifying, gladdening, comforting light and influence over your soul? Do you live to him, and are you among those who wait for his appearing? If the Lord Jesus be not the object of your love and confidence, and if you rest not your eternal hopes on him alone, then are you weighed in the balance and found wanting. Christianity differs from everything else. To be a Christian, Christ must be seen, loved, confided in, and obeyed. There must be abiding convictions of his excellence. Nothing fills the soul with such delightful emotions, as those with which the true Christian contemplates his Saviour. Men are sadly mistaken who expect to find religion out of Christ. An exemplary deism is not Christianity; neither are moral virtues Christian graces. Men may be humane, generous, kind, without being Christians. Truth, justice, honesty, honor in our intercourse with the world, are not love and confidence toward Christ. If he holds this conspicuous place in the Bible, true piety must consist in right affections toward Him. Men have more to do with Christ, and he has more to do with them, than they have to do with one another. It is as irrational and absurd, therefore, as it is unchristian, to place religion in virtues which have no regard to Christ. It is proof of great moral blindness, and great ignorance of the Scriptures, when men satisfy themselves with a religion that has little or nothing to do with Christ. Our obligations to Christ stand

first; there is no other obligation that can come in competition with his prior and everlasting claims. Should these thoughts disturb you, we can only say, repair to that Saviour without delay. Bring this great question to an issue by "receiving Christ Jesus the Lord." Rest not satisfied to be numbered with his enemies, and to sink forever under his appalling frown. And be entreated not to wait for a more convenient season. Ask the dying sinner what makes him tremble and weep; and he will tell you that he once resolved to repent and believe the gospel, but he waited to a more convenient season. Ask tens of thousands of the lost in hell why they weep, and wail, and gnash their teeth; and they will tell you they were once startled by a view of their sin and danger, but they delayed to escape the coming wrath to a more convenient season. Away with this madness! The heart of Jesus is as full of mercy as the Bible is full of Jesus. Stretch your thoughts as far as you will, and you cannot conceive the fulness of his love. You have never yet learned what a Saviour he is who died on the cross, and now lives and reigns. O dismiss these doubts, and abjure the spirit of delay. Break this spell of the fowler. Let the breath of prayer sweep these refuges of his away, and come now to that Saviour who filleth all in all.

02 — Christ's Divine Nature

Chapter 2 THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S DIVINE NATURE.

Dr. Priestly, the celebrated materialist and Unitarian, has remarked, that " the value of the gospel does not, in any degree, depend upon the idea which we may entertain concerning the Person of Christ, because all that is truly interesting to us is the object of his mission, and the authority with which his doctrine is promulgated." At what a great remove is this subtle remark from the whole scope and design of the sacred writings; from their special teaching on this very joint. As we have already seen, there is no topic of which they treat more largely than the Person of Christ; none on which they speak with deeper interest, and none of which they take more pains to present just conceptions. Our theme is his great glory. Our starting point is indeed far above us; it is a lofty eminence; but it is the only point of vision from which we hope to see him even " in part." The Scriptural views of the glory of Christ recognize his TRUE AND PROPER EQUALITY WITH GOD. If it is important to know anything concerning him, it is surely of importance to know whether he is God, or a mere creature. The difference is infinite. To assist us in deciding this question, I propose in the present chapter to institute the inquiry. What are the appropriate and peculiar excellencies of the Deity; to show that the same excellencies are ascribed by the sacred writers to Jesus Christ; and that he is therefore truly and properly God. Our first object is to institute the inquiry:

What are the appropriate and peculiar excellencies and claims of the Deity?

There is no uncertainty in human language when it speaks of this great theme. The first and most prominent thought, connected with the great word God, is that he possesses existence which is underived and eternal. This is what natural and revealed religion mean by God. The idea of an eternal, independent Being is the most exalted conception the human mind can receive of the all perfect Deity. He is one who exists prior to every other being, and derives his existence from no other. He is self-existent, and has the principle of life in himself. This is the conception which the eternal Deity has of his own existence, and which he has revealed to men in the Scriptures. When he revealed his name to Moses, his words were, " I am that I am; that is my name. Say unto Pharaoh, I AM hath sent me unto you." The peculiar and distinguishing name of this uncaused and eternal deity is Jehovah and it is specially expressive of the majesty and glory of his underived existence. To this eternal being the Scriptures also ascribe infinite greatness and goodness. They represent him as immutable and as the being " with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." They speak of him as omnipotent, as " the mighty God," and the " Lord God omnipotent;" as omniscient, as the one who " knoweth all things," and " looketh on the heart;" and explicitly affirm that he, even he only knows the hearts of all the children of men;" as omnipresent, " Behold the heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee;" " Do I not fill heaven and earth?" They clothe him, too, with the robes of supremacy, and declare that " Dominion is with him;" that he is " the King of kings and the Lord of lords;" that his "is the glory," and that "his glory shall endure forever."

Reason and the Scriptures also ascribe to him great and glorious works. They affirm that he has done, is doing, and will yet perform deeds which are done by no other being in the universe. They recognize him as the Creator of all things; as having "stretched forth the heavens alone, and spread abroad the earth by himself. They speak of him as the great Preserver, and say " that the heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hosts, the earth and all things that are therein, he preserveth them all." Him, too, they represent as the Redeemer. The whole work of redemption, from beginning to end, is spoken of as peculiar to God. " The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord." "I, even I, am Jehovah, and besides me there is no Saviour." And as the work of redemption in general is ascribed to God, so is each particular part of it. The work of atonement is attributed to him. " Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; wherefore, glorify God in your bodies and spirits, which are God's;" " the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood." Regeneration is attributed to him. " Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Justification is attributed to him. " It is God that justifieth." The resurrection of the dead is also declared to be his peculiar work. " Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? God will raise up us by his own power." Judging the world is also the sole prerogative of God. "The Lord shall judge the ends of the earth." " The heavens shall declare his righteousness, for God is Judge himself." The destruction of this material universe at the consummation of all things, is likewise spoken of as the peculiar work of God. " As a vesture shalt thou fold them, and they shall be changed;" so also the final glory of the righteous and the final perdition of the wicked are declared to be the act of God. The Scriptures also enjoin duties which all are bound to perform toward God and God only. All creatures are under the strongest obligations to obey him. They are to love him with all their hearts, and to trust and confide in him. Nor are they allowed to place their supreme confidence in any other; " Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his aim." They are required to worship him, and him alone. It is written, " Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." This is the Scriptural description of that Being whom the Bible calls God; such are some of the peculiar properties and claims which belong inalienably to the God of the universe. He is just such a Being as this — infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. They are not the property of any mere manifestation but of a Being. Nor are they the properties of man nor angel, nor any created being in the universe: they belong to Deity. Reason ascribes them to him: the Bible ascribes them to him, and gives him this high honor. It is thus angels and the spirits of the just honor him; thus that holy men on his footstool honor him; and thus he will be honored by the services and the song of an ever-growing eternity. We repeat the thought, therefore, that the great Being who is this and does this is truly God.

We are then now prepared to show that:

All these properties, and deeds, and claims are affirmed in the Bible to belong to Jesus Christ.

There are some comprehensive declarations on this subject, that are not to be overlooked. We are told that " all men and angels " should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." If they honor the Father as God, even so should they honor the Son as God, because he has all the properties and claims of God. They shall treat him as God for the same reasons that require them to treat the Father as God. Whatever of religious veneration, whatever of honor in any form, is given, or is due to the Father, the same is due to the Son. " All things" saith the Son, " that the Father hath are mine," — and what is so properly God's as his divinity? His existence is my existence; his

perfections are my perfections; his Works are my works; the allegiance and the service that are due to him, are mine; our natures are equal and our glory one. But it is important to substantiate this position; and therefore we remark, in the first place. The eternal existence of the Father is declared in the Scriptures to belong to the Son. "Eternity", that great and emphatic property of the Deity, is expressly ascribed to him. Speaking of himself, he says, " I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I am the First and the Last. Before Abraham was, I AM." The Prophet Micah, predicting the birth of Christ, proclaims, " Out of Bethlehem, in Judah, shall he come forth who shall be a ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting." There is a declaration of still more unequivocal and decisive import, and one in which the Saviour explicitly affirms that he possesses the wondrous principle of self-existence in his own eternal nature. " For as the Father hath life in himself so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." This is the great and special attribute of the Deity; it is his gift, it belongs to his nature; and the Son possesses it in common with the Father. It equally belongs to both their natures to possess this principle of self-existence. He existed from eternity; the Father's eternity is his eternity; he inhabits it: it is his appropriate residence, his own eternity. What an avowal is this from him who was despised and rejected of men! It is no marvel that the Jews accused him of " making himself equal with God." Nor is the force of this declaration at all diminished by the phraseology, "so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." Literally understood, for the Father to give self-existence to the Son would be a palpable absurdity, because it would imply a dependent existence. The true meaning is that the Son is a partaker, a sharer in his Father's eternity. Christ borrows his existence, not from another: it is not a stream from another source; the fountain of it is in himself. He, like the Father, is the uncreated one; nor is it possible for us to conceive, if he were a mere creature, though the highest of creatures, that he " could have life in himself"

Then, in the second place, all other properties which are peculiar to the Deity, are ascribed to Christ. The same names and titles that belong to the Father are given to the Son. He is called Lord by the Father himself " The Lord said unto my Lord sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." In the vision which the Prophet Isaiah had of Christ, he says, " I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple." The angels, after his resurrection, say of him, " Come see the place where the Lord lay." Very frequently, indeed, this divine name is applied to Jesus Christ, both in the Old and New Testaments; the Saviour, even in his lowly humiliation, more than once thus applies it. Jesus Christ receives this name and title of the Deity in an acceptation altogether different from that in which it is applied to any human superior or prince. He is styled " The Lord of glory" and the " The Lord from heaven:" and " King of kings" and " Lord of lords" In a multitude of passages, also, the Son is called God. Isaiah says, " For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the mighty God." Even Dr. Priestly consents to regard this passage as " evidently referring to the Messiah." In the forty-fifth Psalm, which Jews and Christians regard as addressed to the Messiah, the writer addresses him in the following exalted strain: " Thy throne, O God is forever and ever." And in the epistle to the Hebrews the validity of this application is confirmed beyond a doubt. " But unto the Son he saith. Thy throne, O God is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Socinians have affirmed that this passage admits of a different translation, and will bear to be rendered, " But to the Son he saith, God is thy throne forever and ever;" but there is no grammatical reason for this rendering, and the argument of the apostle forbids it. And why should we, by a harsh and repugnant metaphor, thus make the eternal majesty the throne of a mere

creature? John, speaking of Christ, says, " And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ; this is the true God and eternal life." Paul says, " By whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever." " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word is obviously a person, and not an attribute. The attributes of God are nowhere personified by the writers of the New Testament. The Word is also here said to have " become flesh and dwelt among us." And who was this, but Jesus Christ? Thomas also said to Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, "My Lord, and my God!" and Paul says to Timothy, " I adjure you before God, even Jesus Christ."

There are several passages in which the Son is also called Jehovah. The prophet Isaiah, in the vision just now referred to, in which he saw the glory of Christ, says, "Mine eyes have seen the king, Jehovah of hosts." The same prophet, speaking of the forerunner and herald of the Messiah, says, "Prepare for the way of Jehovah; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." " Behold, the Lord Jehovah will come with a strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom." " Surely shall one say. In Jehovah have I righteousness and strength; in Jehovah shall all the seed of Israel be justified and shall glory." "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper. In his days, Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; and this is the name whereby he shall be called, Jehovah our righteousness." By the general consent of Jewish and Christian interpreters, this and a subsequent passage which is parallel to it in the same prophecy, designate the Redeemer. In the prophecy of Zechariah, where the converted Jews are represented as looking to the Messiah with hope and repentance, Jehovah is introduced as saying, " They shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and in John there is a reference to this passage, in which he applies it immediately to Christ as he was hanging on the cross. Another Scripture saith, " They shall look on him whom they have pierced." The Father addresses the Son in the following language: " And thou, Jehovah in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth." In all these passages, the original Hebrew word is Jehovah. The Scriptures also ascribe the same nature and attributes to Christ which they ascribe to God. Immutability is ascribed to him. In the one hundred and second Psalm, there is a strong and beautiful description of the immutability of God: " Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them and they shall be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end." The author of the epistle to the Hebrews applies this description directly to Christ. " But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Thou, Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundations of the earth;" and then he repeats the whole of this passage from the Psalms which has just been recited. The writer of the same epistle elsewhere says, " Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever." Omnipotence is also ascribed to Christ: " His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God." Christ himself says, " I am Alpha and Omega, — the Almighty." Omniscience is ascribed to him: " His disciples said to him, "Now we are sure that thou knowest all things Peter said to him, "Lord, thou knowest all things. Our Lord himself says, "And all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and the heart." The most emphatic passage asserting his omniscience, if we mistake not, is in the following words: "All things are delivered to me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save

the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." This and the exegetical passages are remarkable declarations. It teaches us that such is the incomprehensibility of the Redeemer's nature that it cannot be known by finite minds, while he himself knows the infinite. "None knoweth the Son but the Father;" such is his nature that the knowledge of him is too high an attainment for creatures, and is possessed by the Father alone. God only knows himself. He is the sun which no mortal eye can look at; a deep where all created thoughts are drowned; a plenitude which none but the infinite mind can fill. The Bible has nothing to propose to our belief more adorable, more sublime, or wonderful, than the fulness of God. Eternity alone can develop it; nor will the development ever be completed. It must be seen with the eyes, and known by the intelligence of the infinite mind. The deeper we search into this unfathomable depth, the deeper we find it. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son." Creatures do not know him, cannot comprehend him: He surpasses all comprehension but that of the Son. "O righteous Father!" says he, "the world hath not known thee; but I have known thee." "As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father." No one knoweth who the Son is, except the Father; and who the Father is, except the Son." The Father's knowledge of the Son, and the Son's knowledge of the Father, are reciprocal. It requires omniscience to comprehend either. Their knowledge is equal, having the same extent and plenitude. It differs from our notions of perception, association, and intelligence; yet this mode and extent of knowledge, and in relation to the most incomprehensible theme, belong to the Son. Creatures know God but in part. The Son comprehends the entire nature of the Deity; and this is one of the indications of his unaided wisdom, of that "light of light," which beholds the Deity without a veil and without a cloud; which is co-eternal with the all comprehending mind, and which in time, dignity, and perfection, is equal to the incomprehensible God.

We have remarked that the Scriptures predicate great and glorious works of the true God: they ascribe the same works to Jesus Christ. He is declared to be the Creator of all things. The Apostle John declares that "all things were made by him, and without him there was not anything made that was made." All things were made by him — the universe, worlds material and immaterial, were the product of his power. "Unto the Son he saith. And thou Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth and the heavens are the work of thy hands." Paul says to the Corinthians, "To us there is one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things." And to the Colossians, speaking expressly of Christ, he says, "Who is the image of the Invisible God, the first begotten before all creatures; for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." In the epistle to the Hebrews, it is said, "By him God created the world:" Unitarians have deduced the inference from this passage, that Christ was the mere instrumental cause by which God produced the creation; and that this passage is the key to the true meaning of all those texts which speak of the Son as the Creator. But is it a questionable fact that God himself is the Creator? Do not the Scriptures affirm, that "God himself formed the earth and made it," that he alone "and not by other hands, spread out the heavens?" With equal clearness is the Son represented as the Preserver of all things. "By him, all things consist." Of him who is "the brightness of the Father's glory" it is said, "upholding all things by the word of his power." And surely, it is needless to show that the work of Redemption is everywhere attributed to the Son. "His name is Jesus because he saves his people from their sins." He is the "Captain of our salvation." He is the "Prince and

Saviour." It is expressly declared, " there is salvation in no other." And as the work of Redemption generally is attributed to Christ, so is each particular part of it. It is he who made the great atonement, and who " was set forth to be the Propitiation." He too is the author of Regeneration. " No man knoweth the Father, but he to whom the Son will reveal Him " Other sheep I have, them also I must bring." He also is said to " sanctify the Church, and cleanse it with the washing of water." Christ is also declared to be the Justifier: he said of himself, " The Son also hath power on earth to forgive sins." When his enemies once murmured, because he exercised this power before their eyes, he wrought a miracle to justify himself, and to prove to them that this prerogative of the Deity belonged to him, as well as to the Father. In the Prophets it is also written, " By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many." The Redeemed before the throne, also speak of him as " having washed their sins in his own blood." And it is moreover explicitly declared, that " he is the author of eternal life to all that obey him."

It is he also who raises the dead. "As the Father raiseth the dead, and quickeneth them, so the Son quickeneth whom he will." " The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God and come forth."

He also shall judge the world. " The Son of man shall come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory," and "before him shall be gathered all nations." " We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ? "The Lord Jesus shall judge the quick and the dead, at his appearing and his kingdom." Before him all the tribes of the earth shall stand; patriarchs and prophets, apostles and martyrs, kings and potentates of the earth, and of the universe, fallen and unfallen angels shall bow before his judgment-seat, as the absolute disposer of life and death, as the everlasting rewarder, the immortal king of ages, the sovereign Lord of men and angels, the supreme Judge of every intelligent creature.

It belongs to him also to destroy the world. " As a vesture the Son shall fold up the heavens, and they shall be changed." " His voice once shook the earth, but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven; and this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken." Such are the high prerogatives of the Son, as the Creator, the Preserver, the Governor, the Redeemer, the Judge, and the final Rewarder. " Whatsoever the Father doeth, those things doth the Son likewise."

We remark, in the next place, that the same claims that are insisted on by God and the same duties which all owe to him, are also due to the Son. This will not be doubted by any believer in the sacred Scriptures. The supreme love of every intelligent being belongs to the Son. " He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me." " If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be anathema, maranatha." The supreme confidence and trust of the soul are also due to him. While the God of heaven has denounced a woe on the man who puts his trust in any other than the Deity, he invites and urges all to trust in Christ. " In his name shall the Gentiles trust." " Blessed are all they that put their trust in him." " Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Nor is the duty of worshiping the Son less binding than that of worshiping the Father. When the Father "bringeth the first begotten into the world, he saith. Let all the angels of God worship him!" The early Christians, we are told by the sacred historian, habitually " called on Christ's name," that is, worshiped him. Stephen kneeled down, and said, " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." The disciples, after he had ascended to heaven before their eyes, " worshiped him and returned to

Jerusalem." Nor is this the employment merely of the church on earth. The voice of many angels round the throne, and the living creatures and the elders, and the number of them is ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, all unite in the inscription, " Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive blessing, and honor, and thanksgiving, and glory!" Nor are these mere acts of civil respect, and not of religious worship, as Unitarians would fain have us believe. They are greater honors than can possibly be due from one creature to another. The most exalted angel can, with no more propriety, require such homage than the meanest reptile. And yet heaven and earth pay this homage to Christ. No honor which men or angels pay to God may be withheld from Christ, We can conceive of no tribute of respect to the Father which does not belong to the Son. Those garments of light and beauty which deck the divine nature are his; those royal splendors which surround the eternal throne belong to him. All belong to that distinguished personage, whom the Scriptures call the Son of God. They belong to him essentially; they belong to him eternally. The time never existed when he did not possess them, and the time never will exist when he will not possess them. The essential glory and properties of the Father and the Son are the same. To show more distinctly the bearing of this illustration, we proceed in the next place to draw the chords of our argument together, and to prove: That from this ascription of the prerogatives of the deity to Jesus Christ, the inference cannot be avoided that he is truly and properly God. This is perhaps too obvious a proposition to require proof; yet we will venture to say, in regard to it, that the following thoughts deserve consideration. In the first place, the question very naturally suggests itself, Do the Scriptures ascribe the same prerogatives to a mere creature which they ascribe to God? By whatever excellency of nature or dignity of station any mere creature may be distinguished, he falls infinitely below the Eternal Creator. There is an immeasurable distance between all creatures and the ever-living God. A beggar is a creature, and so is a king. Both are of the dust; both must lie down alike, and the worms cover them. Both are born in sin, and responsible to the bar of Eternal Justice. A worm is a creature, and an angel is a creature, as truly as the worm. The one soars and burns in its created splendor in heaven; the other grovels on the earth. God made them both, and in this they are alike. Yet is the distance measurable between the loftiest seraph, and the meanest worm. But who shall measure the line of difference between the seraph and the Creator? " Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the winds in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"

If uncreated, then is he the independent, eternal First Cause, and therefore God. If a creature, then do the Scriptures ascribe to him the same existence, properties, claims, and honors — the same in kind, the same in variety, the same in degree — which they ascribe to the great Creator. Will any man seriously affirm, that a revelation that comes from God, does in sober verity, justify and demand the ascription of equal honors to a mere creature, with those which belong to the living and true God? Do they affirm that any mere creature is self-existent, and from everlasting to everlasting? Do they appropriate the characteristic names and titles of the Supreme God to a mere creature? Can any mere creature be said to be the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace, the Blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords, the great I AM, the wonderful Jehovah? Would the Scriptures attribute the same attributes to a mere creature, that are ascribed to the Creator? Can a mere creature be said to be immutable, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, and eternal? If the Son himself existed before anything was created, how can he be a creature? Would the Scriptures ascribe the same words to a mere creature, which in a multitude

of places they ascribe exclusively to God? Can any mere creature be the Creator, the Preserver, the Governor, the Redeemer, the Justifier, the Judge, the Rewarder, the Disposer of angels and men? And finally, can the Scriptures consistently require the same duties to be paid to a mere creature, that they demand for God the Creator? Is it right in itself or is it consistent with the law of God, that the same love and confidence, the same worship and obedience, enforced by the same rewards and penalties, should be challenged for a creature, that are required only for the Lord God?

If there is a Supreme Being, one who is so much superior to creatures, that they are all as a drop of a bucket before him; it is reasonable to suppose that there are honors by which he is exclusively distinguished. And if a mere creature, a being no matter how exalted, yet infinitely inferior to the Creator, is distinguished by the uncaused existence, the names, attributes, and works of the Deity; by the love, confidence, and worship that are due to him; what then are the distinctions of the Supreme, unequaled God? And if, as we have seen, all these are attributed to the Son, is not the inference irresistible, that he is no mere creature, but "very God of very God." In the second place, if the Son be not truly and properly God, then do the Scriptures furnish the strongest temptation to idolatry. They not only justify, but require the same honors to be given to the Son, that are given to the Father; and require them as the reverence and homage which are due from all intelligent creatures to their Creator. An idolater is one who worships the creature instead of the Creator; and if Christ be not God, this is gross idolatry. To this sin of idolatry, be it remembered, men are peculiarly exposed; in every age of the world they have exhibited a strong and almost invincible propensity to worship them that are no gods. Hence, no sin is more frequently, or more severely reprobated in the word of God. The God of heaven has done more to discountenance and condemn this sin, than any other single sin of man. In his law he says, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me, there shall no strange god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange god." And his providence enforces the precepts and prohibitions of his law. By all his kindness to the children of Israel in the wilderness he taught them, that "the Lord alone was with them, and there was no strange god with them." And when he saw their exposures to this sin, very often did he remove the sources of temptation from before their eyes. When they became mad upon their idols, and would not abjure the worship of false gods, he desolated their city, prostrated their Temple, and carried them away into captivity to a pagan land, where they became surfeited with the idols of Babylon and cured of their idolatrous spirit. And when he commissioned the gospel of his grace to be published to the pagan nations, it was to "turn them from idols, to serve the Living God." And hence Cornelius refused to receive any act of religious worship from the Centurion; and Paul and Barnabas refused it from the Lycaonians; and the angel in the Apocalypse refused it from John. Whence is it then, that this book of God should so universally sanction the divine claims and this worship of Christ, if he be not God? The great Founder of our religion uniformly accepted and approved the worship paid to him. When the Cyrophenician woman worshiped him; when the two blind men worshiped him; when his disciples on the lake, and after his ascension, worshiped him; when Paul and the martyr Stephen worshiped him; they were not reproached as idolaters. Nor are those his heavenly worshipers, whose number is "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands," reproached for their idolatry, who cast their crowns at the feet of the Lamb and worship him day and night in the eternal temple. If he be not God, then has Christianity established a system of idolatry, unspeakably more dangerous and plausible, than that which it

came to destroy. If he be not God, then has the whole Christian Church been an idolatrous community from its establishment to the present hour. Then has the God of heaven, notwithstanding his promise and prediction that under the reign of the Messiah his people should worship him in spirit and in truth left his Church for eighteen centuries to this most dark apostasy. Then was the religion of the gospel unknown and unpracticed until the days of Arius and Socinus, and these men stand out to the world as the rare examples of Christian piety! Nor are we slow of heart to believe, nor doubtful to assert, that if the worship of Jesus Christ be apostasy, it is an apostasy from which the Church will with difficulty be recovered. So far from condemning, the Bible justifies it, demands it. I know not how it could furnish stronger temptations to idolatry than in the worship it allows to Jesus Christ, if he be not God. If the writers of the New Testament did not intend to exalt their Master to an equality with God, and give him divine honors without restriction, and of the highest kind; then can I form no other judgment than that the language of the Bible was framed to deceive. I remark, In the third place, the account which the Scriptures give of the honors ascribed to the Father and the Son is utterly inconsistent with itself and perfectly contradictory and absurd unless the Son be truly and properly God. If we concede to the Bible what we concede to the productions of mere uninspired men, we must believe it to be consistent with itself. No interpretation should be admitted which makes the Holy Spirit contradict himself, and renders what he says in one place at variance with what he says in another. This is a principle of interpretation so important, that we may never consider ourselves as possessed of the true meaning of any passage, until we have given it a construction that is not inconsistent with other passages, and with the general scope and design of the sacred writings. It is a rule of interpretation among men never to vitiate an instrument for any apparent inconsistencies; and it is founded in sound sense and moral honesty. And much less ought we feel at liberty to set aside the sacred record, if there be any possible construction that will make it consistent with itself

Now in relation to the character of Christ, we are free to confess there are some apparent incongruities in the Bible. This book informs us that there is but one Being whose name is Jehovah: yet they attribute this name to the Father and the Son. It informs us that there is but one Being who is eternal, immutable, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent; yet they affirm that these perfections belong to the Father and the Son. It informs us that there is but one Being who is the Creator, Preserver, Governor, Redeemer and Judge of men; yet they declare that the appropriate work of each belongs both to the Father and the Son. It informs us that there is but one Being to whom are due supreme love, unreserved confidence and worship, and to whom these high and peculiar honors are ascribed; yet it affirms that "all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." The Scriptures also speak of the Son in language that is apparently incongruous and inconsistent with itself. At one time they speak of him as God at another as man. At one time they speak of him as the Son of God at another as the Son of man. In the same sentence they say, "Unto us a child is born, and his name shall be called the mighty God." They say that he was born in Bethlehem, and that his goings forth were from of old from everlasting. They say that he is both the Root and the offspring of David. And he himself says, "I and my Father are one;" and also says, "My Father is greater than I".

Now here are apparent inconsistencies; and they either vitiate the divine record, else is there some principle of fair and honest and sound interpretation on which they can be reconciled. It is conceded that they do not vitiate the divine record; all agree that it is the word of God and

consistent with itself. And with this concession, we call on Arians and Socinians, and Unitarians of every class, to reconcile them. The whole history of the Unitarian controversy, from the days of Faustus Socinus to the present hour, shows with how much diffidence they have attempted it; so much that they have not even attempted it at all; and for the best of all reasons. The inconsistencies must stand, and deface, and pollute the revelation of God to man, unless it be conceded that in the scriptural descriptions of Christ, there is a union of supremacy and inferiority, and that he is there exhibited in the two opposite characters of humanity and Deity. This principle adopted, and no part of the sacred record is rejected. Here we see that Jesus Christ is God as well as man; that he was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh and declared to be the Son of God with power; that as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever; and that being in the form of God he thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. There we learn that great is the mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh. But without this mystery, there is no consistency in the Bible. In the Bible I hear the God of heaven say, "I am the Lord that stretcheth forth the heavens alone that spreadeth abroad the heavens by myself; and at the same time I hear him say, that "all things were made by the Word" and that the "Word was made flesh." Which of these declarations is true, and which shall I adopt? To this we reply, you may not reject either of them. One deserves your confidence as really as the other. If there is a principle of reconciliation and harmony between them, you are bound to adopt it. Take the strong declaration of Christ, "I and my Father are one," and compare it with the declaration, "My Father is greater than I." We affirm, that if there is a ground on which both these declarations may be consistently believed, since both are supported by the same evidence; on every consideration of fairness and candor, this is the ground we ought to stand upon. There is one such principle, and only one. With the humanity, admit the divinity of the Son, and with his essential equality with God, admit his mediatorial and official subjection, and the representations are harmonious. It certainly requires little argument and no sophistry to reconcile all such representations with the true and orthodox notion of the deity of Christ. Reject this truth, and the Bible is a mass of contradictions. These seeming inconsistencies become absolute and irreconcilable; the way of life, no longer plain to the wayfaring man, becomes a dark, impervious way. I may add, In the fourth place, that if Christ is not God, there is no proof from the Scriptures that there is any God at all. The Scriptures assert the being of a God; they assume it as one of the great truths of natural religion. But they do not simply assert this truth; they prove the divine existence by referring to his works. They tell you that the act of bringing this world into existence; of establishing the harmony and design which pervade all the operations of nature, and of preserving and governing all things, furnishes incontestable proof that the being who performs these things is God. This then is the evidence on which the Scriptures rely, and on which they say all ought to rely, for the existence of God. But we have proved, that he who created, upholds, and governs this world, is Jesus Christ. And if any will still say, that he who does this is not truly and properly God; we ask them to show us the evidence they have of the divine existence. The Scriptures furnish the same evidence that Christ is God, which they furnish of the existence of any Supreme Deity. And the evidence is worth just as much in the one case as in the other. If it does not prove that Christ is God, it does not prove the existence of any God whatever. What do we mean by that great word GOD? Do we not mean the intelligent, eternal First Cause, who has created, and upholds, and governs all things? Is not this the notion the Bible gives us of the One who is really and truly God? This is what God means by

himself; and what he has proclaimed himself to be. Yet these same Scriptures say, that that Great Personage whom they call the Son is all this. They speak of him in the same language, in the same acceptation. If we have any ideas of God at all, the Scriptures require us to transfer them all to Jesus Christ. What shall that Great Being, the Supreme God, he and perform in order to prove his existence and justify his claims; if they be not such as we have spoken of? Yet all these are attributed to Christ. And if any still say Christ is not God, we call upon them to prove from the Bible that there is a God. Are not these rash violators of the Redeemer's glory in danger of becoming Pantheists or Atheists? This is the tendency of some late German and American disquisitions. Everything is God! God is in the clouds; God is in the atmosphere; God is in the wind, and in the green grass, and in the cup of water which I drink, just as God is in Christ! Miserable sophistry! miserable paganism! worse than disgraces the pages of Roman and Grecian mythology! And is it not a fact, that such men are fast becoming so? Most true is it that they are far on the way to Atheism. If the Son be not God, then the Bible knows no God; with all its moral instructions, all its paternal counsels, and tenderness, it actually leaves us " without God and without hope."

Thus have we instituted the inquiry. What are the appropriate and peculiar properties of the Deity; have shown that they are ascribed by the sacred writers to Jesus Christ; and that he is therefore truly and properly God. There are many other sources of argument and a multitude of Scriptures not mentioned in the argument here presented. But we have given as extensive a view of the subject as a single discussion allows.

We have only to say, in concluding the present chapter, that we see abundant and conclusive reasons for adhering to this fundamental article of the Christian faith. Pluck who dares, the diadem from his brow who hath on his vesture and on his thigh, a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords and on whose head are many crowns! The Christian must surely feel a heart-thrilling satisfaction in those bright marks of divine glory which beam round the Saviour on whom God hath caused him to hope. This is the great glory of our redeeming God and King, — the " brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person." His being is infinite; infinite his power; infinite his rectitude; infinite his knowledge; infinite his goodness, justice, and mercy. Everything that he is and does has the seal of divinity upon it. There is nothing we can contemplate so vast as the infinite glory of Christ. Here human reason, in humble and adoring silence, submits to the authority of a divine faith, nor does she presume to question God's word upon a subject so far above the reach of her comprehension. The rays of his infinite majesty dazzle and overpower us with their splendor. Glorified spirits in heaven fall prostrate, and lay their crowns at his feet, when they approach his throne. What glory greater than the glory of Christ belongs to God himself? O it is a delightful thought, that there is no perfection that adorns the Deity, but it is also the adornment of God our Saviour; no views of God so high and adoring, no sentiments that wake the soul to admiration and praise, as she surveys the richness and fulness of the divine loveliness and beauty, but may be appropriately excited in view of God manifest in the flesh. If there be those whose eyes are closed to this great glory, we may well remind them of the Saviour's words, when he rejoiced in spirit and said, " I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." The knowledge of the Redeemer's personal and divine glory has much to do with the believer's confidence. Strong and immovable is the basis of those hopes which have this divine Saviour for their foundation. It is the anchorage for eternity. What marvel that Paul

should say, " Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, sure and steadfast, entering into that which is within the veil, whither the forerunner hath for us entered." What marvel to hear him say elsewhere, " I know whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that I have committed to him I." There is no fact better attested, and no truth in the Christian system in which good men take more delight than the true and proper Deity of the Saviour in whom they trust. Veil the divinity of the Redeemer, and the Sun of righteousness sets in total eclipse. " Such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, separate from sinners, and was made higher than the heavens." To a thoughtless sinner, it may not be so important a question whether this Saviour be divine or human. But to a man who has seen his sinfulness and trembled at his exposure to the wrath of God; who has felt that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of unmitigated justice; who has been perplexed in spirit to ascertain how it could be right and just to extend forgiveness to the chief of sinners, and whose perplexity has well nigh sunk him into total despair of mercy; to such a man it is a point of unutterable moment to be directed to one infinitely above all created helpers. Never, till he knows that the Saviour who solicits his confidence is the mighty God, can he cast himself into his arms. No truth pours a purer or deeper element of joy through the countless bosoms of the redeemed, than the true and proper equality of the Son with the Father. Poor indeed are the consolations of that religion which blots out from its affections, its hopes, and its experience this unequaled glory! Blessed be God, his church is built on this imperishable, this eternal Rock, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it.

What, then, shall I say to those who have no interest in the love and faithfulness, the deity and propitiation of this Son of God? What but repeat his own all-sufficient invitation, "Look unto me, and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth, for I am God and there is none else." He is the way in which all must walk who would enter in through the gates into the heavenly city. He is the truth which all must believe who would not come into condemnation. He is the life which all must attain who possess the great salvation; for there is no salvation in any other, neither is there any other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved. So that, at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess, that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

03 — In His Incarnation

Chapter 3 CHRIST GLORIOUS IN HIS INCARNATION

It is no denial of the true and proper divinity of the Son of God to speak of him as the Son of man. The great Personage, whose divine glory fills so wide a place in the system of revealed truth, became incarnate and dwelt among us, as a man with his fellow-men. That he had an existence previous to his incarnation is distinctly taught in the New Testament. His own language to the Jews was, " Verily I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of heaven is He which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world." This is a truth which his disciples themselves did not at once receive; nor did they ultimately receive it without caution. When he perceived that they " murmured" at it, he said to them, " Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before?" He subsequently commends them because " they believed that he came out from God." In order to confirm their faith in this great truth, he afterwards instructs them, if possible, in still plainer language, " I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world. Our object in the present chapter requires, in the first instance, a brief statement of the doctrine of Christ's incarnation. This we shall endeavor to make as plainly as we can, and divested of all technical phraseology.

Man is a complex being, consisting of a body and a soul; both which were alike necessary to constitute the humanity of Christ. It was not his divine and spiritual nature united to a body that is human that constituted him incarnate; this would have been a change from Deity to humanity. It would have been the Deity clothed in a corporeal form; the semblance of man, but not the reality. The human, in distinction from the divine and angelic natures, is human because it possesses a human soul as well as a human body. Christ's humanity consisted in his assumption of man's entire nature, and so uniting it with his divine nature, as to become both God and man. The divine nature became partaker of flesh and blood; human nature belonged to him as truly as the divine. God did not in any way alter his divine nature in order to become man; his divinity sustained no change; it was susceptible of none. Nor was it mixed or blended with his humanity, so as to form out of the two a compound nature which should be neither human nor divine. The natures were united, yet distinct; he was God, but became man, and he became man without ceasing to be God. He was more than human, yet was he human. His divine nature existed from eternity distinct from his human nature; his human nature never existed distinct from his divine nature. His human body and his human soul both subsisted in the Person of the Son of God. He brought the divine nature from heaven; his human nature was an assumed nature on earth; there were " two distinct natures and one person." This statement, if we mistake not, distinguishes the Scriptural doctrine of the Incarnation, not only from the fabled incarnations of Paganism, but from the erroneous views which have been given of it by different writers in different ages of the Christian Church." It is a simple and truthful statement that in Christ Jesus the divine and human natures were united, and that the same person is both God and man.

We proceed, in the next place, to the proof of this doctrine. The truth of the statement we have just made will at once occur to every careful reader of the Scriptures. We are aware there are those who will listen to no proof of such a statement, because, in their judgment, it involves an impossibility. We confess that it stands among the inexplicable facts revealed in the Scriptures; yet, inexplicable as it is, it is not among impossible things. If the union of matter with spirit in the person of every human being is not impossible, there is no impossibility nor absurdity in the union of the divine and human natures in the person of Christ. Heathen mythology favors the idea of gods incarnate, which it would scarcely have done had the thought been so preposterous as some philosophical infidels affirm. Ancient and modern pantheism are but an implied recognition of the reasonableness of the doctrine of the incarnation. If philosophers have seen nothing preposterous in the doctrine that God is the soul of the material universe, and the material universe the body of God; where is the absurdity of supposing that God was in Christ? The alleged impossibility of the incarnation arises from erroneous views of the doctrine of the incarnation itself. If the doctrine were that the divine nature was changed into the human, or was in any way altered by being united to the human; if it taught that God is not still a Spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth; it would be a preposterous doctrine. But if the doctrine be that though united to humanity, it is the divine nature still, in all its undiminished, unaltered glory; we see not why it should be charged with absurdity.

There were some early fore-shadowings of this incarnation of the Deity under the patriarchal, Mosaic, and prophetic ages. God appeared to Abraham in human form when he promised him Isaac, and when he renewed his promises to him in the person of the angel of the covenant. He appeared in the form of man to Jacob when the patriarch wrestled with him and prevailed. He appeared to Moses in the burning bush at Horeb. He appeared to Gideon, and announced himself as the deliverer of his trembling people; and to Daniel in the night visions, when "One like the Son of man" came to the Ancient of Days. These and other appearances of the Deity were, if I may so speak, the prefiguration, the commencement of that incarnation which was to be more real and sensible and permanent. The predictions of his incarnation are also abundant. So unequivocal are they, that the Jews were in expectation of that great event, and looked towards it as the great promise of the Old Testament. Christ was foretold as the "mighty God and everlasting Father;" as the one "whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting;" yet is he most distinctly foretold as "the seed of the woman," as "the desire of all nations," as the "Son of the Virgin;" as the "Prophet whom God would raise up to the Jews from among their brethren;" as the "light beheld by the people that walked in darkness;" as one who would "open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf, and cause the tongue of the dumb to sing;" and as one who was anointed to "preach the gospel to the poor," to "feed his flock like a shepherd," and to "sit as king upon God's holy hill of Zion." These, and other intimations like them, allude not only to a promised, but to an incarnate Saviour; and they prepared the Jewish mind, and prepare our own for the affecting narrative of the incarnation which is given by the evangelists. By adverting to this narrative, we learn that Christ's human nature commenced from his conception in the womb of the Virgin Mary. It was miraculous, and altogether beyond the laws of nature. It was the immediate creation of God himself, and by the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost. It was human, not because he descended from earthly parents, but from an earthly parent. There was a literal fulfillment of the promise which had respect to the "seed of the Woman." He was made of a woman and therefore of human descent and stock; commencing his being at the lowest point of human existence, and thus

clothing himself with flesh, bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh, who gave him birth. The narrative of these events is beautifully simple and touching. Four thousand years after the first apostasy, when the fulness of time for man's redemption was come, the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin whose name was Mary, for the purpose of announcing to her that she was the highly favored and blessed among women who was to become the mother of the long expected Messiah. The dignity to which she was thus destined was altogether unexpected to herself. She was troubled at the angel's word, "and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be." And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord shall give unto him the throne of his Father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end." To relieve her mind from all embarrassment, he also declared, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Mary no longer doubted the mystery, but meekly replied, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word!" She conceived, and in the fulness of time brought forth her son; Immanuel, God with us. And then it was that the angel of the Lord made the announcement to the shepherds of Bethlehem. "Behold I bring you glad tidings of great joy; for unto you is born a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord!" This child of Mary thus possessed the two essential ingredients of humanity — a human body and a human soul. The Father prepares, the Holy Ghost forms, and the Eternal Word assumes a human body. When he cometh into the world, he saith, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou then prepared me." To have assumed the angelic nature would not have accomplished the objects of his incarnation. "Verily he took not on him the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of Abraham." His body was like the body of other men. "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have." The shepherds of Bethlehem were told, that they should "find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger." He grew as other children grew, and by the same means of food, exercise and repose, increased in stature as they increase. The evidence is equally clear, that he possessed a rational, human soul. He not only increased in stature, "but in wisdom;" which he could not have done had not his intellectual nature been human; for the divine mind knows no advancement. So rapidly did he increase in wisdom, that at twelve years of age he was able to maintain successful argument with the teachers of the law in the temple; and such was the evidence of his intellectual progress, that his enemies exclaimed, "How knoweth this man letters?" Not less indicative of his humanity was his perfect dependence. He was dependent on his parents, and indebted to their watchfulness and love, and labors and bounty. He was dependent on divine providence, and looked to its daily supplies. He was a man of prayer, and this alone is proof that he was sensible of his dependence on God. He made the frank avowal, "I can do nothing of myself." So absolute was his dependence, that he could promise himself nothing but what his heavenly Father chose to give him from day to day.

He was also responsible to law in the broadest acceptance of the phrase. He felt and recognized his responsibility to human law, which he would not have done, had he not been human. "No law can bind any but those to whom it is given." Whatsoever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law. He was also responsible to the divine law, just as other men are. As God he was not thus subject, but was himself the lawgiver; as man he was God's creature, and owed him

allegiance. The law of God claimed his whole heart and service; he was bound to render it a perfect and sinless obedience. He was under no obligation to assume man's nature; but when he had voluntarily assumed it, he was necessarily "made under the law," and responsible to its claims. He was made under the law as a covenant of works; the law demanded perfect obedience from him as the condition of life, and without a perfect obedience he would neither have obtained heaven for himself nor for his followers. The law relinquished none of its claims on account of his dignity when he was once made under it, but in every view treated him as its subject. And what stronger expression of his humanity than this, as well as of the glory of that humanity, that he himself gloried in this responsibility, and honored its claims in such redundant plenitude. The scriptural doctrine of the incarnation goes the whole length of this statement, and teaches that the Son of God thus assumed all the proper ties of humanity, and was the "seed of Abraham," the "Shiloh of Jacob," the "offspring of Jesse," the "Son of man." With this statement and proof of the humanity of Christ, we proceed, in the last place, to speak of his glory in this incarnation. How glorious was the Son of God in this assumption of human nature! We may not dismiss this thought with out some enlargement. The impression is vivid on our minds that his incarnation is glorious in the first place in its very mysteriousness. That it is a fact involved in mystery appears from the mere statement of it; and it is still more so the more it is contemplated. Though the statement in the Scriptures is not obscure, but perfectly intelligible, yet does it excite our wonder. It is among "the deep things of God." It is revealed to man as a fact utterly beyond his comprehension. The lofty mind of Paul himself, inspired as he was, was constrained to say, "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh!" We bow before it as an inexplicable fact. We believe the statement as we believe mysteries in the work of creation, and in the economy of divine providence; but there are things pertaining to it which surpass the comprehension of all, except the mind of God himself. How the eternal Son should be the omnipresent God, yet personally united to the man Christ Jesus; how the Deity, the whole Deity, should be in heaven, and at the same time in the manger of Bethlehem; how the divine nature could be imparted to the human nature of Mary's son, and be the inhabitant of Palestine, while at the same time it is in heaven and every part of the universe, is more than can be explained by creatures. We know, indeed, that as God, he is present everywhere, and this itself is a fact sufficiently mysterious. But if he was not present with the man Christ Jesus, in a higher sense than he is everywhere present, his incarnation is a fable. By his incarnation he was personally united to the human nature of Christ and one with it. In the strong language of the New Testament, he is said "to have come down from heaven" for this purpose; while he himself at the same time declares that he is the "Son of man which is in heaven." He did not cease to be God, when he became man; nor lay aside his divine nature in order to assume the human. In his divine nature, he possessed all the attributes of God; in his human nature, all the attributes of man. As God, he was the "brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person;" as man, he "took upon him the form of a servant. As God, he was rich in the possession and enjoyment of the universe; as man, he became poor and had not where to lay his head. As God, he was rich in the love and adoration of angels; as man, he was "the scorn and derision of the people." As God, he never slumbered, nor slept, nor was weary, but his eye run to and fro through out the earth, strong was his hand, and high his right hand; as man, he slept on the lake in the storm, he was weary and sat on the well, was weak and bound and scourged by his enemies. As man, he hungers; as God, he feeds the five thousand. As man, he thirsts; as God, he is the Fountain of living waters. As man,

he wept, and died, and was laid in the sepulcher of Joseph; as God, lives and reigns for evermore.

These things are all mysterious to us; we exclaim, as we contemplate them, " Who by searching can find out God? who can find out the Almighty to perfection?" O it is high as heaven and deeper than hell; the measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea! We cannot comprehend how the divine and human natures could be thus personally united; it is enough for our faith to know that God has told us they are united. We may not affirm that it is a presumption in its favor that it is mysterious; while we may affirm that its mysteriousness is no presumption against it, because we may well look for mysteries when we contemplate the incomprehensible Godhead. God himself would not be so glorious if he were not incomprehensible: he would not be infinite, if finite minds could comprehend him. Christianity glories in this great mystery. It may be foolishness in the judgment of a proud and reasoning world; but the foolishness of God is wiser than men. It is the glory of Christ that he is man as well as God. The mystery does but enhance the glory; if the mind of man could perfectly comprehend his mysterious nature, its glory would be unveiled and creatures would cease to wonder and adore. When Solomon dedicated the temple, the glory of the Lord filled the house, and the priests could not enter into the house of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled the house. So when a greater than Solomon dedicated to God the temple of his human nature, there were, and still are, unutterable glories in that union which the mind of man cannot look upon. The light is too dazzling; they are not scattered, but condensed and concentrated rays; it is the brightness of the divine glory, and its profusion perplexes us; its insufferable splendor baffles alike the mightiest and meanest intellect. The human faculties may be forever employed in contemplating, yet never be able to penetrate its unsearchable mysteries. Every new thought and discovery of them possesses a freshness and excites astonishment which no other subject possesses and excites, and as we gradually unveil these combined and contrasted glories of the Great Emmanuel, we exclaim, " O the depth both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" It is delightful to lose ourselves in the contemplation of such a theme, as the ineffable glory of the Saviour incarnate. God is above creatures; nor does he ask counsel of creatures. " He holdeth back the place of his throne, and spreadeth his cloud upon it." The doctrine of the Incarnation is just like God; and like him, is the more glorious because it cannot be brought within the sphere of our comprehension.

Christ is glorious in his incarnation, in the next place, for the endearing properties of the divine nature which he thereby unfolds. God is a Spirit, whom no man hath seen, nor can see. He is the King, eternal, immortal, and invisible. Yet the incarnate Son affirms, " he that hath seen one hath seen the Father." Men have a strong propensity to invent for themselves gods which their eyes can look upon, and their ears hear, and their hands handle. In doing this, they have filled the world with idol worship, and made them gods altogether like unto themselves. To meet this universal weakness of humanity, God has become " manifest in the flesh." That man of Nazareth is God. There is God's power, God's wisdom, rectitude, justice, love and mercy. In the intellectual and moral properties of his nature, what Jesus of Nazareth was, that the eternal God is; yes, he is the Deity, the Deity in the most intimate relation to humanity. The union is absolute and indissoluble. It is God in human form, living among men; sympathizing with men, conversing with men, exerting his godlike influences among men, taking out the very heart of God and showing it to men. Mysterious as is this union, it is the great fact which unveils the world of mysteries; which

dissipates the cloud from his pavilion who has said that he dwells in the thick darkness; which throws a flood of light upon the divine character, purposes, and government, which would have been otherwise inexplicable; and leaves nothing in obscurity to a mind which would acquaint itself with God. God here stoops in his condescension to men, not as he stoops to them in the daily walks of his providence, caring for them and visiting them, but in making man's nature his own; " forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he himself likewise took part of the same."

Men might have trembled at the thought that the great God was about to come and dwell on the earth. When he descended on Sinai, it was a day of terror; the mountain quaked because the Lord descended upon it. When he will descend to it in future ages, men there will be who will call to the rocks and to the mountains to fall on them to hide them from his presence, because he will come in his uncreated and unveiled greatness and majesty. But behold him as the word becomes flesh, and dwells among us full of truth and grace! What wonders of the Godhead are here! The last beings in the universe which one would think of ever being united are God and man. Strange unity! heaven and earth in one! Strange condescension! earth refusing to ascend to heaven, heaven stooping to descend to earth! The Creator becoming a creature, the eternal First Cause, by whom all things consist, uniting and becoming one with the effect which he himself produces and upholds! The Son of God born; born, not of a princess, but of the wife of a carpenter; not in the palace of a king, but in a stable! What wonders, what surpassing glories are these! His native dignity laid aside, in order to give lustre to humanity, and to the Deity loveliness! Well may we dwell on the endearing properties of the divine nature that are unfolded by this incarnation. He who exists in eternity, born in time, and dwelling in mortal flesh; he who is God blessed forever, becoming partaker of man's lowliness and man's sorrows, and making them all his own — what exhibition of the Deity is this! The God immortal putting on mortality — the uncreated One, the omnipotent One taking man's weakness — the holy One so obscured and eclipsed in his glory as to take the likeness of sinful worms — what mingled emotions of admiration and grateful homage, what sublime and subduing thoughts come over our spirits as the wondrous fact strikes us! The Lord of glory, once the associate with cherubims, now taking upon him the form of a reptile sinner; not as a prince to reign, but as a servant of servants! O this surpasses all things, that he should stoop thus low to raise rebellious man so high! How full of blessing was the advent of this incarnate Deity, and what a pledge of blessing from the court of which he is the elected ambassador, and from the mighty King of heaven whom he represents!

It was an auspicious promise when God said, " Behold the days come that I will dwell in them, walk in them, and I will be their God and they shall be my people." It was an auspicious declaration when he said, " Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them." It was the high privilege of the children of Israel, that in their journeying through the wilderness God himself was with them, and the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night departed not from them. The Church of God under the new economy has higher privileges than these. The Saviour's incarnation was not the token, nor the symbol, nor the pledge of God's presence with men; man's body was his tabernacle; he dwelt with man more intimately even than the Shekinah dwelt in the Temple, and in all the tenderness and plenitude of his love.

He could not stoop lower than thus to become a man. We look upon our race, and are mortified and humbled in view of its abjectness. Each one of us looks upon himself and exclaims, " Lord,

what is man that thou takest knowledge of him!" Yet have I this comforting thought, that all abject, all vile, all nothing as I am; I am a man and my Saviour is a man. He is the friend of man because he is one of them. We would not make light of this "precious humanity," this endearing brotherhood by which he links himself to the race. God has interests in common with man, that man may have interests in common with God. Nor is this all. The glory of Jesus in his human nature appears, in the next place, in the fact that his incarnation is the foundation of the whole Christian system. "Behold, I lay in Zion," says the God of all grace, "a stone, a chief cornerstone, elect, precious." The humanity of Christ, in union with his divinity, constitutes that "sure foundation," which bears up the pillars of the redeemed church with all its principles, all its laws, and all its immense interests. It was a memorable occasion on which Jesus put the question to his disciples, "Whom say ye that I am?" and the answer was memorable, when Simon Peter replied, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Nor was the rejoinder less memorable, when Jesus uttered the words, "Upon this Rock will I build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Man had fallen, and was therefore at variance with God. God also was at variance with man, and by all the purity of his nature and the justice of his government was bound to curse him as a rebel. Whether he would save, was a question to be decided by himself alone; because he alone had the right of deciding it, and he alone had the wisdom to devise, and the power to effect man's salvation by a method that should be consistent with his justice. That method was mediatorial and recognized the interposition of a third party between the parties at variance. The unquestioned characteristics of impartiality, ability, integrity, and kindness were demanded for such a service. He must be a mediator by nature, as well as a mediator by office, and must sustain such a relation both to God and man as puts his qualifications for the responsible office he bears beyond suspicion.

Such a Mediator we behold in the person of God manifest in the flesh; in every view a fitting Mediator; sustaining the same relation to both the parties; the same impartial kindness; the same integrity, and invested with a character and ability to conduct his mediation to safe and honorable issues. He is the only being in the universe who is qualified thus to stand between the two; to answer for God and to answer for man. He is the great Emmanuel, God with man and man with God; uniting the two extremes, and pledging before the universe his wondrous and perfectly unique character and influence, be the consequences to himself what they may, for the success of his perilous, yet great and glorious enterprise. That he is and must be God we have already shown in the preceding chapter. There is no other being sufficiently good, sufficiently powerful to effect this mighty work. The most pure and perfect seraph has no righteousness beyond his own necessities. No obedience, or suffering of any mere creature, or combination of creatures, could "make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness." He would have no pretensions to be heard, and no rights of advocacy. He could but answer for himself, and for all that such a one could do or suffer, he must look on this race of criminals as without hope. And therefore it was that "God spared not his Son," whom all the angels worship, and "by whom were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible." And for reasons equally fitting and imperative, he must be man as well as God. Man was the subject of law, and the Mediator was to stand in man's place. It was man's obedience which the law required, and the Mediator was to stand in man's place. If the law was broken by man, man's punishment alone

could satisfy its claims; and the Mediator was to stand in man's place. When man became the actual culprit, and deserved to die, the Mediator was to stand in man's place. Man was an exile from the divine family and kingdom; helpless and alone in this dark and friendless world; temptation and trial, grief and sadness, enemies and fear, distrust and despondency, were his destined allotment all through his earthly pilgrimage; and the Mediator was to stand in man's place. And therefore he became man's kinsman, his kinsman-Redeemer, his goel who, according to the Hebrew law, had the right of redemption. "It became him, that both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified, should be all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren. He had all the sympathies of a man, and has them still; and what his human nature now knows not of man's condition, that his divine nature communicates to the human, so that " he knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." He is touched with the feeling of man's infirmities; man's grief and sadness he makes his own; the sharp temptations which assail man remind him that he was once tempted in all points as man is, though yet without sin. He is gentle toward man, as a nurse cherisheth her children. He gathers the lambs with his arm, and carries them in his bosom. He is accessible to man when "the overawing splendor of his divinity alone" might crush his hopes. His gentle voice breaks not the bruised reed; his breath of tenderness quenches not the smoking flax; his eye of pity looks upon the wanderer, and reclaims the lost sheep.

We add, in the last place, this union of the divine and human natures is that which constitutes his FULLNESS as the appointed and accepted Mediator. He thus fills the chasm between heaven and earth which was made by sin, and those who are afar off are brought nigh. Both natures bear a part in the great redemption in order to make it full and complete. They form the elements of his unchangeable Priesthood; so that he " is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him." Whatever influences are necessary for the accomplishment of his gracious purpose for men and in men, whether they be of providence, or of grace, are at His command. The Father "giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him," because it hath pleased him, " that in him all fulness should dwell." The fulness is complete. Whatever the sinner wants, he shall find in Christ. Be it life, light, power, pardon, sympathy, hope, righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; they are all wrapped up in the union of his two natures. This mystery is the envelope which contains wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. He is able and willing to suffer, to endure, and to bestow. He is a storehouse that can never be exhausted; full of grace and full of truth; full of promises and full of authority to fulfil them; full of glory and majesty, and full of heaven. He is Christ, the wisdom of God and the power of God. No burden of sin is so heavy, but he removes it; no fears are so agitating, but he gives them relief; no weakness is so depressing, but it makes his strength perfect. Hope and expectation are never defeated that centre in him. He is filled to over-flowing with all that man can become and enjoy, and God impart. Blessing, and glory, and honor, and power are his. Expand as the faculties of the human soul may, they can never become so enlarged, and never drink so freely of his fulness; but the streams will still flow, and the fountain still be full. Augment man's unworthiness and ill-desert to an unmeasured infinity; multiply his wants to countless ages; and there is yet room in the mansions he has prepared, and bread enough and to spare. Angels and archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities and powers, in all their primeval and ever-growing beauty and glory, do not rise so high as the lofty eminences of glory and blessedness which the God-man Mediator bestows upon every sinner that repenteth, filled as he will be with " all the fullness of God," and satisfied from those rivers of pleasure which

flow at God's right hand. But we may not further pursue these illustrations. Such is the loveliness, the beauty, the glory of Christ in his human nature. Glorious truth! " there is but one Mediator between God and man, the MAN Christ Jesus." This is the keystone of the arch which binds together the great edifice of man's redemption, setting forth its divine symmetry and beauty, its strength and safety, and bearing the indelible inscription, " The foundation of God standeth sure." And is not this feature of the Redeemer's glory one that ought to interest us as sinners — as men? It is honor enough for an otherwise degraded race, that Jesus of Nazareth was human. There is no such lineage and no such brotherhood in the universe as that redeemed line of spiritual descendants of which he is the progenitor; that Christian household of which God is the Father, and Mary's son the elder brother. I love to think that my Saviour is not only divine, but human; there is endearment, there is palpableness here, and something that appeals to my weak senses as a man. The day is coming when, if I am even less than the least of all his followers, I shall see him as he is. It is not too much to look for from this mystery of godliness, that these eyes shall see him, these ears hear him; these arms hang upon his bosom, this heart be filled with his love, these lips vocal with his praise.

Yes, " every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him," and " all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Woe to the man who shall have remained till then, the despiser's of this God-man Redeemer! Whose is that heart of stone that breaks not as he stands at Bethlehem's manger, and sees the "child that was born?" Whose is that icy bosom that melts not, and is not filled with glowing love, as he looks upon him who is " fairer than the sons of men, and whom God hath anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows?" Whose is that obdurate unbelief, to whom this mysterious truth, so full of goodness and so full of comfort, is so repulsive that it claims homage in vain, and in vain solicits the proud and aspiring sons and daughters of earth to receive and trust in it? " Behold he stands at the door and knocks." It is not he who dwells in light inaccessible, encompassed with the glories of his majesty and the terrors of his justice; it is he who once " dwelt among us," not to fill us with fear, but to invite the guilty to come to him, without distrust, without timidity, and even with joy. Were he now on the earth, you might approach him. You might approach him as the sinner's friend; you might approach him as your counselor and helper; you might approach him in your abjectness and poverty and sorrows; you might approach him as the poor, the halt, the lame, and the blind approached him in the days of his flesh, and without the least distance or reserve. He is man still, though exalted at the right hand of God; the same meek, humble, condescending man; the " same yesterday, to day, and forever," and still inviting the lost to come to him that they might have life; the weary and heavy-laden, that they might have rest; the exile and the orphan, that he may guide them by his counsel and afterward receive them to glory. " This man because he continueth ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood, is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them." You have his sympathy on earth, and you may have his influence in the court of heaven. It was for no trivial object that he left that high and holy place, and descended to this low earth. It was to seek and to save that which was lost. It was to convince you of sin, and lead you to repentance. It was to emancipate you from bondage, and introduce you to the glorious liberty of the children of God. It was to make the conquest of your heart. Has he made that conquest Have you given him that heart? And, with a mind absorbed in the greatness and condescension of this incarnate One, can you appreciate the wondrous truth, that "without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness; God manifest in the flesh?"

04 — The Human Character

Chapter 4 THE HUMAN CHARACTER OF CHRIST GLORIOUS

We have already seen that, in his divine character, the Son of God is every way equal to the divine Father, "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders." Since, however, he possessed a human as well as a divine nature, so did he possess a distinct and purely human character. What was it? and wherein consisted its true glory? These inquiries it is not possible for us fully to answer. We cannot portray the perfect character of the man Christ Jesus. We are imperfect and sinning men, and encompassed by imperfect and sinning men. It is no easy matter, burdened as it is by the heavy consciousness of its own, and unrelieved as it is by its associations with human wickedness, for the mind of man to conceive much less describe a character that is spotless. The efforts of the most instructive and ablest writers, on this topic, are a failure, as all efforts of a like kind must be. There is no theme, unless it be the infinite love of God, on which we feel ourselves so utterly at a loss to speak worthily as this. We can affirm that the character of Christ is a sinless and perfect character; but much more needs to be said, and more than we can utter, in order to illustrate and impress this comprehensive truth. It has depths we cannot fathom, heights we cannot climb, and truths so luminous that our eyes are dazzled in looking at them. A sinless intellect and a perfect heart are the only true interpreters of a perfect character. It has often been said that great and good men go through the world without being understood; and this is emphatically true of him who "is the First-born among many brethren." The age in which Jesus lived did not understand him. His own apostles did not understand him; and required "the Spirit of Truth," to dictate to them the little they have recorded concerning their Divine Master; and though they have recorded enough for all the purposes of a supernatural revelation, they themselves were deeply sensible of the deficiencies and baldness of the record. The most instructive of the Evangelists, at the close of his gospel makes the acknowledgment, that "there are also many other things, which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

We would look around us, and into the history of the past, for some bright models of human excellence, to assist in this illustration. But we have nothing to guide us save the one great original. When the celebrated Zeuxis painted the Grecian Helen for the temple of Juno, he selected five of the fairest women, and copied all that was most beautiful in the form of each. It is no pagan temple, and no pagan deity that we honor; nor is it by any assemblage of human excellencies that we would fain contribute to some just conception of his loveliness who is "fairer than the sous of men." To group them all, and in their highest adornment and perfection, could only present them as faint resemblances to him who is the great model and archetype of goodness, and to whose reflected beauty the great and good of every age owe all their excellence. Our method shall be, in the first place, to furnish some general outline of his excellence; and in the next place, a brief specification of those particular characteristics which constituted his great worthiness. In presenting SOME GENERAL OUTLINE EXCELLENCE, it may not be forgotten that he was "made under the law." We speak not now of the mediatorial law, which he obeyed unto the

death; nor of the ceremonial law of the Jews; but of the Moral Law as summarily contained in the Ten Commandments. This is the great and only standard of human character. He is a perfect man who, without intermission, obeys this law of God with all the strength and ardor he is capable of exercising. We do not know of what degrees of holiness the mind of man is capable. But we see it now in the man Christ Jesus in all its richness. The most general and at the same time the most exact description of his character, is that he perfectly obeyed the law of God extending as it does to every thought, word, and deed. In his inward emotions, and his outward conduct, he was not recreant to any one of its precepts or prohibitions. He felt the obligation of governing his conduct by this great and unerring rule of action. It is pleasant to hear him speak as he so often does of the authority of God as the great Lawgiver; of "the will of the Father;" of the "commandment which he received from God;" always averring that " he came, not to do his own will, but the will of the Father who sent him." There was infinite disparity between himself as the Son of Mary, and himself as the great Lawgiver of the universe; a disparity as great as between the Creator and the creature; nor did he ever allow himself to call in question God's right to command and his own obligation to obey. In his divine nature, he claimed equality with God; in his human nature, there were no such equal terms with his Maker. " My father," said he, " is greater than I." God's supremacy was absolute; he would not set aside even the least requisition of his law, but received with thankfulness and obeyed with promptitude all the intimations of his Father's will. He stopped not to inquire into the reasons of any particular command; God's will was reason; it was enough for him that God had spoken. His whole intelligence and heart united in this voluntary homage to the supreme and indestructible authority of the all-wise and all-perfect Lawgiver. God's will, with him, was above everything else. He felt the obligation and fulfilled it; he fulfilled it spiritually, and he fulfilled it to the letter; he fulfilled it affirmatively, doing what the Law requires, and he fulfilled it negatively, abstaining from what the Law forbids. The sum and substance of the law is contained in the two precepts, " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself." In the character of Christ, the love of God was ever supreme and ever constant. He could not love God more fervently or more constantly than he did. His intellectual and active powers had their limits, but to the full extent of them he loved. He had no other, he knew no other God. There was not an idol in his heart, nor an idolatrous thought or desire. When we read his biography, the delightful impression everywhere comes upon us, that he enjoyed a constant sense of God's presence. God was in all his thoughts; nor did such a sin ever lurk in his bosom as forgetfulness of his Father in heaven. His affections toward him were affections of love in all its sweet combinations of esteem, attachment, gratitude and joy, and so cheerfully indulged, that communion with him was his great solace and comfort, and the hiding of his face was the bitterest ingredient ever mingled in his cup. He had but one heart, and that heart was God's — a whole heart; a pure heart; a heart never debased by an unworthy thought; a throne that was never usurped by a rival deity; a marble tablet, pure and burnished from its native quarry, on which was never engraven any tale of shame, and where suspicion never threw its doubtful shadow.

Here his religion began; it was heart-religion. He himself was an unsullied exemplification of that great truth which first fell from his own lips. " God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." He was no more a formalist than he was a dissembler; as ardent as he was honest, and as quick-sighted and jealous for his Father's honor, as though he felt himself to be its only guardian and vindicator. None, so much as he, ever delighted themselves in the diligent study of the divine nature and glory, or so much enjoyed the divine love. His affections,

toward God were eminently filial. He was the only begotten Son, who "lay in the bosom of the Father;" the everlasting arms were his refuge and his home. His first and best thoughts, his first and warmest affections, his most delighted admiration, his most peaceful confidence and profound reverence were attracted toward his Father which is in heaven. Nor is it a small matter that he was so scrupulously observant of all the institutions of religion. Men sometimes trifle with them because they originate with mere positive laws, and have respect to outward observances. We have not so learned Christ. His heartfelt respect for all the divine institutions was not less remarkable than his respect for their author. It is written concerning him, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." When John demurred at baptizing him on account of his superiority to ordinances, his language was, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it behooveth us to fulfil all righteousness." He had vast concerns committed to his trust, more important than the urgent necessities of poverty, the exacting demands of wealth and fashion, and the weighty responsibilities of kings and cabinets; but they never interfered with his reverence for the Sabbath and the sanctuary. Nor was this a superstitious reverence: for he taught his disciples, both by precept and example, that whenever positive institutions come in collision with moral duties, "God will have mercy and not sacrifice." In the social relations of human life, he was the bright and finished pattern of excellence. There is no relation, whether superior or subordinate, the obligations of which did not find in his example a living and most persuasive sanction. He neither overlooked nor trifled with any social claim; nor did he take refuge in any "higher law," in order to shield himself from "rendering to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor." There were manifold abuses, and palpable wrongs in the government under which he lived; but his refuge was not in revolt, nor in inciting the spirit of revolt. His maxim was, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's." No one was ever so well qualified to question the wisdom and authority of the government, and to sit in judgment upon its laws; and never was one more cautious in refraining from all such interference. He did not look for infallible laws among fallible men. He lived in a world where men are governed by their passions; nor would he, either by precept or example, give countenance to the ambitious, the bold, the discontented, or the disloyal. The history of our race would have been far more mournful than it is but for his uniform and stringent example on a subject of such deep interest both to the church and the world.

If we descend to other relations, we find everywhere the same blameless deportment. He revered age, encouraged youth, took childhood in his arms, and pressed infancy to his bosom. He honored the ascendancy of talent, while he rebuked its pride; he gave wealth its influence, while he exposed its snares and vanity; he acknowledged the eminence of rank, while he did not spare men in high places who abused their trust. That wonderful framework of human society, arranged and put together with so much wisdom, where the strong cannot do without the weak, nor the weak without the strong, and where the sympathy is so universal, that if one member suffer all the members suffer with it; found in him an advocate so intelligent and unfaltering, that the Socialists who watched for his halting, went confounded from his presence, and "durst not ask him any more questions." He honored his parents, and under circumstances when parental authority seemed to countervail the dictates of conscience: even when in the Temple about his heavenly Father's work, at the bidding of Joseph and Mary he "came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." His filial obedience is a most beautiful gem in the bright crown of his human excellencies; it shines even in the midst of his sufferings. Those touching words uttered when hanging on the

cross and by which he commended his mother to the care of the disciple whom he loved, were like apples of gold in pictures of silver. Notwithstanding all that the deistical writers of the last century have alleged against the unsocial character of Christianity and its chilling influence upon the friendships and attachments of private life; never was one more capable of strong and tender attachments, or manifested them more than he. So far from dis-social, there never was a more luminous and beautiful exemplification of the social virtues. High as his calling was, he did not separate himself from his fellow-men, but lived among them, and as one of them. He was a guest at their festive boards, and a mourner at their funerals. His first miracle was to change water into wine at the marriage in Cana of Galilee; and almost his last words were the expressions of effective sympathy for her who gave him birth, and for her comfort when he himself was deposited in the tomb. He was communicative where wisdom demanded it; and where wisdom demanded it, he was cautious and reserved. He founded no monasteries, and gave no instructions for the orders of Christian knighthood, of the sisters of the Sacred Heart. He was a spotless man, not of the world, but everywhere in the world, as he meant his followers should be.

Dis-social! was there ever a greater slander upon the character of Christ than this? Who does not see that love, gratitude, tenderness, private friendship, and even patriotism found in him a faultless advocate? Where is the man on the page of history who preserved so pure and inviolate, yet so kindly and amiably to the last, the laws of social intercourse? If to love as he loved, and live among men as he lived among them, be indications of a dis-social and repulsive spirit; where shall we go to find that which is social and attractive? Those interesting scenes in which he is beheld washing the feet of his disciples and in which the disciple whom he loved leaned on his bosom evince a sensibility and tenderness which no mere didactic lessons could convey. Would you see him taking part in the sorrows of those who were endeared to him; retire with him to the village of Bethany, and there read the words: " Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." It was an humble village, and they were humble persons. But it was there, away from the tumult of the world, and in the quiet, sweet intercourse of private friendship, that he forgot the strife of the city, the malignity of his enemies, and found the solace his loving heart sought after. What tenderness and love were there! I know not where to look for such another example of human dignity, propriety and affection combined. " Having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." Well may the church exclaim, " This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem!" And was he not forgiving toward his enemies? Let this inquiry be answered by that ever-memorable prayer uttered for men whom his curses might have swept from the earth, and uttered amid infuriate malignity and bitter revilings, " Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!" There is no relation of human life, in which he was not as far above the thought of wrong or negligence, as the heavens are above the earth. He was a " man, in all points as we are;" yet with every thought and imagination sanctified, every sense controlled, every word seasoned with grace, every association hallowed, every enticement to sin resisted, and avoiding the appearance of evil. He was content with his destined allotment; " though the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, and the Son of man had not where to lay his head." There was no rashness, nor want of wisdom in his intercourse with men. His truth was never questioned, his honesty and honor never tarnished. " No guile was found in his mouth." When you read his life, you will be impressed with the cautious agreement between the words of his lips, and the thoughts of his heart. There was no coloring in his statements; no unguarded expression, and no suppression of the truth. Where the whole truth ought to be spoken, he spoke it fully, and without concealment;

freely and without fear; clearly, and without obscuring it; sincerely and kindly, and for proper ends.

Unfounded assumptions, evil surmisings, careless misconstructions, unlawful detractions, artful flattery and malignant slander are human, but they are not like Christ. Nor did he know one covetous desire. He had no grief that others were rich; no mortified pride because he was poor; no envy, no inquietude, no inordinate wish, no corroding anxiety, and none of those sinful passions which arise from a corrupt and rebellious heart. The "commandment is exceeding broad;" but he was obedient to the whole law. Even the vile traitor who delivered him to the hands of his enemies, was constrained to confess, "I have betrayed innocent blood." He alone of all the children of Adam need not confess himself a sinner. Not a single trace of sin can be detected in his whole history; even succinctly written as it is by the Evangelists, it is the most wondrous biography in the world.

If we mistake not, this general view of his excellence will be the more appreciated if we pass, in the next place, to a brief delineation of those PARTICULAR CHARACTERISTICS IN WHICH THIS EXCELLENCE STOOD SPECIALLY PROMINENT. There are graces and virtues which distinguish this unblotted excellence, and which, like the angel standing in the sun, gives the sun itself a super-added brilliancy.

One of these was his active benevolence. His character was an energetic and effective character. His mind and heart and hands were not only perfectly consecrated, but brought into action, and perpetually contributing to enlighten the ignorance, alleviate the sorrows, purify the character, and ennoble the destiny of his fellow-men. During his short life of thirty years upon this earth, he achieved more for man, and cheered more hearts than the accumulated philanthropy of six thousand years. His whole spirit was directed to this end. His peculiar character is most emphatically written in the words, "He went about doing good." It was an art he had studied well, and it was the care and business of every day. He aimed to be harmless, but he had higher aims. The infinite God was his example; he was perfect as his Father in heaven was perfect. Wherever he went he wrapped himself in the mantle of that love, the very fold and hem of which were a refuge for the wants and woes of men. He came, "not to be ministered unto, but to minister;" and never was man so intent on this delightful service as he. He possessed an intensity of character as far above other men as his active benevolence was above theirs. His emotions were strong; his object engrossed all his faculties, and stirred up the very depths of his soul. The love of doing good was a flame not only perpetually burning in his bosom, but with intense radiance. All his thoughts, all his life, were at the bidding of this high impulse. The world thought him a madman. He did not seek occasion to be singular, but he could not avoid it. He stood alone, and men wondered at him. So intent, so dominant was his purpose, that he made the first and the last end of his existence to labor for God and man.

If we would have adequate impressions of this feature of his character, we must better understand such declarations as these: "I delight to do thy will, O God; yea, thy law is within my heart." "I must work the work of him who sent me while it is day; the night cometh in which no man can work." "I have meat to eat which ye know not of; my meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work." He would have failed in his object but for his pure and ardent zeal in doing good. It was not one department of human wretchedness to which his mind was directed, but every department. It was not restricted to any particular class of human society, but extended to all

classes, comprehending all the evils of suffering humanity, sympathizing with its griefs, and not overlooking its perplexities and cares. Whether they were the diseases of the body, the sorrows of the mind, or the embarrassments of the outward estate, not one of the miseries to which sin subjects fallen man escaped his notice. The vilest of the race had an advocate in the tenderness of his compassion; nor did his detestation of their sins shut up his compassion toward them as sinners. He did not wait for opportunities to do good, but went in search of them. When men were far from him he sought them, and when they could not ascend to him, he descended to them. He often went so far out of his way, in order to express his kindness, that his disciples wondered at his course; while the event showed that his object in so doing was to give sight to the blind, vigor to the lame, cleansing to the leper, hearing to the deaf, to raise the dead to life. Or perhaps it was to cause some widow's heart to sing for joy, or to convince and enlighten some lost sinner as he sat upon the well. With most affecting condescension, he sought the society of the benighted, the self-righteous, the self-deceived, and even infidel men. Their sufferings were the magnet which drew him forth from his retirement; while with winning wisdom and discernment, did he attract them within the sphere of his influence. Nothing could hinder or weary him; if he was persecuted in one place, he went to another. His own inexhaustible benevolence furnished the impulse to pursue, without relaxation, and with immovable constancy, this career of mercy. He did not seek to be great, but he sought to be useful. All places, all society, from Bethlehem to Calvary, were witnesses of his benevolent spirit and beneficent life. There is something truly affecting in this feature of his character. It appears to us more than human; yet he was human, in whose bosom this unequalled spirit dwelt. It belonged not to earth, was never found on earth, except as exemplified by Mary's Son. Heaven was its native dwelling-place, yet had it this one tabernacle in the heart of Jesus of Nazareth.

Another of these particular characteristics was his perfect self-denial. It was to the last degree important to the objects of his mission, that it should be seen and confessed that he had no mercenary aims. If wealth, or honor, or power had been the ruling principle of his conduct, he would not have differed from men, who have been the founders of false religions. It is no marvel that the Scriptures bring his character to the test of a self-denying and self-sacrificing spirit; because this is the true test. There is reality and strength in moral virtue, when it will cheerfully do and suffer for the principles of rectitude.

How much of this sterling excellence is found in the best of men, let their conduct declare. How little compared with that which shines in the life of Christ. The more attentively we read his history, the more we shall be convinced that his life was one of incessant self-denial. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs; when he deserved to have been the happiest of the race and the most beloved. He bore the weight of scorn and obloquy, when he deserved the highest honors. He was poor and abject; he was as great a sufferer as a sinless man could become; yet was it for the good of others, and not his own. These sacrifices were necessary for other reasons; but were they not necessary in order to bring out his perfectly holy and transparent character? We should never have known his true excellence but for those depths of darkness and sorrow when it shone with such matchless beauty. He did not teach a self-denying religion without practicing it; nor an humble and self-abasing religion, a religion that crucifies the world with its affections and lusts, without exemplifying it everywhere and always, from the manger to the cross. He acted out his own principles, and carried his self-denial as far as self-denial can

be carried. It was not for himself that he lived, it was not for himself that he wept; it was not his own sorrows that he bore, when, at the close of a long life of sacrifices, he terminated his course by that great act of self-denial, that last sacrifice, which human knowledge knows not, human imagination cannot conceive. Pure, innocent, without spot, he freely renounced all and delivered up himself the victim of God's justice and man's cruelty, asking nothing for himself and gaining nothing but the gratification of his self-denying love. He asked, indeed, that men should become his followers, and love him, but he never bribed their love; and when he left them, bequeathed them no earthly inheritance, but the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and the cross on which he hung.

Men of a supremely selfish mind, and who offer incense on the altars of pride, ambition, and pleasure, know nothing of this noble characteristic of Jesus Christ. Those who have never learned to sacrifice their own weal for the relief of others' woes; who have never renounced their own comforts from love to the miserable; whose time, and labor, and repose, and pride, and pleasure, and gold have been devoted only to themselves; cannot sympathize with the moral greatness that throws such a lustre around the man who taught and exemplified the religion of the cross.

Another characteristic was his meekness and humility. There are not wanting some beautiful specimens of meekness and lowliness in those who have named his name in different ages of the world. The Apostle John was his most beloved disciple and friend, for nothing so much as his resemblance, in this feature of his character, to his divine Master. The Mary who came behind him weeping, and washed his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, expressed a spirit more lovely than she would have expressed if she had decked his head with a crown. Moses was styled the " meekest man on the face of the earth," because he maintained his gentleness amid so much that tried and provoked his heaven-born and humble mind. But these holy persons were servants, and their meekness and humility, the cringing spirit of slaves compared with that softness, and mildness, and gentleness of Christ which all his adversaries could never gainsay, or resist. There was not an emotion in his bosom that savored of anger or rashness. Injury, reproach, and provocation assailed him in every form and degree; while the only protestation he made against them was his mild and unresisting gentleness. Denounced as impostor, stigmatized as the enemy of Caesar and a conspirator against the government, ridiculed as a wine-bibber and a friend of publicans and sinners, charged with being a madman and possessed of the devil, seized by the hands of violence, convicted by perjured witnesses, scoffed at, spit upon, buffeted, scourged, and nailed to the bloody tree; his whole course of conduct betrayed not one complaining, or angry thought. He was not capable of a thought for which conscience could reproach him. He knew well how to stand forth the protector of others, and to shield his insulted and slandered excellence; but when his own person and character were assailed, he was speechless, and quietly left them in the hands of God. " He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." When " he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." What beautiful consistency and harmony did this spirit to the more grand and elevated expressions of his excellence! He was lofty in his views; there was everything within him that elevated him above an unworthy action; yet pride and ambition had no lurking-place in that elevated mind; a haughty spirit found no aliment there, and no being. All this is far from man's nature; but it was the uniform and beautiful spirit of the man Christ Jesus. He had

virtues that were more brilliant; but none more lovely. Here his character shines in the very beauty of holiness. This was the most transparent gem in that bright diadem where every gem is transparent. He was a "perfectly meek and humble man." He of all his race was justified in saying, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." His whole life was the most persuasive and eloquent appeal in favor of this spirit; it was the most beautiful and sublime exhibition of it, while the difficulties and trials it encountered seemed only to make it more affecting.

Combined with these characteristics, he also possessed great moral courage. Meek and humble as he was, he was a stranger to weakness and timidity. Never was man so undaunted, and never was there such a demand for vigor of purpose, and promptness, and energy, and endurance. He was born for high and holy ends, and was early made acquainted with the purposes for which he came into the world. Nor did he ever take a changeable and unsteady view, nor a slight and cursory one of his great object. It was constantly upon his mind, and drew toward it all its vigor and fervency. There was no such thing as fear in his bosom, be the dangers that assailed him what they may. He was never intimidated from uttering what he ought to utter, and doing what was necessary for him to perform. If there are instances of his conduct which seem at first view, to savor of precipitancy, it is only because our minds fail to sympathize with a courage so exalted as his, and are not imbued, as his was, with the greatness of his aims, and his intuitive perceptions of what was right and fitting under the circumstances in which he was placed. He could sting the Jewish people with the most keen and lacerating reproaches; he could scourge the changers of money out of the temple; he could send a sarcastic thought through the conscience of the subtle Herod; but it was because such severity could no longer be withheld. "When the oldest and most presumptuous of his disciples would fain have dissuaded him from going up to Jerusalem, he could reply, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men;" and when his hour was come, and Judas delayed the execution of his fell design, his language to this arch traitor was, "What thou doest, do quickly!" There were a resolution and fortitude about him, which it does not seem possible that one so meek and lowly could possess. Nor did they fail to rise with every fresh demand upon them, however exacting, waking up and invigorating all his powers of body and mind, and stimulating him, now to action the most fearless, and now to endurance as brave and inflexible as Christianity. When the lamented Evarts was dying, he said to one who stood near him, "Be bold for Christ; there is nothing else worth being bold for!" Christ himself was the boldest of the bold. He was "Captain of our salvation," and it behooved him to be bold. They were fearful foes with whom he was contending, and he advanced to the contest with undaunted breast. They were stormy skies, and days and nights of peril; he was deserted and desolate; but he was ever steadfast, ever immovable. To these characteristics must be added a perfectly devotional and heavenly spirit. If ever there was a man of too heavenly a mind to be born for earth, and to dwell on earth, and engage in the toil and pursuits, and hallowed strife of earth, Jesus of Nazareth was that man. It is not enough to say that he lived above the world, and was a stranger and pilgrim here, and that his heart was fixed on heaven; he was the spirit of heaven itself, living and moving among men. A worldly mind was the rock on which the devil vainly conjectured he might be tempted to shipwreck the great enterprise with which he was entrusted. Artfully did he spread the snare early in the public career of the Son of man, by the offer of all the kingdoms of the world, if he would fall down and worship him; but the temptation passed over his mind "like the idle wind." When, in a more advanced stage of his

progress, he became for once the idol of the people, and the multitude offered him the crown and the throne of David, he gave them to understand that crowns and thrones had no charms for his heavenly mind. He avowed before Pilate that he had royal claims, but that it was not the royalty of earth that he sought. He sought nothing from the world but his daily bread; nor would he allow himself to be any further embarrassed by its concerns than to treat this earth as the theater on which he was acting so mighty a part for eternity. He sought no other earthly home than that provided by the hand of charity. A home he had, but it was above, where his conversation was, and where he was so soon to go to provide a place for all his followers. His life was one of peculiar intercourse and near communion with God. Many a time did he rise up a great while before day, and retire to some selected mountain, or sequestered brook, or grove, there to enjoy solitary intercourse with his father in heaven. Whole nights he often employed in prayer. Forty days of fasting and prayer were his preparations for his public ministry. He loved to be alone with God. No employment, no society, no trials ever prevented his intercourse with God and heaven. He and his Father were one, if for nothing but the uninterrupted fellowship which existed between them. Things unseen and eternal were the things he looked at. He often spoke of them, and of the beauty and riches and glory of them, and of heavenly thrones and heavenly joys. With intense interest and delight, he spoke of them, and with pensive thoughts that they were at a distance, and with sweet anticipations that in a little while he should go to the Father.

If we would see the excellence of this wonderful man shining by its own light, we may intermingle with these general excellencies and these brilliant characteristics the thought that this perfect character was maintained with unbroken constancy from the commencement to the close of his career. He had no native sinfulness, but was born as sinless as he died. The law of Paradise which entailed the curse of original sin upon the race, did not affect him, because, though born of a woman, he had no paternal lineage. He was an infant without the selfishness of infancy, and with none of its exacting and tyrannical claims. Was there ever so beautiful a sight as the holy infant Jesus! He was a youth, without one taint of frowardness; a man without one stain of human depravity, from Bethlehem's manger to Joseph's tomb! An inhabitant of this fallen world, yet "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners!" One who possessed man's nature, yet who "did no sin!" Nothing diverted him from perfect rectitude; nothing discouraged him; nor was his progress broken by a faltering step. There was no coldness, no inconstancy; and his character shone the brighter as he drew toward the close of his mortal career. As he began, so he closed his work; and as he was about to close it, he could "lift up his eyes to heaven and say. Father, the hour is come; I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou hast given me to do!"

We are far from forming just conceptions of the character of the man Christ Jesus. Unspeakably below the reality is the faint picture we have exhibited. We love to contemplate human virtue even in its inferior forms. 'The history of man furnishes here and there a splendid exhibition of it, and while we do not extol the excellence less, we extol its author more. We mark it as a rare character, and a rare expression of Almighty grace. It is like a stream of water in a dry place, a green spot in the desert, a bright star twinkling on the dark cloud. The character of Christ has no such inequalities, and does not strike us by its occasional and novel excellencies. It is like a broad river steadily tending to the ocean, and making the desert bloom as it goes. It is like the moon walking across the heavens, and obscuring the stars by her brightness. The history of man would be

barren of reproachless excellence, but for this one record. This one only moral phenomenon stood forth to the men of his age, stands forth to us, and will stand forth to all future time fresh and beautiful, ever retaining the novelty that attracts, and the beauty that charms. Penetrate into the history of the past; search the records where fame has preserved the names of the illustrious, or where private worth is embalmed in delightful memories; and between the Son of man and all other men there is such a distance, that the character of the best of our race is an indivisible point, a particle of vapor compared with this ocean of excellence. During the lapse of sixty centuries, and since the day of the first apostasy and the first promise, there is but this individual born of woman who could look his enemies in the face and say, " Which of you convinceth me of sin?" Nations have come into existence and passed away; millions crowded upon millions have been ushered into being and gone to their graves; patriarchs, prophets, martyrs, men and women largely baptized with the Holy Ghost, have shone as lights in the world, and now shine as the stars forever and ever. Heaven has been moved with love to man to make him holy, to inspire him with immortal hopes, and to urge him, not in vain, to aim at his high calling; but it was reserved for the Virgin's Son to receive the Spirit without measure, and to become the only example of perfect excellence. What sublimity and beauty are here! What a halo of moral glory encircles the head that was once entwined with the wreath of shame! Christ is glorious; glorious as holiness, glorious as truth, glorious as love, glorious as joy, shining, beaming, and never ceasing to shine with a splendor that is unspeakable and full of glory.

We do not marvel that so many beautiful arguments have been founded on the perfect character of the man Christ Jesus, in favor of the truth of Christianity. We cannot be too thankful that there is this one perfect standard of true religion. We have no other; we profess not to appeal to any other. The world would never have known what true religion is, nor what it can achieve in the formation of character, until it was taught by the character of Christ. It is not fiction, for fiction never could have invented it; it is something which is embodied and realized in actual existence. Without any of the adventitious distinctions of earth, he possessed a splendor which eclipsed them all. Ten righteous men would have saved Sodom; nor does it surprise us to learn that the righteousness of this One Man Christ Jesus, saves from worse than the flames of Sodom, " a great multitude which no man can number." To what extent are we under obligation to imitate the example of Christ? There can be no doubt as to the answer that must be given to this question. The obligation is perfect; it never ceases; it is never violated without sin. There never was any reason why men should not be as holy as Christ, either in the nature of holiness, or their own nature; either in the binding force of the moral law, or the precepts, prohibitions, and spirit of the gospel. There is a cause for the imperfection of Christians, but there is no reason for it. The cause is their own sinful nature and love of wickedness; and this, so far from excusing them, makes the matter worse, and leaves them self-condemned. Men complain that God is a hard master for requiring them to yield a perfect compliance to his law, because the thing is impossible. We grant that it is impossible; to deny this fact were the grossest ignorance and the wildest fanaticism. But why is it impossible? If their hearts were right, it would not be impossible. If their state of mind were such as Christ's, it would not be impossible. Let us therefore lay our hand upon our mouth. But do we expect perfectly to imitate the Saviour's character, or that it will ever be perfectly imitated in the present world? It is indeed a melancholy truth that we despair of equaling such excellence; we shall fall far short of it, until " we see him as he is." Yet we may not overlook this bright example, as though we were strangers to it, and were never impressed, and charmed, and humbled by its beauty. Christ is

everything to the Christian, as the foundation of his hopes, and the source of supply for all his spiritual necessities. Nor is he less precious as his example. The injunction is still inscribed on the sacred page, "Let the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." It is not enough to contemplate his example merely for the purpose of admiring it, and of exciting within our bosom something like the transports of Christian enthusiasm. It is not enough to contemplate it merely for the purpose of seeing how far we come short of it. Rather should we contemplate it with the earnest desire, and prayer, and effort ourselves to attain to a purer and loftier devotion to our heavenly Father's will. Where is our Christianity if we have none of the spirit of our divine Master? Where is it, if we imbibe not more and yet more of his spirit? How else shall we know that "when he shall appear we shall be like him," unless what we now behold of him progressively transforms into his image?

Let us bring these general inquiries more closely home to our own bosoms. What Christian can allow himself in indifference to the claims of the God of heaven, when the Son of man was so exquisitely alive to them? What Christian will give way to the spirit of murmuring and complaint, when he sees the Saviour of men so uniformly putting his will into the hands of God to be moulded according to his own? Who will be negligent in his observance of the Sabbath, when the Lord of the Sabbath was so punctilious in its observance? Who will not be circumspect in all the social relations, when he protected them with such purity and care? Who will allow himself to become intoxicated in the pursuit of wealth and fame, when his Lord and Master had not where to lay his head, and when, the more he surveyed the "pumps and vanities" of time, the more did they disappear and sink away beneath him? See him in all his lowliness and poverty, and then say, of how much worth is all the glitter of the world? Who can be satisfied to revel in all the pride of life, when he thinks of him who consented to be numbered with malefactors? Who will cherish angry passions and a revengeful bosom, when he could look with such love upon his murderers? What shall be said of the Christian who refuses one drop of that bitter cup which Jesus drank to the dregs? What will the listless, inactive Christian think of himself when he thinks of him who went about doing good, and never wearied of his work? Who will be prayerless when Christ was the man of prayer? Who will rest contented to travel thus tardily towards heaven, when his pilgrimage was so bright and rapid? Humbling inquiries are these, both to the writer and the reader. Christianity does indeed live in our world, but it has never been fully exemplified since Christ ascended from the Mount of Olives. Just conceive of a score of Christians like Jesus Christ within this single city, and how would this moral wilderness blossom! If we love Christ, we shall love to imitate his example; and the more we love him, the more we shall love to imitate it. What he said to his early disciples he says to us, "Follow thou me." Mark his footsteps, Christian, and follow him. A single word to those who are not Christians. Would that there were not so many of this unhappy and guilty character! Yet, who would not be a Christian, if it only were to tread in the steps of Christ? To what more elevated and amiable character, to what hopes more precious, what associations more desirable, what higher usefulness, and brighter and more enduring glory can fallen man aspire; than to receive the truth and confess the name of Christ, bear his image, follow his example, promote his glory, and enter into his joy?

05 — As He Preaches

Chapter 5 CHRIST AS HE PREACHES The great and peculiar work of Christ was to make an atonement for the sins of men. His priestly office was the great office for which he was anointed of God; which, as God manifest in the flesh, he so gloriously fulfilled, and to which all the Prophets bear witness. But while we magnify his office as the great High Priest of the Christian profession, we may not overlook his office as the anointed Prophet, and the most distinguished religious Teacher. The predictions of the Old Testament speak of him as such; and if we look into the four gospels, we find these predictions abundantly fulfilled. We there learn that " he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom;" and that " he went throughout every city and village preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." The first employment indeed upon which he publicly entered, was that of a religious Teacher. No sooner did he emerge from the retirement of domestic life and receive baptism from the hands of his distinguished Precursor, and the visible anointing of the Holy Ghost, than he commenced his public ministry. Aside from those portions of the Evangelists which record his genealogy, birth, miracles, death, and resurrection, these writings are altogether occupied in recording his religious instructions. These records of his teaching are sufficiently copious; yet must they, from necessity, be incomplete and compendious; for in the highly hyperbolic language of John, " if they should be written every one, the world itself could not contain the books that should be written." Of the pre-eminent excellence of Christ as religious teacher, we have abundant evidence. John his forerunner, though the most distinguished of all the Jewish prophets, makes the humble, yet exulting confession, " He must increase, but I must decrease;" " there cometh one after me, who is preferred before me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." We are told that " the people were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one having authority and not as the Scribes," The officers sent by the Jewish rulers to apprehend him, were so affected by his preaching that they could not execute their commission, and when called to an account for their negligence, could only reply, " Never man spake like this man." But it is from his discourses themselves, that we are chiefly instructed in his preeminence as the Great Prophet of God. From these we learn, in the first place, that he was a most instructive preacher. It is recorded of the greatest and wisest of the kings of God's ancient people, that " because the preacher was wise, he taught the people knowledge." The knowledge of God's truth is the germ and principle of all holiness. Spiritual life can neither germinate, nor be developed in the dark and cold bosom of ignorance. To overlook this great law of man's intellectual and moral nature, is to overlook what is primary and essential to the great end at which the gospel aims. There is no appeal to the conscience or heart, no obligation urged, no right emotions excited, and no practical conformity to God cultivated, except by presenting and believing the great doctrines of the gospel. Jesus Christ would have the roots of Christianity strike deep in the barren soil of this ungodly world; and therefore he taught that the "sower soweth the word". The great object of his ministry was to disabuse the minds of men of error, to unteach them where they had been taught erroneously, to enlighten them where they were ignorant, to set the great realities of a supernatural revelation before them, place them within their reach, and make them possessors of this rich inheritance. He

knew of no other means of disarming the powers of death and hell, delivering men from the empire of Satan and the bondage of sin, introducing them into the liberty of the children of God, and rendering them partakers of the life eternal. His Spirit operates only through the instrumentality of truth. It is one of the laws of his kingdom, that "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Richly was he endowed, and abundantly qualified to be an instructive preacher. He did not rush into the ministry until his mind was thoroughly furnished for his work. For a long time he dwelt at Nazareth, diligently preparing himself for this high service; and so well had he studied the sacred Scriptures, that at twelve years of age he astonished the doctors of the temple, "both hearing them and asking them questions." It was not until after his severe trial in the wilderness, where his faith and knowledge were put to the test of the most artful and severe of all opposer's; nor until he was about thirty years of age that he began his wonderful career. From "that time," we are told, "Jesus began to preach, and to say. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Besides this, he was God as well as man; the eternal Logos: who was set up from everlasting. When God prepared the heavens he was there; when the wondrous method of man's redemption was devised he was there; and before the hills were settled, or the mountains brought forth, he engaged to occupy the prophetic office, and himself to become the preacher of that glorious gospel of which he was the author. When he entered upon his ministry, therefore, the great subjects and objects of it, were those with which he was perfectly familiar, and which he well understood how to present. He made no display of human learning, but a rich and convincing exhibition of God's truth. It was not the philosophy of the schools of which he spake, nor did he amuse nor confound his hearers with dissertations upon the traditions of the elders, and the commandments of men; nor did he confine himself to a narrow circle of Christian truth and morals. He spake of God as no other had spoken; of the spirituality of his nature and worship; of the necessity of knowing him in order to attain eternal life. He spake of the law of God in its unchanging obligations and searching spirituality; rectifying the errors of those who flattered themselves that one object of his coming, was to lower its claims to the level of human infirmity; and reading them lessons upon its holiness and inviolability, which taught them that he was not more the advocate of the true faith, than a sound morality. He spake of the sinful character and lost condition of man everywhere affirming that they were not the righteous that he came to call, but sinners to repentance. He largely insisted on that obduracy and strength of human wickedness, which, when thoroughly taught, aims so fatal a blow at self-sufficiency and self-glorying, as to throw the best as well as the worst sinners, upon the resources of omnipotent grace. He spake of the necessity of the new birth or that radical transformation of character, by which the enmity of the carnal mind is slain, and the controlling principle of supreme love to God, is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost. He discoursed largely of the effects and evidences of this spiritual change on his inward and outward man. On the one hand, he set at naught the claims of a proud morality, and instructed men that "except their righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, they can in no case enter the kingdom of heaven;" and on the other, he taught them that a religious sentimentalism is as far from true religion, as a lifeless morality, and that only those are his disciples, who "hear the word of God, and do it." No preacher ever inculcated a more devotional spirit; it was in one of his discourses that he taught men how to pray, and gave that great model of prayer, which so beautifully comprises all that true piety desires. When he spoke of the way of life for the fallen, he taught that there was but one. On

this all-important topic his language is, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me:" " God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." When he spoke of the obligation and duty of men, in view of this revealed salvation, his teachings are, " This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent;" " Come, for all things are now ready;" " Compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." He spoke, too, of the privilege and blessedness of those who receive this salvation; of the responsibility, and guilt, and doom, of those who reject it. As the High and Lofty One that inhabits eternity, he also lifts the veil from future things; tells of the resurrection, both of the just and the unjust; announces the final judgment, where he himself will sit and decide the destinies of men; brings life and immortality to light; unfolds the glories of that heaven where he dwelt from eternity, and premonishes the world of that place of torment, to which all the incorrigible are doomed, and which is " prepared for the Devil and his angels." In every view he was the most instructive of preachers. Erase his instructions from the Bible, and you erase its most sublime lessons of wisdom, and those very lessons which the world most needs. The Saviour sympathized with these wants, and drew from his own redundant resources those instructive truths which were best likely to lead men to repentance, and promote their holiness, happiness, and usefulness when they have become Christians. "Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth." This was his prayer, and this involved the great principle on which he conducted his ministry. It was teeming with truth; rich in the doctrines of grace; resplendent with those great evangelical principles, which the Holy Spirit has ever employed for the conversion of men, which form the substance of the gospel, and constitute the great torch-light of the nations as lifted up from the cross of its Victim Teacher. In the next place, he was a hold and fearless preacher. Though meek and gentle as a Lamb, his nature was bold and fearless. "Well did this moral courage become him as a " Leader and Commander to the people," and as the " Captain of their salvation," called as he was to contend with deeply embedded errors, with pervading vices, with subtle enemies, with torpid indifference, with flesh and blood, and principalities and powers in high places. The gospel which he preached was " to the Jew a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness." Such were the fierce passions and hostile array of a world that lieth in wickedness, that not to oppose them would be to give falsehood the victory over truth; while to oppose them effectively, however meekly, would seem to be like sending division and a sword.

There is an indiscretion, and blustering foolhardiness in some preachers, which finds no warrant in his ministry. His counsel to those whom he early sent forth was, " Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Never was this complex character so beautifully exemplified, as throughout the whole of his ministry from first to last. It was early predicted of him, that as God's servant, " he should deal prudently;" that " the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, and the spirit of knowledge, and the fear of the Lord." A recurrence to his preaching as given by the Evangelists is the best comment upon this prediction. In his selection of times and places of preaching, of men and classes to whom he preached, and the truths that were adapted to their state of mind, he was the wisest and most prudent of preachers. He would not put a "piece of new cloth into an old garment," nor " new wine into old bottles;" nor " cast pearls before swine." He would not allow himself to be ensnared by the subtle priests and elders; nor by the shrewd lawyers of the Synagogue; nor by the learned Pharisees who " took counsel that they might entangle him;" nor by the unbelieving Sadducee's;

nor ever led astray by the bigotry of his disciples. Except upon the great objects of his mission, he was a man of remarkably reserved and cautious habits, and was well apprised of the importance of his own injunction, " Beware of men!"

Yet did the work to which he was called make exacting demands upon his courage and faithfulness. There were truths which he preached, which, if he was not dismayed in the utterance of them, threw his audience into dismay; and which, though uttered without vehemence and without impetuosity, excited the vehemence of their hostility. The prediction just referred to which speaks of his prudence, affirms, that " he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." His words did not always descend as the dew of heaven; but sometimes, like the piercing hail, the sweeping whirlwind, the destroying sword, and the consuming fire. He was a tremendous preacher of those obnoxious truths which have thrown the world into consternation. There are those in the present age who are great sticklers for orthodoxy, who, at the same time, are not a little sparing of those great truths which he uttered so fearlessly that at one time his hearers led him to the brow of the hill in order to cast him down; at another, his nominal disciples went back and walked no more with him; and at another, the Jews took up "stones to stone him." The Bible does not record any such preacher of terror as that divine Saviour, who, in one short discourse, thrice utters the words, "There shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth;" and in another equally short, thrice declares, that in that wretched world, " the worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." The rulers of the Jewish people were no doubt jealous of his power, but they were still more embittered against his doctrine. The fire was long burning in their bosoms. Both the remote and proximate causes of the hostility which led them to nail him to the cross, was their enmity to the truth, and to him as its undaunted advocate. For nothing more than his faithfulness as a preacher did they become his infuriate enemies. They became weary of being thus goaded by the truth, and at length cried out, " Away with him! Crucify! crucify!"

He drew the line so distinctly between the righteous and the wicked, that he did not suffer men to indulge presumptuous hopes without rebuke. Were they as amiable as the young Jewish ruler, he convinced them of their self-deception; as loud in their professions of piety as the Jewish teachers, he unveiled their clamorous pretenses; as self-righteous as the Pharisee who went up to the temple to pray, he hesitated not to blast all their self-righteous expectations. He had no desire to give offense; yet he would not divest the truth of its repulsiveness to the carnal heart, nor rob it of its sting. He was not wanting in kindness, nor did he lack the boldness to call men and things by their right names. No religious teacher was ever so fearless in this respect, and so impartial in his personal application of the truth to all classes of men, whatever their condition in the church, or in the world. One great object of his preaching would have been lost, if he had so preached as to leave the impression upon the minds of his hearers that he had no special relevancy to one man more than another. There was no such indistinctness in his views, and therefore no such indefiniteness in his instructions. The great object of his sermon on the mount; of his parable of the ten virgins; of the good fish and the bad; of the tares and the wheat, was to distinguish between the righteous and the wicked; between the true and the false, the genuine and the spurious in piety, however men might be startled by the distinction, and however discouraging such preaching might be regarded. That which gave to his preaching its remarkable directness was the fact that it concerned his auditors, and had immediate regard to their character and duty. When he uttered

the parable of the vineyard, the " Jews perceived that he had spoken the parable against them." When he discoursed with the woman of Samaria, her own conscience extorted the confession, " Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did." When he said to the accusers of the offending woman, " He that is without sin among you, let him cast the first stone at her," they were " convicted by their own conscience, and went out one by one." Not unfrequently he was more bold and personal. He said to the multitude who so eagerly and ostentatiously followed him, " I know you that ye have not the love of God in you." He told the Jewish people that " they were of their father, the devil, and the lusts of their father they would do." To the Scribes and Pharisees he uttered these tremendous words, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Under circumstances which the fastidious taste of the age in which we live would have regarded as the claims of silence upon his courtesy, and when an invited guest in the splendid banquet-hall of a princely Pharisee; he could not suppress the rebuke, " Ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness;" "Woe unto you. Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites! Woe unto you lawyers, for ye lade men with burdens, grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch them not with one of your fingers." No influence of men in power could dishearten, no danger intimidate him. He would not allow the customs of the world to embarrass him in the work which God had given him to do. This is boldness; calm, deliberate boldness. It was much to say of John Knox, " Here lies one who never feared the face of man:" but it is not much to say of him whom the fearful terrors of the cross could not appall, and whose words were soberness and truth. Nor may the fact be overlooked, in the next place, that he was an impressive and powerful preacher. In the legitimate sense of the term, he was popular and interested the multitude. He never preached to empty synagogues; and when he occupied the market or the mountain side, they were not hundreds that listened to his voice, but thousands. It is recorded of him, that " his fame went throughout all Syria;" and that " there followed him great multitudes of people from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." On that memorable day when he went from the Mount of Olives to Judea, "a great multitude spread their garments in the way, and others cut down branches from the trees," and all cried "Hosannah to the Son of David!" After he uttered the parable of the vineyard, the rulers " sought to lay hold of him, but feared the people. When he " returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee, there went out a fame of him throughout all the region round about," and he "was glorified of all, and great multitudes came together to hear him." So much was he, for the time, the idol of the people, that the chief priests and Pharisees were alarmed at his popularity, and said among themselves, " If we let him then alone, all men will believe on him; behold, the world is gone after him." He was the man of the people, and advocated the cause of the people. We are told that "the common people heard him gladly." He was " no respecter of persons." He was the preacher to man, as man. He never passed the door of poverty, and was not ashamed to be called "the friend of publicans and sinners." His gospel was and is the great and only bond of brotherhood; nor was there then, nor is there now, any other universal brotherhood, than that which consists in love and loyalty to him. He was the only safe reformer the world has seen, because he so well understood the checks and balances by which the masses are governed. His preaching, like his character, bold and uncompromising as it was, was also in the highest degree conservative. He taught new truths, and he was the great vindicator of those that were old. All these things made him a most impressive, powerful, and attractive preacher. His very instructiveness, prudence, and boldness, interested the people. They respected him for his

acquaintance with the truth, and honored his discretion and fearlessness in proclaiming it. This is human nature; men love to be thus instructed; they come to the house of God for that purpose. A vapid and vapory preacher may entertain them for the hour; a smooth and flattering preacher may amuse them; a mere denunciatory preacher may produce a transient excitement; but such is the power of conscience, and such the power of God and the wants of men, that, though their hearts naturally hate God's truth, they will crowd the sanctuaries where it is instructively, and fearlessly, and discreetly urged, while ignorance, and error, and a coward preacher, put forth their voice to the listless and the few.

Jesus uttered the truth with great simplicity and plainness. His thoughts were clear; the meaning of his words was manifest; his sentences were unaffected and artless; there was no complication of argument or illustration in his discourses; they were all the natural and simple expression of his own intelligent and pure mind. They were intelligible to the meanest capacity. He meant they should be intelligible; and would sometimes even make a pause in his discourse, and ask his hearers if he was understood. He would then repeat some uncomprehended thought in different forms. He was like a watchful shepherd leading his flock; he would retrace his steps, and go back again and again, until every stray lamb was brought into green pastures. He took great pains to interest his audience; he knew they must be interested if they were profited by his preaching. Sometimes he would utter the substance of a discourse in a single sentence, so terse and striking that it could never be forgotten. You read a sermon in such a sentence as this: "Ye are the salt of the earth;" as this: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth evil things;" as this: "The tree is known by its fruits; as this: "Where your treasure is, there shall your heart be also;" and as this: "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch;" and as this: "If they do these things in the green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Sometimes he would select a metaphor that would carry truth to the conscience like a thunderbolt. And sometimes he would adorn his thoughts, but with flowers, such as a child might gather among the grass, and lilies of the field.

It deserves remark also, that his preaching savors more of illustration than argument. He came to bear testimony to the truth, and as God's witness. It was his own truth, and needed not argument to substantiate it. Those who received him as God's Messenger, received his message; while those who would not receive the message on the authority of the Messenger, would not be convinced by argument. But while he took comparatively little pains to demonstrate the verity of what he uttered, he felt the importance of illustrating and impressing it. Nor did he fail to do so by the most fitting and affecting methods. When he would rebuke the aspiring spirit of his disciples, he "took a little child and set him in the midst of them, and said unto them. Except ye become as this little child, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." When he would read them the lesson of mutual condescension, he took a basin of water and washed their feet, and said unto them, "If I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, so ought ye also to wash one another's feet." When he would inculcate the danger of apostasy, he related the parable of the Relapsing Demoniack. To inculcate the vanity of riches and earthly hopes, he rehearsed the narrative of the Rich Fool. To impress upon the minds of men the aggravated sinfulness and danger of neglected opportunities, he uttered the parable of the Barren Fig Tree. Other preachers do not, in this respect, follow his example, for the obvious reason that they are unable to follow it. With the single exception of Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress, their attempts to do so, have been a failure. The design of all Christ's

parables was to illustrate and enforce some great truth. The parable of the Merchant selling goodly Pearls — the parable of the Talents — the parable of the Good Samaritan — of the Gospel Supper — of the King preparing for War — of the Piece of Lost Silver — of the Unjust Steward — of the Unjust Judge and Widow — of the Pharisee and Publican — of the Laborers hired at different hours — of the Thief in the Night — of the Children in the Market Place — and of the Strong Man keeping His House was each designed to present in living imagery, and strong and graphic characters, its corresponding and important truth. It was thus he held the attention of his hearers, and kept the avenues of their minds open to what would otherwise have been to them cold and uninteresting doctrines. But it was the ardor and urgency of his preaching that gave it its greatest interest. His own mind and heart were intent on his ministry, and his whole soul absorbed in his work. There was no affectation of zeal, but the honest and strong emotions of a preacher who felt for the glory of God and the salvation of men, as never man felt. We cannot think of Christ as a cold and dull preacher; the thing was impossible. When we hear him say, " Seek ye first the kingdom of God;" " Strive to enter into the strait gate, for many I say unto you shall seek to enter in, but shall not be able;" " What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" we know what it was that made his discourses differ from cold dissertations on morality, and frigid philosophical lectures, and the tame preaching of many a Christian pulpit, that plays around the head, and never aims its arrows at the conscience, or the heart. It was this that made him eloquent. There was heart within him; there was heart in his preaching, and what he most desired was the hearts of those who heard him. It was the soul that he longed to gain, and to free it from condemnation and death. Honor he sought not, and was content that men should " turn away their faces from him for shame." Gold and silver he had none, nor did he seek them. He knew they would melt away; brilliant gems, and splendid palaces would all vanish. Literary reputation he did not ask for; science and the arts, after having accomplished their ends, would remain only among the treasures of earth. He was God's Minister, and set to watch for souls as they that must give account. He was the Minister of that gospel in which are " hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" which changes not with the discoveries and the convulsions of time; which saves the soul from death; and whose true value is known only when all things earthly pass away. The preaching of Christ was also distinguished for its affectionate tenderness. There are favored moments in the preaching of almost every minister, when he catches a portion of the spirit of his divine Master; it warms his heart, illumines his countenance, gives tenderness even to the modulations of his voice, and he speaks as one who has been in the mount with God. When the Proto-martyr Stephen preached in the presence of the blood-thirsty men who condemned him, " all that sat in the Council looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." What is so unusual with other preachers, was habitual, was uniform with the Great Teacher. The unequalled loveliness of his personal character was a pledge of his deep interest both in the truths he uttered, and in the salvation of men. This perfect holiness imparted a sanctity to the excellence of his natural character and gave to it that heavenly sensitiveness and delicacy of feeling which rendered him so acutely alive to human joy and woe. The sins and miseries of men affected his holy mind, as no other mind was ever affected. His sympathy was perfect; " in all their afflictions, he was afflicted;" their joy filled him with gladness. One would think that the most obstinate rebel would have been silenced, and the most shamefaced and trembling penitent have been encouraged by those illustrations of divine compassion which are so strongly marked, and of such touching pathos in his ministry. The gentlest emotions dwelt in his bosom, and the gentlest

words flowed from his tongue. He shook the Tree of Life not for its fruit only, but for its budding promises. " Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted." He would revive the spirit of the humble, and wipe away the tears from the mourner's cheek. The meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peace-makers, the persecuted, and the reviled found in him the words of encouragement and consolation. He knew the character of men; and when he saw them, in all their disquietude, helplessness and misery, wandering and bewildered, and thirsting for good which they knew not how to obtain; often would he ascend some eminence from which he might command a view of the people, and there proclaim, " If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." Those there were to whom he preached, who felt the burden of their sins, and were oppressed by remorse; whose spirit drooped and who found no relief from their anguish; who were un comforted and without a resting-place; and to them he would utter the soothing invitation, " Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Did some company of wretched sinners stand before him who had wandered far from God, and in the wilderness where they were wandering found only the husks which the swine do eat, and with no light to cheer, and no clue to guide them back to their heavenly Father's house; he would paint before their eyes some prodigal youth and favorite son perishing with hunger, doubting, resolving, coining to himself, returning, welcomed, and weeping upon his Father's bosom. They were not unkind thoughts nor words of harshness when he said to the detected woman, " Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more;" nor when he said of her who stood behind him weeping, and washing his feet with her tears and wiping them with the hair of her head, " She loved much, and hath much forgiven!" nor when after the seeming severity by which he put another's confidence to the test, as though he would crush the dog that crouched at his feet, he said to her, " O woman! great is thy faith; be it unto thee, even as thou wilt." How beautiful a scene was that when, with the love of heaven beaming in his countenance, and the grace of heaven flowing from his lips, he turned to the captious Pharisees, and taking little children into his arms, said, " Of such is the kingdom of heaven!" Look too at the picture so delightfully exhibited by John, where Mary and Martha tell him of the death of Lazarus, and Mary falls down at his feet weeping. The depressed and afflicted spirit of these bereaved sisters excited the workings of that compassion which was all tenderness and love. He entered into their sorrows, and mingled his tears with theirs. " When he saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled." With memorable solemnity he had just said, " I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me shall never die;" yet as they led him to the grave of Lazarus, " Jesus wept." He often wept, but we do not read that he ever wept for his own sufferings. When he was going to the cross, he turned round and said to the women who followed him, " Weep not for me." A tear trembled in his eye when he looked upon fallen Peter; the look that melted and rebuked this hasty disciple, was the mingled look of rebuke and love — love which even he perjured denial of his Lord could not extinguish. And when after his resurrection, he would have his Apostles meet him on the mountain in Galilee, and feared that this fallen disciple might not deem it fitting for him thus to meet his Lord; what tenderness was that which condescended to mention him by name, " Go tell my disciples and Peter that I go before them into Galilee, there shall they see me!" Yet was he as holy as he was kind. His knocks at the door of the human heart are at first gentle, and never wax to the thundering voice of terror, except when his long-suffering is exhausted. When he stood over Jerusalem, it was not in stern and ill-omened silence, but in the

burstings of grief. It was the place of his fathers sepulchers; the glory of the Hebrew people; the pride of the world; the Mount Zion that he loved. He gazed long on that ill-fated city and wept over it. Next to Gethsemane and Calvary, it was his hour of sadness. They were not angry words that he uttered; they were wrung from his bosom. His lips proclaim his emotions, and his voice well nigh fails him, as he exclaims, " O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! how oft would I have gathered thee as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but ye would not!" How august the scene, yet how unutterably tender! Was there ever such a preacher! The incarnate God — Mary's Son — humanity in Deity, preaching the glorious gospel to this lost and miserable world!

There is one more characteristic of Christ as a preacher, which gave him still greater pre-eminence and glory. I mean the perfect consistency between his preaching and his character. In this he stands alone the single polar star of the moral hemisphere. Every truth he uttered had its ante-type in his own thoughts; every holy affection he inculcated had its counterpart in his own heart; every duty he enjoined shone out in faultless perfection in his own life. The most captious of his enemies could, in no instance, turn upon him and say, " Physician, heal thyself." There was no such preaching as his holy life everywhere and always exemplifying, and thus enforcing the gospel he uttered. He once said to the multitude and to his disciples, "The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat; all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not." This reproach, to some extent, belongs to every preacher of the gospel the world has seen, save one. Though in this he is most fitly the object of our imitation, yet how imperfectly is he imitated! Compared with his, the lives of the best of ministers neutralize, if they do not countervail their teaching. Yes, this is an humbling and abasing thought; but its verity and the force of it are too obvious, and sometimes too startling to be denied. And while we despair of successfully imitating his personal excellence, let us honor him by the effort to become more and more like him. It should have an effect upon us as ministers and as hearers, to keep his glory as a preacher more steadily in our view. O that we could see more of Christ in our ministry, and more of the power of his gospel in those who attend upon it. It was not for want of power in him as a preacher, that his ministry was so ineffectual in the conversion of men. " He came to his own, and his own received him not;" he " was rejected of that generation." And while this is fearful demonstration of their obduracy, and shows how the men of Nineveh, and the Queen of the South, and Sodom and Gomorrah will rise up in the judgment against that generation and condemn it, because a greater than Jonas or Solomon were there; it is at the same time among the proofs that the days of his ministry on the earth were not the days of his triumph, but of his humiliation. He was not as yet to be the conqueror, but to travel in chains to the cross and the grave. Influences there were which he was yet to control. The day of his exaltation was coming, in which he would lead captivity captive, and give gifts to men that the Lord God might dwell among them; influences which would manifest more brightly than ever his glory as a preacher, and a day of glory when all nations should bow before him. There were' truths also he could not inculcate, because they were not as yet truths. While he lived he could not inculcate them, because they were the great moral lessons of his death. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth," saith he, " will draw all men unto me." Herein is our privilege above his, and those who hear us above those of the people to whom he preached. We preach Christ actually crucified. It is not Christ the preacher alone of which we preach and you hear, but it is Christ the sufferer. The most impressive lessons he ever taught were those when, in silent agony, he hung in Calvary.

I bow my knee before that cross. I thank God that he allows me to preach " Christ crucified." This is the lesson he himself is now reading to you, to me, to all, from his throne in the heavens. This mighty healer now looks down upon this hospital world, to cheer and revive it; upon this dungeon world, to break the chains of its spiritual bondage; upon this vast dormitory of sin and sepulcher of death, to bid the sleeping awake and the dead live. He is Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God.

06 — Christ's Miracles

Chapter 6 THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S MIRACLES

Some writer has remarked, that " it would have been the greatest miracle of all, if the world had received the Christian religion without miracles." If there were those who. were authorized by God to bear the messages of his truth to men, it would seem to be altogether a reasonable and proper thing, that they should have been able, in the first instance, to attest their divine mission, by signs and wonders such as God only can perform. God himself recognized the reasonableness of this expectation, when he sent Moses and Aaron before Pharaoh, and Moses and Elijah to ancient Israel. It was not to be expected that the divine mission and authority of Jesus Christ would be acknowledged by the Jews, unless he brought with him these high credentials. He was a man of humble origin and life, with no adventitious honors, alike destitute of wealth and power, and promising no earthly reward to his followers; yet did he reveal a system of faith and practice so foreign to the habits of the Jewish people, and so hostile to a world that lieth in wickedness, that if he could not have appealed to his miracles as evidence of his divine mission, there is no reason to believe he would have been acknowledged as a Teacher sent from God. The heaven-born religion which he came to teach, had, indeed, very many and concurrent credentials; but, whether they were external or internal, or partook of these mingled characteristics, they all indicated the immediate interposition of the Deity. Prophecy is a miracle; and even the self-evidencing power of the gospel on the hearts of those who receive it, so widely extended and so uniform, is itself miraculous. Christ himself, who " hath the key of David, and openeth, and no man shutteth," is the greatest of all miracles; while the mighty works he wrought, form the foundation on which the gospel rests. And it is a foundation girt round with strength, more firm than that which girds the mountains. The church rests upon it, and has risen, and will continue to rise, when the everlasting mountains are scattered, and the earth and all that is therein is burnt up. Miracles must hold up Christianity, or it cannot stand. The history of the Deistical controversy shows, that there is no one class of arguments against which infidels have combined their forces so strenuously, as the argument from miracles. Some have maintained that miracles are impossible; and some, that if possible, they are so improbable as to be incapable of proof

These remarks evince the importance of the subject to which the present chapter is devoted. Though we do not propose to speak at large of the doctrine of miracles but only of the miracles of Christ, yet we cannot do this intelligently, without submitting a few observations at the outset, on the subject of miracles generally.

What is a miracle? Much depends upon a true answer to this question. Is it merely an event which is extraordinary and marvellous, and out of the usual course of nature? or is it an event or occurrence, which to us is unaccountable and for which we can assign no sensible cause? Or will you define it to be an event wrought by the immediate power of God? Or will you say, it is an event which is contrary to the established laws of nature and one which involves a reversion or suspension or violation of those facts? We are not satisfied with either of these definitions.

Extraordinary events are not miracles; for then would every earthquake, every monstrous birth, every resuscitation of suspended animation in the human frame, be miraculous. Extraordinary events are not supernatural, but rare occurrences, which accurate inspection and a patient investigation of their causes, show to have existed without any immediate interposition of divine power. Effects that are inexplicable by us, are not miracles. What is an unaccountable event to one man, may be easily accounted for by another; and what is the obvious effect of physical causes, in the view of one man, may be miraculous in the view of another, who is ignorant of those causes. There are effects which are the result of trick and necromancy; of sorcery and magic; of art and deception; where the machinery by which they are produced is understood by those who produce them, and their causes are perfectly simple and easily explained.

Such have been the advances in natural science, that what is spoken in the ear in secret, may be almost instantaneously communicated across mountains and continents, through rivers and seas, without any other reliance than on natural causes. Medical science has made such progress in the knowledge of the human frame, and in its acquaintance with natural causes hitherto unknown; that within its own well defined limitations, it produces results that astonish us. Yet none of these are miracles, nor are they attributed to miraculous power. Pretensions to miracle there have been; there were in the magicians of Egypt; but the effects were confessedly the result of "enchantment," and produced either by the agency of natural causes known only to the initiated, or by demoniacal power, given by God, and given to prove, and not disprove the divine commission of those whose authority they were intended to oppose. There have been and are still such pretensions in the church of Rome; and in modern mesmerism, and in the agency of certain spirits whose invisible knocking is supposed to convey responses from the unseen world; but it were difficult to say of such fictitious and ludicrous claims, which is the greater, the wickedness of the deceivers, or the weakness of the deceived. Miracle is not ignorance; it is not necromancy; it is not nature and science; it is above and beyond them. Nor is it every miracle that reverses suspends, or violates the established laws of nature. It is no violation of the laws of nature that a sudden calm should succeed a storm; or that a sudden storm should succeed a calm; though, under supposable circumstances, such events may carry with them the irresistible evidence of miracles. This definition of a miracle exposes the subject to unanswerable difficulties. A miracle is not a violation of any law of nature. The laws of nature are neither violated, nor altered, when a new effect is followed by a new and inadequate cause. They are violated only when the cause being exactly the same, a different effect is the result. This is Mr. Hume's definition of a miracle, and one which evinces the subtlety of his reasoning when he affirms that a miracle is in capable of proof. But what violation or alteration of the laws of nature is it that God should be the author of a miracle? It may be out of the common course of nature, but is not contrary to that course. It may be a new and extraordinary effect, resulting from a new and extraordinary cause; while the laws of nature are no more violated by it, than they were when God said, "Let there be light, and there was light." A miracle is an event which is above the power of the natural agent and produced by the immediate power of God. Whatever event is demonstrably above the power of the immediate and visible agent, is miraculous. It may perhaps be more definite to say, that a miracle is a supernatural effect produced by the immediate power of God for the purpose of attesting the divine mission of those who are sent to communicate his will to men. This is the view which the Scriptures give of miracles. The miracles there recorded are not only ascribed to God alone, but were wrought in proof of the divine mission of those who performed them. Daniel said to

Nebuchadnezzar, " There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets; but as for me, this secret is not revealed to me, for any wisdom that I have more than any living." Joseph said to Pharaoh, " It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace." We are told that " God wrought special miracles by the hand of Paul;" and that through all the ministrations of the Apostles " God bore them witness, both with signs, and wonders, and divers miracles." These holy prophets were scrupulous in disclaiming this power, and in attributing it to God. " Ye men of Israel, why marvel at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us as though by our own powers and holiness, we had made this man well?" The God of Abraham glorified his Son Jesus; and his name, through faith in his name, hath made this man whole." When the Jews saw the works performed by Christ, they made the confession, " No man can do the miracles which thou doest, except God be with him."

It is not unimportant to remark that miracles are performed by the immediate power of God. Natural causes have no influence in producing them. Like the rod of Moses and the blowing of the ram's horns around the walls of Jericho, and the branch cast into the waters of Marah, and the smiting of the rock in Kadesh, and the clay upon the eyes of him that was born blind, and the touching of the bier of the widow's son, natural instrumentalities are the mere indices and exponents of God's omnipotent will. In every instance of miracle it is the finger of God, it is the voice of God that produces it. Every miracle speaks for him, and bears the signature of his power.

Miracles have an object. The uniformity with which God governs the physical and the moral world, is not thus disturbed without good and sufficient reasons. The capricious interpositions of his power, deviating from the ordinary course of nature, and producing effects which contravene the established method of his agency, would not only destroy the confidence of men in the uniformity of his government, and thus put all human calculations adrift upon an ocean of uncertainty, but would be unworthy of God himself. There must be a demand for this interposition, and there was a demand for it. And that demand consisted in the necessity of attesting the divine mission of those who were sent with the messages of God's truth to men. There have been " vanity and lying divination" in the world; there have been " signs and lying wonders," which Satan and wicked men may be able to produce; but they profess to be the work of creatures. They are expressly said to be " after the working of Satan." They are not performed in attestation of the divine mission of those who perform them, but are got up for the purpose of producing the false conviction that there are other powers that are miraculous beside the power of God. They do not, therefore, make any pretensions to such attestation. The miracles narrated in the Bible, as performed by Moses and the prophets, and by Christ and his apostles, all have this great and distinguishing characteristic. They are marks of supernatural interposition in giving to the world the revelation of God's will. Their object was not to excite admiration even in beholding the footsteps of him who doeth wonders, and whose ways are unsearchable; but to throw a strong and irresistible beam of conviction upon the eye of men, that those who addressed them were sent of God. With these few observations on the general subject of miracles, we may, perhaps, be the better prepared to take a view of the miracles of Christ. The first remark which here most naturally presents itself is, that they were actually performed. There can be no doubt of the fact that there appeared in Judea, eighteen hundred years ago, a man called Jesus of Nazareth, who wrought the miracles of which we have an account in the New Testament. This was never denied in the earlier periods of the Christian era, even by the enemies of Christianity. There was no impossibility in these miracles, unless we set bounds to the divine omnipotence; there was no improbability in them, if we

consider the high ends they were designed to promote. Improbable events may require stronger testimony than those which are probable; but the most improbable, so long as they are possible, are capable of being satisfactorily attested. It was a most improbable event that the Israelites should pass through the Red Sea, as on dry land; but it would have been a more improbable, nay, an impossible event, that they themselves should not know if they did or did not thus pass through it; and if they did not, equally impossible was it that that whole nation should have conspired to palm the falsehood upon the world, and should have done it so successfully that contemporaneous nations, so far from challenging, confirmed their testimony. The confidence placed in human testimony does not depend on the nature of the facts attested, but on the credibility of those who attest them. If it be conceded that the miracles of the Saviour were not impossible events; the only question which presents itself to a fair mind, relates to the credibility of the witnesses who attest them. Their testimony ought unquestionably to be severely scrutinized, and the force of it deliberately estimated. Circumstances not a few enter into this question, and such as demand grave consideration. Who are the men, and what was their object in bearing testimony to these events? What interest had they in substantiating them? and what were the circumstances in which they declared their conviction of the reality of what they saw and heard? Were they bad men and deceivers? Were they weak, credulous men, and easily deceived? Were the miracles which they attested, in favor of a religious system that consulted their national or individual prejudices? Were they few in number, and men that had little opportunity of being acquainted with the miracles themselves? Is their testimony discordant, and at variance with itself; and if not so, was their harmony the result of pre-concerted arrangement? Were they gainers by their testimony, and prompted by any considerations of personal interest? Were the miracles they attested wrought privately, or in secluded places, or by night, and in the presence of a few? And were there other concurrent witnesses and testimonials, confirming their simple narrative, and placing their testimony beyond dispute?

We have the most satisfactory answer to these inquiries. The character of these witnesses was never impeached, even by their bitterest enemies. They were plain men, but shrewd and sober men; and one of them so incredulous, that he refused to believe in the testimony of his companions, until he had seen the facts with his own eyes. The religious system in favor of which the miracles they attested were wrought, frowned on all their prepossessions, and was established on the subversion and ruins of their own system, so venerable for its age, and for its splendor so flattering to their national pride. They were twelve men who were Christ's companions for the three years of his public ministry. There was just enough incidental variety in their testimony to preclude the possibility of pre-concert, and just such a concurrence as establishes the great and essential facts. They were, in every view, disinterested witnesses. Their Leader instructed them that they must forsake all and follow him; and though some of them vainly imagined that he came as a temporal Prince, and would elevate them to dignity and power, yet when they came to be thoroughly disabused of these imaginations, and found by experience that they were no regal honors they attained to; they firmly adhered to their testimony, through poverty, contempt, and a persecuting malignity, that was quenched only with their blood. They were martyrs, not to a set of opinions but for their testimony to facts. One word of recantation — any doubt — would have delivered them from this barbarous doom; but they "would not accept the deliverance." The miracles they attested were performed in the open light of the sun, in the presence of enemies as well as friends, in the streets and in the Temple, in the city and in the villages, on mountain and

plain, inviting observation and scrutiny, and open to detection, if there were any appearance of fraud. Concurrent testimonials also, and concurrent witnesses there were, in the standing effects of this miraculous power, in established and perpetuated memorials, and in the testimony of the enemies of Christianity. It is a remarkable fact that their testimony was uncontradicted. It was not contradicted at the time, even by their most violent persecutors; in solemn council they confessed "they could say nothing against it." The chief priests and Pharisees made the confession, " This man doeth many miracles." Peter appealed to " the men of Israel, and told them that they themselves knew, that Jesus of Nazareth was a man approved by God, by wonders and miracles which he did in the midst of them." Josephus, the enemy of Christ, records in his Jewish antiquities, that the man Jesus "performed many wonderful works." The Jewish traditions called the Talmud, while they vilify Christ as a seducer of the people and a sorcerer, acknowledge that he performed numerous and wonderful works. Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, gave an account of his miracles to the Emperor Tiberias. Suetonius, Tacitus, the younger Pliny, AEIus, Lampridius, and other Roman historians, as quoted by Dr. Lardner, in his " Heathen Testimonies," and by Dr. McKnight in his " Credibility of the Gospel History," all confirm the narrative of the four Evangelists. Celsus, Porphyry, and the Emperor Julian, the first living in the second century, the second in the third, and the last in the fourth, did not deny the miracles of Christ, though they ascribed them to magic. The fact also is patent as the day, that thousands of Jews and Pagans, who were once the bitter persecutors of Christ and his followers, were, by this and other concurrent testimony, won over to the Christian faith; cast in their lot with the despised Christians, and with them, " took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and at last sealed their testimony with their blood. These conflicts and triumphs of the early disciples and martyrs to the Christian faith, stand forth to the world as proofs of the miraculous power of Christ, which cannot be resisted. They arrested the attention and attracted the admiration of an admiring world. These early converts, also, like the first apostles, did not suffer martyrdom for their opinions but for facts which forced themselves upon their conviction. And may we not demand, did this cloud of witnesses testify falsely? Would not this have been a greater miracle, less probable, and more in opposition to the established laws of human conduct, as confirmed by observation and consciousness, than the miracles of Christ themselves? We affirm, therefore, that the miracles were actually performed. To the men of that generation, one would think the testimony was sufficiently convincing. We are not surprised that the acknowledgment was extorted from the lips of the Pharisees, " Behold, the whole world is gone after him!" and only wonder that the whole world did not become Christian. In the next place, the miracles of Christ were many and various. There was no needless multiplication of them, and no parade in the selection of their objects; yet were they more various in their character than a careless reader of the Gospels would imagine, and more in number than could be well recorded. There was no ostentation in performing them. It was at no stated hour and in no selected spot, and by no published programme by which the multitude were assembled to witness his mighty deeds. There was no trumpet sounded and no national flag to salute him; no military, or civic pageant, no thunder of cannon, and no triumphal arch to greet his quiet progress. It was in the ordinary course of his ministrations that he performed these mighty deeds, and as " he went about doing good." Many, very many instances of his power are specified by the Evangelists; but they constitute a very small part of those which actually existed. We read of his " healing great multitudes;" of " great multitudes coming to him and his healing them all;" and of people flocking from all parts of the country, and bringing to him those who suffered under the

varied maladies which flesh is heir to, and many of them utterly incurable by human power. The whole course of his three years' ministry was thus employed. Wherever he went, the people followed him in order to solicit his healing power. It was a wonderful period of the world while he was upon the earth; and wonderful scenes were they that were exhibited in Palestine during the years of his active ministry. Just think of a man appearing in the Holy Land, unostentatiously manifesting these miraculous powers, and wherever he goes attracting the multitude by his mighty deeds. What days of power were these, and what days of glory to the Son of man! Everywhere, throughout Judea, Samaria, and Galilee the scene is repeated. They come from far; they would know the Great Teacher and hear his voice, and see his wonders. And when one crowd of applicants after another retires, with one voice they exclaim, "When the Messiah cometh, will he do greater things than these?"

Though the variety of his miracles could not be as great as their number yet was it as great as can well be conceived. When the enemies of God's ancient people were overcome, they attributed their defeat to their ignorance of "the manner of the God of the land." They encouraged themselves with the thought that he is the "God of the valleys and not the God of the hills." To rebuke their presumption and convince them of his universal power, God varied his miracles; he caused the sun and moon to stand still in their orbits, that for once they might see that hill and valley, earth and heaven were alike under the control of Israel's God. I have tasked my own imagination and have endeavored to think of some expression of miraculous power which might have been made by Christ, that he did not make; and I have done so in vain. I cannot think of one, unless it be some capricious manifestation, and one that has no object but a mere parade of power. Make the experiment for yourself. What shall the miracle be? Shall it be to change the elements? at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, he changes water into wine. Shall it be to heal the sick who are ready to die; Jesus said to the nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum, "Go thy way, thy son liveth," and at "the same hour the fever left him." Shall it be the cure of the raving demoniac; "Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and he came out of him." Shall it be the healing of the leprous; the restoration of the paralytic; the recovery of the infirm and impotent; the withered hand restored; the blind recovering their sight; the deaf their hearing, the dumb their speech; the dropsical made whole; the lame walking, and the perished and lost limb of the maimed created anew, and grown out afresh? All these things Jesus did. Shall he still the tempest; hear him rebuking the winds, and the sea, and making them calm, and then listen while the witnesses exclaim, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Shall he walk upon the sea as confidently and securely as upon dry land; "in the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them walking on the sea, and when they cried out for fear, he said to them "Be of good cheer, it is I, be not afraid." Shall he, from a few barley loaves and small fishes, so multiply them as to supply the wants of thousands; he not only does this, but the fragments that remain are more than the food originally provided. Would you see greater things than these; go to the village of Nain, and see him raise the widow's son to life by touching the bier; or stand by the grave of Lazarus, and hear him say, "Lazarus, come forth," and he that was dead comes forth bound in grave clothes. What other acts of miraculous power can the most skeptical mind require? What other can he think of which these do not imply, and which are not less expressive than these? Do you say, he might have removed mountains, and dried up rivers and oceans; or turned in the sea upon the solid land; or sunk cities; or created and peopled them in the desert; or transformed the sandy desert into verdant fields; these things, and others like them, he could have done; and while

they would have demonstrated his power, they would not show forth his wisdom. They were not called for; they would have been worse than useless; and if he had performed a thousand such miracles, they would have been no more convincing than those which he actually performed. What more than this, does the skeptical Jew, or the infidel Gentile demand? What is there that is more demonstrative and significant? Is there anything?

There is one act of his power greater than all these. What if he himself should sicken and die; what if you should see him even suspended from the gibbet, or nailed to the cross, and there, after his blood had trickled down, drop by drop, taken down and laid in the sepulcher, and then come back from the abodes of death, and once more dwell, a living man with living men. You shall see it all. The sun had crossed his meridian and was going down, when Jerusalem is emptied of its inhabitants, and they stand gazing on his cross. Many a long hour had he hung there the sport of Jew and Roman, till at length he cries, " Father, into thine hands I commit my spirit," and then gives up the ghost. A Roman soldier rudely plunges his spear through his heart, in order to make sure that the murderous deed was done. The quaking earth, the reeling city, the veil of the Temple rent in twain from the top to the bottom, the midnight darkness that came over the land at noonday, the silent and retiring multitude, all bear witness that Jesus of Nazareth is no longer among the living. His lifeless body sleeps in the garden in a new sepulcher. In the mean time, unwonted scenes take place within the city; the dead came forth from their graves and appear to many of its horror stricken inhabitants. And on the third day after his crucifixion, this same Jesus, armed with the terrors of a second earthquake, rises from the grave, according to the Scriptures, and appears to his disciples, who went forth and preached through Jesus, the resurrection of the dead. And to crown the whole, this same Jesus, who thus expired on a cross between two malefactors, and rose again on the third day, after having lived forty days on the earth, left the earth which despised and rejected him, and went back to his Father's throne. There was a small company of Christians, consisting of somewhat more than five hundred, who were assembled on Mount Olivet, who were witnesses of his ascension, when, by his own Godlike omnipotence, he made the clouds his chariot, and walked upon the wings of the wind, and the distant heavens received him out of their sight. Is it easy to conceive of a greater variety of miracles than this?

We remark, again, the miracles of Christ were all of a benevolent character. Inspect them all, from the first which he wrought at the marriage in Cana, of Galilee, consecrated to social joy, to the last, by which he ascended to heaven; and you will perceive that they are striking manifestations of his love and mercy, as well as his power. They were the applications of human want to which he responded; and the cries of human misery and helplessness which reached his ear. It was the courtier's appeal for a suffering servant; it was the father's appeal for a dying daughter; it was the cry of the prostrate lunatic, or the foaming demoniac to which he listened. It was the orphan sisters weeping at the grave of their only brother, and the lonely widow broken-hearted for the death of her only son, with whom he sympathized. He did not seek the rich, nor overlook the poor. What he did was without fee or reward. He asked only that these beneficiaries of his benevolent power should receive the greater gift of the gospel of his grace. See that wretched demoniac, naked and bleeding, "howling with agony as a wanderer among the tombs." " Evil spirit, I command thee to come out of him," says Jesus, and the man is " sitting at his feet, clothed, and in his right mind." Go to the lake of Gennesaret, and see that loathsome and frightful form, shut out from the society of men, because " his flesh is putrefied, and inch by inch is dropping from his bones." He had laid

himself down to die; but roused by the tumult of the multitude, and told that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he uttered the cry, " Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean!" Every eye was fixed on Christ, and every ear heard the prompt reply, " I will; be thou clean!" Look, now, at that dense crowd of human beings, pressing on every side, tossed as the trees of the forest are shaken by the wind. It is a " perfect sea of faces, and rocked as if it stood upon the sea;" but it is composed of the helpless and those who help them. They are parents who were once the pride and glory of their children, and children who were once the pride and glory of their parents; the rich and the poor, the maimed, the halt, the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the palsied, the leprous, and the maniac. As fast as one is healed, another steps in his place. The more distant and helpless begin to despair; and as they give utterance to their despondency, Jesus responds, " All things are possible to him that believeth; go in peace!" Such was the benevolent character of his miracles; they were not wrathful, nor omens of wrath.

We remark again, the miracles of Christ were strongly indicative of those greater cures which he came to perform for the souls of men. They were so in their nature, in the means by which they were effected, and in the prescribed conditions on which they were wrought. If we look at their nature, we perceive that they were bright omens of good to lost men, blind, deaf, diseased, and dead as they are in trespasses and sins. One of the most effective methods by which the minds of Jew and Gentile were arrested, their prejudices subdued, and their prepossessions enlisted in favor of the gospel, was the fact that these miraculous cures of the body preceded the cures which Christ came to effect for the soul. Men everywhere needed to be convinced that Jesus Christ was their best friend, and that he had no other object than to promote their best interests for time and eternity. There was great wisdom and love in his selecting the most distressing diseases of the body and the mind as the medium through which his miraculous power was manifested. It showed the benignity of his heart, and was fitted to disarm their suspicion, win their confidence, and indicate the nature and objects of his heavenly mission. This thought demands more enlargement than we can now give to it; and we must content ourselves with merely selecting a few examples. The miracle of giving sight to the man who was born blind happily illustrates the spiritual illumination of men when they are brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light. They are born spiritually blind. " The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." Jesus anointed the eyes of the blind man with clay and told him to go and wash in the pool of Siloam; and when he had done so he was restored to sight. So the dark and benighted sinner, who obeys the voice of Jesus Christ, and washes in Siloam's fountain, is cured of his blindness by God's effective grace; sees spiritual things as he never "before saw them, and becomes a monument of the Redeemer's glory. He may not be able to describe the process of the work of grace in his soul, nor" how this happy change was brought about; but he is conscious of its effects, and can say with the restored Jew, " One thing I know, that whereas I was blind, I now see." Those instances in which Christ cured men of the leprosy are among the most illustrious miracles which he wrought; and most beautifully illustrate the power of his grace in cleansing the soul from the defilement of sin. Just as the leper forfeited his privileges, under the law, of approaching God in his sanctuary, has the sinner forfeited his legal right of drawing nigh unto God. Just as the leper was defiled and unclean and loathsome, so is the sinner defiled and impure, and covered with the wounds and sores and plague of sin. Just as the leper was threatened with a slow and lingering death, so is the spiritual disease of the sinner of the most alarming and dreadful kind, diffusing itself throughout all

the faculties of his mind and heart, and everywhere spreading its malignity. Just as the leper was required to have a just sense of his loathsomeness, to lay his hand upon his mouth, and cry unclean! unclean! so is the sinner required to have just apprehensions of his vileness, a deep sense, and a humiliating conviction of his malady. Just as the leper fell at Jesus' feet, crying " Lord, if thou wilt thou canst make me clean," so is the guilty and perishing sinner's only refuge and hope in the sovereign and almighty grace of the adorable Saviour; and just as the leper, in his application to the great Healer, found himself a recovered and new man, so the sinner, in thus committing himself to the hands of the Redeemer, is washed from his filthiness; and though the remains of his distemper cleave to him, its deadly poison is extracted, its power broken, and he lives. The most emphatic miracles of Christ, and those which excited the most admiration, were his raising to life the daughter of Jairus, the widow's son at Nain, and Lazarus. They were not only diseased, but dead; the lamentations of the mourners had begun; one of them was being borne to his sepulcher, and the body of one had become putrescent and lain in the grave four days. But at Christ's command the departed spirit came again to its earthly tabernacle, and they went forth into the world among the living. So fallen man is not only diseased and far gone in his spiritual malady, but dead in trespasses and sins. Nor is there any power that quickens him but the power of Christ. " You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." By him there is a complete resurrection from the death of sin to a life of righteousness. Christ is their life, and his mighty power it is that quickens them. It is worthy of remark also that the prescribed condition on which Christ wrought his miracles was faith' in him. " Believest thou that I am able to do this?" " According to your faith be it unto you!" So faith is the revealed condition of the gospel salvation. " He that believeth shall be saved." Christ " is the power of God to every one that believeth." The Saviour, also, as the great Healer, was accessible to all; no matter what their condition in the world, nor how inveterate and hopeless the malady, they had the privilege of applying to him. So have men everywhere the same privilege and the same access. There are no legal obstructions; no adamantine or fiery walls of justice to exclude them from entering into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. The blood of Christ is a sovereign antidote, and " cleanseth from all sin." No sinner that desires it but may be admitted to his mercy. He need not pine away in his iniquities, for " there is balm in Gilead, and a physician there."

We remark, in the last place, the miracles of Christ were always effective. We know they are so, in regard to the diseases of the soul. He " saves his people from their sins." They are no longer alienated from God, but he is their chosen portion. They are no longer led captive by Satan at his will. Outwardly and inwardly, they are new creatures. They are no longer odious in God's sight, but the people whom he loves. His wrath no longer abideth in them, nor are they exposed to the arrest of his justice. There is perfect relief in Christ, and he frees the soul " from the law of sin and death." So did his miracles while he was on the earth, accomplish their object. He performed no partial cures, and left no relics of the old malady which he attempted to eradicate. He spake and it was done. Whatever the malady was, no sooner did it come under his treatment, than it was removed. The remedy was complete and permanent. Filthiness was washed away; shame was covered; fear removed; health, comfort, and joy, restored to the abodes of despondency. Not one goes away disappointed and in sadness. The eyes of the blind saw; the lame leaped as a hart; and the tongue of the dumb sang. They were effects which transcended the power of man; and in those cases in which they were effected by means, the means were not only inadequate, but even adverse; while for the most part they were without the intervention of means, and were effected by

a touch, a word, or a look. They were always instantaneous, and never unsuccessful. In this respect they differ from the whole class of cures effected by the skill of men, and give the Great Physician the everlasting pre-eminence. We do not disparage the skill of man; nor are we unmindful of those advances in science, which, under the reign of the great Prince and Saviour, have contributed so largely to the relief of human suffering. Wonderful cures are effected even of the deaf and dumb; but in no case is the recovery effected by a look, a word, or a touch, and in none is it complete. Medical skill, through the power of natural causes, may give vigor to the torpid nerves of the ear; but it cannot perform what the Saviour did, "touch the tongue," so that the recovered deaf, without the aid of that culture which so gradually produces articulate speech, can "speak plainly." And it deserves remark, that Jesus invoked no higher power, in the wondrous works he wrought, than his own. It was not in another's name and by another's power that he did these things; but by his own power and authority, for he himself was God, and competent to perform the God-like work. The question which he put to the two blind men that came to him was, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" He did it, and he did it effectively for the objects of his compassion, and for his own mighty prerogative, and for the introduction and extension of his kingdom among men.

Such is a compendious view of the miracles of Jesus Christ; and do they not bespeak him glorious? Yet this is the Personage whom that wretched generation nailed mangled and bleeding, to the accursed tree. How true is the record, "They hated me without a cause." They could see no virtue where all virtue was. "Many good works," saith he, "have I done among you; for which of these do you stone me?" This is the man for whom they mingled such bitter waters, and on whom they wreaked their pitiless malignity. There was nothing in his character, nothing in his deeds, nothing either in his influence, or his object, that ought to have provoked them to this cruelty; yet the deed was done, that deed of infernal malignity, which shook their city and their Temple; which, in accordance with their own solemn and fearful imprecation, brought his blood upon themselves and their children, and super-induced over that blinded and wretched people, the midnight darkness of eighteen centuries. No marvel that as he stood over against that ill-fated city, he wept. They were but the convulsive throes of his own divine tenderness, when he bathed his face in his hands, and exclaimed, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!"

Take ye heed how ye reject this Great Healer. The men of that generation had nearer and more obvious testimony of his divine mission, from the miracles he performed, than is possessed by the men of this distant age. But the proof of his miracles is not less real to us, than it was to them. We have the testimony of apostles, because we have their own record, and such abundant proof of its genuineness and authenticity. No question has been more thoroughly scrutinized and sifted than this, both by the enemies and friends of Christianity, and none more satisfactorily settled by the laws of evidence. Christianity cannot afford to be credulous. The human mind cannot demand greater evidence of a divine mission, than is furnished by the credibility of the original witnesses to the miracles of Christ, and the genuineness and authenticity of their recorded testimony. Death has called them away; their dust is perished, and no man knoweth the place of their sepulcher; but their memorial remains. Their evidence is not weakened by the distance of time and place, because it is supported by facts, and facts do not lie. We feel an interest that links us to these bygone generations, and these entombed witnesses, because we have the same faculties of judgment, the same responsibility, the same wants, and the same immortality. Our gospel was

theirs; our faith was theirs; our hope, our salvation, rest on the same basis with theirs. We believe in Christ, " for his works' sake." The appeal which he made to them, he makes to us: "The works which the Father hath given me to finish," says he, " these same works do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Here we rest our confidence, and here they rested theirs, when in the depth of their solitude, they entered the prison from which they went out only to bare their neck to the axe of the executioner. The life giving power of that gospel which gave them victory, when Roman lictors threw off their headless trunks from the scaffold, and cast them to Nero's lions, cheers us with the light of immortality, even as they were cheered. Jesus said to the Jews, "If I had not done among them the works which no other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have no cloak for their sin." He came to be the Saviour of men; nor will he now cast out any that come to him, any more than he cast any who came to him in the days of his flesh; no, not one! " Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out." He still heals the broken heart, and binds up the prisoner's wounds. He still preaches the forgiveness of sin, and cures the ills which sin has caused. He still enters the strong man's house and spoils his goods, and destroys the works, and breaks the chains of that Great Enemy who leads men captive at his will. He still raises the dead in trespasses and sin, and quickens whom he will. " Verily I say unto you, the hour is coming and now is; when they that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and they that hear shall live."

I would not turn away from such a Healer. I would not reject such evidence of his mission. I would not refuse to inquire and satisfy myself of the foundation of his claims. Nor would I be long in prosecuting that inquiry, nor slow of heart to believe in him, lest he should come suddenly and shut the door of hope. The remedy is simple: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." You will be won over to him, if you once see him in his true loveliness and glory. There is form and comeliness in him, and beauty, and everything to make him to be desired.

" Ne'er in heaven's mansions, calm and bright, Did his immortal brow Send forth its pure, celestial light, More gloriously than now."

Great Physician! Almighty Healer! come to us from thine own mansions, and show us thy glory here, in this low, dark world. Every one who, having seen the Son, hath believed in him, hath everlasting life. Say not, I know he can heal me, and save me; but I am unworthy! So thought the suffering paralytic. But Jesus said to him, "My son!" — they were strange words, but they opened the sufferer's mind to new views, and new confidence in the Divine Healer — "My son be of good courage, thy sins are forgiven thee "

07 — Christ's Transfiguration

Chapter 7 THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S TRANSFIGURATION

Mountain scenery makes a strong, if not the strongest appeal from the world of nature to religious emotions. It is not the valley, nor the plain, where all is sweetness and tranquility, which speaks most emphatically to those sentiments within us that are waked up either by the sublime or the beautiful. It is not the ocean, now breathless, now swelling under the soft breeze, and now tossed by storms. It is not the crowded city, nor the lonely desert, skirted though it may be with rock and tower, and many a memorial of bold adventure. It is rather the mountain range, rising above plain and city, desert and ocean; sometimes crowned with clouds and sometimes brilliant with light; while here and there some bold and lofty peak shoots upward, glowing in azure beauty, clothed with majesty, and struggling for ages with the lightning's blast, and the fury of the hurricane.

Mount Tabor stands alone. It is a lofty mountain nearly three miles in height, in the northern border of the plain of Esdraelon, and not far from fifty miles north of Jerusalem. Both ancient and modern travellers speak of the view from the summit as one of the most beautiful in Palestine. A late writer says of it, " From the summit of Tabor, the eye wandered over the whole glory of the Land of Promise. To the south extended the mountains of Samaria, their peaked summits glowing in the sun with the colored brilliancy of a chain of gems. To the east, lay the lake of Tiberias, a long line of purple. Northward, like a thousand rainbows, ascended, lit by the western flame, the mountains of Gilboa where the spear of Saul was broken, and the first curse of Jewish obduracy was branded upon Israel in the blood of their first king. Closing the superb circle, ascending step by step, the south-eastern chain of the mountains of Lebanon were seen soaring into the very heavens." On this mountain Barak encamped with ten thousand of the men of Zebulon and Naphthali, on the eve of the battle with Sisera, in which Israel were the conquerors, and sang that song, " So let thine enemies perish, O Lord; but let them that love him be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength." It was from this mountain, that in our own day that great conqueror that made Europe tremble, descended upon the fierce Turk, and routed his army on the plain below. And here, on this lofty eminence, if uncontradicted tradition may be relied on, was the wonderful scene of Christ's transfiguration. This scene is the subject of the present chapter; it is the glory of Christ's transfiguration.

There were scenes in the life of the Saviour, in which the lustre of his divine glory broke through the dense veil which enveloped it by his assumption of our abject nature. Such was that exhibited at his baptism; when the Spirit, like a dove, rested upon him, and a voice was heard from heaven, saying, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Such were the scenes of his miraculous power; when " the God shone gracious through the man," and in his own name, and by his own authority he performed what none but the Deity could perform. Such was the scene on Tabor, when he " took Peter, James and John, and brought them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them." So peculiar and impressive was this manifestation, that it was made only in the presence of three of his disciples. It was not on this occasion only, that he thus

distinguished these three apostles. When he raised the daughter of Jairus, he permitted only these to follow him. When he endured his agony in the garden, these three only were allowed to be its witnesses. So great indeed was the distinction he conferred upon them that they were regarded as the chief in the apostolic family, Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians, speaks of James, Cephas and John as those who seemed to " be pillars." The scene about to be exhibited was not to be disclosed until after his resurrection; and it may be that Christ thought it safe only with these three trusty men. We do not know all the reasons for this distinction; but it is enough for us to know, that he wisely selected those whose united testimony might substantiate this great fact for the edification and comfort of those who fear God in all future time. In order to give additional interest to this transaction, Moses and Elias long acquainted with each other in heaven, came from that blessed world to witness this wonder on the earth; and themselves appeared in glory to converse with Christ concerning his approaching death. It was a scene of deep interest, when these favored disciples, absorbed in their own thoughts, thus accompanied their master to this Holy Mount. They knew not why it was that he led them thither; but no sooner had they reached its summit, than unearthly glories shone around them, and unearthly sounds came upon their ear.

We may well approach this scene with religious fear, and holy admiration. Nine of the chosen apostles were prohibited from beholding it; the three who did behold it, are long since fallen asleep; and it were presumption in us now, at the distance of eighteen centuries, to hope to draw aside the veil, and disclose all its wonders. It suggests to us the four following thoughts. Of all the great realities which this scene discloses, the first is the glory of the God-Man Mediator. The low and abased condition of the Son of God, during the period of his Incarnation, was an unnatural condition. It was a humiliation voluntarily assumed; a stoop from his original dignity; a descent from his previous elevation; a condescending resignation of his superior claims; and a renouncement of the pre-eminent station which he had before occupied. Heaven was his primeval residence, and there he possessed " the glory of his Father before the world was." No being was more exalted, for he " was in the form of God." " He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." He was emphatically transformed and transfigured by his assumption of our nature; and in the scene before us, he is transformed again; he lays aside for a while his condescension and humiliation and rises to some faint exhibitions of the majesty with which he was originally invested. The fulness of the Godhead which dwelt in him, for a little time shines forth in his humanity. When the prophet Daniel in vision beheld him, his " garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head, as pure wool;" of such " exceeding whiteness, that no fuller on earth could whiten them." That glory which had been covered and hidden, now for the first time was manifested to men, as it is to the blessed in heaven. That visage, " marred more than any man's, and his form more than the sons of men," was luminous, and shone as the "Sun, and his raiment was white as the light." He threw off his low attire, and put on his unearthly robes. He rose to something of his true grandeur, and manifested himself in a majesty and glory that made him the object of admiring adoration, both to the living and the dead. Moses and Elias, with the three selected disciples, no longer looked upon him as in the fashion and likeness of a mere man, but worshiped him as in the form of God.

There are some incidents in this transaction, which would lead us to conclude that for a part of the time, these three disciples were asleep; and that when they awoke to see this strange spectacle, like Jacob in the open field, they were constrained to exclaim, " the Lord is in this place, and I

knew it not." Their surprise was the greater, in that, though they came alone with Jesus into this desert mountain, they now beheld him in company with two others, who were also covered with unearthly glory, and conversed with Christ. These apostles had never seen them; did not know them, except as distinguished strangers, and perhaps some angelic visitants. Yet nothing was more simple, or more natural, than that, as they heard Jesus converse with them and identify them, they should recognize them as the two most illustrious prophets of the Hebrew race, since its foundation to the coming of the Messiah. It was altogether a most wonderful exhibition. Their divine Lord concealed this exhibition of his glory from the world. "The world knew him not," and knows him not now; but the eye of sense then beheld, and now the eye of faith beholds him, as "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The import of this appearance of the Son of Man, in the shining figure of a glorified body, and the Father, from the bright cloud that overshadowed him, proclaiming him to be "his well beloved Son," no man can understand who questions the Saviour's Divinity. Like his incarnation, it is glorious for its mysteriousness. It was as beautiful in its objects and aims, as it was unexpected and marvellous. It was indeed scarcely in keeping with the low condition and humble views of him who was born in the manger, and who had not where to lay his head; who entered into this world as the theater of his humiliation, and who was going up to Jerusalem to meet the death of the cross; to aspire to the inexpressible dignity of this wonderful hour. But it was kind to his disciples, kind to his church, and, in the dispensations of the divine government, unspeakably kind to him. It was his more formal consecration to his work of suffering. It was the lighting up of his course before he descended into the dark vale of his approaching sorrows. It was heaven's "anointing to his burial." It was the attestation of his Father's love, not to be forgotten when he hung in agony on the cross. But this was not all its object; there is another truth suggested by this scene. We are told by the Evangelist, that as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged the three disciples to "tell no man the vision, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead." There were disclosures on the mount which the Saviour knew could not fail to irritate the Jewish rulers and people; and which therefore were to be kept secret until he had accomplished the vision and prophecy by his death and resurrection. The Jews believed that their law would remain in full force under the gospel. The strength and extent of this popular prejudice was one of the most formidable barriers to the dissemination of the gospel among a people whose pride it was that they were the descendants of Abraham, and who so often exulted in the superiority of their own Lawgiver. It was the design of the Saviour to "take away the first covenant, that he might establish a second." The ceremonial law formed altogether of positive institutions, and founded on mutable and not immutable reasons, was of such a nature that it might be abrogated, whenever it was no longer necessary to preserve one nation distinct from all the nations of the earth as a religious community. It was plainly predicted in the Old Testament, that this dispensation should be abrogated by another, and more mild and life-giving dispensation. And this abrogation, the Saviour intimates, should actually take place at his death and resurrection. The ceremonial dispensation is revealed and enforced in "the Law and in the Prophets." But what do we behold on the Mount of Transfiguration? Moses, the great Lawgiver, and Elijah, the great Prophet, the two most distinguished ministers of the old dispensation, miraculously called from heaven for the express purpose of bearing witness to the Messiah; of paying their homage to the more illustrious Author of the Christian dispensation, and to lay down their authority at his feet. It was a constant and prevalent tradition among the Jews, that both Moses and Elijah should appear in the times of the Messiah; and to this tradition the

disciples refer after they came from the Mount, when they inquire of Christ, "Why then say the Scribes, that Elias must first come?" The character and history of Moses, as the great Jewish Lawgiver, were famous for ages, and in almost all countries of the world. Elijah was scarcely less distinguished, as the chief of the Prophets, as the founder and head of the school of the prophets which God instituted under Samuel; as the favored individual who was translated to heaven without tasting of death; and whom the Jews supposed to have appeared on the earth in the person of Christ. Yet these two greatest and most honored of God's ancient servants descend from heaven to acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord, and to speak of his death as the end of the Law and the great subject of all the predictions of the Prophets. When Moses was about to depart from the children of Israel, he told them, " A Prophet shall the Lord God raise up unto thee of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken." Here on the Mount of Transfiguration is that great Prophet, according to the divine word. When Moses died, the cloud of glory which had overshadowed Israel in the wilderness, departed; now it is restored, and a voice out of that cloud testifies, " This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him!" The three disciples would fain have detained Moses and Elijah upon the Mount, to listen to their instructions still; but a voice from heaven suppressed the untimely thought, and spoke to them out of the cloud, and said, " This is he; hear ye him " It is in him that I have delighted. He is now your Lawyer and Prophet. Hear him! Moses and Elias were my servants; he is my well beloved Son. He is the way, the truth, and the life; and no man " cometh unto the Father, but by him."

What greater evidence of its kind, can there be of the abrogation of the Old and the confirmation of the New Covenant than is here given by Moses, the great prophet of the Jews; by Elias, the great prophet of Jews and Greeks; by Christ, the great Author of the Christian dispensation; and by God the Father, the great Lord of all? Moses and Elias come from the world of spirits to wait upon their divine Lord. His own power brought them down upon Mount Tabor, to confess that a greater than Moses, or Elias, was there. This is the reason why these two men, above all the race of Adam, were called to act a part in this wonderful scene. Christ converses with them, recognizing their authority and honoring their office, but giving them their proper place. They converse with him, but it is concerning his " decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem," by which the great end of their mission was accomplished, and no longer had any binding force, or obligation.

These dispensations differ only as the " letter killeth and the Spirit giveth life;" as the old is the shadow of the new, and the new the light of the old; as the old is the new under the thick, dark cloud, and thundering of Sinai, and the new is the old under the bright sunshine and heavenly voice of Tabor. Christ is under a cloud in the one, he is in his glory in the other. " The law is but the shadow of good things to come." The Old Testament is the text of the New, and the New is a commentary upon the Old. " The whole revelation of God is here wrapt up and rolled together in itself, showing Moses, Elias, and Christ talking together upon the mount." Let us be thankful that our allotment is cast, not under the dark cloud and burning lava of Sinai, but under the mild and clear radiance of that illumined mountain, whence the voice, not of the mere lawgiver and judge, but the voice of our heavenly Father utters the language, " This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." " By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." " Our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." The day-spring from on high has dawned upon us, a flood of light from Tabor and Calvary is poured upon our path. If the Jews were favored above the heathen, how much more are we favored than the Jews! and " how shall we escape if we neglect

so great salvation?" This scene also suggests another thought, and: of a different kind. The reality of the world of spirits and the immortality of the soul; the resurrection of the body, and the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, are truths that are substantiated by a great variety of evidence. The varied testimony by which the Scriptures are demonstrated to be a plenary revelation from heaven, prove these truths on the testimony of that great Being who cannot lie. But there is one species of testimony not to be resisted even by the most skeptical and unbelieving mind. It is that which results from his own experience. If these doctrines are true, every man at death will find them to be true. The moment his soul leaves his body and he enters the world of spirits, he will see for himself that there is such a world. The righteous will see this the moment they enter heaven; and the wicked will see it the moment they enter their gloomy prison. They will have the most perfect conviction of the truth of a future state, and of all the realities of an unchanging eternity. Allied to this species of testimony, would be the testimony of those who have already died, and who should be permitted to come back to this world and bear witness to us of what they themselves have seen and heard in regions beyond the grave. Were the intercourse between this and the future world more frequent; could we travel into eternity as we can travel into foreign lands, and see its wonders, and then come back and dwell on the earth, we should no longer doubt the reality of the world of spirits and a future state of rewards and punishments. Or could those whom we have often seen, and with whom we have engaged in the common business of life, and who have eaten at the same table or slept in the same bed with us, return from that world for a short period, and walk these streets, and visit our dwellings, or even appear to us in the night watches, and whisper to us that the revelations which God has made in his word are no cunningly devised fables, and that there is in truth a heaven and a hell; it seems to us that we should be no longer faithless, but believing. One of the difficulties men profess to have in not believing these solemn realities, is that so few who die ever return to this world. Our friends pass away, and we see them no more; we hear of them no more. Age after age, and generation after generation passes away, and none come back to tell us where they have been, or where we shall go. No, not one word have we heard from that distant country for these eighteen hundred years! Eighteen hundred years ago, he who inhabiteth eternity, gave the command. Seal up the sayings of the prophecy of this book. The rich man in the parable who went to hell, is represented as soliciting Abraham to send Lazarus to his father's house, that he might "testify unto them, lest they also come to the place of torment." Abraham makes no other reply than this: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them;" and when still importuned, he replies, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they hear, though one rose from the dead." The request was unreasonable, and it would be unreasonable now. It were impossible to repeat this sort of testimony frequently enough to satisfy all the demands of a skeptical mind, without breaking down all the barriers between time and eternity, and throwing this world into a state of trembling and consternation which it could not endure. And it would be utterly useless. Men who do not believe the Bible would not believe even such testimony as this. The true difficulty lies not in the want of evidence, but in a corrupted heart. Let pure and holy spirits come down from heaven, or let the dark and scathed sufferers be evoked from their deep abyss; and no sooner would the terrors of the moment be over, than a skeptical mind would find a thousand reasons for uncertainty and doubt.

It were reasonable to look for this testimony to some extent; and to this extent men already have it, in the word of God. What they could not endure to hear, God has revealed. He has called up the

miserable tenants of the world of woe, and taken their narrative and copied it out in his word. He has called down the bright spirits from heaven, and received and recoded their testimony. There is the son of the Shunamite raised by Elijah; there is Lazarus raised by Christ; there is the rich man in the parable narrating his bitter woes; and there are Moses and Elias descending on the top of Tabor, hidden from the gaze of the curious multitude, but leaving their testimony to the realities of the eternal world, as well as to the sufficiency and perfection of the Sacred Writings.

Moses had been dead upwards of fourteen hundred years; and Elias had been translated near nine hundred years before. Yet they were still existing. They appeared on the mount. They conversed with Christ. They had a corporeal form; Elijah, the same body he had while here on earth, and Moses with a body raised from the dead, as a pledge of the great resurrection. Where had they been; what portion of the universe had they occupied; what had been their employments, and what their state, during the long centuries in which they had been absent from this earth? Is there then no world of spirits — no immortality — no resurrection — no reward and punishment beyond the grave? Does death chill and freeze forever the current of human existence? Shall that cold clay bloom no more? and that eye never more beam with lustre? and no voice be ever again heard from those lips that moulder in the tomb? Go to Tabor, and see and hear, while the bosoms of the long since departed glow, and their eyes kindle, and their lips are fervid, as they speak of the decease which their Lord should accomplish at Jerusalem. No, it is not in vain that we wander along the shores of that unseen world. A sound does reach us over this vast abyss of waters. The waves of eternity will give up their dead. The Son of Man shall come in the glory of his Father, as he came on Tabor to his astonished and adoring disciples. The scene on Tabor made such an impression on the mind of Peter, that long after it we hear him saying, " We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came to him such a voice from the excellent glory, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And this voice which came from heaven we heard when we were with him in the Holy Mount." Let such be our impressions of the vivid realities of the coming world! It is but the pretext of unbelief, that we cannot see and hear these things for ourselves. Never will another return from these invisible regions, to confirm our faith. No, never! The next audible voice we hear from that world, will be the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; the next ocular demonstration of the realities of that world, will be the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his Father. But the most important thought suggested by this scene, remains to be considered. What was it that thus attracted these glorified men from their abodes of light, once more to visit this lower world? It was to have a personal interview with their adorable Saviour, whom they had so often beheld on Mount Zion above; with whom they had so often held sweet communion there, and at whose feet they had so often cast their crowns. And what was the subject of their interview, and what the subject of their delighted colloquy? It was a most affecting, amazing theme. They " spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." They knew it was to be accomplished, for they had spoken and written of it, and had announced it to the world.

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It would be unnatural in us not to have some desires to know the substance of their conversation. But as it was for wise reasons hidden from the nine disciples who were not permitted to ascend

the mountain, so it is wisely concealed from us. From what we know of their intellectual and spiritual character while they dwelt among men; from their familiarity and interest in the theme; from their augmented knowledge and holiness, perfected by their long residence in the heavenly world, and from the immediate presence of their Lord; we have reason to believe that their discourse upon this great subject, was the most instructive and tender, the most pure and holy, that ever fell from the lips of men. But not one word of it is left on record. They did not narrate it to the other disciples; nor were they allowed even to mention the vision itself, " until after the Son of Man had risen from the dead."

We can only conjecture what it was. Was it the expression of their sympathy with the approaching sorrows of their Lord? Amid the lustre of that memorable scene, did they foresee the terrors of his death, and the rising tempest that was about to burst on his guiltless head? Did they speak of the sadness of the garden, the clamors of the infuriate populace and their scorn and spitting, the iniquitous trial, the barbarous sentence, the crown of thorns, the bitter passion, the splendor of his present glory between the two greatest prophets, contrasted with his approaching infamy between two thieves, and the awful moment fixed from eternity for the righteous One to be stricken by the hand of justice, and for the Author of life to die? Were thoughts like these present to their minds; and while they marked his heavenly submission and calm serenity, would they fain have soothed his sorrows, as both he and they turned their eyes toward his cross? Or did they dwell on the necessity and efficacy of his death as the only foundation of pardon and life to penitent and believing men; as the consummation of all the scenes through which he had passed for the purpose of " making his soul an offering for sin;" and as giving the finishing stroke to his character as the mighty Saviour the great and glorious Deliverer of his people? Or did they indulge their strongest and most admiring expressions of his marvellous love to this sinful and perishing world, and tell how it was " stronger than death." Or did they glance at its great and glorious consequences, and speak of the attraction and conquests of his cross; of the travail of his soul which he should see; of the multitudes who would " be turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven;" of the "gathering of the people" unto the predicted Shiloh; of the thousand channels through which the healing waters of life should flow; of the Jews and Heathens who should be raised to a partnership with him on his throne; of the concurrence of all the arrangements of divine providence, and all its resources, with the designs of his redemption; of the effusions of his Spirit, and the subjection of the world to his dominion; of the place which his accomplished decease should occupy in the history of time and the developments of eternity, when heaven should be filled with the brightness of its glory, and every holy creature in the universe shall say, " Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb!" We do not know; and only know that the subject of their discourse was the greatest and most affecting that ever employed the lips of men, the song of angels, or the thoughts of Deity. It was the great mystery of the Divine mind before the foundations of the world. It was the song of angels when he was born, their sympathy when they appeared to strengthen him in the garden, their wondrous vision when he died. Men had read, and heard, and thought of it; philosophers had discussed it; the nations had been agitated by it; and when the mournful scene was realized, we are told, that " all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things that were done, smote upon their breasts and returned!" The " decease accomplished at Jerusalem' imparts a portion of its own grandeur and solemnity to the very spot where it was accomplished. Even now, " trodden down as it is by the Gentiles," there is no such spot as that

ancient " City of our God," consecrated by this Great Sacrifice; rendered memorable by the most solemn and affecting spectacle in earth, or heaven; and marked, even at the present hour, with the scarcely retired sackcloth and darkness that first veiled it when this mighty sufferer said, " It is finished and gave up the ghost "

We linger about such scenes, and are reluctant to turn away. The favored disciples selected to be with their divine Lord on the Mount, naturally desired to prolong that affecting and transporting interview. Peter exclaimed, and said unto Jesus, " Lord, it is good for us to be here! If thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles, one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Many a time since, has the Saviour manifested his gracious presence to his people, when they have revered and adored him, and enjoyed his love. Like Aaron, when he led Israel to the door of the Tabernacle, to hear the responses from between the Cherubim; and like Solomon, when he had made an end of prayer at the dedication of the Temple; they have seen the glory of the Lord filling the house, and bowed themselves and worshiped. So it was on the Day of Pentecost; so it was at many a memorable season, when the early Christians met in solemn convocation; and so it has been at many a season since, when the adorable Saviour has been found walking in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and unfolding his glory to the churches which he has redeemed and bought with his own blood. Moses and Elias in a short time, disappeared from the transforming scene, and Peter, James and John " were left alone with Jesus." Alone with Jesus! The world shut out — alone with Jesus! Heaven and earth shut out, and alone with Jesus! No; heaven is not shut out, when the soul is alone with Jesus. What Christian does not feel that to be alone with Jesus is to enjoy heaven upon earth! It is in fellowship with him, that his people are changed into his image; that they have a foretaste of the coming blessedness, a glimpse of the glory to be revealed. Such seasons give great vigor to faith, and to hope great and precious assurance. They have the " inward witness" then that their title to the heavenly inheritance is clear; and like Moses, they go up into the Mount to take a view of the promised land. " Lord, it is good to be here!" There is a refuge here, from the storms of earth; from the fiery darts of the adversary; from perilous times and from seasons of spiritual darkness. Who would not watch and pray, lest this ensnaring world and the sin that dwelleth in him should exclude him from those consecrated hours when he might be alone with Jesus!

Mount Tabor is a most impressive and affecting preacher of the gospel. How unspeakably interesting to us as sinners is that memorable scene! What is the momentous fact which this scene on Tabor unveils? It is that "God so loved the world;" it is that "the Son of man came to seek and to save that which is lost." It is that " it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Men were lost, but Jesus came to save. Men were obnoxious to the stroke of justice, but Jesus averted the fearful blow. The decease he accomplished at Jerusalem has lost none of its interest. Eighteen hundred years have not blotted it out from the memory of men, nor obscured its glory. It is still the most solemn and affecting event recorded in the history of time, or the annals of the universe. We are verging, in our series of subjects, toward that great event. Tabor throws its light across to Calvary; the transfiguration is intimately allied to the crucifixion of the Son of Man. In the midst of all this splendor, there are mournful thoughts, because, enveloped as we here are with his divine glories, we hear him speak of the " decease which he would accomplish at Jerusalem." Yes, that dark hour draws near. The death of God manifest in the flesh; of the great Teacher; of the great Healer; of him " whose glory

shone on Tabor, and now shines on the mount Zion above! How infinitely interesting to the believer is the death of Christ!

" O, the sweet wonders of that Cross, Where God the Saviour lived and died." That Cross, Christian, is thy refuge; and it is thy refuge, trembling sinner. It is all thy hope; it is thy peace; it is thy salvation. Thine all is identified with that sacred cross. The church of God, on earth and in heaven, casts her highest honors at the foot of that cross. You will not, you cannot forget the cross. No, never can you forget the cross.

Bring the question home, then. What interest have I in the decease and glory of the once crucified and now glorified Saviour? Angels announced his birth as the " tidings of great joy;" but what cause of gladness has his wonderful condescension proved to you? His spiritual kingdom has been set up in our world, but has it freed you from the tyranny of sin? His name was revealed by an angel from heaven, and it is above every name; but do you " bow at the name of Jesus, and confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father?" Men from afar have seen him, and he has been the object of triumph to Jew and Gentile; but have you learned to glory in this star of Bethlehem — this Sun of righteousness — this light of the world? From his baptism to his death, he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs; he was "wounded for your transgressions and bruised for your iniquities;" his soul " was sorrowful even unto death." He suffered as no other could suffer. The daughters of Jerusalem wept over him, and Calvary heard him say, " I thirst," and saw his life ebb away, and the great sacrifice completed! But what is all this to you? He descended into the grave, and the mouth of the sepulcher was closed upon him, and the stone sealed, and on the third day, he rose by his own divine power from the dead; but to what lively hopes and consolations have you been begotten by his resurrection? He ascended on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men; but have you become rooted and grounded in a firm belief of rising and being happy with him in everlasting life? Shortly will he come again to judge the world in righteousness; and will you appear on his right hand, or on his left?

08 — In His Humiliation

Chapter 8 THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN HIS HUMILIATION The career of the Son of Man on the earth was drawing to a close. From his wondrous transfiguration on Tabor, he "set his face to go to Jerusalem." The annual Feast of the Passover was at hand, which all the males of the Jewish nation were, by law, required to celebrate. It was their most distinguished festival. Wherever they were dispersed throughout Asia, Europe and Africa, this feast called them together. It has been supposed, that at the celebration of the Passover, there were not far from three millions of people, including Jews and Gentiles; so that the events which here took place, would soon be known throughout the world. One reason why Christ directed his steps from Mount Tabor to Jerusalem, was that he might keep this feast with his disciples: " With desire, have I desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer." But he had another and higher object. He was about to consummate his earthly course, and himself to offer that sacrifice for the sins of men, which could never be repeated, and of which the Paschal Lamb was but the prefiguration. Everything that he had done was preliminary to this; all his plans and all his conduct, had been drawing toward the cross as their centre. In some views, his glorious transfiguration might have been the fitting close to his history; but if he had stopped here, he might as well have never come into the world. The most affecting and glorious scene was yet to be unfolded. That scene we propose to contemplate; may we be enabled to contemplate it with deep prostration of spirit! There is an awful sacredness in this deep humiliation of the Son of God. Wherein did his humiliation consist; and in what consists its glory? In the first place. Wherein did his humiliation CONSIST?

Christianity has great peculiarities. That in which it differs from all other religions, is that which constitutes its great excellence. Its great Founder came into the world, not simply as a Teacher, but a Sufferer; not merely to prove his doctrines by his miracles and exemplify them by his life, but to reveal his death as the great doctrine. It was with no small difficulty that his disciples were induced to believe that he would be a Sufferer; it is with greater difficulty, that the tongue, or pen, or thought of man can set forth the intensity of his sufferings. The unaffected and graphic narrative of the Evangelists, has done all in this description, which can ever be accomplished. Calvary seeks no rhetorical adornment; it stands out alone. The Redeemer's humiliation began when he was born in Bethlehem; nor did it cease until he rose from the grave, and ascended to the right hand of majesty in the heavens. But though he was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs," during the whole term of his Incarnation; yet were there days of deeper humiliation appointed him, than those which occupy the ordinary pages of his mournful history. The scene becomes more tragical, as it gradually draws toward the melancholy catastrophe. There were peculiarities in it that are strongly marked. Of all that have suffered, from the beginning of time to the present hour, there is but this one Sufferer, who did not deserve the sorrows he endured. His humiliation constitutes an anomaly in law, an anomaly in morals, an anomaly in the divine government. The highest becomes the most debased; the most honorable becomes the most dishonored; the loftiest becomes a worm in this world of worms; the holiest is made the most miserable; and he who could claim most from God and man, bears the rage of man, and the curse of God. It is not

strange that Lucifer was banished from heaven; nor that Sodom fell; nor that Babylon sunk; nor that man is born to trouble, and that God should bend his bow, and set him a mark for the arrow. But that he who was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, should be permitted to die as a malefactor, is a fact that indicates, either that the reins of government have been abandoned by infinite justice, or that some great moral problem is being solved, which demands a tremendous sacrifice. This was the secret of his mighty woes. The fact that "Messiah was cut off not for himself," was ominous of terror. They were strong measures that were resorted to, in order to justify the great Lawgiver, burning, as his throne does with terrors to the guilty, in "justifying the ungodly." And what marvel that an arrangement, which comprised the substitution of the innocent in place of the guilty, when carried into effect, should fill the sufferer with fear and trembling; and that the sacrifice should smoke with God's heated indignation! Heart-sickening and withering consciousness was that when, in ways unknown to mortals, "the swift and stinging sense of condemnation" for the sins of myriads, forced itself upon him with such intense reality, that no ray of light, no hope, no sympathy of earth or heaven could reach him! He must be mighty to suffer, if he was mighty to save; and since the Deity stood by to inflict the blow, the Deity also stood by, un-severed from his humanity, when the crushing blow fell. The sufferer was no mere man. No mere creature could have girded himself for the mighty conflict which the Son of God then endured. 'No; Mary's son was not alone. Divinity itself conjoined with humanity, was necessary to consummate this fearful humiliation. Wondrous sufferer! belonging both to heaven and to earth, yet by both disowned! The Rock of Ages united to a fragile reed, and shivered by the storm!

He was in the garden of Gethsemane with Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, when he gave utterance to the words, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." It was one of the darkest passages in his humbling pilgrimage. He knew not what to think or what to desire. "Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say?" He had unequaled courage, but he shrank from the tempest which he saw just about to burst upon his head. Never was his obedience so put to the test as now. It was Satan's hour and the power of darkness. That pure mind of his was passing under the cloud. Temptation beset him on every side. He grew pale; he trembled in every limb and nerve; he sweat "as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." No mind in the universe but his own knew the horror of those internal agonies. The cup was bitter, and with a transport of terror, agony, and submission, such as never broke from human heart, he could only say, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not as I will, but as thou wilt!"

Judas had betrayed him into the hands of the Jewish priests and Pharisees, and the resolution was taken to execute him as a conspirator against the government. We will not speak of the foul and manifold outrage committed upon his person, and the symbols of indignity he bore, except thus to recall his profound abasement. Pilate delivered him to the Jews to be crucified. It was not lawful to execute him within the city; the soldiers led him without its walls, in solemn procession between two thieves. He was faint from watching, from fasting, from scourging, from solicitude and fear; yet they laid upon him his own cross. Was ever sight more humiliating than the eternal Son of God, thus associated, and bearing his cross to the place of punishment! Well did the daughters of Jerusalem weep when they saw him! What a triumph to the Jews to see him who professed to be their king, thus marching to his crucifixion between two malefactors! To what a low point of ignominy was Christianity then reduced, and what confusion and grief and shame covered the few followers of its Founder! It is scarcely to be wondered at that their faith was shaken; and that, as

the victim was thus being led to the altar, his own disciples, if they did not deny him the tribute of their affection and then tears, " all forsook him and fled."

There is remarkable minuteness in the Scriptural narrative of the closing scene. It was on the day of the preparation of the Passover, and at the sixth hour of the day, or at noon, that he was nailed to the cross. He was numbered with the transgressors; the two thieves were crucified with him, and as though he were the greatest of the malefactors, Jesus in the midst. This was humiliation as deep as God could inflict, or the Son of God could feel. There was nothing to mitigate it; not one alleviating incident; no hand of kindness near; no consolatory voice of affection; no tenderness to pillow that aching head, or assuage that burning thirst, except by the vinegar and gall. He was left alone. The Furies were let loose upon him. There was hissing and execration, and blasphemy. The utmost spite of hell was accumulated on that guiltless head. Angels that came to strengthen him in the garden, did not come to his rescue, or his relief on the cross. The presence and smile of Him he most loved were not there. God hid his face and spoke in tones of wrath. He smote his Fellow Shepherd; and when the sword of the Omnipotent fell, the last ingredient in his cup of misery was mingled. It was full; it overflowed. After a few words of blessing for the guilty and intimations of love for those he loved, he uttered that memorable sentence which man may read, but which the lips of man know not how to utter, and his heart sunk within him. One exceeding great and bitter cry, and he gave up the ghost.

They had taken off his garments, and there hung his poor, mangled, bleeding body, uncovered for his enemies to abuse and scoff at. It was an affecting, humiliating spectacle even for the angry clouds to hover over, and satiated fiends to look upon; but it was indignation to the dead. It is impossible for mortals to sound the abyss of these mighty woes. It was the deepest depth of his intense humiliation. Never was there One in whom the prediction was so fulfilled, " I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people."

Behold the man! Was this the Christ? Was this the great Messiah promised long to Jew and Gentile? Was this the expected child, at whose birth angels sang. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good-will to men! Is this He who was separate from sinners? this the Great Teacher who spake as never man spoke? the great Healer whose fame filled Palestine, and at whose approach the very populace so lately cried Hosannah to the Son of David? Is this He whom angels worship, and to whom the voice was so lately addressed from the excellent glory, " This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased?" Yes, this is he. Behold the man! How changed from the bright glory that once filled heaven! He has not even the crown of thorns to protect his head, nor the purple robe to conceal his shame. O that lowliness, that indignity, that intense humiliation that covered this eternal Son of God. But there is another side to this mournful picture. We speak of honor in the midst of abasement; of dignity in the midst of shame; of victory and triumph in death; of glory, rich and splendid glory in this deep humiliation. This thought may be amplified by the following illustrations.

Christ was glorious in his humiliation, in the first place, in the abundant attestations it furnished of his un-sinning excellence. There are several interesting circumstances which occurred even at the time of his trial and condemnation which demonstrate the innocence of Jesus. He had been delivered into the hands of his enemies, by bribery, and by one of the members of his own immediate household; betrayed secretly, and amid the darkness of night, and in the seclusion of

his own retirement. But no sooner did the traitor perceive that his perfidious design was accomplished, than conscience began her work of retribution, and drove this hardened culprit to despair. He rushed into the presence of the men who employed him in this deed of death, threw down the thirty pieces of silver and exclaimed, " I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood!" And when he learned that it was all in vain, the righteous providence of God would not leave him to any more slow, or less searching trial than his own bloodstained conscience. Never did this vile traitor act a more sincere part than when he made this confession; and inexcusable as the act was, never did he act a more honest part, than when he " went out and hanged himself." And that " potters' field" where he committed the fearful deed, and which was the price of blood, stood for ages a permanent memorial of the unsullied glory of his Master's integrity.

Jesus also, stood before the tribunal of Rome, and at an age when Roman law commanded the respect of the world. He was brought before a Roman Judge, one who did not want motives to gratify the hostility of the Jews toward their victim, and one who from his well known character, had no misgivings at the shedding of blood. Pilate was a monster of avarice and cruelty, and had so abused his power in the Province of Judea, that Rome had no subjects more seditious than the Jews. Yet in the criminal process against Christ, this man preserved a moderation and integrity, which, had he persevered in them, would have gone far toward redeeming the honor of his official station. Again and again he bore witness to the faultless character of his prisoner, and expostulated with the Jews for desiring him to convict an innocent man. He conversed publicly with Jesus; he examined him privately; and then protested to his accusers, "I find no fault in this man;" why should "I crucify your King?" When he saw that it was no longer possible to rescue him, and from the tumultuous spirit of the people, unsafe to delay his execution, as though he called heaven and earth to witness that he yielded to their sanguinary demands, not of his own will and judgment, but in obedience to theirs, he took a basin of water, and in sight of them all, washed his hands of the blood they were so eager to shed. It is a remarkable fact, that a wise providence should so have directed the concerns of the Roman Empire during the time of the Saviour's trial and crucifixion, that such a man as Pontius Pilate should be the Procurator of Judea, and should have borne this uniform and persevering testimony to the Saviour's innocence. The only tribunal which was legally qualified to pronounce him guilty, thus solemnly pronounced him innocent. And it deserves remark, that this Roman Judge, caused his testimony to be inscribed in deep and legible characters upon the Sufferer's cross. Christ had confessed himself a King; nor did Pilate take offense at his confession when Jesus had unfolded to him the spiritual nature of his kingdom. And when he was crucified, the title which Pilate directed to be labelled on his cross was, " Jesus OF Nazareth, the King of the Jews," The Jews entreated him to alter it, but the just Roman was immovable. " Write not," said they, " I AM the King of the Jews, but that he said, I am the King of the Jews." Still the imperturbable Judge remained firm. " Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written." And the inscription stood, declaring to all men, that in the judgment of high-minded and impartial Rome, whose eagle then cast its shadow over the world, the crucified One had no claims he had not vindicated. On two occasions in his previous history, at his baptism and on the Mount of Transfiguration, a voice from heaven was uttered, declaring, " This is my beloved Son!" There were heavenly voices heard just before Jesus entered the garden, and while he was in immediate apprehension of the bitter cup God himself spoke to him; pronouncing him glorious and glorified in the fulfillment of his great work. Just before the last Passover, the Sufferer had uttered the oppressive thoughts, " Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from

this hour! But for this cause came I to this hour. Father, glorify thy name!" The appeal was public. There was wanting, just at this crisis, some strong testimonial of the divine approbation, which should arrest the attention of men, and go with him, and be remembered by them when Satan's hour should come, and the powers of darkness should prevail. Scarcely had Jesus uttered the words, than a voice from heaven was heard in reply. "The people that stood by, said that it thundered; others said that an angel spake." The herald thunder passed away, and the words were uttered, " I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." The eternal Godhead bowed his heavens to put this visible seal, this divine attestation, to the mission and character of his Son. The wonderful prodigies of nature also, that appeared as he was passing through the deepest valley of his humiliation were attestations too honorable to him, and too emphatic, to be misunderstood. During the whole period in which he hung upon the cross, " from the sixth hour, there was darkness over all the land, until the ninth hour." The sun would not look upon that scene of ignominy; he turned away and bathed his face in impenetrable clouds. It was his Maker hanging naked on the cross; the Eternal Son of God receiving on his guiltless head the last phial of heaven's unmitigated wrath. Thick darkness covered the land, and black tempests shook it, when He who is the light of the world was thus enveloped with ignominy. The "veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." Its " massive wails shook to their foundation, and tore that sacred covering from the Holy of Holies," as a man rendeth a garment. There was an earthquake also which filled Jerusalem with terror. "The rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many." They were fearful omens, and might have constrained even the murderers of their Lord to exclaim, this is the finger of God! We cannot attribute them to natural causes, nor account for their concurrent existence at the moment of the Saviour's giving up the ghost, unless they were miraculously commissioned to attest his glory who hung on the cross. They proclaimed to the astonished millions that the dying Jesus, the dead and lifeless Jesus, would yet shake, not the earth only, but also heaven. It was an invisible hand writing its destiny on the wall of corrupted and decayed Judaism; a voice from heaven consecrating the foundation stone of that kingdom which cannot be moved. The testimony struck that vast populace with awe; it opened their eyes to the innocence and glory of the Son of Man, so that " all they who came together at that great sight, smote upon their breasts." The most unbelieving were convinced, and the most obdurate softened by the Spectacle. The scene was suddenly changed. The shame of the Sufferer became his honor; his humiliation his glory. Admiration succeeded contempt and outrage; dark as the scene was, the day had dawned in which men began even to glory in the cross. In the next place, Christ was glorious in his humiliation, from the heavenly spirit and exalted attributes of character which he there expressed. " Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah! This that is glorious in his apparel, travelling in the greatness of his strength?" What the Prophet here demands concerning Christ as the triumphant Conqueror over his enemies, may with perfect fitness be appropriated to him as the mighty Sufferer. In his lowest degradation, he showed himself to be a mighty Prince; and in his weakness travelling in the greatness of his strength. He was " treading the wine-press alone, and of the people there was none with him;" yet was there a moral greatness, a true sublimity of character, which is in vain sought for, except in his own godlike excellence, even when his Godhead was in almost total eclipse. We should never have known his true character but for his humiliation. This is the sphere in which all his loveliness is manifested. His example required the cross to make it

perfect. How fair with heaven's grace and loveliness was he then! What a spectacle of finished moral beauty to look at! What a beautiful portrait of heaven! His Divinity was veiled in clay; his apparel was human; blood was sprinkled upon his garments, and stained all his raiment; yet amid these adumbrations of the Deity, in this low attire, and in this deepest excess of humiliation, he presents the most perfect exhibition of moral greatness and beauty which the world ever beheld. There were gathered around it a loveliness, a splendor, an awfulness of moral virtue, which grew brighter to the last, and which have left behind them a lustre which shall survive the flight of time. This humiliation could not have been imposed upon him without injustice. His life and his blessedness were his own; he had never forfeited them; and he alone had a right to dispose of them. "No man," says he, "taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself." We cannot conceive of a more disinterested and glorious trait of character than that which, in view of the claims of law and justice on the one hand, and the appeal of human helplessness and woe on the other, in order to meet the exigency, freely consented, rather than that man should suffer, to offer up himself on the altar of justice. He who chose the manger for his birthplace, chose the cross for his pillow of death. When they challenged him to "come down," he chose to remain and die. When, by a wish, he could have been rescued by "legions of angels," he preferred to be left under the dominion of his enemies. When he might have arrayed himself in robes of omnipotence, he chose the crushing humiliation. There are other excellencies for which he is beloved and adored by angels and men; but this is his great excellence, and that which renders "his name above every name." It was a thought unutterably precious to him that his heavenly Father loved him for this more than for anything else. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." Not only did he go thus unreluctantly to the altar, but there was a steadfastness of purpose and zeal in accomplishing it, which had its impulse in his own unconquerable goodness. Never was there a work so great or so difficult; and never was there a mind so perfectly absorbed in it as his. At one time we hear him saying, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" And another, to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly." Mark the unvarying constancy of his purpose, the unabated ardor and resolution that distinguished him to the last; and was there not a moral sublimity in his humiliation, such as the light of heaven has never beheld?

Then mark the spirit the calm and tranquil spirit, the unresisting meekness and love with which he passes through this fiery ordeal. What a state of mind was that when he uttered the words, "Father, glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee!" This was the great thought with which he entered upon his humiliation, and which governed his deportment before the tribunals of Judea and of Rome. When the chief priests interrogated him concerning his disciples and his doctrine; to the question touching his disciples, he answered nothing: he would not expose these timid followers to the gathering storm. To that touching his doctrine, his reply was, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? Ask them which heard me what I said unto them; behold they know what I said." When one of the officers "struck him in the face," because he thus answered the high priest, Jesus calmly answered, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" When two false witnesses testified against him, and the high priest demanded what he had to say to their testimony, he was silent. When the high priest adjured him by the living God to tell him whether he were the Christ, the Son of God; perceiving at once the object of this demand, and knowing well that such an avowal would seal his death, he at first eluded the question. "If I tell you, ye will not believe and if I question you ye will not answer

me, nor let me go." The question was too decisive a one and might be evaded for the purpose of setting the answer in a true light.

Having made this remark, he replies, " It is as thou hast said; I am the Christ." The confession served only to seal his condemnation; and the Sanhedrin at once handed him over to Pilate, praying for sentence against him as a blasphemer. To the inquiries of Pilate he gave direct and unequivocal answers; and so full, that neither Pilate nor the Jews could misunderstand the nature of his claims. " Thou sayest that I am a King, but my kingdom is not of this world." I have no earthly throne, and no power of earthly princes. My kingdom is over the minds and hearts of men, whom I would fain subdue by the force of truth and the power of my grace. It was in the course of this interview, that he made that dignified and noble avowal, " For this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." Paul in writing to Timothy, alludes to this " good confession" which Jesus Christ thus made before Pontius Pilate. A noble confession it was, and worthy the King of Truth.

Pilate sent him to Herod; but in the presence of the infamous murderer of John the Baptist, he refused to utter a word. Herod asked him many questions, but he "answered him nothing." He would not recognize the murderer's authority, but would rather quietly submit to his indignities, and meet his doom. Herod sent him back to Pilate, and once more he stood, surrounded by the clamorous Jews, in the Roman Pretorium. Here he was accused openly, but now he " answered nothing." Pilate marvelled greatly at his silence, but " Jesus answered him never a word." He had said enough before. When after this, Pilate scourged him, and the soldiers plaited for him his crown of thorns, and mocked, and smote him; not a word escaped his lips. Pilate expostulated with him; still Jesus gave him no answer! There was profound humiliation in this shameful scene; but there was profound greatness. It was a triumphant hour when the children in the temple honored, and the multitude would have enthroned him; but it was not so triumphant as this hour of his deep adversity and ignominious degradation. He suffered all this outrage, without a tear, without a sigh, without one token of weakness, and with all his glory untarnished. And when from this deep opprobrium, he was being led to Calvary, bearing his own cross; how affecting the scene, and how glorious the fulfillment of the prediction, "The government shall be upon his shoulder!" And when the women of Jerusalem followed him weeping; what beauty, what grandeur was in the thought when he looked back upon them and said, " Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children!" Numbered too, as he was, with transgressors, he manifested his converting and saving power, and at the same time that inscrutable and adorable sovereignty, by which the crucified One becomes a stumbling-block to those who perish, and to those who are saved, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. Nor did he wait till the remembrance of the injury had passed away, and when it is comparatively easy to forgive; it was while they were driving the nails and affixing him to his cross, that he uttered the prayer, " Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!" He saw at a little distance his mother and his beloved disciple; and what does he say? "Woman, behold thy son; son, behold thy mother; and from that hour, that disciple took her to his own home." His greatness was put to a still severer test, when the insolent rulers and the licentious populace derided him, saying, " He saved others; let him save himself, if he be Christ, the chosen of God, come down from the cross, that we may see and believe!" How easily he could have done this, and how strong the inducements to do it when thus challenged! But well he knew how useless such a demonstration of his power, would be to men who had

remained immovable amid all the wonders he had done. If they would not believe what they had seen and now saw, neither would they, though he came down from the cross. The time had not come for his greatest miracle, when he would show that it was more worthy of his character and mission to rise from the sepulcher, than come down from the accursed tree; and a more demonstrative proof of his power to break the chains of death, than to wrench the nails from the cross. Nor did he resign his spirit into the hands of him who gave it, until his work was done, his humiliation complete, and he could say, It is finished! Wonderful Sufferer! Wonderful glory, amid such degradation! As our last general remark, we add, that Christ was glorious in his humiliation, through the fitness of that humiliation to accomplish the end for which he came into the world. God alone is capable of selecting the highest and most worthy end, and so pursuing it, as to justify and demand the means by which it is accomplished. Dark, and perfectly mysterious in some views, as the scene is which has been thus faintly exhibited, it is the heaven-devised arrangement of glorifying God in man's redemption. Man's redemption is God's greatest work. For the wisdom that devised, and the love and power that effect it; for the greatness of its objects, and the extent and compass of the means by which they are attained; for the sin and misery it abolishes, the holiness and blessedness it secures and perpetuates; for the obstacles it surmounts, the enemies it vanquishes, the moral lessons it inculcates, and the augmenting exhibitions it furnishes of the manifested glory of the Godhead; it is God's mightiest work. Of all that God himself has ever thought of, or ever accomplished, this is his greatest.

It was no ordinary Personage to whom the accomplishment of such a work was entrusted. It was not possible for any finite Being to make those progressive manifestations of the Deity who is infinite; nor was it just and right that in effecting man's redemption, they should be made in any other way than by his humiliation unto the death of the cross. Nor is there one feature of it, from the treachery of Judas to the last cry on the cross, that could be dispensed with, and that is not worthy of the mighty sufferer. "It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through suffering." Expiatory suffering, vicarious satisfaction was emphatically the work to which he was devoted. And while he thus aims at man's redemption, his very humiliation shows how man's redemption itself is necessary to unfold the boundless resources and infinite all-sufficiency of that infinite Being who contains within himself the source of all things, and the manifestations of which produce all the forms of created good. Man's redemption is subordinate to him, and accomplishes its object, only as it subserves his honor and glory, who is before all, above all, and incomparably more worthy than all.

It need not surprise us therefore that the means by which this high end is attained should be among "the deep things of God." Finite minds would never have thought of the humiliation of his son; but it was worthy of God; it existed for God; it speaks for God; it was full of God. And with what glory does this great truth invest this unequalled humiliation. It was a highborn thought, and worthy of a mind and heart like his that by his humiliation, God would be forever exalted in the salvation of men. Anointed and baptized in tears and blood as he was, he is glorious in this apparel. It was a wonderful humiliation — unutterably wonderful. But its language is, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and power, honor and blessing." How little would God have been exalted, but for his suffering Son! Where had been the conformity to him in this wicked world! What one faint ray of this divine resemblance had ever fallen on the minds of benighted men! How little

had been known of him, except as a consuming fire? Who would have adored and praised him, and how silent the myriad of voices that now speak forth the honor of his name! Or rather how deep the wailing, and what tones of cursing and blasphemy would have assailed his throne, had they not been silenced at the cross! It was to turn aside this tide of wickedness and woe, and secure that ocean of praise to God and the Lamb, that the Sufferer of Calvary thus humbled himself to the death. How full of meaning are those words we have before recited, which, in the trouble and anguish of his soul, the Sufferer uttered. Father glorify thy name. This was the consummation he desired, and was ready to perfect even at the expense of those bitter agonies and that atoning blood. Glorious Saviour! glorious even in thy humiliation! I mourn and weep when I reflect upon the scoffs and insults that were cast upon him, and the painful and ignominious death he endured, and wonder that he did not blast his murderers by the breath of his mouth. Yet I love to think of them; I see him so glorious in them all, that I glory in a suffering Saviour. He would not have been so exalted, nor so glorious, but for these humiliations. Well may we glory in them, since the greater they were, the more is he honored.

We ask you to receive these truths, and pray that you may receive them under the anointings of his Spirit who has gone up to bleed no more, no more, no more to die. It is from such a reception that you must date the commencement of your religious hopes, your new and spiritual life, your eternal joy. Look, O ye, who love and adore him, at that bloody scene of your Redeemer's humiliation. Dwell on it; it is a glorious scene. Bloody as it is, it greets you with smiles. Sweet voices are echoed from those dying groans; balmy breezes come across the desert, even from that "place of skulls." "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone; but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." Rich are the fruits that spring up from the soil that was watered by the Sufferer's blood. It was indeed a fearful cup that he drank. "The curse of the law was on it. The wrath of God was on it. The loss of God's presence and favor was on it." But he drank it, that you might never drink it. It cannot be that his followers should endure the curse, since he endured it for them, and in their place. O what a truth is this, and how precious does it make that glorious Saviour to them that believe! Give me Christ and poverty, rather than all the wealth of the world without him; Christ and a dungeon, rather than no Christ and a sceptre. I have borrowed this thought from another tongue. "Malem," says an ancient writer, "mori cum Christo, quam regnare cum Caesare. Pulchra terra, pulchrum coelum, sed pulcherrimus Dominus Jesus."

Look also, ye who have never loved and adored him, at that bloody scene of your Redeemer's humiliation! Let the arrogance of human reason take heed how it becomes a scoffer at the suffering Nazarene. Let the vain confidence of the self-righteous take heed how it flatters itself that it has no need of him who is mighty to save. Let the pride of every unsubdued heart take heed lest its contempt be stirred up toward him who is worthy of all confidence and praise. Let unbelief, in all its forms, be ashamed that it is ashamed of Christ, be humbled that it doubts either his power or willingness to save; that it ever gives place to the thought that there is no hope in the bounty of his grace. There is ineffable tenderness in the appeal of his glorious humiliation. A suffering Saviour is the sinner's refuge, the prisoner's hope. Away with reasoning pride. Away with scoffing and thoughtlessness. Away with self-righteousness and obduracy. Away with fear and despondency. Away with wickedness. Take the gospel in its simplicity, and be no longer estranged from the suffering Son of God.

09 — In His Ressurrection

Chapter 9 CHRIST GLORIOUS IN HIS RESURRECTION The hostile Jews gloried in the fact that Christ was dead but denied that he had risen. On this question the decision rests, whether Christianity is true or false; " If Christ be not raised, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." His resurrection is the great miracle which attests the truth of his gospel. If it was never wrought, all previous miracles are left in inextricable perplexity; if consummated, in connection with his subsequent ascension, and the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, it puts the seal of heaven upon the completed series of Christ's miracles, and gives the world the assurance that his gospel is " no cunningly-devised fable."

Let us, in the first place, advert to the narrative itself which the Evangelists furnish of this great fact. Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus, men of wealth, and distinguished for their character and office, and men of blessed memory, for their tender regard to the lifeless son of Mary, took the body of Jesus, embalmed it, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in the sepulcher. Centuries before, the prophet Isaiah had said, " And he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich, in his death." These men were among the principal Jews who followed the Saviour to Mount Calvary, though with very different views from those who came to satiate their malignity by the barbarous spectacle. Their object was to be witnesses of the final act in the drama, and to rescue the dead body of the Sufferer from the outrage of his murderers. It must have been a beautiful and affecting sight to have seen these illustrious men, members in the minority of the very council which had condemned Jesus as a disturber of the peace and a blasphemer, thus shielding him from the infamy which awaited him from the ministers of justice, and giving his body honorable burial.

Jesus expired at the ninth hour of the day, or about three hours after noon. The sun was beginning to go down when these men ascended the cross, drew out the nails, loosened the cord that bound the dead body, and carefully lowered it down, as though they were carrying in their hands a treasure too sacred to be committed to the dust. It would seem that this kind service was the result of preconcerted arrangement between them. It is not probable that they expected his resurrection, from the fact that they embalmed the body; nor was this surprising, when we consider the incredulity of his more immediate disciples. It was a " new sepulcher" where they laid him, built for the Son of God, and hewn out of the virgin rock, never polluted by the flesh of fallen man, and where the sinless One slept alone. There was wisdom in this arrangement of divine Providence, both in that his sepulcher was in the solid rock, and could therefore be sufficiently protected; and in that he was entombed alone, and therefore could be more certainly and easily identified, when he rose. The prediction that he would rise was known to his enemies; nor is it any marvel that they adopted those precautionary measures which would detect or prevent imposture. Hence their care in protecting the sepulcher, in sealing the rock that was rolled upon its mouth, and guarding the place by a band of soldiers. God " taketh the wise in their own craftiness," and the very measures which the subtlety of men adopt with the view of defeating the progress of truth, are often turned to good account, and directed to the " furtherance of the gospel." These very precautions against

Christ's resurrection only served to give the evidence of it greater power, and make the fact itself more notorious. The day on which he was laid in the sepulcher passed away. The following night is passed. The next day passed, which was the Jewish Sabbath.

Very early on the morning of the third day, and while it was yet dark, Mary Magdalene visits the sepulcher, and soon after her, at early sunrising, certain other women came also, who had followed Jesus from Galilee. And " they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher: And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great." There had been a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord had descended from heaven, " and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake and become as dead men."

These women saw the sepulcher, but Jesus was not there. " Then Mary Magdalene runneth, and Cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them. They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulcher, and we know not where they have laid him." As she and her female companions were wondering at what had taken place, " behold two men stood by them in shining garments." And as they " were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth," these bright messengers said unto them, " "Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying. The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified, and the third day rise again." These perplexed disciples remembered these words, and "entering into the sepulcher, they found not the body of the Lord Jesus; but they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them. Be not affrighted, for I know that ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is not here; he is risen, as he said. Come see the place where the Lord lay; and go your way quickly, and tell his disciples and Peter that he is risen from the dead and goeth before you into Galilee. There shall ye see him, as he said unto you, Lo, I have told you! And they departed quickly, for they trembled and were amazed, and fled from the sepulcher with fear and great joy. Neither said they anything to any one but ran to bring the disciples word. And they told these things to the eleven, and to all the rest."

Peter and John, on hearing these things, immediately ran toward the sepulcher John coming first to the cave, did not enter, but stooping down, looked in, and saw the grave-clothes, but not Jesus; while Peter immediately after him, entered into the sepulcher, and also saw the grave-clothes, but neither did he find Jesus. John then entered into the sepulcher with Peter; and though they knew not what had become of Jesus, were satisfied that he was not in the sepulcher The facts they had seen were obvious; but they knew not what conclusion to deduce from them; "for as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead." "Then the disciples went away again to their own homes." Such is substantially the narrative of the Evangelists. The question here arises, What had become of the entombed Jesus? Had his body been secretly removed, by the Jews or by his disciples, or had he risen from the dead? That the Jews had taken away his body, it were preposterous to believe, nor was this ever supposed. That his disciples had surreptitiously taken it away, was reported among the Jews; they had bribed the guard at the sepulcher, to originate and give currency to the rumor that his disciples "stole the body while they slept." This artifice of the chief priests is too frail and preposterous. It is not probable that such a body of men as the Roman Guard, would have slept on such a post, and under the penalty of military law; nor, had they slept,

is it probable that his disciples could have taken the body of Jesus, without awaking them; nor is it possible, that if they remained unawakened, they could have known and testified that the disciples took it away. Subsequent events also show that the very Jews who fabricated this falsehood, themselves were ashamed of it; for when the apostles were afterward brought before them, instead of accusing them of taking away the body of Christ, they beat and threatened them, without making the least allusion to the allegation of their having removed the body. They contrive every pretext for putting them to death; they calumniate and abuse them, they accuse them of sedition and heresy, and the profanation of the Temple; but they say nothing of this rumor of taking the body from the sepulcher. Even their celebrated orator, Tertullus, who was induced to array all his rhetoric, and all the arts of his profession against them, says nothing even of this suspicion although Festus himself testifies that the resurrection of Christ was the subject of discussion between him and Paul. Why did not the Jewish Sanhedrim, when they had seized the apostles and put them in prison, for declaring that "the God of their fathers raised up Jesus whom they slew and hanged on a tree," instead of deferring to the advice of Gamaliel, to refrain from these men and let them alone, at once affirm that his resurrection was a fraud, and that God had no part with impostors? If, then, the body of Christ was not removed from the sepulcher, either by his enemies or his friends, what is the evidence that he rose from the dead? The truth of his resurrection cannot be proved by the fact, that it was seen by men. No eye of man watched over his sepulcher when he rose, unless it were that of the Roman guard, who, according to their own account, were asleep during the whole of this wondrous transaction, and who, according to the narrative of the Evangelists, "for fear of the descending angel, did shake and become as dead men." His disciples were not there; the Jews were not there. The only witnesses who actually saw him rise were the two angels who rolled away the stone from the mouth of the cave, and who appeared to the women early in the morning on which they visited it, and said unto them, "He is not here, but is risen." Habited in garments, like their own resplendent purity, they came from heaven, amid the terrors of an earthquake, to open the gates of death to their sleeping Lord, to be the witnesses of his triumph, and to remain seated upon the rock which they had rolled away long enough to proclaim his resurrection, while the affrighted soldiers recovered from their astonishment, and fled to the chief priests to tell the prodigies they had seen. These holy women were perplexed and sad, when they found the body of Jesus was not in the sepulcher, and probably thought that the Jews had taken it away in order to cast upon it new outrage, and commit it to the same ignominious grave with the two thieves. The two angels made them the first depositories of the tidings, that the Lord had risen, and thus through those holy women who, "Last at the cross, and earliest at his grave," first announced to men that he "who was crucified through weakness liveth by the power of God. When the rest of the company, after having heard the announcement of the angels, had dispersed, one there was who still remained near the sepulcher. She could not leave the spot where she had seen the body of her Lord deposited; but took a melancholy pleasure in bedewing it with her tears. There she stood doubting, weeping, agitated by hope and fear; when, turning round, "she saw Jesus himself standing and knew not that it was Jesus." She was too much absorbed in her own thoughts to recognize her Lord; and when he uttered the words, "Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?" her imagination was still so occupied with what she had just seen, that "supposing him to be the Gardener, she saith to him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away." She made no answer to his questions, because she supposed he could not be ignorant of the cause of her grief, nor of the

object of her search; nor was this silence unnatural in her state of mind. Who could doubt, so near his sepulcher, whom she was seeking? She was waiting for an answer to her own request, when Jesus called her by name and with a tenderness of emphasis which she suddenly recognized, said, Mary! She cast herself at his feet and exclaimed, " O my Master! " It was her risen Saviour, her own living Saviour, that she beheld. She sees him who was just crucified and laid in the tomb of Joseph. She hears his voice, and is subdued with joy. She "came and told the disciples, that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her." After this he appeared to the other woman on their return from the sepulcher into the city; and they constituted a cluster of witnesses. On the same day, he appeared to the two disciples as they were going to Emmaus, and whom he found conversing on the subject of his death. Their hopes that he was the promised Messiah were crushed and buried in his grave. They were giving utterance to their sadness, when Jesus, not at first recognized by them, drew near and went with them. He commenced the conversation with the question, "What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?" He knew their thoughts, and his object was to instruct and comfort them, by first eliciting their own views, and then disclosing himself to them as the risen Saviour. Jerusalem had just been agitated and held in consternation by the tragical event of the crucifixion; multitudes of Jews, not from Judea alone, but from all portions of the earth, had come up to the city; all Israel had seen the great Deliverer lifted up; and the reply they gave to his inquiry was, " Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?" He said unto them, " What things?" The question interested them; and they proceeded to state their views concerning Jesus of Nazareth, the conduct of the Jewish rulers in putting him to death, their own sadness and their vacillating hopes of his resurrection, the vision of angels, and the testimony of the women who had come from the sepulcher In this doubting state of mind, Jesus found them, and rebuked them for their unbelief. " O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken!" He then proceeded to instruct them out of their own Prophets in their minute predictions concerning himself; his birth, his lineage, his character, his death, his resurrection, and his eternal kingdom and glory. They listened with wonder and their hearts burned within them; and when they reached the village where they were going, he went in to tarry with them. " And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake and gave to them." He sat in their presence; they saw him and heard his voice; " their eyes were opened, and they knew him." Their conviction that he was risen from the dead was perfect; and having produced it, he " vanished out of their sight,"

After this, he appeared to the ten disciples when Thomas was absent; and then to the eleven when Thomas was present, when he upbraided him for his unbelief, and showed him his perforated hands and feet, and his pierced side; and to convince them that it was himself and not a spirit, he conversed with them, and ate and drank with them. After this, he appeared to seven of them at the sea of Tiberias, where he again made himself known to them, ate with them, restored Peter, and intimated to him the severe trials and bitter end to which that Apostle was destined. And after this he appeared to more than five hundred brethren at once. This was in Galilee, where he had spent the greater part of his life, and was well known, and where his person would have been universally recognized. Thus he continued to have intercourse with men for forty days until he ascended to heaven. We know not how often he appeared to them during these forty days, besides the instances recorded; but it is probable they were very many. The seeming deficiency in the witnesses is the fact that there is no recorded instance of his appearing to the Jews, his

enemies, and in Jerusalem itself. The time was when my own mind was, I will not say perplexed, but rather wondered at this deficiency. Why were there not other witnesses? Why did not Jesus show himself publicly, present himself in the temple, and stand in person before the Sanhedrin itself, and let them see for themselves that he had risen from the dead? But the wonder has long since passed away. Who should be the witnesses of his resurrection, if not those who were the best qualified? Other witnesses there might have been of very dubious qualifications, and still more dubious character. They were not the men who would have sealed their testimony with their blood. Christianity does not ask the testimony of such men. The resurrection did not need to be propped up by such dubious testimony. Mary's testimony in the garden is worth more than the testimony of the whole Jewish Sanhedrin. We should be sorry if the great proof of Christ's resurrection rested upon the testimony of men so imperfectly acquainted with his person; bloody men, too, and men who stood convicted of subornation of perjury on his trial. Besides, if he had gone into the temple and presented himself to the Sanhedrim; the consequence would have been that they would have denied his resurrection. They would probably have refused to identify him; and would have endeavored to perplex the minds of men with the question, whether the man who had thus appeared to them in the Temple, were the same with him who died on Calvary. Divine providence did not mean that such a question, on such testimony, should ever be agitated. Or they would have treated him as they did his apostles, and as they had treated him — crucified him a second time and put him to an open shame. It was too late for this. The days of his humiliation were past. He was never again to be reviled and rejected of men. It was not for want of testimony that they did not believe; the reason lies deeper than this. It was their proud and radical alienation of heart to the lovely character of Christ, and to his doctrine. The man who began his career in a stable and ended it on the cross, they would never acknowledge as their promised and exalted Messiah. Their disdainful rejection of him could not be overcome by testimony. No, they had closed their eyes and hardened their hearts. They had had their day. The harvest was passed. They were given over in judgment to a reprobate mind. His friends were those who saw him, knew him, and were best qualified to be the witnesses of his resurrection. When he was about to leave the earth, he committed these great facts to their keeping, and said to them, "Ye are my witnesses of these things!"

We may now advert to the interest and glory of this great event. The first thought which here impresses us is the completeness of the evidence by which it is established. It is evidence, throughout, which makes its appeal to the popular mind, and is addressed to ordinary readers and unlettered men. Men need but fair and honest minds in order to appreciate it. Let any man take these sacred records and read them, and he cannot fail to perceive there is an honesty of statement, and a sincerity of purpose in the narrators which bespeak them as true men. We have already shown that they could neither have been deceived, nor were they deceivers, in what we have said in regard to their competency and credibility on the subject of Christ's miracles. We speak now of their testimony itself to his resurrection; read it; compare their different narratives, and though some facts are related by one, and some by another; and though they sometimes relate the same facts differently, they are the same facts. The unrestricted and unembarrassed freedom of their statements is among the vouchers of their honesty. They were not studied, literary compositions; human polish would have spoiled them. Their simple object was to make a faithful record of the death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth; and they have done it with the simplicity which is in keeping with their object. There is a straightforwardness in their narrative which no

impostor could have attained, and touches of nature in it which are above the power of fabrication.

Take, for example, the single circumstance, that the first witnesses of this great fact, on which Christianity rests, were women. Would a deceiver have selected such testimony? Credulous, trembling women to be the first depositories of an event, amid events where stouter hearts might have quaked with fear! Would an impostor have painted the scene in the garden between Mary and her unrecognized, and then discovered Lord? Was this the fancy of an impostor, or a scene from actual life? Is there a chapter in Tacitus, or Pliny, or Suetonius, or any Roman historian, giving an account of men and events at the same period of the world in which Jesus lived and died and rose again, that is worthy of such confidence as the simple memoranda of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? It is a glorious fact, therefore, that " the Lord is risen indeed!" The witnesses themselves at first could scarcely believe their own senses. When the fact was first testified to the apostles, we are told that " these words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." One of them resisted the testimony to the last, and would not believe until he had seen and heard; until he had handled the crucified body, and even opened the scarcely-healed wounds in his feet and hands and side. Nor is it any matter of regret that Christianity had then, and now has the advantage of their caution; for it went forth more boldly as they went more boldly and assured; and though poverty, ignominy, dungeons, and death were their reward, their testimony was destined to subdue the world. Rome fell before it, who was not to be subdued by artifice and imposture. Millions have lived and died by it, who would not have trusted in falsehood. And millions have died for it who were not the sport of delusion. The tomb of Jesus, instead of burying the hopes of men, had scarcely covered up the seed before it shot forth, and its branches of righteousness and hope were themselves covering every land.

Christ is risen, and therefore our preaching is not vain, nor is your faith vain. These truths, these promises, this perfected redemption, have a seal fixed upon them, more sure than the seal upon his sepulcher, and are guarded by those heavenly Watchers, whose eye never slumbers, and whose arm is never weary. In raising Jesus from the dead, God has given him power over all flesh, and full authority to accomplish all the purposes of his grace. He was slain, and hath redeemed us unto God by his blood. Our second thought is, that the resurrection of Christ is a glorious reality, for the assurance it furnishes his followers of their own resurrection to eternal life. The doctrine of a future state is clearly revealed in the Law and the Prophets; it is revealed with progressive clearness; it was believed by the Jews, and this popular belief constituted one of the preparatives for the introduction of the gospel. It is a different question, whether the Old Testament reveals the doctrine of the resurrection of the body and whether all those passages which speak of the future blessedness of the righteous, and the future misery of the wicked, may not receive a true and fair construction in limiting their future existence merely to the undying spirit. We would not be over-confident in our conclusion that they require a different and less limited construction, in opposition to the expressed views of men of great learning and excellence. Yet must we deliberately affirm that to us it appears, that when the Psalmist speaks of " his flesh resting in hope," of " waking in God's likeness," and of God's " redeeming his soul from the power of the grave;" — when the prophet Isaiah speaks of " death as swallowed up in victory," and when we weigh well the interpretation which the apostle Paul gives to these words;— when we hear the prophet Daniel affirming " that many of them that sleep in the dust shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt;" — when we hear Job declare, "

For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin is consumed, and worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eye shall behold, and not another;" no doubt remains upon our own minds, that the great doctrine, not only of a future state, but of the resurrection of the body, is contained in the Old Testament Scripture.

It is quite obvious, however, that the full disclosure of this truth is reserved for the New Testament dispensation, and that the great proof of it is found in the resurrection of Christ. All doubt and perplexity on this subject are dispelled, when we hear the apostle say, " Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you, that there is no resurrection of the dead: but if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." It is a wonderful truth that these bodies, after having been reduced to dust, buried in the ocean, or scattered by the wind, or devoured by beasts of prey, or burnt to ashes, shall be restored; but it is not more marvellous than true, and not less true than that Christ rose. Christ is " the first fruits of them that slept." Not the first fruits in the sense that he was the first instance and example of resurrection, because others had risen before, and he himself had exercised his miraculous power in raising them from the dead. But they were not the matured fruits, though first gathered, nor the true samples and specimens of what the resurrection should be. They returned to dwell again among the dead; he rose to die no more, to live and reign; this is the resurrection of which his is the first collected fruits, the first offered to God, as the earnest and pledge of the final harvest. In the narrative of his death, we are told, that when the veil of the Temple was rent, and the earth quaked, that the graves were also " opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many." When he rose, he raised up them also, in honor of his own triumph over death and the grave, and as proof to the world that he had risen, and that there shall be at last a resurrection of the dead. " The grave hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure, and all nations have descended into it;" the earth itself will at last become like one vast grave-yard; but they shall "come forth."

How perfect the resemblance between the resurgent body, and the body which existed on the earth, we are not informed. It will be sufficiently so as to be identified with it; yet will it be more beautiful and lovely, because it will be spiritual, immortal, and " fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body." The early Christians rejoiced in this glorious prospect; nor could the cross, nor the stake, nor the cruelest death their enemies could inflict, suppress the joy. They did not fear to suffer nor to die, because they had been " begotten to such living hopes by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Our third and last thought is, that the resurrection of Christ is glorious for the full and complete introduction it furnishes of the gospel dispensation. The Saviour instructed the Jews, that though there had not been born of women a greater than John the Baptist, yet " he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he." John belonged to the old and worn-out economy. The gospel dispensation had not commenced; great as John was, the meanest prophet under the gospel dispensation was greater. The gospel dispensation did not begin with the coming of Christ; Christ himself was subject to all the Jewish ordinances. It did not begin with his preaching, nor with his miracles; he was then in the form of a servant. It did not

begin with his death, nor while he lay in the sepulcher; these were the days of his deepest degradation, and in which his disciples were clothed with sackcloth. It was not until the morning on which he rose, that the glimmering twilight of Judaism passed away, the night vanished, and was followed by the day in which the sun shall no more go down, neither the moon withdraw itself. The resurrection of Christ is the marked period in the history of the world, the brightest period, the most joyous period. He must continue under the power of death for a time, before he could be recognized as the authoritative Founder of the New Dispensation, as the Author and Finisher of the Christian faith, as the announced and honored Captain of his people's salvation. He was a mortal man till then; after this, "death had no more dominion over him." Till then, he was Heaven's Messenger, sent to woo and win his church in accents of sadness, and in groans and death; after this, he became her joyful Bridegroom, decked with robes of salvation, and clothed with light as with a garment. Till then, he came not to be ministered unto, but to minister; after this, he was Lord both of the dead and the living, the Head of his church, the King of the universe. The sacred and joyful day of his resurrection, ushered in the year of jubilee to the impoverished and enslaved families of the earth; it was the Sabbath of the world. The glory of the resurrection eclipses, I will not say the shame, but the glory of the cross. What is earth, and the glory of all its kingdoms, to the glory of this risen Saviour? This is he who rose, that all nations might bow before him; that he might sway the sceptre of the world; and having extended his kingdom from sea to sea, set upon the throne of David forever. This high vantage-ground the Christian dispensation occupies. This was the stand-point of the apostles when they went forth "preaching Jesus and the resurrection," and repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations in his name. Was it not a glorious event? We look back upon these scenes of mourning, and repeat the question he put to the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and enter into his glory?" On this eminence, the ministry of reconciliation now stand when they speak and teach in the name of Jesus. The cross is victorious, only because he could not be holden by the chains of death. His resurrection holds this prominent place, because it is God's mark of approbation of the perfection of his character and work. If his death was an expiation for sin, his resurrection is the great proof of its sufficiency, and of God's acceptance of it in behalf of sinners. The Scriptures give emphasis to the fact, that "he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, that if thou dost confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

"The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner; this' is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day the Lord hath made; we will rejoice in it, and be glad." Every returning Sabbath bears this witness for the Son of Man. It brings before the world this seal of his completed atonement. "Though made of the seed of David according to flesh, he is declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of Holiness, by his resurrection from the dead."

Such is the narrative given us of the resurrection of Christ; such the testimony by which it is supported; and such is the glory of his resurrection itself.

We place ourselves by the tomb of the risen Saviour as dying men. It is a dark world we inhabit, where sorrow and pain, infirmity, sickness, and death are man's inheritance. "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble." The glittering show of earth and all its pageantry vanish, when "his confidence is rooted out of his tabernacle, and he is brought to the king of terrors." It is a

dismaying truth that these bodies will putrefy and be dissolved in the dark grave. "Man dieth and wasteth away; yea man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?" The cold, damp sepulcher is a solitary dwelling, and an untried state of being. "As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. As the waters "fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up, so man lieth down and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, neither be raised out of their sleep." These are sad reflections, and they come from a far distant and dark dispensation. There is a brighter view of the grave than this. It is not the deep ocean where the hopes of man are buried; but the garden of hope, and where the seed dies only to spring up again, and bloom with the returning year of a pledged immortality. Long ago the blow was struck that weakens the power of death, extracts his sting, and is destined to break up his empire. When the Son of Mary assumed our nature, it was "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death." When he rose on the morning of the third day, he publicly announced the purpose, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; O death! I will be thy plague; O grave! I will be thy destruction." Glorious triumph! and still more glorious Conqueror! Cease then these gloomy and agitating fears of death and the grave. Anticipate, if you will, the bold and sudden knock of the Destroyer at this earthly house of your tabernacle. Or mark the gradual invasions of disease under which it is wasting away. Or inspect the wrinkles which time has traced upon your brow, and count the gray hairs which admonish you that the elasticity of youth and the vigor of manhood are gone, and that you may look in vain for withered sprightliness and faded beauty. And bid them welcome. Hail them all as God's appointed and your own bright omens of unfading vigor and immortal manhood; as the ripening seeds of the coming and promised harvest, "sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor but raised in glory; sown in weakness, but raised in power." He who was dead, liveth, and is alive for evermore, and hath the keys of death and the grave. "If we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall he also in the likeness of his resurrection."

We place ourselves also by the side of the Saviour's tomb also, as mourners. We have a quarrel with the all-devouring grave. It has swallowed up those we have loved. The venerated are there. There sleep smiling infancy, and prattling childhood. There moulder beauty's form and manhood's promise. The parents' hope lies buried there, and the husband's pride, and the wife's own refuge and comforter. And there the living sigh and mourners tread softly, and many a bosom gives utterance to the thought, O cruel grave! But have they all forgotten, that there Jesus slept Have they never learned, that "since Jesus died and rose again, so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him?" When now from his high abode he looks down upon these dreary ages of time, and marks the desolations which death has made, and the hopes which the grave has swallowed up; does he not remind them of his own protest against this all voracious destroyer! Is it not over this vast cemetery that he uttered the promise, "Thy dead men shall live; together with my dead body shall they arise." Is not the command still imperative, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust, for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead!" Bright rays even now fall upon the mansions of the dead. He will not be slack concerning the promise, that "the hour is coming in the which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man, and shall come forth." The days are few before the light of that immortal morning shall dawn, and these vile bodies shall be no longer the food of worms, but shall be fashioned like unto his own glorious body.

We place ourselves also by the tomb of the risen Saviour, as the ministers of his gospel. We bring you a message from the sepulcher where there is nothing now but the napkin that was about his head, and the linen clothes that formed his shroud. We show the proof that he is the promised Messiah, and the Saviour of the world. We give you his own assurance, that, having thus struggled with the powers of darkness on the cross, and gone through the gates of death and grave, and thus accomplished the most arduous parts of the work he came to accomplish, he lives to perfect it, and that not one iota of it shall remain unaccomplished. Jesus and the resurrection is the gospel we proclaim. He is not on the cross now; nor do your sins wring with anguish his tortured soul. Nor is every human hope now buried in the caverned rock, guarded by Caesar's soldiery, and watched by hovering angels. On that memorable morning, he bid adieu to earth's sorrows and ignominy, and now fills a throne where heaven does him homage, and where it is heaven, and will be heaven to you thus to honor him. "Awake then, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." This is our message from his sepulcher; and " he that hath ears to hear, let him hear." This is His message; and " see that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not they escape who refuse him that speaketh from heaven."

10 — Christ's Ascension

Chapter 10 CHRIST'S ASCENSION GLORIOUS The history of Christ during his residence on the earth, was, as we have seen, a wondrous history; everything is worthy of notice that relates to it. The manger where he was born — the Temple where his parents consecrated him to Israel's God — the village where he was brought up — the chamber where he instituted the Supper — the garden where he agonized — the cross on which he hung — the sepulcher from which he rose, and the Mountain from which he ascended, all awaken in our bosoms the most lively emotions, because they bear so intimate a relation to Him, to whom, if we are Christians, we have committed our immortality, and on whom we rest all our hopes. Sacred spot of earth! where those feet last stood that were nailed to the accursed tree. The Empress Helena, the mother of the great Constantine, is said to have here erected a temple, in honor of his Ascension. There is no doubt a superstitious and unchristian reverence for what are called holy scenes and holy places; nor that they have given rise to observances and rites which are hostile to the simplicity of the gospel, and ruinous to the souls of men. Yet is it human to be affected by them; and it may be Christian without regarding them as the symbols of Antichrist.

We are creatures whose thoughts are formed, in no small degree, by associations of thought. Great events consecrate and impart a portion of their own greatness to all that surrounds them. Were a Christian traveller to visit the Holy Land, next to Gethsemane and Calvary, he would go to the Mount of Olives, and there turn to the New Testament, and read the short narratives which so beautifully describe the circumstances of his divine Lord's final departure from this sinning and suffering world. With lingering and fond delight, he would dwell on the minute and apparently trivial circumstances which bring this delightful, but too often forgotten scene, to his remembrance. Christians of every age have contemplated this event with deep interest, not merely because it is the bright commencement of that brighter future upon which the Son of Man was then ushered, but for its intrinsic importance, and the halo of glory which it throws around his Person and his throne.

Allusions to his ascension are found in various parts of the Sacred Writings, but the only detailed account of it is given in the short narrative of the Evangelist Luke, in the closing paragraph of his gospel, and in the introduction to his historical treatise, called " The Acts of the Apostles." The narrative in his gospel, is in the following words: " And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." In the " Acts of the Apostles," he adds, that "a cloud received him out of their sight," and that his disciples " looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up." About forty days after his resurrection, he met with his disciples at Jerusalem for the last time, where he uttered those lessons of heavenly wisdom which none but he knew how to utter, and gave them important instructions with regard to that spiritual kingdom which he had set up in the world. It was forty days after his birth, that he was brought into the Temple, and presented to the Lord; and now, it is forty days after his resurrection, which was a sort of second nativity, that he presents himself before the Lord in the temple above. It was after his forty days' temptation in the wilderness, that angels came and ministered unto him; and now, forty days after

he left the wilderness of the grave, angels minister to him before his throne. Having reiterated to his disciples the assurances of his continued love, and having instructed them to "tarry in Jerusalem until he should send upon them the promise of his Father," he "was received up into heaven, and set on the right hand of God."

They were at no loss as to the place to which he ascended. The question as to any intermediate state where the souls of the righteous have been supposed to exist between death and the resurrection, is settled by the fact that he ascended to the heaven where God dwells, and that "where he is, they shall be also." It is perfectly obvious that it was not to any such intermediate state that he himself went. "A little while," says he, "and ye shall not see me, and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father." Still more explicitly he says, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father." The evidence of his ascension depends, in the first place, on his own declarations. He frequently declared that he was going back to the heaven from which he came, and persisted in that declaration to the last. We have just as much reason to believe his testimony as we have to believe that he was true. It depends also on the testimony of his disciples, who saw him rise. He did not ascend alone, but took his disciples with him from Jerusalem to Bethany, so that they might be witnesses of this great event. He does not shun the face of day, and amid the secrecy and silence of the night, fly back to his native heaven; but in the open light of the sun, he ascends through the astonished firmament, and in the presence of adoring disciples. He does not disappear and "vanish out of their sight," as he did on some other occasions; but in solemn majesty moved up before them into heaven, while their eyes were fixed upon him and they "steadfastly looked up" as he rose, till the bright object they were gazing at became smaller and more small, and all farther distinct vision was precluded by the "cloud which received him out of their sight." Nor was it from some obscure valley or mountainous ravine that he ascended; but from the mountain top, near Jerusalem, where the whole city might have seen him. He selected this eminence that nothing might intercept the view. It was the spot where he often retired from the city's strife, to hold intercourse with God, from which he rose to renew and perpetuate that fellowship. It was from Olivet because he there struggled in the garden, and he would have the scene of his greatest weakness, also the scene and the memorial of his divine power; that the place which was the beginning of his passion might be the beginning of his glory; and that from the spot where he had contended with the powers of darkness he might ascend as the mighty Victor, thus teaching all his followers in every age of the world that their severest conflicts secure their greatest victories. Other witnesses also there were, angelic messengers sent from heaven to give the assurance to his astonished disciples that he had gone to dwell with his eternal Father. There is evidence, too, of a different kind arising from the fact that the predictions which he himself uttered before his ascension were fulfilled by subsequent events. He predicted the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; and the Spirit was poured out. He predicted the signs which were to precede the destruction of Jerusalem; and not one of them failed. There were "false Christs who deceived many;" there were wars and commotions, "nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom;" there were "famines and pestilences;" there were "earthquakes," and "fearful sights and signs from heaven;" there were persecutions, and his followers were "delivered up to councils and synagogues and prisons, and beaten and killed." He predicted that "the gospel must be published among all nations;" and it was preached to Jew and Gentile, and churches were organized and pastors settled in every part of the then known world. He predicted

the siege of Jerusalem by the Roman armies, and the trench that should be cast about it; and it was compassed on every side. He predicted the miseries of the Jews during and subsequent to the siege; and history assures us that never was there such strange and unparalleled suffering. He predicted the total destruction of the temple and the city; and they were both "laid even with the ground," nor was there "left in them one stone upon another." He predicted that the Jews should be led away captive into all nations; and they were led away. He predicted that "Jerusalem should be trodden down by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;" and so completely was Judea subjected, that its very land was sold, nor has the city from that time to the present ever been in possession of the Jews. And to add to this testimony there is the fact that the Son of Man, from the day of his ascension, has not been seen among men. From that memorable day, with the single exception of Saul of Tarsus, no eye has seen him save upon the throne of David and at the right hand of God.

Such, in few words, is the scriptural narrative of the ascension of Christ, and of the testimony by which it is established, so far as is consistent with our present design to present them. We say nothing now of the moral argument in proof of this great fact, as we may have occasion to advert to it hereafter. We are chiefly concerned with the importance of this fact, and with the great glory it confers on the ascended Saviour. There are several characteristics of this great event, by which this thought may be illustrated. In the first place, this ascension furnishes strong confirmation of the truth of Christianity, Christianity is not less a narrative of marvellous facts, than it is a statement of marvellous and heaven inspired truths. To speak with more precision, its great and distinguishing doctrines are but revealed statements of these great facts. We have before remarked the singular circumstance, that the primitive martyrs to the Christian faith, suffered martyrdom, not for their belief in speculative theory, not for principles and doctrines which they could substantiate by argument; but for unwavering testimony to facts which they themselves either saw, or which they received on the testimony of accredited witnesses. It has been our object to state these facts, from the descent of the Son of God to Bethlehem's stable, to his ascension from the Mount of Olives. They are all miraculous, and indicate the interposition of supernatural power. Although each of them distinctly possesses this feature, and bears the seal and superscription of heaven, yet they are not narrated as distinct and isolated facts, but as the component parts of a perfected series. Christianity may not rest on any one of them; its Author never intended it should rest on any one of them. Not one of them can be spared from the series; every one of them is a link of burnished gold; but the brightest and purest of them does not alone form the golden chain of truth and love that binds earth to heaven. The true gospel is contained in those momentous facts, so forcibly bound together by Paul: "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory; Christianity ends where it begins. The divine Author first came from heaven, and after his varied pilgrimage of love, and labor, and suffering, on the earth, went back to the heaven whence he came. The facts which constitute the sum and substance of it, form this beautiful circle, of which Christ is the centre, and from which so many subordinate truths radiate to the unbroken circumference. There is this consistency in it, that every part of it is adapted to every other part; and it is only in its relation to the whole, that any one part can be appreciated. This last miracle of Christ, his ascension from earth to heaven, suits well with his first miracle, his descent from heaven to earth. It suits well with his life, his preaching, his death, and his resurrection. They all stand or fall together. You cannot deny one without denying

the whole. There is the same evidence in favor of every part, that exists in favor of the whole; and the same evidence in favor of the whole, that exists in favor of every part. You demolish Christianity, if you demolish the doctrine of the resurrection, because if he did not rise, he does not live and reign. So you make a wreck of Christianity, if he did not ascend; because he is no more than the risen Lazarus, if he lives not, reigns not. We must travel with him from the place where he was born, to the Mount of Olives; and there, on that sacred eminence, we may look back and see his glorious career. Olivet will not soon be forgotten, for the confirmation it furnishes of the truth of the gospel. In the next place, the ascension of Christ furnishes us an affecting view of the loveliness and the dignity of his character. We have more than a glimpse, both of his humanity and his divinity, in this wonderful scene. There are things in his Person and glory that are protected from all unhallowed curiosity; but in the circumstances of his ascension, we feel that, like the disciples who accompanied him from Jerusalem to the Mount of Olivet, we are permitted to inspect with more than ordinary familiarity, that contrasted yet combined loveliness and dignity which render him glorious. It was the last earthly interview he ever enjoyed with these holy men. Endeared as they had been to him, and he to them, the time had come of which he had often premonished them, when he must leave and go to his Father. Yet to remain with them as long as he might remain, " he led them out as far as to Bethany."

Eager as he was to return to his native skies, he trod this last path with no unmeasured steps. Here was the man Christ Jesus; the emotions, the look, the language of the man. And there was divine loveliness and divine light that spread around him, kindling within their bosoms thoughts and affections beyond the ordinary privilege of their fellowship even with their divine Master. Who is that wonderful Personage standing on the Mount of Olives, with his eye fixed on heaven, " lifting up his hands and blessing" his disciples? His words ever had been words of blessing; but now they fall with an emphasis and a tenderness that bespeak his departure. He began his career, he continued, and closed it in the same spirit of blessing. Just as he is about to ascend, the words of blessing are on his lips. His heart yearned toward them. All that he could give, he then gave, because all that he could feel he then felt. It was in the very act of blessing them, and while his hands were uplifted, and the blessing was on his lips, that " he was parted from them." He could not leave them to measure their bloody path through this vale of sorrow, without this last assurance that all their weakness and faults were forgotten, and that he bore them on his heart. Their allotment was to wait a little while here below; his cause demanded it; and that through fiery trials and great tribulation, they should enter the kingdom of heaven. They were the last words he uttered, when he thus blessed them. Thus ended his wonderful career on the earth; a termination which will be had in everlasting remembrance. Calvary, Tabor, and Olivet, will ere long melt away; this earth, with all its profane and sacred scenes will ere long be burnt up, and the places which now know them will know them no more; but this loving Saviour will not be forgotten.

We scarcely know which most to admire in this scene, his matchless loveliness, or his infinite dignity. Hear him speak, and see him ascend. It is not the Man Jesus who had not where to lay his head; nor is it the Living God before whom Moses trembled. It is the God-Man Mediator, that despised rejected One, putting on his robes of majesty, in order to terminate his earthly career in a manner befitting his high character. While he was pursuing the preliminary objects of his mission, his true dignity was slowly and gradually unfolded. At his resurrection the dawning light began to break forth; but it was at his ascension into heaven that he openly demonstrated before angels

and men that the eternity of the Godhead is his; that he inhabits it; that he fills it, and that it is his own eternity. Such was his progressive and splendid path, that when he saw that his Mediatorial work on earth was accomplished, and when he had made all necessary arrangements for the extension and perpetuity of his kingdom among men; by his own almighty power — that power by which he stilled the tempest, cast out devils, and raised the dead — he "ascends up where he was before." There the dying Stephen saw him, when he "saw the heavens opened." There the exiled Apostle beheld him, where thousands and thousands of thousands bowed before him, and sung the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!" And there he will remain "until the times of the fulfillment of all things, spoken of by all the Prophets since the world began."

We are told that the disciples who saw him ascend, after he had gone up worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the Temple, praising and blessing God." The scene they had just witnessed confirmed the views they had long cherished of the dignity of their Divine Master. In supreme love and profound veneration, they prostrated their souls before him, as their faithful Redeemer and rightful Lord, as the triumphant Conqueror over sin and death. They knew what he deserved. To him belonged all honor, glory, and praise, and to him they ascribed them. They could "now return to Jerusalem with great joy." Mount Olivet was one of the permanent memorials of their Master's glory. From the spot where their own feet had stood with his, they had seen him rise; and though their transports of joy may have passed away, they were in that settled state of mind which constrained them to abide in the Temple, "continually praising and blessing God." The Bible has few facts more full of interest than this ascension of the Son of God; it has none more sublime or wonderful than his glory as here manifested. Human reason has nothing to do here but satisfy itself of the fact; the glory is infinite; it is above the reach of human comprehension. We worship and adore, as the disciples did, when they returned to Jerusalem. Men may have large and lofty views of his glory; but however large and lofty they may be, they fall short of his real dignity. It will employ eternity to make it all manifest. Nay, eternity itself cannot complete the development. It is easier to tell what he is not, than what he is. He is not man; he is not angel; he is not the highest of created beings. To know him perfectly, we must see him with the eyes, and know him with the intelligence of the Deity. The more we search into this unfathomed depth, the deeper we find it. The rays dazzle and overpower us with their splendor. As we see him go up, and recall his birth, and life, and crucifixion, we are hushed into the silent raptures of astonishment. His ascension furnishes us, in the next place, with a glimpse of his blessedness. If modest and humble piety is chastened by this view of the personal dignity of Christ, it is gratified by the view it presents of his begun blessedness. The blessedness of the Man when he ascended, we can better understand, than we can the blessedness of the ascending God. The infinity of the Deity is to us an inconceivable idea; nor can we comprehend his blessedness any more than his infinity. We must speak of that which we cannot comprehend when we speak of the heavenly blessedness of God manifest in the flesh, or we must not speak at all. His incomprehensible blessedness is one of the radiating splendors of his glory. He ascended up on high to behold his heavenly Father's face without a veil and without a cloud, and with him to inhabit the same infinite plenitude of joy. We have seen enough of his degradation; other visions now greet us. The scenes of shame and suffering are over. The days of humiliation may be remembered, and even commemorated; but they are never to be realized a second time. It is not the Garden now, but the celestial Paradise. It is not now the scorn of kings and the derision of the people; but the alleluias of harpers harping with their harps. It is not the groans that rent rocks asunder and shook terribly

the earth; but the voice of those " which were redeemed from the earth," as the " voice of many waters and as the voice of a great thunder." It is not One, who of all the miserable, is himself the most miserable; but One, who of all the happy, is himself the most happy. He is within the City where "nothing that defileth" shall enter. He has reached the shore, and wave after wave no more rolls over him. His last tear was shed when he wept for others' woes; and now, on that same Mount where he wept over Jerusalem, he bids farewell to earth, and goes back to be "glorified with the glory he had with the Father before the world was." That glory he so often sighed for, how welcome! That joyful meeting with his Divine Father was itself a recompense for all his woes. That long sought home, that peaceful rest, that renewed intercourse with seraphim, and with the spirits of just men made perfect, and those acclamations of praise all found a response in his own divine bosom, and he was happy, infinitely and eternally happy.

How joyous must have been the scene when the early disciples thus saw him so far above the darts of this cruel world, and the more cruel darts of his earliest and latest foe! It was enough that their beloved Lord now lived, God blessed for evermore. They remembered the words which he spake, " If ye love me, ye will rejoice because I said I go to the Father." His glory was not eclipsed in the darkest night of his sufferings; he could suffer as no other ever suffered, and glorify his Father even in draining the bitter cup. Nor was it obscured now that the darkness is passed, and the light of heaven shone upon him. His character was not such as to lose its lustre amid the fascinations of joy; on the other hand the fascinations of joy added lustre to his character. He who traveled in the greatness of his strength, in the deep valley of his humiliation, arrayed himself even in purer garments when he ascended to sit down on his throne. There was surpassing glory in that surpassing blessedness. What is more triumphant and glorious than the infinite blessedness of the infinite Saviour? blessedness as diffusive as it is infinite! blessedness that is identified with the blessedness of his ransomed ones, and that is the only source and guardian of all the blessedness in the universe! This leads me to remark, in the last place, that we cannot have just impressions of the glory of his ascension without associating it with the objects it was to attain. These were the same for which he clothed himself with humanity, and endured humanity's curse. They were vast in their intrinsic importance, vast in their extent, and vast and interminable in their influence upon the destinies of men and the empire and glory of God. The work he had already accomplished on the earth was but preparatory to the work which, as the mediatorial priest and king, he was to carry on in his state of exaltation, until the final consummation of all things. It was a remarkable prohibition which the risen Saviour uttered to Mary in the garden, when he said, " Touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my Father but go to my brethren and say unto them, ascend to my Father and your Father and to my God and your God." His work was not accomplished, nor could it be until he ascended into heaven as the recognized and honored Priest and King.

There are emphatic predictions in the sacred writings of the perpetuity and glory of these high offices of the ascended Christ. " Thou art a Priest forever" says the Psalmist, "after the order of Melchizedec." He was designated to this high office by the decree and oath of him " who hath sworn and will not repent." The prophet Zechariah instructs us that "he shall be a Priest upon his throne." He was to unite the character of priest and king, and forever maintain his royal Priesthood and his sacrificial royalty. " I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion. Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor." The prophet Isaiah affirms, " When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, and the

pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death." Again, it is written, " the Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." And again, " He shall drink of the torrent in the way, therefore shall he lift up the head." There, too, was that marvelously-retained inscription upon his cross, " Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

These and other similar productions were fulfilled, not until he ascended to his Father. Then it was that he went up to offer oblation and intercession for his redeemed, and to give them his official benediction. " We have a great High Priest," says the Apostle, " that is passed into the heavens Jesus the Son of God." Again he says, " Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Jesus the Son of God." Jesus Christ, because he continueth forever, hath this unchangeable priesthood. Like the High Priest under the Levitical law, who with his splendid robes entered into the most holy place, so Jesus, not with the blood of bullocks and of goats, but with his own blood, and still bearing the marks of the Great Sacrifice, as the Lamb of God, entered into the " most holy place, not made with hands, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." The true church of God in every age, can now say, "We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens." There he must present himself as their Advocate, pleading for them the merits of his sacrifice, supporting them under their trials, and conduct them safely to his and their heavenly home. There must he appear, presenting to the heavens from which he came the public demonstrations of his perfected sacrifice, and claim the fulfillment of that everlasting covenant of which his own blood is the seal. Under the dark and shadowy dispensation faith lived only on these predictions; now it lives on the predictions fulfilled, and consummated by the resurrection and ascension of the once foreshadowed and predicted High Priest. " Who is he that condemneth? 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." Nor until he ascended, was he publicly invested with his kingly office. For the suffering of death, he " was by the right hand of God exalted." He was to become "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." " We see Jesus," saith the apostle, " for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor;" having a "name which is above every name." When he ascended into heaven, therefore, it was as the great Mediatorial King "principalities and powers being subject unto him," and to exert his power in the kingdoms of nature, providence. and grace, as " Head over all things to his church." Thence he was to send down his Holy Spirit to perfect the work of redemption, and to perpetuate it to the day of his coming. His crown of thorns was the pledge of " many crowns" to be won from the enemy, and there cast at his feet. From his glorious, high throne, he was to spoil the Destroyer, and deliver his captives by means of his own ordaining, and by institutions and authority which he alone had a right to establish. He was to impart the power of working miracles to his apostles; he was to inspire them with the thoughts and words with which they were to reveal his will to mankind; and he was to conduct them by his Spirit and providence to the ends of the earth. By their preaching he was to overturn the altars of superstition; extend his gospel and kingdom over the world; plant his church amid arid sands and mountain snows; and be everywhere present with his people and his ministers, and repeat the triumphs of his power and grace, ever redeeming the promise, that " the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church." He was to introduce the period of Millennial glory, and fill the earth with the " knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters fill the sea." And when all this is done, he is to come at last to judge the

world in righteousness. This last fact was strongly impressed upon the minds of those who were the witnesses of his ascension, by special messengers sent from heaven. These apostles had seen him for the last time, until they should see him come in power and great glory. " As they were looking steadfastly toward heaven as he went up," behold two men stood before them in white apparel, saying, " Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven!" As he had disappeared in the clouds of heaven, so the clouds of heaven should reveal him, when he would once more descend, to gather before him all nations. Descending angels met him in his upward flight; amid their acclamations he ascended, and by them conducted to the portals of the Heavenly City. What a glorious epoch was that in the history of Christ and of heaven, when the everlasting doors, for more than thirty years closed upon him, were opened! Who, in contemplating his ascension, can do otherwise than contemplate his glory? What a triumph was here! It was the Seed of the Woman bruising the head of the Serpent. It was the triumph of humanity over the malignity of Fiends, and the power of Hell. The Second Adam, the appointed and accepted representative of a redeemed humanity, was in heaven at last. In defiance of sin, death, and hell, he was there the grand proof and pledge of God's reconciliation to man. Illustrious, refulgent day! It was the great consummation of his great work. And what a thrilling; welcome was that, when thousands clustered around this restored Son of God, and shouted the return of this mighty Conqueror, with all the scars of the great battle fresh upon him. What mean those heavenly voices? " Thou HAST ASCENDED ON HIGH; THOU HAST LED CAPTIVITY CAPTIVE; THOU HAST RECEIVED GIFTS FOR MEN, YEA, FOR THE REBELLIOUS ALSO, THAT THE LORD GOD MIGHT DWELL AMONG THEM!" Hark again! " LIFT UP YOUR HEADS, O YE GATES, AND BE YE LIFT UP, YE EVERLASTING DOORS, AND THE KING OF GLORY SHALL COME IN!"

Thus glorious was the great Redeemer in his ascension into heaven. Christians in every age have contemplated this great event with high satisfaction. So ought we to contemplate it, and study its import. It is truly a remarkable event; as the closing event in a series, it is the most remarkable. Do you believe it ever took place? It is the great policy of Satan to prevent men from believing these facts, to make light of them, and treat them as a farce. You believe other things on far less testimony; but do you, believe these? You believe other things because you have no motives to disbelieve them, and your own minds are in a state which yields to the force of evidence. It is not so easy to believe this, because it involves such high interests, and affects your eternal well-being. I ask therefore again, Do you believe that Jesus died, and rose again, and ascended into heaven as the King of the universe and the Judge of men? Perhaps you wish they were not true, because they disturb your consciences, alarm your fears, and demand so high a place in your thoughts, that they do not allow you to look to any other refuge than this Prince and Saviour. Do you doubt them? Do you love to doubt them? Are you willing to doubt them? There is no question of greater importance to be decided, than whether they are true or false; and if true, whether you believe or reject them? I entreat you not to live any longer without deciding this vital question. They are so far beyond the range of common truths, that nothing can satisfy you, or justify you in rejecting them, unless you can prove them false. This no man has ever done, and no man can do. Be he Jew or Gentile, it is something gained to be convinced that you cannot prove them false. If you look upon them as doubtful, O be implored, by all the glories of that heaven to which Jesus of Nazareth is gone, and all the solemnities of that Day of Judgment to which he will soon come, not to give sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till that doubt is removed!

You will say you do not doubt them. Well, then, how do they influence your character and conduct? You give your assent to them as facts; and just think what momentous facts they are. You could not believe that the sun shines, or is obscured; that the wind of heaven blows from the east or the west, without its influencing your conduct. And can you believe such momentous facts as these, facts on which hang an eternal heaven, or an eternal hell, and yet treat them as the idle wind? Ah no, perhaps you do not believe them, after all. Faith in such realities as these, would form your character, and fit it for the heaven where Jesus dwells. You would have new views, new affections, new hopes and fears. You would have sources of peace and joy you never had before. You would have found what the world cannot give you, and would no more go to the world as your chief good. You would love that Saviour who, though he knew no sin, became sin for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God in him. Your faith in such realities would form the elements of a new and holy life, and do for you what nothing else can do. This is the reception we solicit for this great fact in the Saviour's history. Let it bring near the realities of eternity, and make those realities precious. The ascended Saviour is as near to us as he was to his early disciples; and the heaven where he dwells as near to us as it was to the Mount of Olives. There is indeed a heaven; it is but a few hours' distance from us, when once our spirits receive the Saviour's bidding to "Come away." The eye of faith can see it; through the grave and all its circumambient clouds, it can descry the Heavenly City. He still speaks the assurance, " Because I live, ye shall live also." They are his lips which still affirm, " I go to prepare a place for you." Just as certainly as his disciples beheld him ascending through the clouds, will all those who love his appearing " ascend to his Father and their Father, to his God and their God." Take courage, then, ye trembling saints. "To him that overcometh," saith he, " will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne." Christians are apt to fear, because they do not see their Lord, nor hear his voice, nor receive his sensible benedictions as they once fell as it were from his own lips, that he is unmindful of them. Like an inexperienced and fretful child, because it does not see its mother's countenance, nor hear her voice, concludes that it is forsaken, so we, because the ascended One is out of sight, sometimes complain, " The Lord hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me." But absent though he is in body, he is present in spirit. Well we know what he can do for us, and how he can fill us with the consolations of his love. Well may we live above the world and walk with Jesus. Well may we seek often to be alone with Jesus, and well may other objects be lost sight of and swallowed up in the thoughts of Jesus. Well may we, with the exulting disciples, meet often in his temple to praise and bless the God of our salvation; and at his table also, and drink at that fountain of living waters. One would think we should have no heart to speak of anything but Christ, nor any other language but that of praise. Delightful employment! Come Christians, let us unite with these holy men who returned from the Mount of Olives with so much joy, and let the heaven where our Master dwells bear witness to our vows, and record our thankfulness, while we say, " My soul DOTN MAGNIFY THE LORD, AND MY SPIRIT DOTN REJOICE IN GOD MY SAVIOUR; FOR HE THAT IS MIGHTY HATH DONE GREAT THINGS, AND HOLY IS HIS NAME!"

11 — In the Mission of the Holy Spirit

Chapter 11 THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN THE MISSION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. So far as it respects its influence upon men, the great object of Christ's coming into the world was to elevate them to moral rectitude. There is a higher good than mere enjoyment; something more valuable than the pardon of sin, and deliverance from the wrath and curse; else would there have been no such revealed conditions of salvation, and no such sacrifice as the humiliation of the Son of God. Infinite goodness would make men happy, but not at the expense of holiness; it is a holy happiness which it seeks to bestow. In the final issues of his government, God cannot tolerate an unholy happiness. When we speak of holiness, we speak of that which God most loves. His own character is "glorious in holiness." Seraphim and cherubim cover their faces with their wings when they prostrate themselves at his throne, and say, one to another, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts!" Such a being, from his nature, must be the support and guardian of holiness on the earth. This world can give riches, pleasures, honors, dignities, crowns; but it cannot give holiness. The sons and daughters of men are pilgrims to the Holy Land; but they cannot enter it unless they themselves are holy. There is no such thing as a happy hereafter, unless it be a holy hereafter; nor is there any crown of immortality unless it be "the crown of righteousness." They themselves must be consecrated temples, sanctified by precious graces, and adorned with the beauties of holiness. Though formed for blessedness, they must forever be banished from God's presence if they remain defiled with the pollution of sin. Their title to eternal life was not only extinguished with their innocence, but the gates of heaven remain forever barred against them unless there be super-added to the expiation of the Son of God, that divine arrangement by which they are born anew to a spiritual life, not of corruptible, but of incorruptible seed, which liveth and abideth forever. Every principle of the gospel illustrates its supreme and immutable regard to holiness. The wondrous and eternal purpose which originated it; the doctrines it reveals, its promises and its threatenings, its institutions and means of grace, are all designed to purify and elevate the moral character of men. It would render them not merely the objects of the divine compassion, but of the divine complacency. It would fit them for that holy world where they shall be purified from all that is debasing, and the glorious Redeemer shall present his church unreproug, without blemish and without spot.

Hence the Scriptures speak of the Dispensation of the Spirit, of the Ministration of the Spirit, and of the Spirit of Christ as dwelling with men; and of the work of the Spirit as glorifying Christ.

We propose in the present chapter, in the first place, to speak of the work itself which the Spirit of God performs. The work of the Spirit itself in carrying into effect the gracious purposes of the Redeemer is not limited to any one effect, or series of effects in the human mind. Besides giving to the world the divine Oracles, and recalling to the remembrance of the inspired penmen the facts and truths which these Oracles contain, it is his province, in the first place, to awaken the attention of this thoughtless and slumbering world to the truth of God. There is no fact more discouraging in the history of a preached gospel, than the utter listlessness with which it is heard. Men's thoughts are absorbed in other things; "their heart goeth after their covetousness; the sower soweth the

word;" but the seed falls on the barren rock, and is choked by the cares and pleasures of the world. Men will listen to a popular preacher, and be in admiration of his eloquence; while the truth he utters has no charms for their unthinking minds. We are told that, " The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, that she attended to the things which were spoken of Paul.' No sooner is this listlessness dismissed, and men begin in earnest to attend to God's truth, than there is reason to hope that some salutary impression is made upon their minds. This is the work of God's Spirit. It is he who unstops the deaf ear, and makes a passage for the first ray of heavenly truth to penetrate the dungeon mind.

It is his work, in the next place, to convince of sin. There is nothing of which men know less than their own wickedness. The Saviour says of the Holy Spirit, " He shall convince the world of sin." The power of the Holy Spirit is always super-added to the truth, when the truth shows the sinner his true character and condition. When the mind is merely awakened to attend to the truths of God's word, the effect of this awakening is ordinarily no more than to excite alarm, and give rise to some few self-righteous efforts to escape the coming wrath. Under this excitement, men become reformed in their outward conduct; return to the neglected duties of religion, and indulge the expectation of pleasing God by going about to establish their own righteousness. They have very superficial views of their own sinfulness, and therefore do not feel their need of an interest in the atonement of the Son of God. But when the Spirit of God sets home the truth, shows them "the plague of their own hearts;" makes them see that they are dead in sin, and that their own righteousnesses are as filthy rags; their apprehensions of the wrath to come are painful realities, and often too heavy to be borne. Their state of mind is not unlike that of Paul, of which he says, " I was alive without the law once; but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. The law condemns them; and they feel that they are without hope. " The arrows of the Almighty stick fast within them, the poison whereof drinketh up their spirits." They are self-condemned, and all their false refuges are swept away. Most of all do they feel condemned for not repenting and believing the gospel. " When he the Spirit of truth is come, he shall convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me."

It is the work of the Spirit, in the next place, to regenerate the soul. That great and governing principle of human conduct, the love of God, which was lost at the fall, is restored to its rightful throne in the heart only by the Spirit of God. Give the sinner this, and it changes his whole character. Old things are done away, and all things become new. He is brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light. His understanding is illuminated, and he sees the things of the Spirit of God in their reality, their nearness and beauty. This is emphatically true of the method of salvation by Jesus Christ. The time was the Saviour of men was to them as " a root out of a dry ground, having no form, or comeliness that they should desire him." But it is not so now. He who " commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into their hearts, to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." In their view, he is now " the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." They fall in with the method of redemption by his cross; are clothed upon with the " righteousness which is of God by faith;" give him all the glory, and only desire to know more of him, and to be more like him. They are " born of the Spirit;" they are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."

Sanctification is also another work of the Spirit. It is he alone who progressively purifies the soul and fits it for heaven. This is one of the most important and beautiful offices which the Spirit of

grace performs, and in which he himself so much delights. We read of " the love of the Spirit;" and it is in this hallowed work that his love is so delightfully made manifest. He not only takes the soul from its deeply embedded pollution, and transforms it from the rude rock which it was by nature; but burnishes it, and gives it its diamond lustre, and makes it sparkle on the brow of its heavenly Prince. All Christians are " sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Whatever means are necessary to this end, the providence of God prepares, and his Spirit consecrates. That sweet attraction of the heart to heavenly things, by which the eyes are turned away from beholding vanity; those delightful aspirations so often breathed in the closet, " O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee; my flesh longeth for thee;" those sacred festivals of the mind in which it feeds on the bread which came down from heaven, and where every pious thought is invigorated, every devout affection enlivened, and every hope cheered, are all the fruit of the Spirit. In the last place, it is the high and peculiar work of the Spirit to perform the office of the Comforter. "If I go not away," says the Saviour, "the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him unto you." Delightful work is this, and delightfully befitting the lovely nature of him who thus proceedeth forth from the Father and the Son! Delightful thought it is, that that vivifying Spirit, spoken of by the prophet, who directs and animates the ministering cherubim in their attendance upon the throne of the Most High, should, take up his abode in the hearts of his often dejected and sorrowing people on the earth! Here he dwells, like the Shekinah in the Temple, filling their hearts with his light and love; creating a fire and a smoke in every dwelling-place on Mount Zion; making her Sanctuaries glorious with his presence, and like the cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night, guiding and comforting his church through the wilderness. It is because taught and encouraged by him, that the individual Christian, perplexed and desponding, harassed by enemies, agitated by fears, and chastened by afflictions, is so often heard to say, " Why art thou cast down, O my soul! and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God!" It is because he is her refuge and solace, that the church of God, in her associated character, when oppressed and disheartened, and passing under the cloud, and through long nights of darkness, and trial, has been buoyed up by bright expectations, and has found light arising in the midst of the darkness. The four emblems by which the Spirit is set forth in the Scriptures, are water the dove the wind and fire. Soft and gentle as the refreshing showers, meek and retiring and easily grieved as the fluttering dove, balmy as the breeze, and glowing with heavenly fervor as the flame on celestial altars; this Commissioned Comforter dispenses his heavenly grace, gives the people of God an earnest of their inheritance, and seals them to the day of redemption. The Son of God no longer dwells with men. He has gone to return no more, until he shall come in the clouds of heaven to judge the world. He must have returned had not the Holy Spirit come in his place, to act as the great representative of Christ upon the earth, that his church might not be with the present Deity, nor the world without this Witness to the truth.

Such is the work of the Holy Spirit. All the religion that ever was in the world, and that is now and ever will be in it, is the effect of his power. No awakening, no conviction, no conversion, no sanctification and comfort are genuine unless they are the work of the Spirit. There is as wide a difference between those awakenings and misnamed revivals of religion which are the result of human machinery, and are got up by the measures and management of men, and that well-instructed, noiseless, humble, and deep-toned piety which is the fruit of God's Spirit; as between the rushing tempest which rent the mountains, and the still small voice which made the prophet wrap his face in his mantle. The Spirit of God never counterfeits. There are abortions and

monstrous births in " that which is born of the flesh;" that " which is born of the Spirit is spirit." Our next object is to show that this great and divine agent is the Messenger of Jesus Christ.

Although the power of the Spirit was enjoyed by the church of God under the old dispensation, and cheered and refreshed her pilgrimage, and was often revealed in the holy land; yet was it the great promise to the new dispensation. There were early predictions, not a few, that looked forward to this dispensation of the Spirit with a cheered and cheering vision. Isaiah spake of it in the glowing imagery of " pouring water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground;" and often spake of it with his own characteristic and sublime rapture when he predicted these latter days. The prophet Joel spake of it in more simple, and not less instructive language. " And it shall come to pass afterward, saith the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh." All classes and orders and ages were to be partakers of the blessing; sons and daughters, old men and young men; and " upon the servants and handmaidens in those days will I pour out my Spirit." The New Testament, as we have already seen, repeats and confirms these promises. Not more certainly was the promise of the incarnate Son the great promise of the Old Testament, than the promise of the Spirit is the great promise of the New. Before his death the Saviour made frequent mention of the Spirit's advent. After his resurrection, and as the time was drawing near when he was about to ascend to his Father, he renewed the promise, and told them that the time of its accomplishment was near. In one of his last interviews with them, " he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

Most gloriously was the promise fulfilled. Ten days after our Lords ascension, and fifty days after that memorable day of the Passover when he expired on Calvary, and when the day of Pentecost was fully come; that wondrous event took place which is recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. The Holy Ghost descended both in his miraculous gifts and his converting power upon the souls of men. We would that time were allowed us to dwell upon the details of this narrative, for it is one of the most interesting in the sacred record. It was at the hour of prayer in the temple, on the morning of that memorable day which commemorated the giving of the law on Sinai, now made more memorable, not by proclaiming it in thunder, but by inscribing it in the hearts of men. It was the day consecrated in Jewish history to the annual offering of the first fruits; now more emphatically consecrated by the first ingathering of the gospel harvest. It was one of those three days in the year on which all the Jews were obliged by their law to come to worship at Jerusalem and in the temple: and well was it selected, if for no other reason than to give publicity to this first triumph of Christian truth, this successful commencement of the " ministration of the Spirit." Here again, as at the passover, and on the clay of the crucifixion, Jews from Asia, Africa, Europe, the islands, and all parts of the world where they were dispersed, were assembled to become the witnesses of this great fact, subjects of this divine influence, and to bear the tidings of the new doctrine, the new dispensation, and the descending Spirit. The risen Saviour did not intend that this vast multitude, who had so lately demanded and triumphed in his crucifixion, should depart from the city so lately desecrated by his blood, till they had seen these new wonders of his power, and not a few of them had washed in that fountain which their murderous hands had opened, and had become thus qualified to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth.

Wonderful was the spectacle. We can form no just conception of it without representing to our minds his expectant disciples assembled " with one accord, in one place," bowing with one heart before the mercy-seat, lifting up their souls to God, and imploring him to put honor upon his Son Jesus, by fulfilling the promise, and causing the Holy Ghost to descend. These holy men had been bound together by the strongest ties of love to their Master, love to his cause, and love to one another. They were now bound by welcome, yet most solemn responsibilities; for they had already received the command to " go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." They were about to separate, with the view of fulfilling this high commission, but were detained by this one command: " Tarry ye in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father." Burning as their hearts did burn to enter fields already white to the harvest, they could not go without the Holy Spirit. They needed both his miraculous and his sanctifying and comforting power in order to qualify them for their work, and sustain them in their fiery trials. And there they were in prayer, expressing their earnest desires, pleading with God, with no dubious and vacillating faith, but with humble and strong and confident expectation, that the promise of their ascended Master would be fulfilled, and that "God would glorify his Son Jesus" by such wonders of his power as this earth has never before beheld.

" And it came to pass, while they were praying, they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The promise was fulfilled. The multitude were held in profound admiration. And while some of these millions scoffed, and others were held in doubt, these men of God, no longer oppressed by their own faintheartedness, and no longer shutting themselves up in secret chambers for fear of the Jews, went forth undaunted, and carried the message of the great salvation to their assembled countrymen. Even in the presence of the Sanhedrin, who had but seven weeks before put Jesus to death, and in the presence of the scoffing millions, who circulated the rumor that his disciples came and stole his body while the guard slept, they testified that Jesus was the promised Messiah; that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain him; that God had raised him from the dead, and that now repentance and remission of sins was preached in his name to all nations. The consequence was, that the Holy Spirit which was with the apostles, fell also on the multitude, so that under the preaching of a single discourse by Peter, three thousand were converted in a day. It was a rich day to the apostles, to the infant church, to the world; and a rich and glorious day to Jesus Christ. It was a new day in the history of God's grace to the sons and daughters of men. Thus it was that Christianity began its course. And thus it continued during the apostolic age. Immediately after this, five thousand more were made the subjects of converting grace. And then here and there, hundreds, until the gospel had free course, and was glorified throughout the Roman empire. It was " the ministration of the Spirit;" nor will it cease until men shall be blessed in the God of Israel, and all nations shall call him blessed. Our last and principal object is to illustrate the glory of Christ in this mission and work of the Spirit of truth and grace. This illustration we can best present by the following distinct thoughts. In the first place, the work of the Spirit furnishes additional proof of the great facts which form the sum and substance of Christianity, We have made this deduction from premises before stated; and the evidence here culminates to its highest point. We need not go beyond this, in order to prove that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of men. This was the last prediction which he made while on the earth; next to his death and resurrection, it was the great prediction. Christ himself did not go beyond this, in order to satisfy the faith of his apostles, and substantiate his claims to the confidence and obedience of the world. He told his disciples to wait

for the fulfillment of this prediction; they did wait; and when the Spirit came, they girded on the whole armor of God, and went forth. This was the only piece of their bright panoply which remained to be buckled on; with this sword of the Spirit, so burnished, they addressed themselves to the conquest of the world. The Christ had come whom their Scriptures foretold; fit the predicted time, from the predicted seed and origin, and in the predicted place. According to the same series of prophecies, he was God and man, and the Great Prophet who came in the power of Elias, and confirmed his mission by signs and miracles, which demonstrated that God was with him. They had seen him, as the same spirit of prophecy foretold, poor and despised; betrayed by one of his disciples, mocked and derided, and crucified for the sins of the world. They had seen his garments divided and the soldiers cast lots for his vesture; honorably buried, risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. The Holy Ghost had not yet been given, " because Christ was not yet glorified." But now they saw that he was faithful to his promise, and sent the Holy Spirit, the Comforter. This was the argument on which they relied for proof of the divine origin of Christianity. This was the argument of Peter on the day of Pentecost, and the argument of Stephen before the Jewish Sanhedrin. These were the facts, the most of which the Jews denied; and which, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, the apostles proclaimed in their hearing, and in the place and under circumstances, the very last to be selected by impostors. It is worthy of remark, that they did not go first to Antioch, nor to Ephesus, nor to Rome; where, from the superstitious habits of the people, it would have been an easy matter to have introduced a false religion, and where the ignorance of the people of events in Judea and Jerusalem, would have rendered any detection of their fraud impossible. But, in obedience to the direction of their Master, they " began at Jerusalem;" in the very courts of the Temple, and in a presence the most appalling in the world, if they had been impostors; because these were the men who had been the crucifiers, and who, if there had been anything in the form of connivance or fraud, not only had the best and only means of detecting the deception, but who had a deep interest in confounding the deceivers before the world. Yet three thousand of these very men, on the first presentation of these great facts, bowed before the majesty of truth, and professed their faith in that Saviour, whom but fifty days before, they had nailed to the accursed tree.

These were the proofs, also, with which they afterward went to the Gentile world, to combat its philosophy, its idolatry, its wickedness; overturn its altars, and subdue it to the obedience of the Christian faith. And this completed series of facts, constitutes the argument in favor of Christianity at the present time. It is in few words, the great moral argument arising from the effects of Christianity on the minds of men. We have nothing more to utter in its behalf, than to demonstrate these facts; on these, with the concurrent and immense interests and responsibilities they involve, rests our appeal for the Saviour's honor, and the salvation of men. We say to the boasting infidel, see for yourself these great facts in the history of Jesus of Nazareth, and then mark their influence upon the character of men. What has human philosophy or human legislation accomplished in this agitated and convulsed world, compared with the elevating and reforming influence of these great facts? We make our appeal to the living masters of the Jewish law, and ask them to tell us what Judaism is worth, and what it is more than a worn-out system, breeding nothing but obduracy and disappointment; a rigorous, exclusive, and unmeaning system, if it terminate not in him who " was to come." Go to India, to China, to Persia; inspect the combined influences of other religions, and all the influences which this earth ever has known, or now knows; and what have they done in restoring the race from the moral malady to which sin has subjected them, and in regenerating the

world, compared with those living and actuating realities, the truth and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. In the second place, the work of the Spirit gives efficacy to the work already accomplished by Christ's death and resurrection. Had the world been left without any other divine agency than the death and resurrection of Christ, it had been left dead in trespasses and sins. Something more was necessary, than that the Son of God assume man's nature, die on the cross, rise from the dead, and ascend to the right hand of God. Experience, observation, and the Scriptures instruct us, that with these great facts before them, men will not come to him that they might have life. They are not influenced by these facts, as they ought to be influenced; nay, without super-added influences, they are not governed by them at all, save in so far forth as they restrain the wickedness of the unrenewed heart, and exert a moralizing and elevating power on the social intercourse of Christian lands. Men everywhere, even where these facts are known, are still under the dominion of a blinded understanding, an erring conscience, and a heart that is desperately wicked. "This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and they have loved darkness rather than light." "In them, that is in their flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." They are thoughtless and indifferent to the claims of the gospel; unconcerned alike about their sins and their salvation; blinded by the God of this world, bowing in his temple, and sacrificing at his altars, rather than turning from these dumb idols to serve the Living God. It requires more than the mere gospel offer, and the proclamation of mercy in the Saviour's name, to lead them to repentance, however urgent that call, and aided even by extraordinary dispensations of divine providence. It is not the force of truth alone, nor the most persuasive and cogent inducements, that awaken, convince, regenerate, sanctify, and comfort the soul, and fit it for heaven. They were not those influences, on which Christ himself placed his dependence, for the introduction, and extension, and prevalence, of his religion on the earth. "Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase." Presumptuous hope! to look for the conversion of men except to a power that is higher than human, and more effective than any of those truths which the great Author of Christianity has committed to men, in the mere outward ministrations of his gospel.

Indispensable, therefore, was it to the success of the gospel, and the saving effects of Christ's death, that, in addition to the facts which terminate with his ascension, there should be this great consummation, the descent of the Holy Spirit. "He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." Here the immediate influence of his great Propitiation terminated. His priestly office is a department by itself; it affects the law and government of God, and has no proximate efficacy in renewing the sinner's heart. This belongs to another department of the method of redemption. and is reserved for the Spirit of grace and truth, into whose hands the Father and the Son have committed it, that he, with them, might share the equal honors of man's salvation. The Saviour himself left the world, that he might send down his Holy Spirit to dwell with men, and rear that beautiful superstructure of holiness, the foundation of which was laid in his Atoning Sacrifice. He would not have ascended to the Father but for this; but would have remained on the earth, and here established his kingdom in the hearts of men by his own mighty power, and thus established his claim to the office both of Mediator and Sanctifier. He did return to his Father's throne, but it was to send the Holy Spirit; not, indeed, "to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness," but to bear testimony that the Son of God has accomplished this great work; not to add to the perfected atonement which Christ has made, but to bear testimony that Christ is approved and accepted in what he has done; not to detract from the work of Christ, but to be heaven's messenger, crowning it with honor, testifying to the understanding, the conscience,

and the heart of men, that there is salvation but in him, and drawing them to him, by the cords of love. God is still upon the earth, not in the person of the Father, nor in the person of the Son, but in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is the appointed and honored Representative of Christ in the world and in the church; taking of the things of Christ and showing them unto his people; subduing their hearts unto himself, and extending his kingdom. He gives efficacy to the peculiar work of Christ, by making it efficacious on the hearts of men; by driving them from their refuges of lies, and sweeping away one hiding place after another, till they are glad to take refuge from the raging storm of divine wrath, at his cross. He gives efficacy to it by striving with them and overcoming them, till they consent to be saved by Christ alone; by banishing their fears, and giving them the assurance that the blood of Jesus cleanseth from all sin. And need I say, that it is thus that the Saviour triumphs, and that in the eye of God, and angels, and men, he is glorious in the ministration of the Spirit. Has he any greater glory, than in thus verifying the declaration, " And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me!"

Once more: the work of the Spirit alone enables us to form some just estimate of the blessings which Christ bestows.' Not until he ascended up on high, did he sit down upon his mediatorial throne, and give gifts to men. It was his coronation day; and his accession to the kingdom was marked by the bounty of a Prince, such as this world never saw. His disciples did not at first comprehend the full import of the promise, that he would send the Comforter; their views were obscure and indefinite. This one thing only did they comprehend, that it was some great blessing because he had told them it was more desirable even than his own blessed presence. It was to introduce a new and spiritual dispensation; was to effect great changes in them, and in the men who were their associates; to transform the world, and to change the whole course of the divine government toward fallen men. They were gifts purchased by his own precious blood, and worthy of the price; gifts that would prove his right to the dominion to which he was exalted; that would abundantly gratify his benevolent heart to bestow; and in bestowing which he would take possession of "the joy that was set before him, when he endured the cross, despising the shame."

What were these gifts? They were to arrest the progress of millions, who, under the full sunlight of a revealed Christianity, were treading their way where peace and hope never come, and where sin and the curse hold their uncontrollable dominion. They were to break those chains of sin and death, and give the liberated captives the liberty of the sons of God. They were to make them a peculiar and holy people; peradventure the wonder and the laughing-stock of the world; peradventure the victims of torture and death; but a holy people, destined to be more, and still more like their divine Master, and at last received to those holy mansions where sin never enters, and where are imperishable honors, and crowns of rejoicing for every sinner that repenteth.

Yes, they were gifts for men. They were to make his people willing in the day of his power. Wondrous thought, and still more wondrous grace — willing! Willing to be what? to do what? to escape what? to enjoy what? Willing to be the friends of him who as far excels all other friends, as heaven exceeds earth, and eternity time, and God creatures; to be pardoned and justified subjects; to be clothed with the pure robe of his righteousness, comely through the comeliness which he puts upon them, and luminous through the light with which he decks them as with a garment. Willing to do his will, who governs by no usurped authority, and whose right to command none can deny; whose commands secure the approbation of every conscience, and who has made abundant provisions of grace to help in the time of need, and strength according to their day.

Willing to escape the burden of their own guilt, and their Maker's curse, the everlasting shame of wickedness, and the unutterable groans of everlasting anguish and despair. Willing to enjoy God's presence and favor, to love and praise him, to behold his glory, to reflect his image, and drink of those rivers of pleasure which flow at his right hand.

Yes, they were to make this people willing in the day of his power. Again I say, wondrous thought and grace! It is not the character of men to be so blind to their own well-being, as to require to be made willing to enjoy earthly good. It is in relation to higher and spiritual blessings only, that they are the slaves of this guilty and miserable infatuation. It is even so. Their reluctance to be made truly and forever happy is absolutely invincible by any power short of the omnipotent energy of the Holy Spirit. And in this consists the greatness of the blessings he imparts. It is immense graciousness, and gracious immensity of blessing.

It adds not a little to this bounty that this work of the Spirit is perpetual. The day of Pentecost commenced a series of wonders, and was the pledge of those divine influences, which, however various in measure, shall never be intermitted until time shall be no more. The Saviour has departed; but the Comforter will never depart. He will continue to instruct, convince, convert, and sanctify the sons and daughters of men until the last heir of glory is gathered in. There is no substitute for this influence. It will be as continuous as the work of redemption. And though it will not always descend in unwonted richness, it will ever be descending. No more than God the Creator abandons the world he has made; no more than God the Redeemer retires from the great work of making all things subservient to the church of which he is the Head; will God the Sanctifier resign the interests of his sacred office, and leave it unoccupied, or in other hands. It would be a darker day than this world has ever seen, if the divine Spirit should ever take his leave of men. Individuals may be thus abandoned of God; but his church — nay, this guilty world will never be thus abandoned. "As for me this is my covenant with them, saith the Lord; my Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed, from henceforth and forever." Just before his crucifixion, the Saviour said to his disciples, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you FOREVER." The dispensation of the Spirit is a perpetuated dispensation to the end of the world. Wherever Christ's ministers go in his name, the Spirit is with them. Where two or three are met together in his name, the Spirit is with them. Wherever the great congregation assembles to worship him, the Spirit is with them. If there be a community or a man on the face of the earth, whose condition is more to be deplored than that of any other, it is the community and the man who is utterly abandoned of God's Spirit. We hope never to see such a community or such a man. We believe there are few such men. Living under the dispensation of that condescending and gracious Comforter, whose benignant influences penetrate all orders of men, and hover over the path and the pillow even of the most thoughtless and giddy, we dare not relinquish the hope that the most deaf may yet hear the voice of God, and the most benighted open his eyes upon this great glory of his risen and princely Son.

Beautiful is that glory which belongs to the Son of God in his wondrous ministration of the Spirit. His name is written on myriads of minds that are thus transformed by his life-giving power. His voice breaks from the cloud, when it descends in copious showers, and gives verdure to the mountains of Zion. It whispers in the breeze, speaking not only to man, but in man, and insinuating his sacred influence into the very centre of his soul. There is not one of these renovated and

illuminated minds in which his light does not shine brighter than the sun, making them all reflect his glory. And when, in after and latter days, this light shall be steady and strong, and the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun as the light of seven days; how will his glory which was concealed in the veil of man's nature, and eclipsed in Calvary, break forth and overlay every dwelling-place, and make it a tabernacle of the Most High; every temple and make it the "Holy of Holies;" every mountain and valley, and deck them with heavenly beauty; every wilderness, and every dark and subterraneous cavern where the wickedness of man has been secreted, and make them glitter for that day in which he shall make up his jewels.

How obvious is it, on a summary review of these observations, that the Holy Spirit is the hope of the world! The promise of the Spirit was Christ's promise; and it was like him, worthy of him, and the fruits of it are the matured fruits of this Tree of Life. Ages, and places, and men on whom this blessing most effectually descends, are the marked ages in the history of the church, distinguished spots on the face of our favored globe, the favored individuals of our fallen race. The Apostles were scoffed at, until the descent of the Holy Ghost. The ministers of Christ, in every age, have spoken, and now speak to no better purpose, until the Spirit be poured from on high. Look over the world, and the land in which we live, and even on these favored churches where God's power and glory have been seen in the Sanctuary. What have they been when the Spirit of God was in the midst of us? What have they been, what are they now that the Spirit descends so sparingly? This is the influence we want. We have Bibles, we have Sabbaths, and sanctuaries, and ministers; our great want is more and greater outpouring of the Spirit from on high. The Holy Spirit is the hope of the church, and the hope of the world. The external machinery of God's church is complete; we want now the sacred fire to set it in motion. Nothing but God's omnipotent Spirit can safely direct its course, and give it the impulse that shall carry it through the earth. Never will another beam of light dawn, unless he bids it shine. Never more will there be an awakened thought, nor a pang of conviction, nor a penitential tear, nor a peaceful hope in Christ, nor an emotion of spiritual comfort and joy, nor a successful effort for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, unless he gives it. "All these worketh that self-same Spirit."

Yes, he is employed in this holy work still. He is now working in men to will and to do. And this is your hope. This gracious Reformer and Comforter meets the sinner in his deepest and most dire necessity. He gives him what he needs, because he makes him willing to receive the great salvation. He cannot come to Christ without the power of the Holy Spirit; but he can ask, he can seek, he can humbly knock at the door of heavenly grace, and will not be sent away empty. God gives his Holy Spirit to them that ask him. The promise is sure, "Then shall ye find me when ye search for me with your whole heart."

Let this truth be appreciated. It is no easy task for the sinner to resist the tenderness and importunity of the Spirit of truth and grace. To all the dispensations of God's Providence, all the truths of his word, all the checks of conscience, the ascended Redeemer is adding the appeals of his own Spirit. Wait not for them; for they are with you. Long has the Spirit of God been striving with you. From earliest childhood, he has been repeating his invitations, his remonstrances, his convictions. You have no such friend. Only do not grieve him. "Beware of him, and obey his voice; provoke him not, for the name of the Lord is in him," and he has come to show you his great glory.

12 — In the Character of His Followers

Chapter 12 THE GLORY OF CHRIST IN THE CHARACTER OF HIS FOLLOWERS. The time was when the human nature, like the angelic, bore the impress of its divine original. The perfect production of the artist indicated his excellence and skill. The stream was clear, and discovered the purity of the fountain. But man is no more what he then was. His "carnal mind is enmity against God;" nor is it until he "puts on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness," that he "shows forth the praises of him who hath called him out of darkness into his marvellous light." This is the high privilege of all the followers of Christ. "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature." His highest honor is to honor Christ. That the Son of God should be glorious in himself and in all that he has done, is a thought that commends itself to reason, to conscience, to piety; but that he should be glorious in the character of his followers, welcome as the thought is, is one which does not find so ready access to our minds. It is a wondrous manifestation of the divine condescension, that a creature of yesterday, born in sin, should be allowed to cherish so lofty a purpose. "Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not; yea the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man that is a worm, and the son of man which is a worm!" Yet nothing short of this fulfills man's spiritual and immortal destiny. This affecting truth bursts upon us from every utterance of the divine oracle, from the progressive developments of divine providence, and from the inward teachings of the divine Spirit. It is among the perpetually-augmenting glories of Christ, that he "is glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe." He is glorious in the character of his followers, in that they give him the throne, and cheerfully acknowledge his authority over them; in that their character is but the reflection of his own; in that they are his witnesses in this ungodly world; and in that they live to advance the interests of his kingdom and promote his glory. Let us dwell a few moments on each of these four thoughts.

Christ is glorious in the character of his followers in that they give him the throne and cheerfully acknowledge his authority over them. Every creature in the universe needs to be governed; not excepting the "angels who excel in strength." Nothing would be more unstable than this world under the control of a capricious monarch, or under any other than his one empire who is "Head over all things to his church." Even under such a head, what faction, sedition, treachery, disloyalty, and rebellion on the part of the great mass of mankind! The humors and tempers of men are the sport of their passions; the world is a scene of tumult, so that, instead of living in peace and order, and by their subjection doing honor to the King of heaven, every man is his own monarch; and the world we live in bears the marks of desolation and anarchy.

It is in such a world that he who styles himself the "Prince of the kings of the earth," has not only set up his throne, but subdued unto himself a "willing people in the day of his power." By nature, just as depraved and rebellious as other men, and just as much disposed to complain of his laws, they have learned to award him the honors of universal empire, and to take their proper places at his footstool. On that memorable day ' in which he first made his spiritual conquest over them, and when, as sinful and guilty rebels, they first drew nigh to God with hopes of pardon, it was through

him, as the exalted Mediator, and by faith in the blood of his cross. They were "reconciled to God by the death of his Son;" but it was with penitence and shame for their former disloyalty, with self-renunciation and self-abasement, and with unconditional submission, not less to his authority as their lawgiver, than to his mercy as their Redeemer. These were the indispensable terms of their mutual reconciliation. The very end of their reconciliation, was " that they might walk in his statutes, and do his judgments and keep them;" their obedience is the test of their reconciliation. True religion consists in a renovated character, controlled by those high-born principles, which, while they are the main-spring of spiritual affections and emotions, possess the vigor and efficacy to govern the life, and show their strength only when they constrain its subjects to make the will of Christ their joy. His yoke is easy, and his burden is light, because his sceptre is a right sceptre, and such as every right-minded man loves to obey. The very acts of obedience which he requires, are themselves joyous, and productive of inward blessedness. If it costs self-denial to obey, there is happiness in the self-denial; the love of Christ makes the service delightful. Nor do his followers engage in it unpardoned, and staggering under the curse; but with the embarrassments of a legal condemnation thrown off, and cheered with the light of their Heavenly Father's countenance. Although they are sanctified but in part, and do not always find a heart within them that is pliant to the authority of their Master; yet is their strength according to their day, and there is grace to help them in the time of need. There is an eye above them that inspects all their inward struggles, and observes all their outward conflicts; and there is a voice, too, that cheers and comforts them. Many a time does their heart turn away from the fickleness and imbecility and deception of earth, to his all-gracious and stable throne, and rejoice that their divine Lord and Prince is not only qualified to rule, but to defend and enrich them. All power is his; his are the riches of the universe. "Dominion is with him," and greatly do they rejoice. And is it too much to say, that those whose minds and hearts have been graciously schooled and disciplined into this conviction and these sentiments, do him homage? Do they not speak for him and hold in check this rebellious world? Are they not the guardians and defenders of his rightful and royal prerogative? Is it not his honor to have a loyal people in this world of anarchy and wickedness, and one so full of dishonor to " the monarchy of heaven?" Bound to him by cords of love and recorded vows, they rally round this unearthly fabric of his power; and though, like his exiled and captive people of old, they may be "men that are wondered at," they are his "peculiar people." Our second thought is, that Christ is glorious in the character of his followers, in that whatever is excellent in their character is but the reflection of his own. The moral desolation of the world is fitly represented in the Scriptures, by the earth shrouded in darkness. It is all gloom, imperishable gloom. There is no sun, no moon. Not a star twinkles in the sky. Not a light is to be seen in the habitations of men. Imagine yourself standing in the midst of such an impervious night; and then see the curtain gradually drawn up. One black cloud after another rolls away, discovering here and there a pale star, then a bright planet, then some clustered galaxy, and then the full moon walking in her brightness. Yet all these bright orbs shine in borrowed splendor, and do but reflect the light of the great Central Sun. So the light reflected from the church of God on the earth, whether from a single star, or a brighter planet, or from more faint and congregated twinkling's of the milky-way, is the light of heaven. It is not uniform; " one star differeth from another star in glory;" yet is it luminous, and its brightness indicates its source. If there be those who think and say that there is wonderfully little of this resemblance to the character of Christ among men; while we confess there is too much truth in this remark, we at the same time affirm, that what there is of true religion in the world, consists in this resemblance. We

do not inquire how strong or how faint the resemblance is; and only say, that be it ever so faint, it is still a resemblance to him. Be it so that it is faint, and often marked with dark shadows; blot it out, and the world is all darkness, Egyptian darkness, darkness that may be felt. Even the imperfect holiness that is found among men, is a beautiful object; the most beautiful under the sun. We could hold up before you the character of many a Christian man and woman among the living, that would at once be recognized as a beautiful, though not a spotless character. The severest and most fastidious moral critic in the world, would be slow to deny that the true church of God, with all its blemishes, possesses a beautiful character. " Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined." " Thou wast exceeding beautiful" and thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect, through the comeliness which the Lord God had put upon thee." This reflected character of the Lord Jesus in his followers is not a little for his own honor and glory. He has undertaken the great work of redeeming his people from the power of sin; and when their renewed and sanctified character is contrasted with what it once was, who is there that is not constrained to honor him for what he has done, and in what he has done? We look at the church of Rome, at the time when their " faith was spoken of throughout all the world," and compare it with the same individuals whose nauseous character is described in the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans. We look at the licentious, debased, and polluted Corinthians, and then at those same Corinthians, " washed and sanctified and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus;" and while we love and honor them for their piety, it is not the persons themselves whose character is thus transformed, that we so much think of, as that Lord Jesus, by whose grace they were thus beautified, and whose reflected glory they show forth. Could we unroll the catalog of all those holy men and women, so many of whom were stars of the first magnitude, and so many more of whom whose light was less resplendent, but not the less lovely and attractive; and could we add to these those untold myriads of infant minds, born in sin, but made pure and bright by him that " maketh the seven stars and Orion, and turneth the shadow of death into the morning;" and could we then bring before you the names of those now on the earth who were once as notorious for their wickedness as they now are more or less illustrious for their piety, we should furnish some adequate illustration of the glory of Christ in the character of his followers. The moral hemisphere is lighted up with these reflections of his love and power.

" Look how the floor of heaven Is thick inlaid with patinas of bright gold;

There's not the smallest orb that thou behold'st But in his motion like an angel sings, Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim."

Yet all this celestial harmony is but an echo; and these brilliant lights in the vault of heaven shine by rays from the Sun of righteousness.

If from such a survey, you take the map of the world as it now is, and trace those lands where the national character and government and laws and literature and customs are formed by the degrading and brutalizing influence of Paganism, the iron sceptre of the False Prophet, the delusions and tyranny of the Man of sin, and those prolonged triumphs of Oriental philosophy over reason and conscience and moral virtue, and contrast them with the civil, social, religious, and moral condition of those favored nations where Christianity exerts her appropriate influence; can it be difficult to decide in which the Prince of life is exalted? Is there not in this survey, both of individual and congregated and national character, an intuitive perception of the Saviour's glory?

Does it not strike the eye as clearly as the rainbow when it spans its arch over against the cloud? What is Christianity but Christ revealed? What is its appropriate influence, but Christ revealed to the mind and heart? And in what consists its true glory, unless it is in the fact that where it is thus ascendant, millions of intelligent and immortal beings, in the solitude of their retirement, and in the noise and bustle of the world; in the depression of their grief and in the tranquility of their joy; in the secrecy and publicity of their devotions; in the rectitude, truthfulness, and benignity of their deportment toward God and their fellowmen; manifest his glory, who is " the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." The most difficult graces and virtues which the disciples of Christ are called upon to exercise, are those which respect their relations to their fellowmen. Many are they who cheerfully engage in acts of piety and devotion toward God; it costs them little to pray, and praise, and hear his word. But to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly; to practice the duties of kindness, forbearance, meekness, forgiveness of enemies, beneficence, self-control, and self-denial; to be just, truthful, diligent, honest; these are the duties which most honor our divine Master. The Scriptures largely insist on the importance of these relative obligations, in our intercourse with our fellow-men. " Though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, I am as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals." "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the widow and fatherless in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." These duties are spoken of by the Saviour as the great evidence of a living and operative faith at the Last Great Day. " In as much as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." We cannot be profitable to God, as we can be profitable to our fellow-men. We cannot serve him, but we can serve them. We cannot do good to him, but we can do good to them. External religious rites are a very cheap religion. We may perform them all, and yet be covetous men, proud, malicious, envious, revengeful, and voluptuous men. True godliness honors Christ in the family, as well as the closet; in the world, as well as the church; never does it shine in more attractive beauty, than in the very heart of the world, and living, breathing, in the midst of secular employments. The image of Christ, though faint, is there; it is Christ in the soul. Their weakest emotions of love, their faintest beamings of hope, their very lisplings of prayer and praise, are beautiful and heavenly because they are so full of Christ. Much more is he glorious in them when they " come to excellent ornaments," and the rigor and constancy, and uniformity of their character are in more close and bright resemblance to his own. There is nothing in this inferior world in which Christ himself so much glories, and which he has done so much to restore, elevate and ennoble. He calls them " his treasure;" and anticipates with joy the day when he " makes them up as his jewels." None triumph in their bright prospects so much as he; and none but he could paint them in such glowing imagery as he has done, when he says to them, " Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee and his glory shall be seen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. The glory of Lebanon shall come unto thee, the fir-tree, the pine-tree, and the box together, to beautify the place of my sanctuary and I will make the place of my feet Glorious." Nor have they themselves any more devout exultation, than when they declare, " I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." Our third thought is, that Christ is glorious in the character of his followers, in that they are his witnesses in this ungodly world. Errors and sin have no need of

witnesses; they are too deeply embedded in the human heart to require testimony. Nor has there ever been a period of time, since the days of righteous Abel to the present hour, when there were none on the earth to bear witness for the King of truth and grace. They have often been " a little flock;" but they have borne their testimony, and like righteous Abel, " being dead, they yet speak." Sometimes their testimony has gathered strength with the widening and rapid current of time; then again it has been alternately accumulative and diminished; and then, like the waters of the ocean, it has become diffused and dispensed itself over the earth in clouds.

If you inquire of what are they the witnesses; I answer of the truth and power of Christ and his gospel. Many such witnesses the Saviour has now on the earth; and though they may be of different preferences, and polity, and names, they all unite in bearing testimony to the truth of Christ. His church is a witness-bearing church. They are witnesses to his being and character; to his deity and incarnation; to his life and death, to his resurrection and ascension. They are witnesses to the equity and binding obligation of his law, and to the hallowed influences of his grace; themselves living epistles of its excellence known and read of all men. When the scoffers' tongue slanders the doctrines of grace as conniving at immorality and wickedness, the Saviour can point to all his true followers and say, " These are my witnesses," who have been taught to deny " ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present evil world." True Christians are practical preachers of the gospel, demonstrating in their own lives its elevating and purifying tendency. They are witnesses of its preciousness; of the pleasures it gives above all the pleasures of sin. They are witnesses of the high privilege of access to God and sweet communion with things unseen; they are witnesses of the equanimity which arises from trust in him, and from a mind subdued and regulated by the graces of the Spirit; they are witnesses of the comfort which the Saviour's presence imparts, of the rest which he gives in the time of trouble, in the midst of this fluctuating and agitated world; they are witnesses of clear and sunlight prospects when the wilderness is dark, and of springs of joy in this dry and thirsty land where desolated blessings and blasted hopes so fearfully mark the Destroyer's path. They are witnesses to the truth of his promises and the value and preciousness of his ordinances. They are witnesses for his Bible; witnesses for his Sabbath, his Sanctuary, his ministers, and his saints. They are chosen, called, and faithful witnesses. They are sworn witnesses, and consent before God, angels, and men, that " God should help them," as their testimony is true or false. They are competent witnesses, even though they may not be learned. They are credible, convincing, and unanswerable witnesses; and where their testimony is disregarded, they are condemning witnesses. They are witnesses for the Saviour and judge of men against Satan, sin and the world. They are continued through every age of time; and just so far as they are his followers, the testimony he calls for they give.

Every true Christian in the world is Christ's witness. Whether he occupies a throne or a dungeon, his heart and his voice are lifted up for his once suffering and now exalted Master. The poor Negro who is washed in the blood of the Lamb, the frozen Greenlander whose heart is warmed by the love of God, the brutalized Hottentot, the treacherous Hindoo, and the lewd and sanguinary worshiper at the shrine of Juggernaut, who have been turned from dumb idols to serve the Living God, are as truly witnesses for Christ, as the favored Missionary of the Cross who first bore the glad tidings of great joy to their degraded lands. That Christian mother, and that believing child, bear witness for him as truly as Paul before Nero; or Luther at the diet of "Worms; or Calvin by his

Institutes; or Zuiugle on the battle-field; or John Knox in the Castle of St. Andrews; or the persecuted Church of Scotland by her Solemn League and Covenant; or Thomas Chalmers when he led out the Church of Scotland free.

There have been noble witnesses for Christ in ages of darkness and when wickedness triumphed, and the witnesses were clothed in sackcloth, and sealed their testimony with their blood; but that child of poverty and prayer who is overheard giving utterance to her faith and submission in the almshouse, is as truly, though a more humble witness for him, as the martyr at the stake. Great and extraordinary trials and conflicts call for great sacrifices; nor will the providence and grace of God fail to raise up witnesses fitted for such scenes; yet must it not be forgotten, that it is amid the ordinary scenes of Christian life, where watchfulness and prayer, faith and patience, and toil, uncheered except by heavenly influences, that the believer's testimony exerts its appropriate and powerful and abiding efficacy.

It is no small matter to live and die, bearing witness before angels and men for Christ and his truth. More especially is the Saviour honored by this testimony when the witnesses are few, and dishonored for their testimony. When wealth and pride, fashion and power frown upon the Christian; when to be allied to Christ is to dissolve the charm of other alliances and the believer stands alone; then it is that the exactions of the gospel are urgent, and a strength of no ordinary faith is called for in order to take up his cross cheerfully. The temptation was strong for the twelve disciples to symbolize with the impiety of Jerusalem and Rome; and it was this that gave their testimony value and importance. When iniquity abounds, and error unfolds her gorgeous and Protean standard, and those even from whom better things are expected fall away; it is no feigned regard to the Redeemer's honor, that verifies his truth. Noble was the answer and the testimony, and it shall travel wherever this gospel is preached, " Lord to whom shall we go but unto thee? thou hast the words of eternal life, and we know and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." How many millions have lived and died bearing this testimony! That death-bed testimony, how precious it is! and how many pallid lips have uttered it! and how have its fragments been gathered up, and consecrated by tears! When Toplady lay on his death-bed, he said to a friend, " It is impossible to describe how good God is to me. The comforts and manifestations of his love are so abundant, as to render my condition the most delightful in the world. He leaves me nothing to pray for but a continuance of them. My prayers are all converted into praise. Those great and glorious truths which the Lord in mercy has given me to believe, and which he has enabled me, though very feebly, to stand forth in defence of, carry me far above the things of time and sense. Sickness is no affliction; pain no curse; death itself no dissolution. I am the happiest man in the world. O how this soul of mine longs to be gone! Like a bird imprisoned in its cage, it longs to take its flight. Being fixed on the eternal Rock, Christ Jesus, my soul is filled with peace and joy." When he drew near his end, he said, " O what delight! Who can fathom the joys of the third heaven! The sky is clear; there is no cloud. Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" Soon after this, he closed his eyes, and found " A death-like sleep, A gentle wafting to immortal life."

How many precious memories of the departed have thus been preserved, and how often have they been scattered far and wide, and everywhere shedding the fragrance of the Saviour's name! And think you, Christ is not glorified by this great cloud of witnesses, whether among the living or the dead? This testimony is designed to honor him, and does honor him. Our last thought is, that the followers of Christ live to promote his glory and advance the interests of his kingdom. "None of

us," says the inspired Apostle, "liveth to himself" Such is the supreme and all-absorbing egotism of the human heart, that to do this is the most difficult thing in the world. The great conflict is between the flesh and the spirit, self and interests that are higher and more important. The conquest is complete when sin and self are lost and swallowed up in God. And although it is never complete in the present world, yet just in the measure in which the conflict is successfully maintained, is Christ glorious in the character of his followers. We confess to no sympathy with those moral chemists, who, by their subtle analysis, have endeavored to resolve all the elements of goodness into self-love. Self has its place in the nature and relations of all intelligent existences; it has its place in the divine law, and in the gospel of Jesus Christ. But the infinite and ever-blessed God has also his place. Nor is it possible for a false philosophy so to twist and mould any one modification of true piety, as to make it appear that its origin and ruling motive is selfishness. If this principle were true, it would break down all moral distinctions in the universe, and show that the best man in the world, though he may be wiser, is radically no better than the worst. The controlling principle which governs every truly Christian mind, is not so involved in abstruseness and intricacy as to escape consciousness; nor is it so obscure and doubtful in its overt actings, as to escape observation. The self-sacrificing impulse is strong where "the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost." The faith of the gospel "works by love." A dead faith is a contradiction; it has no actual existence; it wants the principle of life and activity; its vitality is gone. Living Christians are "constrained" by the love of Christ, henceforth to live, "not unto themselves, but to him that died for their True piety has this for its great object; and never does it appear to such advantage, and never so glorify the Lord Jesus Christ, as when it holds forth the beautiful picture of a redeemed sinner, caring more for the honor of Christ than his own, and for the interest of his kingdom than his own interest. Be his errors and imperfections ever so mournful a blot upon the canvass, this single characteristic stands out upon it in bold relief. There is not a Christian on the earth, who does not live to promote the glory of the Redeemer, and advance the interests of his kingdom. It is not his own ease, or honor, or wealth, or social relations, or country, that he lives for; it is for interests above and beyond all these, and to which all these, even when most cherished, are made subordinate. This is the great triumph of Christianity. In the character of such followers, its author is able to show the universe some bright spots in this dark world. Much as he is despised and rejected of men, and little as the mass of mankind care for the salvation of others, and for the nations that are going down to death, there are those who think of him, and honor him; who feel that all they are, and have, and can perform, belongs to him, and that it is their earnest expectation and hope, that he may be "magnified in them, whether it be by life or by death." Is he not glorious in such as these? May he not say concerning them: See, I have not died in vain! The manger of Bethlehem, the poverty of Nazareth, the gloom of Gethsemane, the scorn, the scourge, the spitting, the cross, the grief, the love, were not in vain. Nor when I rose, was it in vain that all power in heaven and on earth was entrusted to my hands. These are they who were bought with a price. To their hands I have committed my honor, and the interests of my kingdom in yonder world. This is my reward; these are my triumphs, and they shall be multiplied as the drops of the morning dew! Are they not multiplied? Are they not found wherever a pure Christianity lives? Does not the wilderness blossom as the rose for them? Are they not the friends of the fatherless and the widow; the founders and patrons of every charity, the teachers of the ignorant, the reformers of the vicious, and the Christianizers of every people, and kindred, and tongue, and nation? Sweet is the privilege to be thus instrumental in extending the knowledge of God's salvation, and to become

one of the lights of the world! Every effort to make known his name, is an effort to promote his glory; it makes God himself known, and "makes his praise glorious." It brings glory to him from others, arresting the attention of a thoughtless world, augmenting the trophies of his love and power, making new manifestations of his glorious character, radiating around them and beyond them, to untold generations. God himself has said, "This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise."

Thus is the glory of Christ unfolded in the character of his followers. Nor is this empty speculation; but full of comfort to the people of God, full of inducements to holy living, and full of rebuke to ungodly men.

It is full of comfort to the people of God because they have the greatest security in his guardianship and love. "The Lord's portion is his people; Israel is the lot of his inheritance." He has left them in this world as the guardians of his honor; to their keeping he has committed this sacred deposit, more valuable than worlds. And think you he will not keep them and be their Guardian? We may rest satisfied that his church is safe. The signs of the times may be complex, and even dark; thrones may totter and there may be commotions among the people; but nothing in heaven, or on earth, or in hell, shall ever divert the love of Christ from his people. His unchanging faithfulness is the guaranty that light and darkness, good and evil, joy and sorrow, friends and foes shall work together for their benefit. "Surely there is no divination against Jacob, and no enchantment against Israel." There is nothing he regards with such a watchful eye, or such a loving heart. What God said to ancient Israel, he says to his church now, and in these ends of the earth: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine, and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, a holy nation." He stands forth their Protector. "He that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye." His church is more beautiful and lovely in his eyes than in ours; and he will be its friend because it is the only living exhibition on the earth of his amiable and glorious character. "Not for their sakes will he do this, but for his own great name's sake." He has too many important purposes to accomplish, by their character and agency, ever to intermit either his care, or his love, or to fail in the promise, "I will make thee an eternal excellency, the joy of many generations." The thoughts which have been expressed, are all full of inducements to holy living. We know of none stronger, or more constraining. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit. For what has his spiritual vineyard a place in this desert world; for what has he built a hedge about it, and encircled with his omnipotent protection, and nurtured it by the prayers, and tears, and blood of his Son; but to bring forth fruit? From time to time, he visits it to "see if the vine flourish and the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth." If his church would welcome the visits of his love, she should welcome these visits of inspection. Her prayer should be, "Awake, O north wind, and come thou, south; blow upon my garden that the spices thereof may flow out! Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits!" It is not enough to be professors of the Christian faith, and maintain the forms of Christian consecration and worship; the pride and self-delusion of the human heart often assume this disguise. Outward decency may not be the "fruit of the Spirit." It is a melancholy indication when men refuse to avow relation to Christ, and are ashamed of his truth and institutions; but this avowal is not necessarily Christian, nor may its object be to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour. If we would honor Christ, we must possess his Spirit, and sympathize with him in the great objects he came into the world to

accomplish. We must exemplify his Spirit in the more arduous and self-denying duties, by bearing his cross and never becoming weary in his service. We should take heed lest we dishonor him, and furnish a keen eyed and fault-finding world some plausible pretext for saying, "What do ye more than others?" O give no ground for this. Be consistent; be circumspect. Do not wound the Saviour "in the house of his friends." Do not betray the trust he has committed to you, but preserve his glory untarnished. It is a glorious trust. "Wherefore also we pray for you that our God would account you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power; that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ." The thoughts which have been suggested are also full of rebuke to ungodly men. There are no indications of the Redeemer's glory in their character. They neither acknowledge him to be their Lord and King; nor is their odious sinfulness any reflection of his unblotted purity; nor are they his witnesses in the world; nor do they live to advance the interests of his kingdom and promote his glory. It is another Master they serve; another model they imitate; another cause in behalf of which they appear as witnesses, and other interests than his which they live to promote. They bear no fruit to his praise; and but for his overruling providence, would be cumberers of his ground, and but for his forbearance and long-suffering, would be cut down. "Hear ye, and give ear; be not proud; for the Lord hath spoken. Give glory to the Lord your God before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountain, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness. But if ye will not hear, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, and mine eye shall run down with tears." It is wonderful that God spares "the proud and them that do wickedly" so long. It is a perfectly proper thing that after he has waited upon them a suitable time he should cut them down. "Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." We say frankly to all the ungodly, it must come to this unless you turn from your evil way, and live and die to him whose glory is man's chief end and joy. The day of his scorning is not gone by; for men still hide their faces from him, and it is the day of his reproaches. Yet, with all the contumely that you are heaping upon him, his eye now beams upon you the radiance of compassion and love. Woe to the man who discourages, and exhausts, and crushes those heavenly sympathies! The day is coming when the defamed Jesus will vindicate his insulted honor; when he will avenge the wrong that has been done to him; and the man who now hates and slanders him, will find that he has not a friend in the universe, and that heaven and earth "shall clap their hands at him, and hiss him out of his place."

13 — Spiritually Discerned

Chapter 13 THE GLORY OF CHRIST SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED

It is recorded of the two disciples, in their instructive and animating interview with their divine Master on their way to Emmaus, that " their eyes were holden so that they did not know him." The Sum of righteousness may shine around us in the fulness of his glory; but if our eyes are closed, it matters not to us whether he be risen, or covered with a cloud. It is one thing for him to possess these unutterable glories, and another for men to behold them. At his first advent, " the light shone upon the darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." It is no uncommon thing for those who have strong convictions of the truths of the gospel and some hopes of the divine favor, to complain of the obscurity of their views of Jesus Christ. They are not without some just impressions of their need of him; nor without occasional glimpses of his fitness, excellence, and beauty; nor do they doubt his fulness and all-sufficiency; yet the great defect in their religious experience, and as they themselves judge, the dark spot in their character consists in their defective views of Christ. On the other hand, there are those who think much and speak much of him, and seem to make much of him in their hopes, who do not furnish the best evidence in the world that they partake of his spirit. They profess to enjoy delightful, and even ravishing views of him; yet you cannot help feeling that their Christianity is questionable. It has an Antinomian cast; nor do they appear to have a sufficiently deep impression of the truth that " if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

Yet the important fact may never be forgotten nor obscured, that personal, experimental, practical godliness has much to do with Christ. His character and work and glory not more certainly form the great and prominent subjects of a supernatural revelation, than believing and sanctified views of him form the inward source and spring of devout affections and holy sensibilities of soul. All true believers are " complete in him." From " his fulness have they all received, and grace for grace." He " of God is made to them wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." He is the fountain of their spiritual life, the ground of their hopes, the solace, the joy of their hearts, and their everlasting portion.

It is of no ordinary importance, therefore, that we make a scriptural presentation of those views of the glory of Christ that are peculiar to the people of God. There were those in the days of his flesh who " beheld his glory;" there are those who behold it now, and whose views differ from those which " see in him no form, nor comeliness." We shall confine our remarks to the following characteristics of those views of the adorable Saviour which are enjoyed only by his own people. The first of these characteristics is, that they are the fruit of the Spirit. The apostle Paul represents unrenewed men as "having their understanding darkened being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart. This blindness is nowhere more obvious than in their ignorance of Christ. Their views of him are obscure and confused. They are perverted views, and such as dishonor him; they are false views, and sometimes no views at all. Not a few persons of this description do not possess even a gleam of

intellectual light when they hear or read of him who " is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person." Of true Christians the Scriptures speak in very different language. "Ye were once darkness; but now are ye light in the Lord;" — " We all, with unveiled face, behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord;" — " Ye are a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."

We say, therefore, that the peculiar views which Christians have of Christ are produced by the Holy Spirit. " God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in their hearts to give them the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ." It is not the work of man, nor of means, nor of the unilluminated intellect in its deepest researches, or its loftiest flights. When the Apostle Peter, with his characteristic boldness, made that memorable declaration, " Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," the Saviour said to him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." In speaking of the appropriate work of the Spirit, the Saviour remarks, " He shall take of mine and show it unto you;" and he elsewhere speaks of " manifesting himself to his disciples as he does not unto the world." As a consequence of this general and leading truth, we remark, in the next place, that the views which all true Christians enjoy of their divine Lord are spiritual views, in distinction from those which are purely intellectual. In the act of creating them anew in Christ Jesus, the Spirit of God creates within them "a new heart and a new spirit;" he " sheds abroad the love of God in the heart," which of itself lays the foundation for new discernment, new sensibilities, and, if I may so speak, a new spiritual taste. We see not why the metaphysical writers of a very intelligent class should have made so fierce a warfare upon what we mean by spiritual taste. It is a common-sense view of the subject when we speak of a spiritual taste in men, and a natural taste. Just as there is in some minds a peculiar sensitiveness to the beauty of colors, or to the melody and harmony of sound, or to the beauty of proportions; so is there in every truly regenerated mind a moral or spiritual sensitiveness, a ready perception of the deformity of sin, the beauty of holiness, the excellence of the divine character, and the glory of Christ, There is a taste and relish for divine truth, and for the duties and enjoyments of piety. There is no more certain criterion by which true grace may be distinguished from all counterfeits than this. The renewed mind receives pleasure from the contemplation of divine objects; nor can you touch a string within the whole circle of divine truth, but such a mind, if well instructed, responds to it. It is far otherwise with the unrenewed heart. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he show them, because they are spiritually discerned. Spiritual minds are deeply interested in Christ's instructions; they have exalted and delightful views of his Person and work and ineffable glory. Their views of him are above and beyond all mere intellectual views, however just those" intellectual views may be. All spiritual views of him are scriptural but all scriptural views of him are not necessarily spiritual. Judas Iscariot may have had scriptural views of him. We are told that " the devils believe and tremble;" they may, and doubtless do possess views of Christ's Person and work that are accordant with truth: and wicked men may be well instructed in all those doctrines of the gospel which relate to the Son of God. Yet none of these ever truly beheld his glory.

Yet while we say these things, it is not unimportant to remark that the best and most orthodox intellectual views of Christ are very apt to be intellectually defective. There may be just views of his natural perfections as he unfolds them in the works of creation and providence; while not a few

who live under the broad daylight of the gospel have no just conceptions of the glory of his moral nature. This thought suggests the true and discriminating nature of spiritual in distinction from mere intellectual views. It requires rectitude to perceive rectitude, goodness to perceive goodness, love to perceive and form a true estimate of love, just as it requires thought to perceive thought, and genius to perceive and appreciate genius, and nobleness and generosity to perceive and appreciate them in others. It is one thing to possess the intellectual conviction that Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again according to the scriptures, and another to perceive the excellence of his Person and work. Those there are who do not call in question the instructions of the gospel concerning him, whose views of him are limited to the bare letter of these instructions without any right feeling or corresponding emotions. When we speak of spiritual in distinction from intellectual views of Christ, we are aware that we use language that is capable of perversion. The words spirituality, spiritual and spiritualize are some of these compendious words, which, if we do not regard their true import, may conduct minds not a few, to the mysticisms of piety, rather than to its intelligible reality. Mysticism is obscurity. It is a sublimated, rather than a sublime religion, and flows from a supposed and direct intercourse with the divine Spirit, without the intervention of God's truth. The puerile illusions and collusions of modern spiritualists, are scarcely more absurd than the mysticism of the fourth and twelfth centuries. The Spirit of God always acts upon the mind through the medium of truth. Truth is one whether revealed in the works and providence of God, unfolded in the Scriptures, or brought to the view of the mind by that divine Agent, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ, and show them to men. Spiritual views of Christ are sober and veritable views. They are not high-wrought sentimentalism. They are not poetry; nor are they the effect of mere mental abstraction. They are not the fancies of the cloister; nor are they produced by dreams, and visions, and supernatural audible voices. Nor are they the effect of any extraordinary light to the outward eye; nor do they consist of those perceptions that are caused by an excited and fertile imagination, painting the Saviour as suspended on the cross, and surrounded by a halo of indescribable glory. Nor let the remark be deemed too trivial, when we say that they are never steeped and drugged into the soul by subtle opiates and alcoholic poisons, stealing upon the nerves and senses, and super-inducing that dreamy and exquisite sensibility, which, by weak minds, is so often mistaken for the fervors of piety. Nor is it any evidence that they are spiritual views, that they were obtained in some extraordinary and unaccountable way, and have been deeply affecting. It is true that the "wind bloweth where it listeth;" the Spirit of God may sometimes come over the soul amid the night-watches; amid hours of solemn thought, and through altogether unwonted agencies; but when he does so, it is always in the overshadowing's of truth. All other views are imaginary or false, and are not worthy of confidence. They are a sort of religious transcendentalism, which a believing mind looks upon with suspicion and rejects. The great facts of the Bible form the basis on which a mind enlightened by God's Spirit rests its confidence. Spiritual views are "full of truth;" God's truth lies at the foundation of them all.

Another characteristic of those views of Christ which are peculiar to the Christian mind is, that they are not selfish views. Self is not dis severed from them, but they are not mainly excited or sustained by selfish considerations. They are views of a grateful, but not a selfish mind. They do not flow from regarding him merely as our benefactor; but from loving him as he is, and for his own sake. True love and gratitude are easily distinguished; while as exercised toward Christ by every truly Christian mind, they are never separated. A good man may receive benefit from one whose character he condemns; and a bad man may receive benefit from one in whose character he takes

no complacency; while both may be grateful for the benefit and have no love for the character. Where the character deserves complacency and confidence, and the benefits bestowed demand gratitude; the complacency strengthens the gratitude, and the gratitude the complacency. The character of Christ and his love towards his people, give him the highest claim both upon the complacent and grateful admiration of his glory; nor need they be separated. But what if my impressions of my own personal interest in Christ are delusive, and my hope in his mercy no better than the hypocrite's hope? Such a persuasion obviously has not anything gracious in its nature. Remove this delusion, and such a mind would see no beauty in the Son of God. Those views of his glory which are imparted by the Holy Spirit, consist of enlarged and gratified conceptions of his own intrinsic loveliness. If my impressions of my own personal interest in him are such as are founded in truth; are they not rather the result of my spiritual views of him, than these views themselves? They are views of him and not of my own hopes that are so transporting. These views of him produce a calm and peaceful state of mind; nay, they are often associated with hope's full assurance, and because they furnish the scriptural evidence that those who enjoy them are personally interested in his redemption. But they are not selfish views; nor do they forsake the soul even in her most despondent hours. There are those who have very languid hopes for themselves, who have at the same time views of Christ that are truly spiritual. They have the assurance of faith without the assurance of hope. Through the power of temptation, or from a suspicious and gloomy temperament, or from bodily infirmity, they may be driven to the borders of despair; yet their souls pant after Christ, and they are resolved to seek him, though they die at his feet.

Then again, there are those whose views of the Saviour are so clear and transporting, that they do not stop to think of themselves. The manifestations of his glory are so resplendent and so absorbing, that they are raised above all thoughts of their own spiritual state. Such views are not selfish. The sweetest, purest, and most spiritual joys ever experienced by the people of God, arise from their objective views of Christ. Self is lost sight of. Christ is the object they are contemplating; nor can they, in such a state of mind, consent to withdraw their thoughts from him. His loveliness and glory are then realized, and make corresponding impressions on the heart. There is that heart-felt sense of his excellence and beauty, imparted by that grace which the world knows not of.

Another characteristic of these views is the perfect assurance they produce of the reality and excellence of the things that are thus discovered to the soul. They put to flight all doubts of the truth of God's word, and of the method of salvation there revealed. The Christian who enjoys them no more doubts than Peter did, when he exclaimed, " We know and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." He no more doubts than he doubts his senses. He has the evidence of experience; it is experimental knowledge; he has " tasted and seen that the Lord is good." This, to him, is more than all other evidence. It is no theory; it is matter of fact. He never forgets it; many a time, in subsequent seasons of darkness does he recur to it in order to eradicate his unbelieving fears and repel the suggestions of the adversary. There is something unutterably delightful in such views of God and his Christ, were it for nothing more than the assurance, and perfect repose they produce in the reality of the things thus seen. Babies in Christ may have these intelligent teachings, and this assurance that they are taught. They may have no other evidence within their reach, but this satisfies them. They have found the truth of Christ to be what it professes to be; it speaks to them as nothing else speaks. Mere speculative knowledge cannot

produce this impression. It is something written on the "fleshly tables of the heart." It is unwrought; it is "truth in the inward parts," and is as much a reality as their own thoughts and affections. It is the joy and rejoicing of the heart. Good men glory in it as Paul did when he "gloried in the cross." The Person and grace of Christ shine with such a divine glory, that they seek no other Saviour. They are satisfied with Christ, though in want of other things; while without him all other things are nothing.

Another characteristic of these views is that they produce a lowly mind. No views, be they ever so transporting, are the fruit of the Spirit that have not this effect upon the soul. Never does the Christian lie so low as when he enjoys the clearest perceptions of his Redeemer's glory. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes!" When he looks up and sees how exalted and glorious that Saviour is, he is covered with shame; an humbling sense of his own abjectness and vileness abases him. Past and present sin humbles him, abases his pride, and fills him with self-loathing. He lies low, and "his comeliness is turned into corruption." The soul feels its wants then. It is sensible of its insufficiency and ill-desert, and its language is "God be merciful to me a sinner!" We may rest satisfied that where our views of Christ are such as to lift up the heart in pride, and produce a self-sufficient and self-exulting spirit, they are not of God.

Still another characteristic of all spiritual views of Christ is a cherished solicitude to honor and glorify him. They give him the throne, and would see him enthroned in every heart. One glimpse of his glory, and no living man asks for greater evidence that he deserves to be practically acknowledged as "God over all blessed forever." The crown of the Godhead is his; the crown of Creation is his; to him belong all the badges of kingdom and royalty. The crown of heaven is his; and his the crown of all the earth. His "By ancient covenant, ere nature's birth, And he has made his by purchase since. And overpaid its value with his blood."

Look where he will, after such rich views of his divine Lord, the believer exclaims, "Whom have I in heaven but Thee; and what is there on the earth that I desire beside Thee!" His heart finds its sweetest impulses to active and self-denying duty in the character, the love, the ineffable glory of his adorable Master. His reason goes on from step to step, but finds naught to gratify it like the revelations that are made of Christ. When his affections become enchained and his imagination enchanted by earthly good; nothing breaks the charm like spiritual perceptions of this "brightest, sweetest, fairest One." Where these views of Christ do not furnish effective inducements to holy living, they may always be regarded as spurious. The Christian profession is a good profession; and where it is sustained by supreme love to Christ and joy in him, is indicated by watchfulness and prayer, by a circumspect deportment, and a faith that is manifested by works. His light shines before men, that others seeing his good works, may glorify his Father who is in heaven. If he is obstructed in his heavenly career, he is the more careful to lay aside every weight and the sin that doth most easily beset him; and though he is never what he should be, he strives to be better than he is, and seeks for grace to enable him to walk worthy of his high hopes and high vocation.

Such are some of the characteristics of that spiritual discernment of the glory of Christ that are peculiar to the people of God. They are by no means the same in all Christians, nor with the same Christians at all times. The best "see through a glass darkly;" while not a few "see men as trees walking;" and others walk for the most part in darkness. No one may draw the conclusion that he is

not the disciple of Christ because he has not the same illumined views with Moses and Paul. If he does not habitually enjoy the sunlight splendor of God's countenance, let him be thankful for its milder, and less refulgent rays. Paul was not always in the third heavens, nor was Moses always in the Mount with God. There are bright views of the Redeemer's glory; and there are those equally spiritual that are less bright. The more bright we should desire and seek after, because they are attainable. There are no new faculties imparted to the soul in order to enjoy them; they are such views as all might enjoy if their hearts were always right with God, and they loved the Saviour as they ought. They are not obtained by the revelation of any new truths not contained in God's word; but by clear and deep impressions of those already made known, and carried home to the heart by the Holy Spirit.

Let the reader, in view of these thoughts, ask himself, am I a Christian? Do I belong to that peculiar people, who in character and sources of enjoyment differ from other men? God has such a people, to whom he gives peculiar views of the glory of his Son. No thanks to them that they are what they are. The work is God's; his the grace, and his the glory! " I thank thee Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes. Even so Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight!" Would you be a happy Christian; seek to know more of Christ. There is more to be seen and admired in him than you have ever beheld. There is nothing which appertains to true godliness which those who have once experienced do not desire to experience again, and in still higher degrees. Paul could say, " Not as though I had already attained; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." There is room to know more, love more, admire, enjoy more, and to be more transformed by these delightful manifestations into the same image, from glory to glory. The mind of a godly man is alive to every repeated and every fresh discovery which the Redeemer makes of himself, whether in his word and ordinances, or in his providence. He " would see Jesus." He would see him everywhere, and enjoy him in everything. Whatever the scene, the events, the place, the duties which bring his Saviour near, attract his own heart toward Christ and heaven. That is the Mount of Transfiguration to him, and he says of it, " Lord it is good to be here!" The most adoring views he would have still more adoring. His prayer is, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory!" He would be satisfied to the full; he would drink of those " rivers of pleasure," that " river of life, flowing clear as crystal from the throne of God and the Lamb." If you walk in darkness, there is fault somewhere; and must it not be in you? It cannot be in God; for " God is love;" he " taketh pleasure in them that fear him and in them that hope in his mercy." It is not in the gospel; for the gospel is " glad tidings of great joy." It is not in the Saviour; for his glory is never concealed, but always luminous, always visible if men will but open their eyes to behold it. " He that followeth after me," says this great source of light and comfort, " shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He passed through scenes of darkness, that he might "lift the light of his countenance upon them, and give them peace." Let the benighted Christian say, " Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth." He is looking to other sources of light and joy, when he should be looking only to Christ. It is not the world that can give you peace, but Christ. It is not human counselors, but Christ the Wonderful Counselor. It is not frames and feelings, but Christ. To a sinner everything is dark but Christ. Happy frames and feelings are not Christ. They change, but he never changes. There is no delusion when faith fixes its eye not upon itself but upon him. " Who shall separate us from the love of Christ!" Let these simple truths sink down into your hearts, and your nights will be tranquil, and your days cheered and joyful. You will not indeed

throw off from your heart the load of conscious wickedness, but you will find the relief of pardon and grace; you will be established in the peace, and hope, and joy of the gospel; your apprehensions will be dissipated, and you will possess those views of the Saviour's glory which fill you with light and joy. Would you be fitted for death and ripe for heaven', seek to know more of Christ. Special manifestations of his glory are often vouchsafed to the people of God for the purpose of furnishing them responsible and self-denying duty and toil. They are often imparted in order to prepare him for scenes of conflict and days of temptation and trial. But they always exert a happy influence in fitting them for death and heaven. No small part of the blessedness of that joyous world consists in " seeing him as he is;" though even there, there are heights and depths of his glory which the purest of disembodied spirits never penetrate. There the soul is happy because it loses itself in his infinity, and prospects are ever being opened which are the source of ever increasing joy. Preparatory to this glory hereafter revealed, there is no more delightful or effective means than those less refulgent manifestations begun on earth. Nothing so certainly withdraws the heart from things seen and temporal and fixes it on the things that are unseen and eternal. They are like the Pisgah views which the Prophet enjoyed of the Promised Land, where the eye of faith rests on the "delectable mountains," and runs over the fields beyond the flood. They are like some unlooked-for light which breaks on the path of the wearied and benighted traveller as he comes near to his journey's end, and as it glimmers from the window of his own beloved home. They are no unfriendly indications of our departure from the present world, when the veil is thus drawn aside, and like the martyred disciple we are allowed to " see heaven opened and Jesus standing on the right hand of God." Christ is " all and in all," to the dying, as well as the living believer. John the aged might well consent to be gathered to his people after that vision of the Son of Man in the isle of Patmos. It was a view that traveled with him to his grave. Ever after that heavenly voice fell upon his ear, " Fear not; I am he that liveth and was dead." And when that same voice spoke the words, " Surely I come quickly;" well did this favored disciple reply, "Even so; come Lord Jesus!" But it may be that the reader is not a Christian. Yet is he travelling to the same eternity and through no such illumined path. It is a dark path through the wilderness which he has chosen, and a dark valley through which he enters upon his gloomy inheritance. No fellow spirit can accompany, no created arm support him in the dread conflict. The Comforter is afar off', and he goes alone to the house appointed for all the living."

What shall we say to him? Shall we cheer him by vivid delineations of earthly joy? His mind cannot be thus satisfied, even though thus transiently deceived. It may be that even now it would fain hunger and thirst after righteousness. It were no fitting counsel to magnify in his esteem the wealth, and honors, and pleasures of time. We come on a more kind errand, and have a sweeter message. We would tell him of the crucified and living One who came to guide his erring feet into the way of peace, to make him happy by making him holy, to show him his glory and induce him to become partaker of his joy. The pleasure of his return to God would outweigh all the pain of forsaking and mortifying his sin. One cheering view of Christ would far transcend all the glories of earth and time. Come, " taste and see that the Lord is good." Gather fruit, now before the harvest is past and the summer of life is ended, from this Tree of Life. Drink of these rivers of salvation, that you go not any more to these broken cisterns which hold no water.

O what overpowering splendor shines in the face of Jesus Christ! Behold it as the " glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." " Look unto him and be ye saved, all ye ends

of the earth, for he is God and there is none else!"

14 — Wonder of Angels

Chapter 14 CHRIST'S GLORY THE WONDER OF ANGLES From the fact that God has chosen this world to be the theater of the great Redemption, the inference cannot be fairly drawn, that all the benefits of this stupendous work are confined to this world. We have our own special concern in it as fallen creatures; but others observe it as well as we, and may, peradventure, learn more from it than we ourselves learn, Men are not the only race of intelligences in the universe; some there may be that are lower; that there are those who are higher is distinctly revealed to us. We have frequent notices of the existence of a class of intelligences existing in another state of being, and constituting a celestial family, or hierarchy, over which God immediately presides. They are of different orders, and, it would seem, form a chain of beings which fill up the chasm between the infinite Creator and the creature man. We know nothing of them except from the Bible; while from this source our knowledge is collected from hints and fragments, rather than from any historic or dogmatic statement. They are spiritual beings, of intelligent and holy character; and in those instances in which they have appeared to men they have appeared in human forms, in robes of purity, and with emblems of power. When sent on errands of mercy, their countenances are full of light and love; full of terror when bearing messages of judgment. They are described in the New Testament as young men whose countenance is like lightning, and whose raiment is white as snow. They stand in the presence of God; are ministering spirits to them that shall be the heirs of salvation; and in the execution of this office are sometimes clothed with a cloud, and a rainbow about their head.

We probably have very inadequate views of the number of these holy and heavenly intelligences. They are represented as a "host," and as "the host of heaven," standing on the right and the left of the celestial throne; as "thousands of angels;" as " thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand;" as " more than twelve legions;" as " a great multitude of the heavenly host," and as an innumerable company of angels." It is said of them that they " excel in strength;" that they are " great in power and might," and that their activity and power are such that they fly from heaven to earth, and from earth to heaven, with a swiftness that is inconceivable to men. The object of the present chapter is to speak of the fact, itself that angels take a deep interest in the Person of Christ; to show why they feel this interest; and to advert to impressions which their views of his glory make upon their own minds.

We will, in the first place, advert to the fact ITSELF, THAT ANGELIC EXISTENCES FEEL A DEEP INTEREST IN THE PERSON AND WORK OF CHRIST.

Although these celestial messengers have no personal interest in the redemption of Christ, because they are not sinners; yet are they represented as " desiring to look into it." One of the great truths enumerated by the Apostle Paul as connected with the history of God manifest in the flesh, is that he was " seen of angels." The same apostle, in addressing the church of Ephesus, distinctly informs us, that it was " the intent" of this redemption, that " now unto principalities and powers in heavenly places "might be known the manifold wisdom of God." It is a curious fact, also,

that in the great epoch of the Saviour's history, we find these angel ministrations; ever and anon the angels of God are about his path, and hovering over him. There is an intercourse kept up between them, as though the association were mutually expected and delightful.

Men "see through a glass darkly," both from the imperfection of their intellectual powers, the sinfulness of their character, and the remoteness of their position from celestial objects. Angels possess thought and intelligence far above that which is human; while their proximity to heavenly things enables them to behold them without any intervening obstruction. We are ignorant of the laws of their intercourse with one another, and with the great and glorious objects around them; yet in those instances in which they have appeared among men, the medium of their perceptions seems to have been not unlike our own. Their views and emotions were communicated just as we communicate ours; and their perceptions, though more extensively intuitive, are derived from sources of knowledge more proximate and more clear, indeed, but such as are revealed to men. When the revelation was first made known in heaven that he was to take upon him "not the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham," there is no doubt they regarded the intelligence with astonishment; and when he assumed man's nature, and made known the great objects he had in view by this assumption, while a part of their number revolted from this service as an indignity to their exalted rank, those who remained loyal held themselves ready to promote this glorious design in all the ways by which their loyalty to the Son of God and their love for man could be expressed. They regarded him with high interest as their Maker and Lord; but when he veiled his divine glory, and was made of a woman and made under the law, they regarded him with new interest, and with an admiration still more profound. Some of them had, from time to time, attended on their adorable Master when he made a transient appearance to the patriarchs as a prelude and earnest of his actual coming in the flesh; and now they saw the whole import of that incarnation. Centuries before, it had been predicted that his "name shall be called Wonderful;" and now the wonder was realized. They beheld his glory; it was a rapturous view to them of those councils of peace which had been made known in heaven. They had seen that there was no hope for the apostate rebels of their own race; and they waited with eager expectation to see the problem solved, how God could be "just, and the justifier of the ungodly;" how Satan could be baffled in his mischievous and successful device of man's apostasy; how snail's restoration and happiness could be rendered consistent with the support of the divine government and the authority of the divine law, and the whole enterprise be so conducted as to save the Deity, harmless, and even augment the lustre of his throne. When the eternal Word bowed his heavens, and they beheld the child that was born, they saw the mystery of godliness thus far explained. They were expecting this event; and Gabriel was sent to foretell it to his virgin mother. And when she brought forth her first-born and laid him in the manger, one of them was commissioned to make it known to the shepherds, while "suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men!" They even indicated the place of his birth to the astonished shepherds; and it was in obedience to their angelic directions that these men went to Bethlehem and "found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger." This was but the beginning of their admiration. When the eastern sages worshiped him, angels beheld the sight; and they saw how and why it was, that "Herod and all Jerusalem were troubled." They saw his flight into Egypt, wondering why men should take the alarm, because the God of love had come to dwell on the earth. They saw his return to Nazareth, and witnessed the purity and devotion of his private life, and marked how this remarkable

Personage " grew in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." Night and day did they observe him, for they had never seen such a sight before; " a sinless child, a sinless youth, a sinless man," among the descendants of Adam! It was a wondrous object they thus beheld in humble retirement, and before he launched upon more troubled scenes and agitated seas. It was not in his true glory that he even then appeared to them; but they thought not the less of him for appearing in this strange disguise. He was not disguised to them; they knew him well; and they joyfully discerned in his person and conduct, that greatness and goodness, that beauty of holiness, which outshone all their own, and made them veil their faces in his presence. A palace and a throne would have added nothing to him in their estimation; nor the riches of the world, even though for our sakes he became poor. Nor would it have increased his glory in their view, if, instead of the reproaches that were cast upon him, his name had been always mingled with the hosannas of the people. For thirty years of his short life, he remained thus in comparative retirement; and they saw him all the while. But when he came forth to the world, and published the errand on which he came, they also published and confirmed it. He was seen of them when John baptized him in Jordan; and when he came up from the river, they heard the voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased!" In his forty days dwelling in the wilderness they watched him, solitary and alone among beasts and devils; they saw his conflicts, and when "the Devil leaveth him, behold angels came and ministered unto him." They saw his miracles; and were held in astonishment at the power of the Great Healer. They heard the contradiction of sinners against him; and were the witnesses of his patience and meekness under it all. When he was transfigured on the Mount, they saw him; and rejoiced at this prelibation of his coming glory. In Gethsemane they, beheld him, burdened and distressed; and they heard the cry, " Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" They were the witnesses of that deep distress; and, strange and wondrous errand, so abject was his condition, and so high their privilege, that " an angel appeared strengthening him!" They saw him betrayed and apprehended; and legions of them stood ready to rescue him at his Father's bidding. They saw him arraigned, accused, insulted, blindfolded, spit upon, dragged from hall to hall, scourged, crowned with thorns, and at last condemned as a malefactor. They saw him led out to Calvary; they stood still, because heaven stood still; and this commandment they received from their Lord, while the high and holy and harmless One was laid on the cross, transfixed with nails, raised up in agony to be a gazing-stock to the infuriate populace, and inhumanly derided in his agonies. He was seen and heard of angels, when he cast that look of pity on the dying thief; and when he uttered those words of filial love and duty on behalf of his weeping mother. They heard that prayer for his enemies, and that final sentence, " It is finished!" They saw him expire, taken down, and laid in the tomb of Joseph. Where the soldiers watched, they kept watch also over his lifeless body. And as soon as the third day began to dawn, one of them appeared and rolled away the rock that was upon the mouth of the sepulcher, and for " fear of him the keepers did shake and became as dead men." They saw him rise from the dead, and were in waiting in shining apparel, to announce the joyful tidings to his disciples, " He is not here, he is risen!" And when forty days afterward, he was received up into glory, they stood by and saw him go up. Nay, they tarried awhile to console his mourning disciples, with the assurance of his coming again a second time, without sin unto salvation. They conducted him to his throne in triumph; shouted his return in joyous praises, and though they have not learned the notes of the redeemed, they cried with a loud voice, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."

After he ascended, also, they saw and honored him. They beheld his glory in the "ministration of the Spirit." And if "there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth," what a jubilee was the day of Pentecost to angels! And how often has that jubilee been repeated; and those angelic triumphs, how sweetly have they reverberated, and how are they destined to prolong their echo! Nor does their admiration stop here. In the future and final administration of the Mediator's government on the earth, they still bear a part. They are commissioned by him to sound one trumpet and one woe after another, in order to prepare the way for his Last Advent. Nay more, at his command "the angels come forth to sever the wicked from among the just," and to "gather his saints together who have made a covenant with him by sacrifice." And when he shall come to judge the world in righteousness, they shall be his glorious attendants; "the Son of Man shall come in his glory and all the holy angels with him." They are now, they shall be ever, enveloped with his glory; his glory, from first to last, is their wonder and admiration.

Thus true is it that the glory of Christ is the admiration of angels. Men admire other things. They are intent on the pursuit of wealth, pleasure, and fame. They gaze with admiration on the beauty and majesty of the outstretched earth, and the splendor of the starry heavens. Its princes and its palaces, its proud cities and gorgeous temples, and the solemnity and pomp of their religious worship, these excite their wonder. Angels look at Christ and admire his great glory. This world did not contain such another Personage, nor present a scene half so glorious in their eyes. The splendid court of princes had no charms for them, compared with Mary's Son. The wealth and honors, the learning and splendor of earth they could not look at, so long as their eye might be fixed on Jesus. Its men, its virtues, were lost sight of, while they might behold him, and be conversant with one so holy and harmless, so undefiled and separate from sinners. Jerusalem with its gorgeous Temple made with hands, they cared not for, so long as they could see him within its sacred courts, and hear him disputing with its learned masters. Its sacred ark and vestal fires were of little moment to them. The ark was gone, the primitive fires on its altars were extinguished. The Temple needed them not, for he filled it who was its glory, and who made the glory of the latter greater than the glory of the former house. This earth did not contain such another Personage, nor present a scene half so glorious in their eyes, as this ever-blessed and adorable Redeemer.

We proceed in the next place, to THE REASON OF THEIR DEVOUT ADMIRATION.

Here we remark, in the first place, angels were made the spectators of these things, that they might be the witnesses of them. It is well for Christianity, that its Author is thus glorious in the eyes of angels. They are his witnesses as well as men. In every view, their testimony to the great facts in the history of Christ, is of weight in the argument in favor of the truth of Christianity. These facts, as we have had occasion frequently to remark, lie at the basis of that religion that is revealed from heaven. He who believes these facts to be true, and treats them as true, is a Christian. He who rejects them, or gives his cold and bald assent to them, without trusting in them, is an infidel. We say nothing of other evidence; God himself summons his angels from heaven to bear witness to these great and glorious realities. They were eye-witnesses of them; and they have more than once come down from their high abodes to give their testimony. In bright array they stand before men as the Saviour's witnesses. Men may think little of this testimony; but it will be found to have either a justifying or condemning power. We may, or may not give credence to such testimony, but it is given to us. And it will be given at another day, when the universe shall hear it, and shall know

that the witness they bear is true. In the next place, He whom they thus saw and admired is worthy of their intense regard. He was manifested in the flesh, but he is their Creator; he is that eternal Word without whom not one of them was made. He was in low attire, but more exalted than they; "for to which of the angels saith God at any time. Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee?" God requires of them this respectful, this venerating, this devotional regard, to his well-beloved and only-begotten Son. When he bringeth his only-begotten into the world, he saith, "Let all the angels of God worship him." In his human nature, he is the "head of the creation of God." It is his purpose, "in the dispensation of the fulness of time, to gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; even in him." It is but taking their place and giving him his, to watch him at every step? of his career; and never are they so exalted as when thus observing and thus ministering to their Creator and Lord. God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of "things in heaven, as well as things upon the earth." Believers on the earth, in the homage they pay to the Incarnate God, are only "come to" and sympathize with, an "innumerable company of angels." We know not all the relations which exist between Christ and these unfallen spirits; but they well understand that his assumption of human nature, and his official capacity and subordination to the Father, abate nothing of his essential claims as "over all God blessed forever." Angels celebrate the glory with which he is invested, because all power is given to him in heaven and on earth; boundless resources are his; to him belongs the homage of the universe. In their admiring views of Christ, there is also a beautiful exhibition of the angelic character. They are not of the moral temperament which allows them to be indifferent to any of God's works, or to any of the manifestations of his excellence; much less to this great impersonation of the Deity; or to his redemption, which is the greatest, the brightest, of all his works. They were filled with wonder, because he was manifested for the purpose of destroying the works of the Devil, and establishing and perpetuating on the earth, the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost. God has taken occasion thus to turn the apostasy of man to good account, and thereby to illustrate his own wisdom and all-sufficiency, and to express at once the glory of his justice and the riches of his grace. Angels would do violence to their own nature, not to worship at his cross, and bow at his throne. Here is the showing forth of his glory, and the exact representation of his essence. On the wondrous facts of his mediation, these lofty intelligences delight to meditate, because they are benevolent beings; this greatest expression of benevolence and love that was ever made, must necessarily attract their attention. They are holy beings; and it cannot but be delightful to their holy minds, to see the multitudes once totally defiled with sin, now, and hereafter, to be washed, and sanctified, and restored to perfect purity. They the friends of God, of order, of law, and of good government; and in this Deity Incarnate, and his triumph on the cross, there is a sure and certain pledge of the happy issue of all the events of time, and the everlasting security of the divine empire. Nor may the thought be overlooked, that angels themselves are the gainers by this great redemption. Though not the objects of it, it consults their character, their honor, their joys. Though they form no part of Christ's redeemed kingdom, yet are they brought under the same rule, and authority, and Prince. It is the object of his incarnation, to bring the whole unfallen and redeemed creation into one family, and into closer union with himself Through this great work they are expecting to see the terrible breach repaired, that was made by the rebellion and fall of so many of their own once holy society; and as those vacant mansions are thus replenished, to unite with the restored millions of our race in the sacred joys of their obedience and praise. There is, and there

will be forever, a heartfelt union between the saved of our race and angels, which never would have been known, but for Christ.

It is natural to ask, as the last topic of our illustration, what are some of the impressions which their view of the Redeemer's glory must make on these angelic minds? We know nothing what these impressions are, except as they are revealed to us in the Scriptures, and from what we know of angels themselves. Their impressions must be worthy of their holy natures, and of the vast intellect with which their Master has gifted them. They are, and ever have been, disposed to look with a friendly, gratified eye, on all that God has done. They are capable of very strong and intense impressions, and there is nothing more fitted to produce them than this Incarnate Deity, and the objects and purposes for which he came into the world. Their views of Christ must, therefore. In the first place, greatly augment their love and admiration of God himself. Every new view of God increases their obligations to love and admire him; and here they have the clearest and most enlarged views. There is every reason to believe that even their intellectual and moral powers become invigorated by this service; and that in this contemplation of the Deity their minds become greatly expanded, and their hearts greatly enlarged. Their love of him must be inflamed, and their confidence in him greatly strengthened, by their views of him as manifested in the flesh. It must fill them with unbounded admiration of his manifold wisdom, his strange condescension, his matchless love and grace, his equal justice, his inviolable truth, and all his glowing excellencies and unfolding purposes, as they thus shine in the face of his Son. It is altogether a new view of God, and such as they never had before; and it is a most delightful view. The prophet Isaiah once had a remarkable vision of the angels, as they themselves fixed their minds upon the Incarnate Deity. "I saw the Lord," says he, "high and lifted up; and his train filled the Temple. Above it stood the seraphim, each one had six wings; with twain he covered his feet, with twain he covered his face, and with twain he did fly. And one cried to another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" These were very deep and strong impressions. They were heartfelt and thrilling impressions, whenever those pure and lofty spirits caught a view of Jesus. There is no object which they looked upon with half the admiration of the Deity, with which they looked upon him. This wide universe they had explored, but nowhere saw so much of God, and so much to admire, as in the Person of his Son. For ages and ages have they traveled over the vast empire of Jehovah, to observe and mark where and what could give them the most admiring views of God; but they always came back to gaze upon the manger and the cross.

It is quite obvious, in the next place, that their views of the glory of Christ, communicate to their mind deep impressions of the sovereignty of God in providing a Saviour for men and not for the fallen of their own race. Those of their own race who fell, once stood upon as solid and lofty an eminence as the unfallen; but God suffered them to fall, and now they are "reserved in chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the Great Day." God kept these holy and favored ones, else they would have fallen too. And deep must be their sense of dependence, and most deep their gratitude. When a portion of their own once holy and happy race thus fell, they fell without remedy and without hope. There was no helper — no mystery of godliness — no God manifest in the flesh, preached to them, or to be received by them. When angels beheld him as the appointed Saviour for men it was an impressive, an amazing view, of his amiable and awful sovereignty, who "has a right to do what he will with his own." It was an instructive and memorable view; it was a test of their submission to God's supremacy; it proved their submission, and that instead of finding fault

with God because he thus " had mercy on whom he would have mercy," they rejoiced in his government, and even became ministering spirits to them who should be heirs of salvation, in preference to the fallen of their own race. Their views of Jesus must also, in the next place, give them strong impressions of the evil of sinning against God. The time was when they had the knowledge of good, but no knowledge of evil. Until a part of their own race fell, they had no conception of what it was to do wrong; there never had been an act of wrong in the universe; nor had they any conception of what it was to be tempted to such an act. When Lucifer fell, they saw what it was; and it was a terrible view when they saw him and his guilty confederates forever banished down to hell. When Adam fell, they saw what it was, and what a fearful curse rested upon all the successive generations of men! But when the Son of God, their Lord and Maker, stooped so low; when he descended lower than the nature of angels, and condescended to abject men; and when he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross — and all because he took the sinners' place — then they saw what it was to sin. Not Lucifer's expulsion from heaven, nor Adam's exile from Paradise, nor the flood that swept away the antediluvian world, nor the fires that rained on Sodom and Gomorrah taught them what the death of Jesus taught them. If they had never seen Jesus suffer, never would they have had so deep impressions of the evil of sin. They do not wonder now, at the justice that condemns the sinner. No marvel that God spared not the angels who fell, when he spared not his Son; no marvel that he spares not sinners of our guilty race, if he spares not his well-beloved Son. In their views of this glorious Saviour they also have new views of all the works and ways of God. From the time of their creation to the fall of Adam and the announcement of the method of redemption by Christ, they must have been a mystery to themselves, and known comparatively little of the high and great work for which they were brought into existence. But when Christ was revealed, they saw themselves, and all things in a new and splendid light. New glory was given to the Deity; a new face was put upon all his creation and works; upon angels and upon men; upon time and eternity; upon the church and the world; upon the method of God's grace and the method of his justice; upon everything in the universe of God; and especially upon that great and glorious end which Christ came to accomplish. God manifest in the flesh is the luminous truth that pours light upon every other and all other mysteries. Where sin abounds, it makes grace much more abound; where darkness covers the earth, it chases the darkness away; it swallows up death in victory. We ourselves are babes in knowledge; and the more so for want of clear and impressive views of the work of Christ. Angels do not see all that is to be seen; but they see most when they see most of the Person, purposes, and work of Christ. New light is every day pouring in upon their astonished minds; the glory of Christ is still the subject of their new and more engaging, and rapturous contemplations; and their knowledge, holiness, and happiness still find their aliment in him who is the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his Person.

Such are the views of angels of the glory of Christ; such some of the thoughts which arrest their attention in their contemplations of his glory; and such some of the impressions which a view of his glory makes on their holy minds. Does not this conduct of angels rebuke the thoughtlessness and indifference of wicked men? What shall we say of those who take no notice of that which angels stoop down to look into! Is Jesus thus admired of angels, and shall he be despised and rejected of men? Do angels veil their faces with adoring reverence before him, and will men turn away their faces from him through shame? This is strange delusion, else is it sin beyond the sin of devils. O foul ingratitude! blackest crime! thus to contemn him whom all heaven adores! Men have an

interest in beholding this Lamb of God which angels cannot have; yet they practically say unto him, "Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." Ye who refuse to give your hearts and your confidence to this incarnate Deity, and will not come to him that you might have life, ye are they of whom we speak. Your heart is waxed gross, and your ears are dull of hearing, and your eyes have you closed: lest at any time ye should see with "your eyes, and hear with your ears, and understand with your heart, and should be converted." O that your eyes and ears were opened, and your consciences awake, and your fears alarmed, and your hopes excited toward this all-sufficient and all-glorious Saviour. Go not forward, I pray you, thus blindfold and careless in the broad road to destruction, when that Saviour, whose glory dazzles seraphs, presents himself before your eyes. You know not at what you stumble, and little think that this crucified Saviour rejected, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. That there should be any Saviour for lost and ruined sinners, is marvellous mercy; but that there should be such a Saviour is still more marvellous. Well does he say, "Ye have hated me without a cause." And glorious truth that he also says, "Blessed is he that shall not be offended in me!" And what thoughts does this conduct of angels address to the people of God? Christian! behold what angels see, and love, and admire. Though you have not seen him with your bodily eyes, you may yet know more of him even than angels know. If God has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light, and shined in your hearts to give you the light of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ; is it not wonderful that you know so little of him and love him so little? The world is blind; but why? Christian, should you be so blind to the glories of your Saviour? See him as he forgets himself and thinks of you. See him on the cross; and when you learn that it was your sins that nailed him there, O look upon him whom you have pierced and mourn. Repentance is never so deep and bitter as when the penitent sinner gets a sight of Christ crucified. Come see him, and let the tears flow. Come see him, O my soul, that thou mayest repent and mayest be forgiven, and mayest be saved. See him on the throne and ask why it is that he is thus exalted? And when you learn that it was that you might live and reign with him, learn also more steadfastly to set your affections on things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. If you have beheld his glory; if you now behold it, look at him more intensely. Still look, look continually, never lose sight of him. All your darkness, doubts, discomforts arise from losing sight of Christ. Look to him whose glory is the wonder of angels. His love never grows cold; his resources never fail. Witness, ye who have been washed in his blood and presented faultless before his throne; witness ye angels who excel in strength, swift to do his will, harkening to the voice of his word, if there be any sense of want he cannot relieve, any fear he cannot quell, any guilt he cannot wash away, any sinner so vile that he cannot save and save to the uttermost!

15 — Millennial Reign on Earth

Chapter 15 THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN ON THE EARTH

[note: Rev. Springs defense of his views in this chapter should be viewed in a historical context with relationship to the doctrines with which he was wrestling in his era. lg/May 2010]

We have been contemplating a series of causes which forms the most effective chapter in the divine purposes and government; — God manifest in the flesh, teaching, obeying, suffering, dying, rising, ascending, reigning, and manifesting his power and grace in the dispensation of his Spirit. Facts like these may well be supposed to have a sensible and permanent influence on the destiny of our race. Earthly princes are not wont to visit the remote boundaries of their empire for unimportant ends; nor did this Prince of heaven and King of the universe descend to this fallen and proscribed province of his dominions, but for ends that vindicated his condescension. Well might the inhabitants of this and other worlds be looking out for important changes in human affairs, from the hour when the Sufferer of Calvary finished his work and went up on high. All orders and classes of men might well be, as indeed they were, held in eager expectancy. Kings upon their thrones would naturally be arrested by these wondrous occurrences; and the agitated nations, attracted by the greatness and novelty of their claims, would anxiously demand, what will the end of these things be?

We have in a former series of lectures, spoken of some of the "first things" which distinguished the history of the divine government; in the remaining chapters of the present series, we propose to speak of last things. Our object is not retrospective; it is the bright and dawning future that now employs our thoughts. If we look into the Scriptures, we find a day is there foretold, such as the world has never seen; a remarkable age, and distinguished for nothing so much as the manifestation of the Redeemer's glory. When the sacred writers speak of it, it is in weighty thoughts and glowing imagery. "As I live, saith the Lord, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory. All the ends of the world shall remember, and turn unto the Lord. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord, and shall glorify thy name. It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established on the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. From the rising of the sun even to the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles. I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, and bound him a thousand years; and cast him into the bottomless pit and shut him up, and set a seal upon him that he should deceive the nations no more, until the thousand years should be fulfilled." Such are a very few of the many passages of Scripture which describe these coming days. Theological writers have been accustomed to speak of this period as the Latter-Day Glory; as the Millennium of holiness and happiness; and as the Millennial Reign or Christ upon the earth. From the fact that the scriptural descriptions of this period are for the most

part figurative and symbolical, there has been and still is a difference of opinion in relation to some of its leading characteristics. While by far the greater portion of the church of God "believe that it is purely a spiritual reign of Christ that is here spoken of, not a few advocate the view that it is the reign of Christ in his own proper person. The former are decided in their judgment by the figurative and symbolic language which speaks of his Millennial glory; by other truths and facts which they deem inconsistent with Christ's personal advent, and by the general scope and spirit of the Sacred Writings. The latter rest their conclusions upon the more literal import of the language which speaks of that period itself. This question is assuming such grave importance in our own land, and moreover has so intimate a relation to the conversion of the world, that we shall devote a few thoughts to the consideration of it, before we present the scriptural characteristics of the Millennium itself. The views of those who adopt the opinion of Christ's personal reign upon the earth cannot be so clearly and intelligibly stated, as they might be if the advocates of them did not differ so widely among themselves. Those which come under review in the following chapter may be thus represented. In general terms they affirm, that at some subsequent age of the world Jesus Christ will descend in Person upon this earth, and here establish a visible and temporal kingdom, of which he himself will be the reigning Prince: — That the saints of all past generations will then be raised from the dead, be associated with him in this visible empire, hold places of power and authority under him as their Head, and with him possess the kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven: — That the particular place where this kingdom is to be established, is the Holy Land; Jerusalem is to be its recognized capital, and here the Palace of the Great King is to be erected: — That here all the tribes of Hebrew origin, and all the nations of the earth are to be assembled, and are to come up to worship the true God; and that for this purpose the order of Jewish Priests and Levites is to be restored, the altars and sacrifices of the Levitical Law renewed, and new revelations of God's will to be made known: — That during this visible reign of Christ and his saints upon the earth, the anti-christian powers and wicked men who will not submit to his dominion are, at different times and in different places to be judged and destroyed, and that this is the day of judgment of which the Scriptures speak: — That this visible reign of Christ and his saints on the earth is to continue forever: — That the race will increase and multiply just as it does now, except that men will no longer be born in sin: — that this world will never come to an end, but be purified, made beautiful and immortal, and the everlasting residence of the righteous: — That men will always continue to be regenerated and sanctified, and thus the redemption of the race go on perpetually; and that the time when Christ will thus come to make these visible manifestations is near at hand, and may not irrationally be considered as the attendant, or the last scene in the drama of the age in which we live.

This, so far as I have been able to collect it, from volumes not a few, is the prevalent theory of what is called the pre-millennial advent. It holds that the time of Christ's second coming with all these attendants and sequences is not at the close of the Millennium, but before that period. We have not designedly misrepresented this theory; we have not caricatured it; we have not colored it by any additions, or imaginations of our own. We have not presented it in its fulness; we could not do so without writing a volume.

We do not believe it is necessary for us to say, that we have no sympathies with this anti-scriptural theory. With the single exception of the return of the Jews to the Holy Land, on which we now express no opinion, and which is not a necessary part of the theory, we do not believe that it is

anywhere taught in the Scriptures.

There are two ways of refuting the manifold errors of this strange system. The one is by a patient and critical examination of the passages of Scripture which are relied on for its support. This is too tedious a process for such a work as that to which these pages are devoted; nor could it be interesting to the great mass of readers. This has been done, and ably and conclusively done already. The other method is to bring the theory to the test of those acknowledged principles and truths of the gospel with which it is at variance. The truths of God's word are unchanging things. There are truths so clearly revealed, and so important, that the theory, or interpretation which calls them in question must always be regarded as false. It is a safe law of Scriptural interpretation thus to "compare spiritual things with spiritual;" it is one of the first and best of all laws; one which is addressed to the popular mind; and one which cannot be controlled by any systems of Literalism or Symbolization. Of how little consequence is any theory of symbolical and figurative, or literal interpretation, which should, for example, come in collision with the doctrine of God's existence; or the perfection of his purposes and government; or the doctrine of human depravity; or the Deity and atonement of Christ! These are settled truths; the theory and interpretation that calls them in question must be unsound and false, however learnedly and ingeniously supported. Now there are features in this theory of Christ's pre-millennial advent which, though not at war with the truths just mentioned, are directly at war with other truths equally undeniable. Men who adopt theories of interpretation which lead to these results, are not to be reasoned with except as those who deny important truths in God's word, and important principles as sanctioned by the great mass of Christians, and as expressed in the Confessions of Faith of the Reformed churches. We must necessarily present a very brief illustration of these thoughts; and although in this illustration, even if more extended, you would have but a part of our objections to pre-millenarian theory, we hope that, partial as it is, it may furnish some protection against errors to which good men in the present age of excitement are not a little exposed.

I. Our first objection against this theory then is, that the great principle which it assumes in its interpretation of the Scriptures on this subject is a false principle. That principle is the law of rigidly literal interpretation than which nothing can be more preposterous. All agree that the Scriptures ought to be so interpreted as to express the mind of their Author, and the sense which the writers of them intended to convey. If the sacred writers were divinely inspired, they cannot be inconsistent with themselves. If there be doubtful and obscure passages in their writings, they are to be rendered clear and intelligible by those that are not obscure and doubtful. A metaphorical or symbolical passage may receive light from one that is literal; while one that is literal may receive light, force, and beauty, from those that are expressed in symbols and metaphor. The simplest interpretation, and that which presents itself most naturally to the mind, is often that which regards the passage as purely symbolical or figurative. It may require great art and subtlety, and great research, in order to justify a literal interpretation of some passages on the subject of the Millennium; while the true import of the figures and symbols they contain, is discovered with perfect facility. "The true sense is the necessary sense;" and we only wonder when we come to perceive it, that we did not perceive it before. There are passages which, if literally interpreted, would go the whole length of the statement we have already given, of the Pre-Millennial Advent; but the question is, is the literal construction the fair and true construction; or do they require some other construction, demanded by the subject, and which must necessarily be adopted, in order to

make the sacred writers consistent with themselves? To affirm a literal construction of those passages which are professedly contained in the most figurative and symbolical books of the Scriptures, would go far toward destroying all the fixed laws of sound interpretation. This would be to make prose of poetry, and bold imagery as though it were doctrinal statement. No sober man would interpret such passages as one would interpret a law, a deed, a contract, or a last will and testament. To do so would be a perversion of language, and an outrage upon common sense and common honesty. The true principle of interpreting the word of God, so far as the question of literal construction is concerned, is to interpret those passages literally, which their authors designed should be thus interpreted. Enthusiasm and fanaticism would have nothing to restrain them, if allowed to put a literal construction upon those parts of the Bible which the Holy Spirit never designed should receive such a construction. If objects and events are represented to the sacred writers in a vision and are described in all the richness of imagery and glow of emotion which prophetic pens could command; instead of overlooking this fact in our interpretation, we are bound, so far as thought and piety and prayer will enable us to do so, to enter into their views and emotions. The intellect and the heart will then be in perfect coincidence; and what is true to both, will be true to the word of God.

It is easy to affirm that the prophetic and apocalyptic writings which speak of the Millennium are free from figures and symbols, and are altogether literal. Yet on this mere assumption rests the whole hypothesis of the pre-millennial advent. The strength of this argument lies in this rigid and literal interpretation, while the propriety of such an interpretation has nothing in the world to support it, but the strength with which it is repeatedly asserted. As we shall have frequent occasion to make use of these observations in the present discussion, we will illustrate our meaning. The representation, for example, which speaks of "all nations flowing to Mount Zion," which speaks of God's "gathering all nations and tongues," and of their "coming and seeing his glory in Jerusalem," cannot be construed literally, because it is not possible for all nations ever to go up to Jerusalem. In view of this difficulty, the advocates of this theory are constrained to abandon their own position of literal construction, and to concede that all nations will thus worship at Jerusalem in the presence of Christ, only by some selected representation, or delegation of all nations! Their theory fails them; and if it fails them in this instance, why may it not be fallible in others? Kindred prophecies speak of priests and Levites, and of the offering of sacrifices, as under the law; yet the Apostle Paul assures us that these sacrifices "have ceased to be offered;" that "God hath taken them away;" that under the Christian dispensation "there is an annulling of them;" and that by "one offering Christ hath perfected forever them that are sanctified." If literalism is thus to Judaize the church of God in the days of her millennial glory, may we, with impunity, give it our confidence? Paul says to the Hebrews, "Ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burneth with fire; but ye are come to Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels." This declaration is true; but in what sense is it true? It is not true that the Hebrews were literally "come to Mount Zion;" for they were a persecuted people, scattered over Palestine and other lands. It is not true that they "were come to an innumerable company of angels;" for they were not in heaven where angels dwell. It is not true that they "were come to the general assembly and church of the First Born which are written in heaven," "and to the spirits of just men made perfect;" for they were still residents on the earth. But it is true, that instead of living under the law of terror, they were under the gospel of peace; instead of living under the Mosaic they enjoyed the Christian dispensation; instead of

belonging to the earthly, they were initiated into the citizenship of the spiritual Jerusalem: they belonged to the same society with angels, and all holy men living and dead; were one with them, under the same Prince and Head, whose blood of sprinkling had purchased for them these rights and this denizenship, and to whom they were all joined in one spirit. Paul speaks of true believers, whether Jew or Gentile, as " the Israel of God;" — as " the circumcision who worship God in the spirit;" and as " a chosen generation and royal priesthood."

It is yet more to our purpose to remark, that not a few of those passages on which pre-millenarians rely for proof of their doctrine, are interpreted by the Apostles themselves not in a literal, but a figurative sense. When James, at the general Synod in Jerusalem, quotes the passage from the prophet Amos, " In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David and close up the breaches thereof," he expounds it as relating, not to a temporal kingdom, but the Christian Church; and makes use of it to prove the abolition of Jewish rites. When Paul, in writing to the Hebrews, adverts to the prediction of the Prophet Jeremiah, in which God declares that he will " make a new covenant with the house of Israel not according to the covenant which he made with their Fathers" he refers to it in order to show that the gospel dispensation supersedes the Jewish, and that the prediction itself is accomplished in the introduction of the gospel dispensation. When the same apostle, in writing to the Galatians, refers to that emphatic prophecy of Isaiah, "Sing O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing thou that didst not travail with child," he applies it to the New Testament Church, and is instituting the contrast between the church under the new, with the church under the old dispensation. The following prediction in Hosea, " Then said God, Call his name Loammi; for ye are not my people neither will I be your God; yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered, nor measured; and it shall come to pass that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them. Ye also are the sons of the living God;" the same apostle declares to have been fulfilled in the calling of the Gentile Church. There is no truth more clearly revealed in the New Testament than that, " They are not all Israel who are of Israel; neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children." Let them belong to what nation they may, they are only those who are believers in his Son who are God's people — "sometime afar off," but " made nigh by the blood of Christ." So when the Prophet Zechariah speaks of " the man whose name is the Branch" as " building the Temple" — " sitting upon his throne" — and " a Priest upon his throne;" we are confident that the prediction is not to be interpreted literally, because Jesus Christ did not literally build the Temple, nor literally sit upon the throne of David, nor literally minister as the High Priest. Yet is the prediction fulfilled in the establishment and extension of his spiritual kingdom, and in his ministrations as the great High Priest of the Christian profession. We deem it of some importance in our argument that the literal interpretation of the prophecies on the subject of the Redeemer's kingdom did not receive the least countenance from the Apostles; so far from this, they gave them a spiritual construction, and understood them figuratively and in a Christian sense. Though not verbally and literally true, therefore, these and other analogous predictions and descriptions express great and precious truths. Great and precious truths also are expressed by the figurative and symbolical representations of the Millennium, truths which the literal construction perverts and annihilates. The literal construction of this subject is the most arbitrary construction in the world. Such a view of human language as this theory adopts is incompatible with the very design of language. They are most certainly mistaken views which result from them; nor is there any end to the mistakes which have been made in resorting to the doctrine of literal construction. If the nature

of the subject, the object of the sacred writers, their consistency with themselves, and the analogy of faith have anything to do in interpreting the Scriptures; the arbitrary law of literal construction must be given up. Nor is there any intimation in any of the scriptural descriptions of the millennial glory of the Son of God, that the language is to be thus literally understood. We have read labored dissertations on the laws of symbols and metaphors; we have observed the impatience their authors manifest because the Christian world does not bow to this dictation; we have noticed with some surprise the indecorous epithets with which they stigmatize those who differ from them as unlearned and ignorant men; but we have not found their system supported by the Bible. More especially in its application to the supposed pre-millennial advent of Christ, is it unsupported by a single proof text, a single declaration of the Scriptures, which, if properly explained, does not sustain the opposite doctrine. We give them credit for no small ingenuity and critical research, and patient labor, and great zeal; but they are distorted views which they express, and rest on no secure foundation. The subject is not a difficult one, if we consent to take the Scriptures as a whole. It is one which most certainly calls for a patient reading of the Scriptures; but the path of inquiry is a plain and simple path. Our adorable Master, when he spake of the future world did not speak in ambiguous language. There is great sublimity in his teaching, but no obscurity, unless we are on the lookout for forced and subtle interpretations. All we ask is, that intelligent and devout minds should take a common sense view of the instructions of the whole Bible on this subject. If it be true that the Son of Man is to descend from heaven before he descends to judge the living and the dead; that he is to establish his throne in Jerusalem, and there introduce the worn-out rites and sacrifices of the Jewish law, and give his sanction to a system of services which he himself abolished more than eighteen centuries ago; if it be true that he is then to raise the pious dead of all generations, and that they are thus to reign with him forever on this earth; and that those who are alive at his advent are to remain in immortal and unglorified bodies, and to perpetuate their race; we have a right to demand chapter and verse for such theories.

It must be a forced construction of the Bible, a forced literalism and a forced symbolization combined, that proves such things as these. If they seem to be contained in the words of the sacred writers, taken by themselves, they express a sense which the writers themselves never entertained. They are errors of no ordinary kind, and lead to errors still more seductive, and that wax worse and worse. We marvel not a little that their advocates are not alarmed for their own hallucination, and do not shrink from the abyss into which they are plunging. It is due, not to the boldness of which these discussions are a specimen, but to the sober thoughts of the Christian community, and their love of the truth, that these errors have not more deeply imbued the American mind. There are those who have listened to them and followed them; but we are not without hope, that, like others who have listened and followed for a while, they will be glad to return, with elastic force, to the plain and safe instructions of the Bible.

2. Our second objection to the theory is, that it obscures the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. Jesus Christ has now a kingdom on the earth. It has been long established in this apostate world; has attained to great enlargement, and will eventually cover the earth. When the great Founder of it left this world, his kingdom did not die. When apostles and martyrs died, this kingdom lived. When the reformers died, still it lived. When we and other generations die, it will live still. "Of the increase of this kingdom and government there shall be no end. Christ must reign until all things are put under his feet." It is the same kingdom now which existed in the days that are past; it will be the same

kingdom during the millennium; the same forever. It does not change like the kingdoms of time; it is " A KINGDOM WHICH CANNOT BE MOVED." Its Prince, its subjects, its laws, its privileges, its rewards, are ever the same. It began in Jerusalem, is now being extended over the earth, and will be more extended in the latter days, and perpetuated in heaven. The great characteristic of this kingdom is, that it is a spiritual in distinction from a temporal and visible reign. When the Saviour founded it, he made the open avowal, " My kingdom is not of this world." When his disciples misunderstood its nature, he instructed them by the declaration, "The kingdom of God is within you." When the opinion was prevalent that it was limited to a particular locality, he uttered the truth, "the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem worship the Father. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." When men looked for its advancement amid the pompous decorations of earth and earthly power, he told them, " The kingdom of God cometh not with observation." When two of his favored followers preferred the request that they " might sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left in his kingdom," he replied, " Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" He told them all that they should live and reign with him, but that it should not be here in this world; but that both they and all his followers to the end of time, should reign with him at the right hand of God. He never intimated to them that they should leave those high abodes, and that angel presence, and those blissful interchanges of thought and affection, and that overshadowing of the ineffable glory, and come down to reign on this earth doomed to fire. He desired they should reign with him, and where he reigned. His prayer for those who were first given to him, and for " all those who should believe on him through their word," was, that " they might be with him where he is, and behold his glory." This great characteristic of his kingdom, its holy and divine spirituality, is made as prominent as the Scriptures can make it. The passages multiply on every side, which assert and illustrate this great and important thought. Light and love are its distinctive features; wherever these are found, there is his kingdom; and though they exist in an imperfect state in the present world, there exist here the elementary preparations for it in heaven. This great truth, therefore, is to be carried into all our interpretations of those Scriptures which speak of his kingdom, whether now existing on the earth, or existing during the millennium. The glory of this spiritual reign is expressed to us not infrequently by figures and emblems and symbols addressed to our senses, because we are creatures of sense. They are instructive and affecting representations, if we carry this great truth along with us in order to interpret them; but without this, we make havoc of the word of God. This great truth is worth all the literalism and all the algebraic laws of symbolization in the world. No man supposes that the sea of glass, — the streets of the New Jerusalem, — the river of life, — the trees on its banks, — the terraces of the city sparkling with precious stones, — the gates of pearl, — the harps of gold and the white linen of the saints, are anything more than emblems of the beauty, purity, and bliss of this heavenly and spiritual kingdom. Nor does any man suppose that when the same writer, in the same metaphorical language, speaks of an "angel coming down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand," and of his "laying hold on the Dragon, that old Serpent, and binding him a thousand years, and casting him into the bottomless pit, and setting a seal upon him," that there was literally any such angel — or key, — or chain — or dragon — or seal. The meaning is, that the time is coming when Satan's power on the earth shall be divinely and effectively restrained. And when the same writer proceeds in the next sentence to say that he " saw thrones, and they sat upon them; and the souls of them that were

beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, nor in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years;" no one supposes that these were literal thrones; nor any person that sat upon them; nor any least; nor image; nor any mark upon the forehead or hands. It was all a vision, and was designed to teach such truths as enlightened and devout minds would receive. The writer is speaking of the thousand years when the power of Satan should not only be restricted, but the power of piety revived, and the kingdom of Christ greatly advanced. The whole passage cannot be understood literally, without the most preposterous conclusions. We have a key that unlocks the whole, in the spirituality of Christ's kingdom in all its progress through the millennium. It was a most beautiful vision; it was piety predominant on the earth; it was the spirit of noble and martyred men living in their successors; men who had no alliance with anti-Christian powers, or with wickedness. It was a resurrection of long-decayed principles in the hearts of the blessed and the holy, living and reigning with Christ on the earth, as he had not lived and reigned since the days of Pentecost; as indeed he had never lived and reigned before. It was a new creation in which God creates Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy.

Pre-millenarians insist on a literal construction of a vision! Very well; we hold them to this construction. What was it that John saw? "I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus." He did not see the bodies of these witnesses. It was not therefore a bodily resurrection. Literalists should abide the consequence of their own rigid interpretation; if they do so, so far as this passage is concerned, they must confess their error. John says of these souls that they lived, not that they lived again: he simply saw the souls of the witnesses alive. Their testimony was living; there was a new race of witnesses for the truth. No, it was not the bodies and persons of departed saints which were seen rising from the mighty abyss of the past. They were the souls that were thus seen coming up — everywhere coming up — from the gulf of bygone ages. They were souls which never die, and of which no literal resurrection can be predicted; they were minds, bright, and pure, and spiritual minds, multiplying on the earth, influencing it by their piety, enjoying unwonted fellowship with their exalted Saviour, falling in and co-operating with his designs of mercy, and extending his dominion over the children of men.

Nothing is more obvious than that the theory of Christ's pre-millennial advent and personal reign, obscures the beautiful spirituality of his kingdom. We are told that when he comes, there is to be a splendid and magnificent temple erected for him on Mount Zion; that Jerusalem is to be rebuilt, and enlarged, and adorned with magnificence; that "he is literally to assail his enemies with the instruments of destruction," and fight with them as he fought in the day of battle," and thus showing himself the great warrior of his age. So thought the Jews in relation to our Lord's first advent. They were literalists; nothing suited their taste but the visible manifestations of temporal royalty. Christ's own disciples were imbued with this expectation, even after his resurrection, and until after the day of Pentecost, when they were in the highest sense "endued with power from on high." We know how prejudicial this notion was to the early propagation of the gospel; nor is the theory of modern literalists less ruinous. The day of Pentecost effected a radical cure of this evil in the minds of the disciples; and we marvel not a little that the glorious "ministration of the Spirit," does not eradicate the kindred error from the minds of those who are so intent on the personal and premillennial advent of the Son of Man.

How adverse is all this from the millennial reign of the Son of God, as described in the Scriptures! Give his spiritual kingdom the place which the Bible gives it, and you kill this theory at once. It has nothing to support it but a vain imagination, that congratulates itself in an empire decked with all the gorgeous royalty of this world, rather than one which is not meat and drink, but "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The world has seen in recent treatises from the press, how such an imagination misinterprets that sweet passage, "The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." One would scarcely believe that an intelligent writer would, from such a passage, draw the conclusion that the prophet is speaking of literal nutriment to the body; yet such is the fact. Why not carry the principle through, and affirm that when the Psalmist says, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters," the language is to be literally interpreted? Why not apply it to the words of Paul, when he says, "I have fed you with milk, and not with strong meat, because hitherto ye were not able to bear it?" Is it not better to let the Scriptures interpret their own metaphors? There is no more difficulty in interpreting the passage, "In this mountain hath the Lord of hosts spread a feast of fat things, of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined," than there is in interpreting the passage, "I will give them pastors after mine own heart, who shall feed them with knowledge and understanding." We have no confidence in such views of the kingdom of Christ. His designs are above this. The gospel will not have free course, nor Christians be comforted and instructed, nor God's enemies humbled and subdued by such prospects.

Ye may not utter all the objections in their full force to this sentimental, tender, and pathetic theory. We are instructed by the great Teacher, that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Some of the features of modern Millenarians are not difficult to be seen; nor are they altogether revolting to the natural heart. We are told that "that which is born of the flesh is flesh;" nor may we forget the truth that in the resurrection "they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God." It is the antispiritual view of Christ's kingdom which imparts attractiveness to it which God himself has not given. We do not wonder that a theory which thus addresses itself to creatures of sense should produce excitement in the world. We do not wonder at the preposterous views concerning it in the first three centuries, nor that it sunk in silence under the burden of its own unworthiness and absurdities. We do not wonder at the wickedness of the Anabaptists of Munster, nor at the legal enactments against them; nor at the tragical issue of the "celestial republic" of John of Leyden. Nor are we surprised at the extravagances of the men of the "Fifth Monarchy," during the time of Cromwell, establishing a "heavenly kingdom" on earth, which was the resort of Deism, infidelity, and crime. Nor do later errors of the same general family in our own land surprise us. We respectfully submit to good men, who, though they disclaim all participation in principles thus ruinous, yet advocate this antispiritual and literal theory; whether the fundamental principle of their system does not lead to such results, and whether the system they now oppose and which the Bible advocates, is not the safer system?

3. A third objection to this theory is that it gives undue and unwarranted influence to the mere Personal presence of Christ in the conversion of the world. It does not assign its proper place to the agencies in this work which already exist, and which God himself has appointed. When the Son of God ascended up on high, he bequeathed to his church all the agencies that are required for the extension and final triumph of his spiritual kingdom on the earth. These are the truths of his

gospel and the omnipotent power of the Holy Spirit. Just in the measure in which these are enjoyed will men turn from the error of their ways to the wisdom of the just. We hold this to be a truth of universal application — everywhere and always in Christian, Antichristian, and Pagan lands, in present and future ages, down through the millennium and to the end of time. Just in the measure in which men withhold the gospel from their fellow-men, and God withholds his Spirit, will they everywhere and always remain "dead in trespasses and sins." This is the doctrine of the Bible, and one which is illustrated in every page of the world's history, and deeply written in the hearts of all the people of God. No doctrine is more important, or more inseparable from the existence of true piety, or from the gospel itself. In the same proportion in which this doctrine is obscured, the glory of the Prince and Saviour is cast into the shade or sunk in total eclipse; in the same proportion in which it is denied, the great moral argument in favor of the truth of Christianity loses its force, and the last and most brilliant chain in the series of facts on which it rests is broken. This is one of the grounds on which we stand in our opposition to the supposed premillennium advent. We might have said more than that this theory does not assign its proper place to the truth and Spirit of God; but we should do violence to our own feelings to say more of those whom we have long known as the advocates of evangelical truth. Yet when a recent and able writer made this objection to the views on which we were animadverting, the leading organ in the expression of those views in this country repelled the imputation with indignant sensitiveness. Let us see how this matter stands, and whether, according to their own showing, this indignant disclaimer will avail them. We affirm that they deny the sufficiency of God; revealed truth in the conversion of men; because they declare that at the period when the Jewish and Gentile nations are to be, as they suppose, assembled at Jerusalem, God "is to give them new revelations and institute new laws;" that "he is to make new communications of his will;" and that "these revelations of himself will be more efficient means than any others. Is not this a plain denial of the sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures, and does it not unite all manner of pretensions to a new revelation? God declares that his word "is able to make men wise unto salvation;" this theory declares that it is not able. God declares that "Christ crucified is the power of God;" this theory makes the bold demand, "What can exceed the error that the cause in which Christ suffered cannot prevail and be victorious, unless the work is entrusted by him entirely to his cross?" And again it declares that "if Christ is not to come anterior to the conversion of the world, it is absolutely certain that it is never to be converted."

We have the same error expressed in somewhat a different form. We are told that in order to "bring the whole race to a full discernment of God's being will obviously demand means far more influential than any that have hitherto been employed;" "that it will doubtless require the use of extraordinary means" — "new and peculiar means," without which the nations "must fail of adequate views." Is not this an avowal of their belief that there are to be new means of grace and salvation? Nor do these writers leave us in doubt as to what these new and extraordinary means are. They are comprised in the visible and personal appearing and manifestation of Christ on this earth. They speak of "the necessity of Christ's interposition to make the gospel efficacious," and of his "interposing to convince and convert the nations." They affirm that "it is not the purpose of God to give essentially any greater efficacy to the means of grace than he heretofore has given," until Christ comes in Person; that "the universal prevalence of religion to be hereafter enjoyed is not to be effected by any increased impetus given to the present means of evangelizing the nations, but by a stupendous display of divine wrath upon all the "apostate and ungodly;"— that "

the kingdom and universal church are to be established, not by gradual conversion more or less rapid under this dispensation, but by the Personal advent of our Lord himself, and all the remarkable events that accompany it;" — that " the rectifying comes at last, not by mercy, but by judgment; not by the sowing of grace, but by the sickle of vengeance; not by the extension of the gospel and the labors of its ministers, or any gracious instrumentality now at work but by the angels of God who are to accompany the Son of Man at his advent;" and that " it will consist not in resowing but in reaping the field." Nor may this class of writers protect themselves from the charge of error by saying that all they mean is, that these visible manifestations arrest the attention and wake up the minds of men to the divine claims; for they expressly affirm that they " are to excite love and submission."

While therefore the advocates of the Personal Reign repel this attendant upon their views, it must recoil upon them as a necessary result of their theory. When the question is asked. Will the Personal appearing of Christ on the earth exert no salutary influence? Is it unnatural to suppose that it should occasion an overwhelming sense of guilt in not having believed on him; and a realization of the necessity of submission, faith, and love in order to salvation? To this we reply in the language of Christ himself, " When he the Spirit of truth, is come, he will convince the world of sin." The Scriptures represent all true conviction of sin as produced by the Holy Spirit. " Lord, make me to know my transgression and my sin." We reply further, that these outward manifestations will not of themselves exert the least influence in the conversion of men. Were he to come again in the flesh, his Personal presence would have no more influence in subduing the hearts of his enemies than it had on the Jewish Sanhedrin, or Pontius Pilate. It might awaken the attention of men, it might produce the faith of the "intellect; but it would not touch the heart of rebellion. The solemn truth seems to be lost sight of that men are blind and dead in sin, and that no objective light converts the soul. Here lies the fallacy of the Premillenarian system in this particular article of its faith. It supposes that the unbelief of men is to be attributed to the want of objective light; whereas the true cause is subjective darkness and sin. Unbelief is never owing to the want of evidence, but to the want of an obedient heart. The burning splendor of the Millennium in its meridian glory would not convert a soul to God, unless the power of the Highest came down upon it, and the Holy Spirit take away the heart of stone and give the heart of flesh. To do this it is not necessary that Christ be personally present; his personal presence is supposed to be confined to Jerusalem. Yet he can do this in the Millennium just as he did it on the day of Pentecost. It will be no more difficult for him to convert the nations then than it was for him to convert Saul of Tarsus. This supposed efficacy of his Personal presence is the merest assumption in the world. It is worse, because it is false doctrine. The rich man in the parable thought that if one should go from the dead to his brethren, they would repent. The abettors of this theory, though they mean not so, are furnishing the world a new apology for its unbelief, and are unwittingly throwing up a strong entrenchment to defend the infidelity of the human heart. The faith of the gospel consists in believing it as it is revealed. If the light of truth is so essentially defective, men are justified in waiting for more evidence. It is not defective. Men deceive themselves when they suppose that Christ's Personal presence will produce convictions that are not produced by that gospel which is now the power of God unto salvation. God has already given the world the best means of grace; if Christ's personal presence had been more effective, he would never have left the earth and committed his kingdom here to the Comforter. The reason why he did not remain was, that he had selected a more excellent way, and a more fitting agent. Nor has he seen fit to amend, or alter this

arrangement; nor will he during the Millennium. The "Ministration of the Spirit" is to introduce and perfect that era of glory, and is to continue until the last heir of his spiritual Kingdom is gathered in. There will be no other dispensation until the unchanging dispensation of eternity. The presence of the Comforter was forever to supersede the presence of Christ among men; and therefore it " was expedient that he should go away." In this beautiful feature of his redemption, the Millenarians have a controversy with Christ. Their theory is a fiction of their own, however ardent the piety from which it may flow, and however attractive to the imagination. What should induce them to believe, that the Personal presence of the Son of Man in Jerusalem, or in the clouds of heaven, or on the throne of judgment, or anywhere else, would be rightly regarded by men who will not regard the testimony of God in his word, it is not easy to divine. " Let not God speak with us lest we die." God told Moses he could not behold the fulness of his glory; no man can see his face and live. His presence on the Mount of Transfiguration made his own disciples afraid. The wicked would be filled with terror at such a view; they would tremble and turn pale; they would cry to the rocks and the mountains to fall upon them; but they would neither love, nor adore him. The man who remains unconvinced and at enmity with God, unsanctified and hopeless amid all the light of the Gospel, and in this world of the effusions of the divine Spirit, and amid these consecrated altars and ordinances, will not find holiness and hope from such scenes. Such scenes would disclose nothing more than is already revealed in the Bible; they would only be the Bible over again, except under circumstances not so well fitted to be the subject of serious reflection, or to impress the mind. Christ's Personal presence is superfluous to the great objects which the Scriptural Millennium aims at. Christians in the Millennium, as in all ages, will walk by faith and not by sight. A spiritual mind needs nothing more than faith's view; it asks no more than those views of Christ which are here imparted by the Holy Spirit. Why should they desire his Personal reign in the Millennium? Faith will then exert its high moral influences on themselves, and on all their efforts for the advancement of their ascended Saviour's glory. " Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen and yet believed." It is the high character of saving faith, to believe in an unseen Saviour: " whom having not seen we love; in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

4. Our fourth objection to this theory is, that it denies the General Judgment and the final destruction of this material world. It is not necessary for us to prove that " God hath appointed a Day in which he will judge the world in righteousness;" that " the dead, small, and great shall stand before God;" that " the sea shall give up the dead which are in it, and death and hell deliver up the dead which are in them;" that before the Son of Man shall at last " be gathered all nations," and that he shall " separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats;" and that the sentence shall then be carried into execution by which " these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Nor do we suppose that it is necessary for us to prove, that at the close of this scene, " the heavens shall vanish away "like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment;" that the heavens shall pass away with a " great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up;" that all these things shall be " dissolved," and that " before the face of him who sits upon the throne, the heavens and the earth shall flee away, and there shall be found no place for them."

There are so many important ends in the divine government to be secured by this arrangement, that to deny it is a virtual attempt to disturb the pillars by which it is supported, mar its symmetry, and deface its beauty. No judgment of individual men, as such, or individual nations, can answer the end of a general judgment. That man does not preach the same gospel which Christ and his Apostles preached who denies, or even obscures this great truth. We have all our lifetime read the Scriptures in vain, if they do not instruct us that Christ's second coming is his coming to the judgment, and if they do not connect the final and irrevocable sentence of the righteous and the wicked with his second coming. They speak only of a first and second coming; the first to save, the second to judge. The twentieth chapter of the Revelation makes it perfectly clear, that his coming to judgment is after the Millennium. If his coming to judgment is his second coming, there is no such event revealed therefore as his Premillennial Advent. There is no Advent until the judgment, and this will be the second and the last. The great event which the departed of all ages are next to look for is not the coming of their Divine Lord to establish a kingdom on the earth and there to reign with him; it is the judgment. " It is appointed unto men once to die; after that the judgment." It is not his coming to introduce, and extend and perpetuate his reign on the earth; but to bring it to its august conclusions, and announce the issues of that kingdom which he set up when he rose from the dead. It is not to convert his enemies, but to bring his kingdom of grace on the earth to an end and pronounce the sentence that puts their conversion beyond hope. It is to erect the indestructible barrier between eternity and time by striking time out of existence, and then sinking the impassable gulf. The Scriptures utter these truths as among the most important they ever utter; so that men may appreciate the privileges of the kingdom which Christ has already set up in the world; may know the value of time while it lasts, and the true worth of this world before it shall melt away with fervent heat.

Yet these truths are denied by the Premillennial theory. It does indeed recognize a judgment, but no such " Great Day" of judgment as that to which the Scriptures give such emphasis. It makes the judgment consist in the personal rule and authority of Christ during the thousand years. It does this professedly, and as it seems to us, treats with disdain and contempt the idea of the General Judgment. It argues this question deliberately and calls upon us to prove, that when Christ affirms that he will gather all nations before him in order to hear his sentence and their doom, he means all the nations of the earth. We have no desire to prove so plain a truth, except by such Scriptures as we have just referred to. Men who deny the plain and obvious sense of such declarations, and yet whose whole theory rests upon the doctrine of literal construction cannot be reasoned with. And what astonishing coolness is it with which they confront the Bible, and endeavor to show that this world will not at last be burnt up and destroyed! They tell us that the Personal reign of Christ on the earth " is to extend through eternal ages;" — that " it is to be exercised over all the world through endless ages;" and that the Scriptures " do not teach that the world is to be burned up, nor that the righteous are to be taken to heaven." We have their reasoning, if reasoning it may be called, in such sentences as the following: " Were the world to be destroyed, because Satan has held dominion over it; or the race intercepted from multiplying, and transported to some other scenes of existence on the ground that the earth had become unfit for their residence because of the curse brought upon it by sin; would it not be a triumph to Satan?" Again, " Christ is to work a perfect remedy of the disorder and ruin brought on man and the world by revolt, not by putting an end to the multiplication of the race, nor by striking the earth from existence, but by rescuing them from the dominion of sin, and causing the race to continue as it would have done if it had not

fallen." What would the noble man have thought of a future state in which the righteous are to live and reign forever on this earth, and increase and multiply just as they do now, who wrote of " a better country that is an heavenly," and taught the world that " flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God?" What would a greater than he have thought of it, who uttered the words, " In my Fathers house are many mansions I go to prepare a place for you." What would the Apostle Peter have thought of it when he said, " Looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" What would he say to the miserable subterfuge of its advocates, who in order to protect the righteous from the desolating effects of the fiery judgments which, according to their own theory", are to come upon the wicked, are driven to the conviction that the final conflagration will be partial, and limited to scenes where the destruction of the wicked will not endanger the righteous! We marvel not that the abettors of this theory speak of new revelations? May it not be that, in their enthusiastic eagerness, they themselves have anticipated those extraordinary instructions from heaven which they so distinctly intimate will be revealed during the supposed Personal reign of Christ on the earth? We must indeed have a new Bible before we can believe any of these things. Are they not a mere human device, originating in the love of novelty, fostered by the self-complacency of a severe and imperious criticism upon long received and well fortified opinions, and fitted only to mislead minds that are " carried about by every wind of doctrine?" Most fervently do we wish that our respect for the advocates of this theory could restrain us from saying that it is anything better than ingenious and learned trifling with the word of God.

5. Our fifth objection to this theory is, that it is inconsistent with the scriptural narrative of those events which are to take place between the Millennium and the end of the world. The 20th chapter of the Book of the Revelation furnishes the following brief, but comprehensive narrative. "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the Beast and the False Prophet are, and they shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." Immediately after this, the sacred writer proceeds in highly symbolical language to describe the Day of Judgment. " And I saw a great white throne — and the dead small and great stand before God — and the books were opened, and the dead were judged." There are several things in this narrative that are absolutely fatal to the hypothesis of the Premillennial advent. In the first place. it speaks of events that are to take place on this earth; and affirms the thousand years of the Saviour's reign upon it are to have an end; " when the thousand years are expired." This the millenarians deny, as we have before seen. In the next place, it affirms that the judgment will not take place until the dose of the thousand years; it was not until the thousand years had expired; that the books were opened, and every man judged according to his works. This also millenarians deny. And in the third place, it speaks of a great and final conflict between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, which is to take place between the close of the millennial reign and the subsequent and second coming of the Son of Man. This the millenarians also deny; and affirm that the final battle is to take place long before, and when Christ comes in Person to introduce the millennial reign and to establish his kingdom. Will they explain these incoherences in their theory: will they inform us how it is, upon their hypothesis, that the spirit of

Antichrist is to rise again in the earth, after the thousand years are expired? Will they inform us how it is that the great and final conflict which they assign to a period previous to the Millennium, John speaks of as after the Millennium! Nor is this all. In the 21st chapter of the same book, we have the following narrative. " And I John saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem come down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." The writer then proceeds to describe in language that is too grand and symbolical to admit of comment, the beauty and glory of the heavenly world. This whole narrative is equally fatal to the Premillennial theory. It affirms that the first heaven and first earth are passed away; which this theory denies. It affirms that the great and glorious scenes and events which it speaks of are realized not until after the judgment. This also millenarians deny, and declare that they are realized during the thousand years of Christ's Personal reign on the earth. Will they explain these inconsistencies between the inspired writer and their own hypothesis?

6. Our sixth and last objection to this theory is, that it is fitted to produce mischievous and fanatical impressions upon the minds of men in relation to the period of Christ's second coming. There is no doubt that the dawn of the true Millennium, and that of which the Scriptures speak, is not far distant, and that God is now rapidly preparing the way for it by the diffusion of his gospel, and the political agitations of the earth. Nor is there anything in this prospect but is fitted to exert the most animating influence on the human mind. But the Millennium becomes a very different thing from what it will be in reality, when it is assumed to be such as it is described by the advocates of the Premillennial advent. Yet the same predictions and the same signs of the times which the Scriptures specify as indicative of the approach of the universal reign of holiness on the earth for a thousand years, millenarians regard as indicative of Christ's final coming in the glory of his Father and with his angels to commence the reign of eternity. Hence they proclaim their belief that that coming day is near. They proclaim it from the press; they proclaim it from the pulpit; and we ourselves have heard some of the most intelligent and best informed among them, and men whose personal character and worth might well give weight to their convictions, declare that they were expectants of his coming, could truly say that they held themselves in the attitude of waiting for the Lord's last advent. We know well that such men have no sympathies with the ravings of the mad prophet who has driven so many persons in this land to folly, and disappointment, and despair, and the madhouse, and that they disclaim all alliance with such extravagances. But we repeat the thought, does it not behoove them to inquire if this millennial furor is not a legitimate deduction from their own avowed principles, and whether they can throw off the responsibility of leading so many weak minds astray, and furnishing arguments in favor of their abused hypothesis to minds that are more wicked than weak?

Many are the generations, and many the centuries that will pass over the earth before the final coming of the Son of Man. Those who love him will welcome his coming whenever, and however he shall appear. His coming is virtually to every man at death, because his destiny is then unalterably decided, and his account sealed up for eternity. His actual coming " knoweth no man, no, not the angels in heaven, but the Father only." The harvest of the earth is not fully ripe. Great and important events are yet to take place, before the command is given, " thrust ye in the sickle;" and great preparations are yet to be made for that solemn catastrophe. The plans of heavenly wisdom are too vast to be consummated in a day; " the end is not yet."

We have thus presented our objections to the hypothesis of the Premillennial advent. We have omitted several strong points in the discussion, from necessity. It is unhappy that at this age of the world the church of God should be called on to go into a question which has been so often discussed, and one which we have long supposed put at rest. Forty years ago, there was not, to the best of my knowledge, but two men in New England who advocated this theory; and their works were deemed unworthy of notice. They are crude views; and though persisted in honestly at the present day, I confess I do not see for what good end.

If you ask me, Is there then to be no Millennium? I answer there is; there is a day coming when the Great Prince and Saviour will reign gloriously over this earth. What is the nature of that reign, and what the leading characteristics of that coming age, we shall endeavor to show in our next chapter.

16 — Millennial Reign

Chapter 16 THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S MILLENNIAL REIGN

There is a class of minds, which the concealment of the future does but incite to ascertain what it will disclose. Give them but the clue to it, and though their inquiries be of doubtful success, they prosecute them with ardor; though their excursions be across seas and deserts, and through deep caverns and intricate labyrinths, they shrink not from the toil, or the peril of the pursuit. Nor is there anything in the spirit of piety to repress, or rebuke this research, but rather not a little to encourage and give it right direction. The Christian is the only genuine philosopher; the lover of God is the only true lover of nature and science, the only wise and profited inquirer into the history of the past, or the prospects of the coming times.

How trivial the consequences which flow from the greatest achievements of men, their most important discoveries and their most agitating revolutions, compared with those which may naturally be supposed to follow from the setting up of that kingdom of which Jesus Christ is the Head, and which is fitted in its noiseless, pathless course, to transform chaos into order and beauty, and create all things new!

When, six thousand years ago, the thought was uttered that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the head of the serpent, there were wrapped up in this announcement some of the greatest thoughts ever intimated to men. Here was the love of God to this guilty world. Here was the Father of Eternity giving his Eternal Son to die, and here the stipulated reward of that mighty Sufferer, and the joy that was set "before him, when he endured the cross, despising the shame." And here was the bright harvest of the omnipotent and ever-blessed Spirit, who, though Paul plant, and Apollos water, himself gives the increase. The mighty mind of the Deity has formed purposes without number that are expressive of goodness and wisdom; but they are all subordinate to this, and minister to its fulfillment. Without it, there had been a vacuum in the universe, the sun had never shone in the heavens, nor the moon walked in her brightness. This earth had not been this earth. Man had not been man. Seraphim had not covered their faces with their wings, nor had they ever have been heard to say, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory." When Rome inscribed in three different languages, that inscription on the cross, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," there was an invisible hand which was preparing the announcement, "At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father." We have in the preceding chapter, endeavored to show in what this predicted age of millennial glory does not consist, and have expressed some of the reasons of our dissent from the opinion that Jesus Christ will then reign in Person upon our earth. We are, in some sort, under obligation, therefore, to show wherein consists the glory of that predicted day. This we do by the induction of the following particulars. That coming day will, in the first place, be introduced by remarkable judgments inflicted on anti-christian nations and wicked men. It would seem, from many intimations in the Scriptures, that the church of God, just before the brighter dawns of that

day, will be involved in no small perplexity from the hostility of her enemies. It has been the method of divine providence to allow his people to be reduced to some extremity of depression before God himself interposes for their deliverance and enlargement. To such an extent has this been the fact in past ages, that good men have been taught the lesson that at the period when their enemies began to triumph, they themselves may begin to hope. The representations given of the Millennium in the Apocalypse are preceded by the representations of most exemplary and fearful judgments inflicted upon wicked men, and upon the powers of Antichrist in every form. Without attempting to specify the events in the past or the future history of the world, which correspond with the pouring out of the seven phials, containing the seven last plagues, it is enough for us here to say that they are all emblematic of the judgments that are to descend upon the earth, in order to prepare the way for the reign of Jesus Christ among men. And they are to be continued down to the period when John "saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand," to bind "that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan," a thousand years. The evidence preponderates in favor of the conclusion that the sixth phial is now being poured upon the earth, and has been descending for many years that are past, and will yet descend for years to come. The "Holy City," the true church of God, is still "trodden under foot of the Gentiles," infested by enemies and false friends, and in the old world especially the witnesses for the truth are "prophesying in sackcloth." For a series of years events have been taking place which indicate the overthrow both of the imperial and the ecclesiastical Beast, or, in other words, the Beast and the False Prophet; and by which the sources of all anti-christian powers have been and are gradually drying up, like the drying of a mighty river, which for so many ages has been overflowing all its banks. How long before the seventh and last phial will begin to be poured out, we are not warranted in determining any farther than to say that this last series of judgments is yet to visit the earth. There is little doubt that the spirit of wickedness is yet to become rampant in all its forms of arbitrary power, vile hypocrisy, giddy worldliness, bold infidelity, and filthy crime. Nor is there any doubt that they will combine their counsels and their power against the Son of God and his struggling church, and that in this last battle, which is to precede the Millennium, the kingdom of darkness will be made to tremble "From turret to foundation stone."

These judgments upon anti-christian nations will neither be few nor light. Revolution will succeed revolution both in the political and moral world; convulsion will come upon the back of convulsion, and God will pour upon the nations "his indignation, even all his fierce anger." The scenes shall be realized of which it is written, "And there were voices and thunders and lightnings and a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake and so great." The "cities of the nations shall fall;" and "great Babylon shall come into remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath." The nations who have spilled the blood of his saints shall drink blood because they are worthy. The cry of the souls from under the altar shall be heard in heaven and answered, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth!" The "day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and lofty, and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low;" and upon "every high tower and every fenced wall," and God will "cause the arrogancy of the proud to cease, and will lay low the haughtiness of the terrible." So far from being subdued and humbled by these judgments, the hostile nations shall throw their armor about them, and, exasperated with rage, shall contend with God as in the day of battle. With the sword and

with fire and with famine God shall contend with them until they are swept from the earth. "They shall pass through it hardly bestead and hungry; and it shall come to pass that when they shall be hungry, they shall fret themselves, and curse their king and their God and look upward. And they shall look unto the earth and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish, and they shall be driven into darkness." This last conflict under the seventh and last phial is described in the Apocalypse by the most fearful metaphors and symbols which human language can utter. " I, John, saw the Beast and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, to make war against him who sat upon the horse and against his army." "And I saw an angel standing in the sun; and he cried with a loud voice, saying to all the fowls that fly in the midst of heaven, Come and gather yourselves together unto the supper of the great God; that ye may eat the flesh of kings, and the flesh of captains, and the flesh of mighty men, and the flesh of horses, and of them that sit on them, and the flesh of all men both small and great."

Judgments, of which such things as these are the symbols, are yet to take place in our world, and to prepare the way for the glory of Christ in his millennial reign. There will be no refuge from this desolating march of death. The work will go on until the enemies of the Son of Man are destroyed by the breath of his mouth and the brightness of his coming.

Throughout all this period, God's designs are represented as rapidly coming to maturity for the introduction of this predicted day of his great power and glory. The assembly of the first-born, we are told by the same symbolical writer, will give glory to God both for these judgments and for the dawning of millennial glory as simultaneous events. Immediately as this ascription of glory to God is being given, the angel who interpreted the vision to John is heard saying " Write, blessed are they who are called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb." Then it was that the song of triumph began. " And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready!" Then the devil will be chained, and the Millennium will advance by progressive and rapid steps. It will be like " life from the dead," and well nigh as rapid as a general resurrection. The perfect day will not shine at once; but the dawn will shine brightly.

We are looking for that day. Heaven is looking for it. Angels and the spirits of the just made perfect are looking for it. Its fainter lights even now begin to transpire through the veiled windows of time, and seem struggling to break through and illumine this dark world. Even " the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for this manifestation of the sons of God." The One so long despised and rejected of men, shall come " like rain upon the mown grass, and like showers that water the earth. All kings shall bow down before him, and all nations shall call him blessed."

Thus introduced by judgments, this reign of mercy will commence; and our next remark concerning it is, that it will be distinguished by the multitudes who enjoy its sacred influence. It will be the glory of Christ's millennial reign that " he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." Nor will the inhabitants of the earth then be few, notwithstanding the desolations that have been made by the sweeping judgments that preceded his gracious empire. Everything will combine from the very dawn of that blissful period to augment the population of our globe; so that at the close of a single century of the thousand years, more human beings will be

found upon the face of it than ever existed at any former period. The predictions which relate to the increase of the Jew alone are of a very marked character. "The mountains of Israel shall shoot forth their branches;" and God "will multiply men upon them, and do better to them than at their beginnings." Men shall no more say, that "the land devours men, and has bereaved its nations." As the "holy flock, the flock of Jerusalem in her solemn feasts; so shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of men." The same causes which contribute to this augmented population of the Jews, are adverted to in the Scriptures as having the same effect upon the Gentile nations. There shall be "an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains: the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon; and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." The "abundance of the seas," and the "forces of the Gentiles," the multitude of the beasts of the earth, and the glory of its forests shall unite in beautifying the place of God's sanctuary, and making the place of his feet glorious. This earth is now believed to contain eight hundred millions of inhabitants. Yet what vast portions of it remain uninhabited; and what a multitude, both of remote and proximate causes, retard the increase of the human family; or cut off its population in its bud, and flower, and fruitfulness; or diminish and reduce those honored years, in which "the almond-tree flourishes!" The social relations form no small part of that wise and benevolent arrangement of divine providence by which the institutions of religion, and true religion itself are perpetuated from parents to their children, and the honor of the Redeemer becomes refulgent in the earth. They are dishonored now; but they will not be dishonored in that coming day, when "a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation." Few, if any, will then be found who, from a dis-social spirit, from avarice, or licentiousness; from the dread of toil, or the fears of responsibility; from indifference to the wise arrangements of the Author of their living, or from any other selfish consideration; will countervail that great law by which these relations are rendered perpetual and pure. The world will be exclusively a world of families; or if here and there a solitary straggler is found beyond the bright zone that thus belts the earth, he will be pitied and wondered at as a wandering star. The science of Political Economy about which so much has been written to little purpose, will then be understood, and its true principles will be found in the nice adaptations of that moral code which not only prescribes the conduct of man toward his fellows, but the intercourse of nations. The crowded and suffocated portions of the earth, where human labor finds little encouragement, and there is a scanty supply for human wants, will migrate to broader lands, and where the earth is enriched by the quiet of centuries. Avarice will give way to contentment; the spirit of speculation will be superseded by cheerful diligence and moderate gain; and land and ocean yield their increase, because "His way is known upon earth, and his saving health among all nations."

It was the promise of God to his people, that if they would hearken to his voice, "he would take away sickness from the midst of them." It is a remarkable declaration of the prophet Isaiah, concerning the Millennium, that the "inhabitant shall not say, I am sick." The germs of disease will no longer be found in human vices; men will die only by the gradual decays of nature; and "there shall be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days." Famine and plague shall no more desolate the earth; war, that scourge of humanity, shall cease, and the resources it has diminished, and the energies it has wasted, shall be employed only in the diffusion of blessing. Those fountains of human infirmity and sorrow, — intemperance, licentiousness, and luxury — in whose deceitful and rushing maelstrom so many generations have found a premature grave, shall be dried up; and in its place the waters of the sanctuary shall flow,

and " everything shall live whither the river cometh." Could we stand in the midst of those coming days, and view the population of this globe, we should see what has never yet been seen. Not a continent nor island, not mountain nor valley; not river's bank nor iron-bound shore, not a sandy desert nor a bold promontory, but will teem with the habitations of men. Successive generations, no longer traversing the earth in solitary streams or broad rivers, shall flow on in one vast, swelling ocean, everywhere multiplied as the sands on the shore. To an extent hitherto unknown, the age of which we speak, will also, in the next place, be one of light and knowledge. It is the device of the Adversary, to shroud the world in darkness; he holds his throne most firmly in "the dark places of the earth." He who is the light of the world never made a more exulting avowal than that at the bar of Pilate, when he said, " To this end was I born, and for this end came I into the world, that I might bear witness to the truth." He is the King of truth; light and truth are the great elements of his empire, and the only means of its advancement and triumph. It is a remarkable prediction, that " knowledge with the strength of salvation shall be the stability" of the best days of the Christian church. And it is a remarkable fact, that since the commencement of the Christian era, save the arts of divination, which still linger in Pagan lands as their forlorn hope, the lights of science have been waning throughout the Pagan world. Even in the darkest of the " Dark Ages," almost every department of useful knowledge, repudiated everywhere else, found a refuge in the monasteries of a corrupted Christianity. Facts and principles multiplied without limit, do indeed show that a spiritual religion does not necessarily stand abreast with the progress of science and the arts; while they also show that all advances of true religion carry along with them a proportioned intellectual advancement. Bright will be the glory of that age of which it may be said that piety is the adornment of its learning, and learning is the adornment of its piety. This shall be eminently one of the glories of Christ's millennial reign. Institutions of learning shall be multiplied, and they shall be under a Christian influence. The press shall no longer teem with error, but become the vehicle of truth; important truth, truth that interests and pleases, because it instructs and elevates. Most of all shall religious knowledge, the knowledge of God and his Son, have access to the human mind. The world shall no longer groan under the bondage of ignorance and superstition. The Prince of darkness shall be expelled from this his usurped dominion, and be chained a thousand years. " The eyes of them that see shall not be dim; and the ears of them that hear shall hearken. The heart of the rash also shall understand knowledge, and the tongue of the stammerers shall speak plainly. Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of Hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously." The imagery by which this increase of knowledge is illustrated is beautiful and significant beyond comparison. Nor is the sober fact less significant, or beautiful. God's word, never bound, shall then break over the limits of tribe, nation, and language, and have " free course and be glorified." " This gospel of, the kingdom shall be preached to all nations." The rising generation shall be a generation religiously instructed; and the Bible shall become a text-book in every school and university throughout the earth. Everywhere shall it have access to the human mind; kings shall honor it upon their thrones; courtiers shall honor it in their councils; and the common people shall honor it. Untold myriads shall be sanctified through the truth. An intelligent and holy ministry, and an intelligent and holy church shall be found in every clime. Heavenly truth shall be diffused through all nations; the institutions of heavenly love and wisdom shall flourish under genial skies; returning Sabbaths shall everywhere revisit the earth; churches of a pure faith shall be erected in every district, and stand as beacon lights on every shore. God shall "destroy the face of the

covering cast over all people, and the veil spread over all nations." Amid the multiplied facilities for human intercourse, many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." " The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days," and the " knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea."

It will also in the next place be an age which is emphatically the dispensation of the Spirit. It will differ from former ages, in no one particular more than this. The third Person in the adorable and ever-blessed Trinity will then be universally acknowledged as the appointed and honored Dispenser of the blessings of that New Covenant of which the Son of God is the Mediator. In consequence of this, the reign of Christ on the earth will be the reign of holiness. There shall be few unconverted and unholy men. We dare not say that all the inhabitants of the earth will then be converted to God, because the Scriptures intimate that there will still be a leaven of wickedness, and miry places of the earth that " are given to salt," and where the waters that" issued from the Sanctuary do not come. The final struggle between the righteous and the wicked, and the great battle of Gog and Magog which is just antecedent to the final judgment, and during which Satan shall be again let loose for a little season, cannot well be accounted for without the fact, that notwithstanding the multitudes of good men, there will be a remnant that will still cleave to their sins, and their lusts, remain rebels among the rebellious, and adhere to the last, to the accursed Father of rebellion. These constitute " the rest," the remnant of which the Apocalypse speaks, that lost their power during the Millennium, and "lived not again until the thousand years were completed." This one thing is clearly revealed, that the inhabitants of this world, as a mass, will then be holy. " The gathering of the people" shall then be unto the predicted Shiloh. " A nation shall be born in a day." The " daughter of Zion shall rejoice, because many nations shall be joined unto the Lord in that day, and shall be his people." " From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, his name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place, incense shall be offered to his name, and a pure offering, and his name shall be great among the heathen." The Jews also will be restored from their long exile, and form one community with the Christian church; the veil that is upon their hearts shall be taken away, and from " all places whither they have been scattered," they shall return, and come into the fold of the Great Shepherd. The Root of Jesse shall " stand for an ensign to the people, to which the outcasts of Israel shall assemble, and the dispersed of Judah shall gather from the four corners of the earth." The effect of their conversion upon the Gentile nations may well be supposed to be bordering almost upon the miraculous; " for if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" Not only will there be more good men, but good men themselves will be more conformed to God. They shall walk in God's statutes and keep his judgments as previous generations have not done. They will still be imperfect men; but they will be eminently adorned with the beauties of holiness. " They shall not speak lies, neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth." In that day "there shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord!" This reign of Christ by his Spirit is his true reign upon the earth; and glorious will it be for the splendor of his power, and the triumphs of his redemption, beyond what eye has seen or ear has heard. Men shall be blessed in him, all nations shall call him blessed. "The idols he shall utterly abolish." The great obstructions to the prevalence and growth of piety in the earth will then be taken out of the way. The various forms of Paganism will die; atheism and infidelity and the Mohammedan imposture will wake no more; and every form of hierarchy will have slept its sleep. False religions that are baptized with the Christian name will no longer exert their neutralizing and

corrupting influence; their teachers and their disciples will have passed away; no hand shall garnish the sepulcher where they lie, and none shall be found to shed a tear upon their grave. It will be a time of great engagedness among the people of God; Christian churches will be Christian in character as well as in name. It will be an age of prayer and one of great anxiety, and still greater hope and expectation for the souls of men. The ministers of the gospel will be eminent for their self-denial, toil, and fidelity, and will preach as they never preached before. The Spirit of God will be upon preachers and upon hearers; and instead of here and there a passing cloud, the heavens shall pour down righteousness, and the earth shall open and bring forth salvation. The New Jerusalem shall come down from God out of heaven; God himself shall dwell with men and be their God. The Millennium will be heaven begun on earth, and heaven will be the millennium of earth consummated in holiness and joy.

We remark again, it will also be a period when it will be distinctly seen that all things are directed by Providence in subserviency to the kingdom of Christ. All things ever have been thus directed; but this subserviency has, to the eye of sense, and even to the eye of faith, been sometimes so obscurely made known that it has scarcely been perceived, much less always gratefully acknowledged. If we look over the earth on which we dwell, we see so many events, agencies, and influences that countervail the great objects which Christ has in view, that we see not how they will ever contribute to his advancement and honor. We see wrong and injury in every form; human rights trampled on, and human obligations unenforced and trifled with. On the side of the oppressors is power, and the oppressed have no comforter. But in that age of millennial glory, human authority and power will be in the hands of good men. As the vast majority of the human race will then be holy, such will be their influence that human governments will be in their hands, and the places of power and trust will be at their disposal. " The kingdom and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven will be given to the saints of the most high God." The people will be righteous, and therefore the rulers will be good men. The people will rule, and a glorious and Christian democracy will it be when righteous nations demand righteous rulers, and rulers and ruled come bending unto the Son of God! " All kings shall bow down before him, and all nations shall serve him." Oppression shall cease, and every yoke of bondage shall be broken. Kings shall be nursing fathers, and queens nursing mothers to the church of Christ. Great voices in heaven shall announce that " the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. He will be exalted, and all the powers of earth shall be subservient to his dominion. He Will reign over the earth, in his people and with his people, and they " shall live and reign with him." His influence will be extended to all the forms of power and to all the departments of government, everywhere vindicating the rights, and at the same time enforcing the responsibilities of men. Legislators will be wise and good men; that great engine of security and happiness, or of insecurity and misery, human law, no longer subject to the arts of professional adroitness, will be submitted to upright and impartial expositors and judges, and be a terror only to the evil, and a praise to them that do well; while in the execution of law " its officers shall be peace and its exactions righteousness."

There are great elements of nature also which have just begun to be subjected to the power of man. Others there are which as yet remain locked up in her own bosom, because the time is not come, when " the Lord hath need of them." The magnetic power, and the power of steam are destined to work wonders for the kingdom of Christ. The resources of the physical creation will not

probably be known until they are rendered more subservient to the moral and spiritual creation. Problems are waiting for their solution, only until they shall be made to speak for Jesus Christ, bear testimony to his truth, and extend his kingdom among men. The heavens and the earth, land and ocean, men and nations, the inspection of the present and the researches of the past wait his bidding, " by whom are all things, and for whom are all things." The light and the darkness, the atmosphere above us, and the fossils and minerals and more precious metals beneath us, every element, and combination of elements shall be conducive to his praise. And will it not be the jubilee of the material creation, when its clouds and its sunshine, its mines of gold, its honors, its pursuits and its enjoyments all do honor to the Redeeming Saviour? The arts and sciences shall also be under the influence of Christian principles, and receive a benevolent direction. No longer will they be employed in works of impiety and unrighteousness, or for the mere gratification of selfishness and gain, or for the construction of ingenious instruments of death. Instead of being embarrassed and kept back as they have been in past ages, because they multiply the agencies of evil, they shall disclose new inventions and be crowned with new successes, because men have learned to employ them wisely. This whole material creation, made by Christ, and for Christ, shall no longer be diverted from the design of honoring him, and wickedly made the unhallowed means of obstructing the progress of his kingdom. For ages past, this has been a polluted earth and still " groans" under its pollution. Every created thing in it has been prostituted to the vile purpose of dishonoring the Son of God. It has been thus " subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. There is hope even for the earth which is now under the curse for man's sake. The day will dawn when it will be rescued from this " bondage of corruption," and made subservient to " the manifestation of the Son of God." " Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord; for he "Cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity. Sing O ye heavens, for the Lord hath done it; shout ye lower parts of the earth; break forth into singing, ye mountains, and forests, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel!"

It will also be a day, in the next place, when the glory of Christ shall be wonderfully manifested to the children of men. Here lies the true glory of that coming day. God himself is the true glory of all his works. In past ages he has done much to bring himself to the view of creatures; but they have been comparatively ages of darkness. He is known now by " the judgments which he executeth," and by the dark cloud in which he dwells, and whence the voice goes forth to agitate, convulse, and overturn. Yet these are but parts of his ways. There are other glories of his nature to be unfolded; other impressions of his excellence to be produced on the minds of men; other honors which he is to receive, ere the last ingathering of this world's harvest. Some of these manifestations have already been made; and if it is a view unutterably grand and beautiful thus to " stand still and see the salvation of God," what will it be when that salvation is consummated, and its splendid glories burst upon the earth, and the tongue of the dumb is unloosed, and millions in every land exclaim, "Behold, what hath God wrought!" They are these strong and vivid impressions of the Deity made upon the minds of men, which is one great object he has in view in the arrangements of his providence and in the dispensations of his grace. We turn aside to see this great sight, as Moses did, to look on the burning bush in Horeb, and take the shoes from off our feet. Or like Jacob, in the open field, we catch a glimpse of the heavenly vision, and with him exclaim, " Verily, the Lord is in this place!" He speaks to us as he did to Elijah on the mount, or to

Job out of the whirlwind, and we bow at his footstool. Wondrous day will that be when the nations shall acknowledge his supremacy, and feel the weight of his great and amiable character. " Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty; for the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of man shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day!" Wondrous day, when " all kings shall bow before him, and all nations shall call him blessed!" No marvel that ancient prophets " searched what, or what manner of time" it would be. Delightful, yet awful day! desirable, yet fearful age! to his friends desirable, fearful only to his foes! And they shall go " into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth."

It is a great thought when we speak of Christs millennial glory. The time is coming when it will be written in broad and legible characters on the azure sky, and stand out in strong and bold relief when the sun is turned into darkness, and the moon into blood. It will blaze forth as the recognized standard of that " kingdom which cannot be moved," and as the well-known insignia of its royalty and splendor, when the kingdoms of this world shall have "passed away, as the chaff of the summer threshing-floor." It is the ineffable glory of his divine nature in all the combination and infinitude of his perfections. It is the glory that is consequent on his sufferings who is " God manifest in the flesh!" It is glory that shall be worthy of him, worthy of his greatest purpose, and his greatest work, worthy of his work of degradation and suffering, when he traveled in the " greatness of his strength." It is glory which is his fitting reward, and with which he is satisfied when he looks back upon the travail of his soul, and contemplates his completed work. The existence of this earth would be a dark problem, and the method of redemption would seem to be a failure, if we could contemplate only the past and the present. There are scenes unspeakably more glorious than these. It is not the present glory of his church glorious as she is, nor his present glory, exalted as he is at the right hand of majesty in the heavens, which the revealing Spirit unfolds. It is the glory that shall be when the triumphs of Christianity are consummated on the earth, and the Sufferer of Calvary shall rejoice " over his redeemed with joy, shall joy over them with singing, and rest in his love." It is the glory that shall be when the ages so anxiously looked for and intensely enjoyed, shall have come and gone; when the light and love of a progressively holy world shall find a mirror in every bosom; when all that faith believed, and hope anticipated, and a sanctified imagination had tried to picture, shall be realized in its growing knowledge, holiness, and joy. Nay, it is the glory that shall be, when things seen and temporal shall be lost sight of in those that are unseen and eternal, and when redeemed men shall press forward to their equality with angels. It is the embryo being and the embryo glory now; for now the God of Israel is a God " that hideth himself." What has been, what is, may well be lost in the prospect of what will be. This leads to our last remark, which is, that Christ in his millennial glory will reign during a sufficiently long period to secure the great objects both of his humiliation and his exaltation. We do not feel warranted in speaking, with anything like precision, of the time during which the Millennium will continue. It is one of the mysteries of the divine government, that the great objects of Christ's Redemption have not been more extensively attained, and are even now being accomplished so tardily. The greatness of the design may not be estimated by the extent to which it has already been accomplished. " God is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness." The reason why, after so long time, it has not been more fully accomplished, is found in the very magnitude of the design itself. It cannot be accomplished in a century. Eighteen centuries have

passed away, and it is still a progressive work. Its peculiar glory is that every part of it is so arranged as to express the augmented and progressive glories of its great Author. " God hath made all things for himself." His great object is to show forth the undiscovered and unsearchable glories of his nature by such means, and in such progressive manifestations, as shall be most clearly seen, most deeply felt, and most admired and adored. No sudden effulgence can effect this: he has resources which cannot be thus exhausted. It were a low and unreasonable conception of the Deity, to suppose that all the features of any one of his designs are fully made known.

We know not how many years will pass away before the day of millennial glory will begin. Sir Isaac Newton well remarks, that " prophecy was not designed to make men prophets." We have no desire to commit, or even trust ourselves with any numerical calculations on a subject where so many minds have been at fault, and where enthusiasm, or despondency have so much to do with forming the opinions of men. The four thousand years that were preparatory to the Saviour's incarnation, were but the morning of a bright and prolonged day. God's moral arrangements, like everything else which he does, contemplate events in their order. " The kingdom of heaven is like seed cast into the ground; first "Cometh up the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." The fairest portions of Christendom have scarcely seen the "corn in the ear;" by far the larger portions of the earth remain as yet fallow ground, which is yet to be broken up. The Millennium will no doubt come on gradually, though rapidly. Preparations are now being made for it; but the scene has not yet begun to open. Curtain after curtain is yet to be withdrawn, ere the world obtains a glimpse of the dawning glory. It is a mistaken notion that it is to be introduced and sustained by miracle except so far as the work of the Holy Spirit is supernatural. It is the work of faith and the " labor of love;" a faith that is human, and a power that is divine; a faith that gathers strength and expectation from every instance of success and every new attainment, and a power that neither intermits nor relaxes its energy until " the zeal of the Lord of hosts" shall have accomplished its gracious purpose. When we look at the prevalence of false religions, and more especially those systems of error that prevail throughout the oriental nations, and that are so venerable for age, so encrusted by the accumulations of centuries, and so deeply embedded in the science, the morals, and social institutions of millions; it would seem to border on the expectations of romance to look for the time when these vast mountains of ignorance and wickedness shall melt away. There are not many visible indications of decay in any of the great anti-christian powers or systems; nor is the sanctuary itself yet cleansed. We may not look for the dawn of the latter-day glory until there are some more significant indications of these great changes. There will be, as we have seen, days of great darkness and suffering and bloody persecution in reserve for the church of God, before Satan shall be bound; yet in a little time " he that shall come will come, and will not tarry." Christ will prove himself the triumphant conqueror. He will " bruise the head of the serpent," and crush his power. It is not the majority of our race over whom the devil will triumph, and whom he will drag down to perdition, but a meager minority. As a section of the divine empire, this world belongs to Christ; in defiance of the past and present dominion of the adversary, he will reign over it. He will take his own time to make the conquest; nor is there any reason to doubt that his millennial reign will include prolonged ages of his power. The Scriptures speak of a thousand years during which Satan shall be chained; but they do not intimate whether these thousand years include only the meridian glory of that age of mercy, or whether they include its gradual dawn and close. They simply instruct us that his power shall be crippled for a thousand years. Whether this

period be literally a thousand years, or whether a round number of years is thus designed to indicate an indefinite and long period; or whether, counting a day for a year, which is revealed as the prophetic counting, it comprises three hundred and sixty thousand years; are questions on which great and good men have entertained different views. The most welcome conclusion certainly is the last; but we can only say that in a book so symbolical and figurative as the Apocalypse, it is not probable that the " thousand years" are to be understood literally. We can affirm with certainty that there will be a sufficiently long period, during which Christianity will have a free and unobstructed course in the world; and men and nations, unembarrassed by the deceptions of the adversary, and uncontrolled by his power, will flock to the universally-erected standard of the cross. The work to be accomplished is no small work, and the happy period allotted to it is no short and transient age. It is no vain hope that generations shall yet exist, which, in long and unbroken series, shall see the Son of Man thus come in his glory. And when these have traveled on and traveled far, subsequent generations, in a more distant and brighter stage of this the world's spiritual progress, shall behold still brighter glories, till their progress verges toward the hemisphere where the sun never goes down. Their days shall be as the days of heaven upon the earth. It is the great -glory of God's eternal Son, illuminating all, encompassing all, the atmosphere in which all live and move and have their being.

17 — Doctrine of the Millennium

Chapter 17 PRACTICAL DEDUCTIONS FROM THE DOCTRINE OF THE MILLENNIUM.

We have reserved a separate chapter from some practical deductions of the Scriptural doctrine of the Millennium, because we could not, without embarrassment, crowd our thoughts within a narrower compass. The first remark which suggests itself in reviewing this cheering subject relates to the importance of having our minds deeply imbued with the fact that brighter days are yet to dawn upon this lost world. There is no fact more delightful, in relation to the future history of man, than that the Redeemer is to reign in millennial glory on the earth. This is humanity's hope. Come what will beside, this one thing we know, the Millennium will come. Be the darkness ever so great that precedes it, and the convulsions ever so many and severe, and the conflicts ever so agitating; the pure light of heaven will yet dawn without a cloud, revolutions and war shall be no more, and there shall be "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth." Human wickedness may be greatly prevalent, and wicked men and nations possess great power; but not more certainly is there a God in heaven, than "the righteous shall inherit the earth," and that "for yet a little while and the wicked shall not be, yea thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." The government of God needs this great revealed fact in order to dissipate the clouds and darkness that surround his throne. We are not without evidence in the dispensations of his providence that he now superintends the affairs of men; but the day is coming when his hand will be more conspicuous, and his gracious designs be more fully comprehended. When the Apostle John in the Apocalypse beheld the woman that "sat upon the scarlet colored Beast" upon whose forehead "a name was written Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth," and saw her "drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus;" he makes this emphatic observation: "And when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration." Good men in every age have stood surprised and in amazement at scenes and events so full of successful wickedness that they have been tempted to feel, that "the Lord seeth not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth." It is true that Eternity will clear up these inscrutable things; but what symmetry and beauty does it give to the system of revealed truth that these clouds are even now dispersed by the light of prophecy, and that we have the perfect assurance that during the thousand years when the Spirit of God will be poured from on high, the wickedness and the miseries of the past shall be forgotten in scenes which earth and heaven behold with transport! Does not the church of God also need this great revealed fact in order to remind her of her high destiny? It is not easy for us to conceive what Christianity is destined to accomplish. We have often spoken of it as God's greatest work, and as embodying the highest interests of his kingdom. Yet its progress has been so interrupted and slow, that even now after the lapse of eighteen centuries, they are but the orient dawns of the Sun of righteousness that have risen on the earth in which we dwell. A thoughtless and giddy world may flatter themselves that the church of God has no higher destination than this; that these are the extent of her victories, and that here her horizon terminates. But though the moments seem to linger and the lapse of time is slow; the Christian's eye is fixed on these last days as the great triumphs of truth and holiness.

There is some obscurity in the details of this predicted advancement of Christ's kingdom; but there is so much that is luminous in the results, that faith and hope live in the brightness of the anticipation. There is nothing visionary in the most generous expectations of all that is desirable and delightful in those days when Christianity shall fulfil its office among men, and accomplish the end for which she was sent from heaven. When the ancient church was an exile in Babylon, she hung her harp upon the willows; she wept sore in the night, and her tears were on her cheeks. They are days of exile which remain for a little while for the church of God that is now on the earth. Judah is gone into captivity because of affliction. The ways of Zion do mourn because few come to her solemn feasts; all that pass by clap their hands at her; they hiss and wag their head at the daughter of Jerusalem. But these days of her mourning shall shortly be ended. Blessings, rich and pure as the heavens from which they descend, shall mark her progress as she returns and comes to her promised glory with singing. There is ripe fruit to be gathered from the seed that is now being scattered, and health and salvation from the tree whose leaves are for the healing of the nations. They are the most glorious revelations of the future, which God has made known. We chide ourselves that we do not give them that place in our thoughts and affections which their inimitable richness and beauty demand, and are constrained to look upon this deficiency as indicating a low state of piety in our own hearts. When the Christian ministry, and the Christian church become deeply imbued with these great truths, it will become such a ministry and such a church as the world has not seen since the days of the apostles.

We cannot help feeling that there is a value and sacredness in this doctrine of the Millennium which we may well contemplate on our bended knees. It is heavenward in all its tendencies and influence. There is no remorse in such anticipations; nor do I know that there is even any temptation to extravagance and sin. Victor Hugo once said " that the law which rules the world is not, cannot be different from the law of God." The man in whose creed this thought is most intimately woven, in whose heart it is most deeply embedded, and whose deportment is most under its control, other things being equal, will be the holiest, the most useful, and the happiest man. The man who uttered this sublime truth we all know is not a man who is living for the Millennium. This single anticipation, intelligently cherished in the bosoms of princes and statesmen, diffused throughout the various social organizations, and disseminated over the earth, would be like a new power from the armory of heaven by which the world would be subjugated to the kingdom of Christ. " He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth." What a powerful truth is this to take hold of the human intellect, to inspire human genius, and to consecrate human piety! Dwell upon it; teach it; instill it into the infant mind. Let the pulpit bear witness to it; carry it to the halls of legislation; let literature and the arts, and commerce honor it. Let it go forth to the world as man's inheritance, as heaven's harbinger of good-will to the race. A second remark suggested by these views of the Millennium is, that no other agencies are necessary in order to secure this glorious consummation than those which the church of God already enjoys. Just before the Saviour ascended to his heavenly throne, he gave the commission to his apostles, " Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; and lo, I am with you always even to the end of the world." These are the promised agencies by which men are to be converted in every age of time. The truths of the gospel and the presence of Christ these, and these alone, are adequate to the introduction and perfection of millennial glory. His gospel, with all its sacred institutions and influences imparted to all classes of men and all nations, and his presence in the kingdoms of providence and grace are pledged to accomplish this great work. The

truth of God and his Spirit are the influences which have penetrated the mass of human society, and by which so large portions of it have become already transformed. And what is true of the past will be true of the future. Of the brightest days of the Millennium nothing more can be said than was affirmed on the day of Pentecost, that " Jesus, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear."

We have heard much of the law of progress and that, in the natural course of human events, the world is growing better. We, too, are believers in the law of progress; but it is not nature's progress; it is not the progress of the human intellect or the human heart; it is not the progress of human legislation or the science of human government, uncontrolled by the gospel of Jesus Christ. All history shows that without Christianity all the tendencies of our nature are evil. We look with concern upon the dreams of those modern philanthropists who expect to see the world transformed in its moral character by agencies which acknowledge neither the truth nor the power of the ascended Saviour. All other agencies are powerless. There is no law of progress except this. Men who have conceived this idea of the necessary and resistless progress in human affairs, have caught this impression from those bright periods in man's history in which his moral advancement has emphatically indicated the development of the divine purposes of mercy toward our race. They overlook the thought that these purposes have been carried into effect by a power that is superhuman. The Bible is as truly suited to one age as another. No matter how rapid, and how far advanced the progress; the Bible will ever be foremost in the race of improvement. The same is true of the Spirit of God. Shut out God's truth from the minds of men; exclude the renovating power of his Spirit, and the direction of his almighty providence; and the character of our race will become not stationary only, but retrograde. Our confidence is weakened in the wisdom of men with every passing year. We look with suspicion upon all those arrangements and alliances by which they hope to renovate the world, irrespective of the truth and power of God. It is something better which we are hoping for, and to a more simple agency and a higher power that we look. If our world is made better, the work is to be done by Christianity. If the Millennium ever arrive, the work will be done not by science, nor by human legislation, but by Christianity; Christianity will prepare the way for it by its patient collision with every system of error in church and in state, in individual man and in aggregate society. Christianity will introduce and perpetuate it by the power of its living and reigning Prince. It will be the sword of his Spirit cutting its way through the very heart of the nations, and multiplying its triumphs till the predicted consummation shall come. In these two things, the truth of Christ and his Spirit, are comprised all those moral influences which act effectively upon the minds of men. The strength of all permanent reform lies thus in the power of Christianity. That peculiar and excitable state of the public mind which gives rise to spasmodic efforts to restrain and subdue the vices of men, is not what the condition of our world calls for. We honor those associations whose object is the suppression of human wickedness; but if we look into the Scriptures we shall find that even those moral virtues which adorn the character of good men are " the fruit of the Spirit." God is wiser than man, and better knows access to the human heart. What the world requires is the conservative influence of God's truth, enlightening the public conscience, imparting a strong sense of rectitude, deep impressions of human dependence and responsibility, and confidence in God. The destitute and wretched condition of the masses and their reckless vices will find no permanent relief except in the truth and Spirit of the Great Healer. It is the dream of idiocy to look for any permanent melioration of

individual or social wrong except from the influence of Christianity. It is no marvel that the truth of God is studiously protected from the inspection of the people, where the policy of Princes is to keep them in bondage. Rome fears nothing so much as the unembarrassed dissemination of God's truth. Recent as well as ancient facts in her history proclaim alike her shame and her weakness. This crusade of the Papal hierarchy against the Bible is the most emphatic exposition of its " universal declaration of war against freedom." If these fair lands in which we ourselves dwell, ever prove themselves recreant to the high and inestimable trust committed to them by their sainted Fathers, it will be by their national departure from Christianity. Nothing but this in the wide universe can hold us together, and induce us to hold fast that we have, that no man take our crown. Social and political convulsions may be directed by the wisdom of statesmen, or be held in check for a while by the strong arm of military power; but there must be another remedy for local jealousies and fermenting discontent; and that remedy is the " righteousness which exalteth a nation." Christian principles lie at the foundation of all order, government and godliness. That nation will bear the most honored part in introducing the Millennium which most fears God and keeps his commandments. Give the world the gospel and the presence of its divine Author, and the Millennium is begun.

We remark therefore again; the view which has been presented of the Millennium urges the friends of God of every name to vigorous and combined efforts for the introduction of that promised day of their Redeemers glory. The agencies by which it is to be brought about are put into their hands for the purpose of being employed, nor can they throw off these solemn obligations of duty, of love to Christ and love to this lost world to employ them diligently. The Millennium will not come while good men are asleep. It is then that the enemy sows tares. Nor will it come so long as they are employed exclusively in their secular occupations, and living to themselves. We know not the power they may exert in preparing the way for their divine Lord. Men who have the gospel may send it everywhere, at home and abroad. They may send it with that mighty agency, the presence of its divine Author, whenever they are so intent on securing it as to give him no rest until " he make Jerusalem a name and a praise in the earth." The prediction was once uttered, " It shall come to pass that there shall come people and the inhabitants of many cities; and the inhabitants of one city shall go unto another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord and to seek the Lord of Hosts; I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. What a sight will this be, when, not individuals only, but churches; and not churches only, but nations; and not nations only, but many people and strong nations, nations pre-eminent in power, nations distinguished for wealth and literature, renowned in civilization, in arts and in arms, in solemn and delightful concert, go to " pray before the Lord!"

Such a scene we have never witnessed; in the present disjointed and jarring state of Christendom, the time seems far distant when the sun will shine upon such a scene as this. The importance given to party shibboleths, and the intolerance with which they are sustained — the mutual jealousies and apprehensions which find their way even into the more evangelical churches — the suspicions which are fostered against institutions that are based upon the broad basis of a common Christianity — the isolated and almost monastic training and habits of the Christian ministry, and the reluctance of private Christians to co-operate in those religious and spiritual services which so greatly advance the kingdom of their Master — the zeal and extravagance of

good men in pushing some favorite measure of ultra reform, to the neglect of the divinely instituted methods by God's truth and Spirit — the diminution in numbers and spirituality of men devoted to the sacred office — the thirst for novelty in the pulpit to the neglect of the solid and substantial truths of the gospel — the neglect of religion by the young, and the growing indifference to this neglect on the part of the old — the all-absorbing influence of the world, and the melancholy control which its social splendor exercises over men and women professing godliness — the unwonted apathy of the church of God in this and other lands, unmindful of mercies and unmindful of judgments — all these indicate that the spirit of fervent prayer, and the stimulus to united effort for the glorious presence of the Son of Man are greatly wanting in the age in which we live.

These things must, and will be repented of and reformed, before the coming of that predicted day. There must be another spirit in ministers and in churches, before Zion becomes a light to the nations, and salvation to the ends of the earth. It will not be amid such a state of things that the standard is set up to which the outcasts of Israel shall be gathered, and the dispersed of Judah shall assemble. Were the men and the means which have, for the last twenty years, been so unsuccessfully employed in promoting objects which the preaching of the gospel more effectually promotes, there would have been fewer divisions in the church and in the state, and the spirit with which they are imbued would have been less rancorous. The church of Christ is, by the organization of her great Head, one church and her interests are one. She is not an isolated community; her dwelling-place is among men. She may not maintain the position of indifference and prayerlessness; nor a selfish and iron-hearted policy; nor inactivity of any kind in the midst of so much ignorance, superstition, idolatry, impiety and crime. The great end of her existence is the instruction and conversion of the world. She is a Missionary Community, and from her very nature and laws, a community for the promotion of every good work. So far as religious objects are concerned, she is herself the great voluntary society of the earth, under a high and heaven-born organization. Her principles are principles of peace, of temperance, of purity, and of all that is lovely and of good report. If she would but be true to her principles, she forms the best organization for the accomplishment of all those great and important events which her exalted Saviour lives to accomplish. Her ministers, her officers, her members are by their covenanted allegiance to their celestial Leader, as well as by their own mutual engagements, pledged to seek nothing so earnestly as the universal triumph of his kingdom. It is no marvel that her light wanes, her energy becomes feeble, and her glory obscured, when she loses sight of the great end for which she was called by his truth, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit. She needs a more self-denying heart, and one that is more sensitive to the endearments of redeeming love. She needs a conscience exercised for the Millennium and one that speaks in higher tones of authority and decision. There is no lack of encouragement in this high source; nor is there any higher, or more hallowed impulse, than that it is the glory of her ascended and reigning Saviour which that illustrious day will secure. Never was there a period of the world in which his glory ought to incite to nobler thoughts and deeds, or in which her hopes ought to be higher or more regaled. Our next observation relates to the signs of the times and the indications they furnish of the approach of this latter day of glory. The history of the past is a most instructive history. As we look back on 1800 years, we see that Christianity, though not without severe conflicts, and some seasons of deep depression, has been making rapid advances. Within less than a century after the death of its Founder, one of its strongest holds was in the capital of the Roman Empire; in the fourth century, it was the established religion of the Empire itself It was diffused through all its

provinces, was embraced by barbarous and invading nations, was subsequently handed down to the nations of modern Europe, and is now the professed religion of the most civilized and enlightened parts of the world. In all this progress, this one fact has been delightfully demonstrated, — that Christianity consults the best interests of men, not for eternity only, but also for time. Just in the proportion in which it has had free course, have the temporal blessings of the Millennium stood abreast with its progress. Civil and religious liberty have trodden in her footsteps; literature and science have been her adornment; and if the Lord of heaven and earth has not always given Christian nations that physical power which has been exercised by some that are anti-christian, he has given them a moral influence in the world which is more powerful. He has also given them physical power. To say nothing of our own land, we have but to look at the Christian and Protestant nations of Europe, in order to perceive the authority which they have exerted, and still exert in the world. What land holds so commanding a position among the nations as the little island of Great Britain, spreading her dominions as she does, over one hundred and fifty millions of the human family, swaying her sceptre beyond the utmost boundaries of the Roman Empire, and embracing a territory on which the sun never ceases to shine? Her language is spoken in the East and in the West, and her institutions have taken root in a soil occupied by one sixth part of the human race. While the foundations of the principal European states have been shaken by political convulsions, her social fabric has stood firm; God has made her the great bulwark of Protestant Christianity; and notwithstanding all her faults, she now lives to bless the world. Compare her condition at the present hour, with her condition at the beginning of the fifteenth century; and how marvellous the change! Read the third chapter in the first volume of the "History of England" by Thomas Burlington Macaulay, and you will see a change, as almost by magic, and one to which the history of the Old World furnishes no parallel. Read the slight sketch indeed which is presented by the same elegant and forcible historian in his first chapter, and you will see when and how it was that the light began to break on that once dark land. Nor are we so much surprised as gratified to hear this author say, "Unless I greatly deceive myself, the general effect of this checkered narrative will be to excite thankfulness in all religious minds and hope in the breast of all patriots; for the history of our country during the last hundred and sixty years is eminently the history of physical, of moral, and of intellectual improvement. Those who compare the age in which their lot has fallen with a golden age which exists only in the imagination, may talk of degeneracy and decay; but no man who is correctly informed as to the past will be disposed to take a morose or despondent view of the present."

If from Great Britain, we look to the Scandinavian nations of the North, comprising Denmark, Sweden, and Norway, we discover, if not equal, yet real indications of the same progress. What were the ancient Celts and Goths compared with the modern Danes but a nest of merciless and ferocious pirates who were distinguished by their hatred of the Christian name, and their terror to all Europe? What was Sweden in the days of Tacitus compared with Sweden after she was converted to Christianity at the close of the eleventh century; and more especially compared with what she was in the days of Luther, and under the reign of the religious, the humane, and yet the invincible Gustavus Adolphus; and with what she was in our own days, under Bernadotte. What was Norway the most interesting, but the least known of all the countries of ancient Scandinavia, that land of lake and mountain, and pagan necromancy, until the period when the followers of Luther gave them the Sabbath and the Bible.

If from these you pass to the more central nations of Europe, and look at ancient Germany, ignorant of arts and agriculture, with no cities and no villages; no temples, but groves and forests where they worshiped the sun, the fire, and the earth; or if you inspect her provinces after the conquest by Julius Caesar; or if you advert to her intellectual and religious character as they existed under the Papal See; and then compare them with what they have been since the great Reformation; you cannot but perceive that, notwithstanding the pernicious effect of her philosophy, falsely so called, the efforts of her reformers, and the learning of her universities have contributed largely to the growth of true religion in Protestant lands. Holland the home of Calvinism, and the asylum of the Puritans, was not long since the land where 50,000 perished on the scaffold for conscience' sake under a single reign. Switzerland the birth-place of Zuinglius, Bullinger, and Beza, and from the bosom of whose placid lake the renowned Calvin sent forth a voice that now speaks in every well-instructed and well-organized church in the Christian world, was once at the feet of imperial Rome, and overrun and almost extirpated by hordes of barbarians. Prussia the land of Copernicus and the great Frederic, and whence Berlin, and Halle, and Bonn have diffused so much of the learning and intelligence of Europe, and which has been the honored asylum of the persecuted, and than which no country on the Continent is more distinguished for its schools, its toleration and its Christianity; as late as the 13th century was the dwelling of the Vandal, and later still one of the arenas of that fearful conflict between the Catholics and the Protestants, known as the " thirty years' war." Hungary was once the hospitable region where reposed the innumerable hordes which overran the Roman Empire: it was the asylum of the Tartar; now, down-trodden as it is, it gives toleration and security to two millions of Protestants, and seventy-five thousand Jews. It is scarcely two centuries since Russia was known as an Empire; now she holds the balance of power in Europe; and though her religion is but one of the corrupted forms of Christianity, the Bible is recognized as its standard, and is accessible by the people. Of Austria France and the Roman States we can say nothing, but that they are not Pagan, and that the witnesses for Christianity which are there, are there to suffer; and it may be by their sufferings, by the word of their testimony, and by the blood of the Lamb, are to overcome.

It is a fact of deep interest in the divine government also, that no one nation now on the earth is so powerful as to dictate and give laws to all other nations. It was not always thus. The Chaldean, the Medo-Persian, and the Macedonian Emperors successively ruled the earth. The Roman Empire, still subsisting in its ten broken kingdoms, once gave law to the world; but when that empire fell, it was the last anti-christian power that should sway the nations, and that was to be superseded by the " stone cut out of the mountain without hands." Nor is the circumstance to be overlooked, that Infidelity has received a blow from which it will scarcely be resuscitated. The great question between believers and unbelievers in the Christian revelation has been so thoroughly discussed, and the evidence in its favor is so cumulative, that no intelligent infidel has for a long series of years ventured to array himself against the authenticity and inspiration of the Sacred Writings. Where infidelity has not retired from the field, it has sought a refuge in scholastic philosophy, or betaken itself to some corrupted form of the Christian faith. The well-known arena of its temporary triumph has been so fearfully scathed by the divine judgments, that its noisy pretensions have been silenced, and the nations look upon it with horror. It always has been, and ever will be the natural result of minds that are at enmity with God; but so long as the scenes of the French Revolution are fresh in the remembrance of men, it will not again form the great feature of national character. Romanism may in the last resort do it homage, because it has no Bible to fall back upon

when its own resources fail. False religions in different lands may do it homage, because without the gospel, it is their only asylum in their overthrow. Islam will not honor it; rather will it honor the Christianity which itself honors the "One God." Despots will not honor it, because without some religion, they are insecure upon their thrones. Nor will the people honor it, because it gives them blood to drink, and only blood. The rapid progress which Christianity has made in the world during the last half-century is also among the brighter signs of the times. Wonderful as the fact may appear, the Bible is now scattered through the earth in one hundred and seventy-five languages. Great Britain alone maintains in successful operation fourteen Societies for Foreign Missions; Germany seven; the United States fourteen; Holland one; Switzerland one; France one; Sweden two; Norway one; British America one; while there are in the Christian world not less than twelve flourishing associations for evangelizing the Jews. Large missionary stations, with all the appliances of schools, Bibles and religious tracts are now formed in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, the inland seas, and the great islands of the Southern Ocean. Some of these stations occupy some of the most important positions on the face of the globe, where Christianity has entered in earnest into the contest with millions, and hundreds of millions; and where such have been its successes and triumphs that it is "difficult to furnish reapers even for the ripened harvest." In some of these fields of labor the in-gathering has been of the most encouraging kind, and equal to the ingathering of the churches in Christian lands. It is a melancholy truth indeed, that false religions in every form still exist, and that they embrace in their gigantic arms the great mass of the human family; but they are agitated by internal convulsions, and are already beginning to be conscious of their own weakness. It is a remarkable fact, that the gospel has access to them all; that among tens of thousands of them it is doing its work; while some among them have not only publicly cast their idols to the moles and the bats, but have enrolled themselves with the great brotherhood of Christian nations, and have become fellow-laborers with them in carrying the gospel to other lands.

There are also some facts of a different kind not to be overlooked in this rapid survey. The authoritative tendency of former ages in controlling the opinions of men has been for centuries, and still is one of the great barriers to the progress of the world toward the days of millennial glory. That great birthright of every man, the right of private judgment in matters of religion, was long in being recognized and understood. The systems, and claims, and organizations of priest-craft, and parliamentary and legislative enactments which had for centuries held the human mind in their iron grasp, are not systems "on which consumption feeds," nor which die a natural death, or of old age. The longer they live unassailed the more inveterate they become, and the stronger their dominion. Their death-knell was indeed sounded when Christ uttered the words, "If the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed." It was a deadly wound that was given them by Luther, and Calvin, and Knox. The great statesmen of the English commonwealth contended with them; they were successfully assailed by Milton and Locke; Oliver Cromwell wielded against them his ponderous sword; Sir Harry Vane invaded them in the British parliament, and nobly breasted himself against them in the infant colony at Plymouth. But never was the triumph actually and extensively exemplified over them as it has been realized in this land. The influence of the American Republic in giving substance and permanency to the rights of conscience has been a silent, but powerful influence. It has not been by the intervention of her cabinet, or her arms. Her moral influence is her power, and her example is not only now felt and acknowledged by transatlantic states, but will eventually become the law of Christendom. It is no small advance in the state of the world toward

better days, that so many men have been found, like Chalmers, and Candlish, and Guthrie and Cunningham in Scotland, and Vinet in the Swiss Cantons, and Eobert Hall and Baptist Noel in England, who have felt so deep an interest in establishing the intellectual and religious rights of men upon their true and proper basis, and in giving Jesus Christ the sole supremacy in his own house. The great cause of civil liberty too has been making gradual advances during the last fifty years. Napoleon Bonaparte, with all his destructive ambition, taught the nations a lesson which they cannot easily unlearn. The despotisms of Europe and even of Asia are not what they once were. Who does not see that the policy of Great Britain has become a more liberal policy; and that in all these gradual modifications, she has less of favor to the privileged classes, and a more benevolent view to the great body of the people? The unexpected and untoward events which have recently taken place in Europe, and which would seem to indicate an alliance that is fatal both to religious and civil liberty may not throw so dark a shadow upon the future. It may be that the nations of Europe are not prepared for freedom, either by the strength of their religious principles or moral virtues. Some things they have learned, which they will hardly fail to lay up for future use. They have seen the unstable and faithless character of their own governments. They have seen the superior strength of the people whenever they came in actual collision with despotic power. They have seen that despots are conscious of their own weakness, because they have been forced to take refuge in foreign aid; and thus experience has taught them salutary lessons both in relation to themselves and those who rule over them. Whether the more immediate results of these ominous overturnings be for weal or for woe, we have this to satisfy us, that God is on the throne, and that the darkest events are but evolutions of that complex arrangement which he himself is directing for the restoration of fallen man by the redemption of his Son. " Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world." The most unnoticed flower and the smallest dew-drop occupy the place assigned to them by his unerring wisdom. The falling of a sparrow and the crushing of a worm under the foot of man as truly form a part of his all-comprehensive purposes, as the extinction of an empire, or the overthrow of the world by the flood. " He worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." " The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and let the earth rejoice!"

Great and rapid has been the advancement of Christianity from the day of Pentecost to the present hour. It may not be observable in a single century, but in the progress of centuries it is strongly marked. This, as we have already seen, is the true character of the Millennium. It is the progress of Christianity to its culminating point; retaining still all the characteristics of the New Dispensation and triumphant in the earth. The records of the future will, no doubt, in many respects, still be like the records of the past. There was a variegated and misty prospect to the eye of the first preachers of the Christian faith. Like a beautiful landscape that rests upon a deep background, Christianity then loomed from the hazy atmosphere of forty centuries. The age that preceded it was the iron age of the world; an age of exclusiveness and bigotry, of bondage and suffering, of wars, famine, and pestilence; an age fitted to the character of the nations that successively occupied it. Nor can we say much more than it looms now, if not from the same hazy atmosphere, and the same deep background, from a foreground that is still overcast, and from dark recesses where are seen gloomy and subterranean caverns, and many a rugged mountain and fallen tower. We have, it is true, traveled far beyond the dark ages: the day breaks upon us, but it is not a cloudless sky; " the morning cometh and also the night." Whether the prophetic symbol of the drying up of the river Euphrates denotes the exhaustion and overthrow of the

Turkish empire, or the downfall of the nationalized hierarchies of Papal Europe, is not essential to our object. One thing is obvious, the struggle has commenced in which down trodden nations have taken the field. And it is equally obvious that there is no relenting on the part of their oppressors. This confederacy of the anti-christian and despotic powers, of which the present generation is the witness, may indicate that the time is not far distant when the great battle for religious principle and human destiny is to be fought; and when blood shall flow even to the horses' bridles; and when the prediction shall be fulfilled, "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." This marshaling of the hosts of false religions is but the heaving of the tempest, the collecting of the materials for some mighty eruption. The promises of God to his church are but threatenings to her enemies: "he will give men for her and people for her life." It is not for us to fore-sketch the steps of divine providence; but is it not obvious that the way is preparing for a change in the affairs of men; that the ground which was laid in the planting of Christianity, is becoming broader from year to year; and that in its ascent to brighter climes the superstructure will defy the storm? Our next remark relates to the prospects and the duty of the American people in the present interesting period of the world. While with others, we feel that as a nation we are verging towards a most important crisis, we confess ourselves to be among those who have more hopes than fears. It is but a little more than two short centuries and these States were the abodes of pagan and savage men. Yet was it the purpose of Him who giveth this earth to whomsoever he will, to reclaim this vast and rich territory from the desolations of past ages; to put it under a Christian culture, and make it the theater of his millennial glory. In the fulfillment of this design, it has been well said, and often repeated, that he "sifted three nations that he might sow the American wilderness with the finest of the wheat." We have no spirit of glorying in the Anglo-Saxon race, but would rather invite all to adore the wisdom and goodness of God in bringing to these shores that combination of races which forms the excellence of the American character. The English and the Scottish Puritans, the generous Hollanders, the Protestant Irish, and the noble Huguenots of France constitute the elements of our national greatness. Never has the world seen four nobler races of men; races whose combined intelligence, piety and thrift were so remarkably fitted by divine providence to convert these western forests into a great and growing empire. The design of heaven in thus laying the foundations of this government, was a far-reaching and benevolent design, and we still regard it as of bright augury.

There have been interpositions of Providence also, in all our history, which show that the eye of God has been upon this land for good, and not for evil. The issue of the bitter conflict with the mother country, the master-spirits which directed it, and the wisdom, courage, and indomitable perseverance of that most useful and most illustrious man of the age, who was raised up as its honored chieftain, were indications that it was the purpose of God to make this land his peculiar care. What had this land now been, had this revolution been in the hands of wicked men!

Many a time since that period also, has the wing of an almighty providence sheltered us; in days of peril, the God of our fathers has not forsaken their posterity; while amid those very crises in which we stood upon the brink of civil war, his voice has more than once been heard stilling the tumult of the people.

It is a fact of deep interest, too, that the American people have never been a persecuting people. They seem, from this single circumstance, to be secure against those judgments which are threatened against the nations who shall drink blood because they have shed the blood of the

saints. The Jews, persecuted everywhere else, have never been persecuted in this land; nor can the threatenings against those who have trodden down the Hebrew race, ever fall upon us, either as an ecclesiastical, or political community. It is a beautiful feature in our history, that the God of nations has taken this land out from the limits of that great persecuting power, the old Roman empire, and constituted it the asylum for the persecuted of all lands.

We put these facts together, and we carry them as a torch-light into the labyrinths of the present and the future. We have taken a glance at the Old World; and while the events we have hinted at were taking place there, what is it that was in progress in the New? Why " a little one was becoming a thousand, and a small one a strong nation:" so that now these Christian States are not only planted in the very midst of Papal superstition, and there carrying the liberties and institutions of Protestant Christianity, but spreading themselves out on mountains of gold, and almost within hailing distance of the whole Oriental World. The character of our increased population has indeed greatly changed; but with all its heterogeneous elements, it is thrown into the same alembic, and its noxious gases are passing off. That great medium of Christian thought, the most potent engine of reform now in the known world, the English language is gradually reducing these thirty millions to a uniform character. For the first time since the foundation of the Hebrew Commonwealth, the problem is being solved on a large scale, whether it is practicable and safe to elevate the great mass of the population. As the world is constituted, it was a hazardous experiment; but it is one that was called for by the spirit of the Bible, by the intellectual, moral, and immortal nature of man, and by those unequivocal indications of Divine providence which planted this vine in the wilderness " wholly a right seed." Give the people religion and it is always safe to elevate them. European statesmen did indeed regard the experiment with apprehension; Rome regarded it with inveterate hate; but the founders of this great human charity believed that it was the work of God, and could not be overthrown. And what is the consequence? It is that the land in which we dwell, which has been the scorn of older nations, the jest of the men in power, and the ribaldry of their scholars, has become the pride of all lands, teaching them lessons of liberty and law, gradually supplanting their commerce and manufactures, claiming their respect for its talent and literature, welcoming their surplus population by millions, and co-operating with the virtuous and good of all lands in evangelizing the race. Our fields are cultivated, our public works are wrought, our manufactures and our families are served by European operatives, while their children are taught in our schools, and themselves are insensibly imbibing our principles. We have given to their starving population the bread of our granaries; while, strange to say, up to the present hour, in their spiritual destitution they do not hesitate to make their appeal to these western churches for the bread of life. But this is not all. It is a remarkable fact in the history of this land, that while trouble and perplexity for a long series of years have been the portion of the older nations, pure and undefiled religion has taken deep root in the minds and habits of the American people. We do not mean by this remark, to commend the piety of this land above that of other lands; nor is it made from the spirit of self-complacency, and self-glorifying. We could write a chapter upon the defects of the American character, which would be sufficiently humbling to gratify even the unreasonable hostility to our institutions which exists on the other side of the water. But we may not overlook the purposes of Divine providence toward us, nor be slow of heart to recognize the munificence of his grace. I refer to the fact, that amid the agitations of Europe, churches were being formed in this land, and springing up on every side, plenteously watered by the dew of heaven. Just at the time when our fathers, educated and disciplined as they had been by trials and

by truth from their very landing on Plymouth rock for the liberties they subsequently enjoyed, were preparing the way for the struggle which issued in our national independence; God was preparing us for the place we were destined to occupy among the nations, by those spiritual influences which form so luminous an era in our colonial history. And when this young Republic had taken that place, and had survived the corrupting influences of war, and the experiment was being upon a large scale, whether the church of God could prosper independently of state-patronage; the Spirit of God was again poured out upon us, and the land was visited with successive and long-continued refreshings from the presence of the Lord. Nor is it too much to say, that these wonders of a wonder working God commenced a new order of things among the American people. Although unobserved by statesmen, they gave sacredness and permanency to our institutions; elevated and sanctified our colleges; raised up an effective Christian ministry; gave prominence to the American church, and moved other lands. There are no periods of our history so bright as those which have been thus distinguished. They were days of vengeance to God's enemies; but they were years of recompense for the controversies of Zion. Blood was flowing in torrents in Europe and the West Indies; kings were tottering on their thrones; cabinets were perplexed by divided and stormy councils; but the branch of peace was waving over the church of God in the New World. Nor, much as we have reason to lament subsequent seasons of spiritual drought and declension, have these seasons of mercy come to an end. Up to the present hour, "Israel hath not been forsaken, nor Judah of his God, of the Lord of hosts: though their land was filled with sin against the Holy One of Israel." This series of revivals has never been so interrupted as to leave a chasm; nor have the heavens over our head ever been so much like brass; but that from the top of Carmel some little cloud of mercy might be seen arising out of the sea like a man's hand. We have other grounds of hope, but these are the strong pillars of our confidence. In regard to our duty as a nation, there can be no difference of opinion, unless it be as to the means and measures by which the great ends of our national existence should be pursued. It is needless to urge the necessity of sound religious principle, and thorough morality to the preservation of our institutions, and the continued favor of the God of nations upon our land. Nor is it necessary to say, that it is essential to our prosperity that he should give us upright and Christian rulers, and men who are more sensitive to the weighty responsibilities of office, than to its emoluments, or honors. We wave remark even upon these important topics, because we have often given utterance to these views. Nor have we time now to say more upon other topics, than that we live in an age of great excitement, and greater excitability; nor are there any principles which can so fitly govern us as those of a conservative policy. We may be the opposer's of infidelity and all false religions, without the spirit either of persecution, or of bigotry. "We may be the enemies of tyranny, both civil and ecclesiastical, without active intervention in the authority of tyrants. We may be the friends of law, without aiming to make human laws do the work of the gospel, or endeavoring to introduce the Millennium by human legislation. We may combine in the promotion of every charity, without allowing human combinations to take the place of the church of God, or to neutralize her influence. We may be the friends of freedom, without interfering with the constitutional rights of our neighbors. We may be looking out for the Millennium, and fervently praying for the downfall of the kingdom of darkness, and the general effusion of the Holy Spirit, without expecting to see the Son of Man reign on a temporal throne in Jerusalem, or specifying the date of his advent. And "last, but not least," we may be the friends of the heathen without overlooking the spiritual wants of our own land. This land of the West is the first and great charge of the American people. To perform the

part allotted to her in preparing the way for the coming of the Son of Man, she must remain a Christian land; and to remain a Christian land, she must make rapid and effective aggressions upon the empire of darkness within her own borders. She must have ministers of the gospel, and they must be supported. She must have churches, and congregations to occupy them. She must have Christian families and Christian schools, or the people will perish for lack of knowledge. It is not possible for us to give these plain thoughts too great prominence. The field which God has obviously allotted to the American churches is this broad land. Already on the shores of our own Pacific Ocean the providence of God is planting colonies from the oriental, pagan nations, to learn the value of our institutions and our religion, and to go back the missionaries of the cross, or send back the glad tidings of the great salvation. Would we operate on all nations; we have them in our own land and at our own doors. If we would most effectively promote the cause of Christ, and the salvation of our fellow-men, and hasten the millennial glory of our Divine Master, this land is the proper sphere for our greatest exertions.

We may not extend these remarks. Yet before we bring the subject to a conclusion, we may not suppress this last observation, that as the creatures of God we are under great obligations to him for the period of the world in which we have been permitted to live. The years within the remembrance of not a few among the living have been years of deep interest to individual man, and to every form of social organization. Events have taken place within a shorter period than half a century which some future historian will celebrate as among the brighter ages of time. It has been a period rich in results, and one that adorns the last dispensation of the divine government over this fallen world. That man must be an atheist who does not perceive that events have taken place in such sequence and dependencies as to baffle the councils of the wise, confound the wisdom of the prudent, and even take the most enlightened, the most expectant, and the most believing by surprise. They have been clustering and crowded upon one another so densely, as not only to give substance and continuity to the series, but to furnish striking proof of his supremacy, who "stretched abroad the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth that he might say unto Zion, thy God reigneth!" Some of us were born to behold the whole of this wonderful, splendid era. Not many such series of events as those which have occurred within the last half-century are necessary in order to fill the earth with the knowledge of God. The fifty years to come will indeed be a momentous period. The child that is now in its cradle will see greater things than ever prophets saw but in vision. Nor will they be long in coming; nor stand alone; nor will their influence be isolated. They will be fitted to one another and to the crisis they produce; and when the crisis comes they will rush to their glorious issues. This agitation among the nations, and the sweeping judgments that are now passing over portions of the earth, so far from obscuring the prospect, are just the events which God and his people are looking for. It will be in vain for us to expect that the course of divine providence will be tranquil and unobserved; rather will it be broken by rocks and ruffled by storms. There will doubtless be seasons of desolating calamity. The stream will be swollen by the mountain torrent; and as it dashes on and mingles with the ocean, "the deep will utter his voice and lift up his hands on high." Yet is there no depression in these anticipations. Notwithstanding the damp and murky atmosphere with which we are sometimes enveloped, there is a feeling in it that revives us; a fragrance coming up from the blooming earth which is the precursor of the new-born year. Favored, highly favored is that generation which is destined to occupy these coming years! We may not say that we have no latent wish to put back the shadow on the dial, and enter with younger men and youthful ardor upon this opening period of time. We

are thankful for the past, and congratulate those to whom the future furnishes so cheering a prospect. The trump of jubilee is even now sounding from the lands to which Christianity was transplanted, to lands where she was born. Its tidings come from yonder "sea-girt isle," and are echoed far and wide from these mountains of the West. Long may a wakeful providence throw its guardianship around these lands, and bid them "declare his glory among the Gentiles!" And thou, my country! The burying-place of my fathers and my children, be not thou unmindful of thy birthright, nor profanely barter it for a mess of pottage! Hail, ye blood-bought churches! whether planted on the sea-beaten cliff, or the verdant plain! Hail, ye her consecrated ministers! her colleges, her schools of the prophets! her Christian statesmen! destined to fulfil such wondrous councils of love more wondrous! Hail, ye her increasing millions! who stand in full view of this coming age of millennial glory! And thou, this poor, lost, but redeemed earth, all hail! under whose opening heavens the Son of Man is to descend, proclaim his triumphs, and receive his reward!

18 — As the Final Judge

Chapter 18 THE GLORY OF CHRIST AS THE FINAL JUDGE.

It is not so much the object of the present chapter, to delineate the scenes of the Last Judgment, as to speak of the glory of Christ as the Final Judge. The present world is not the theater of equitable rewards and punishments; nor can it be unless governed by a perpetual series of miracles. Either there is no administration of justice in the universe; or God is unjust; or there is a judgment to come. Law implies responsibility to the Lawgiver. It were more reasonable to deny moral government, than to deny that man is the creature of account. It was not necessary for the world to be furnished with a supernatural revelation for the purpose of revealing this truth; this truth itself is the ground-work of revelation. It is an ultimate fact. Men feel confident of it; the foundation of it is laid deep in the constitution of the human mind. They need a revelation from heaven not so much to assure them of their responsibility, as to define it; to inform them what is its standard; and when, and where, and how they will be called to account, and what will be the final results. For fall information concerning a future judgment, therefore, we must go to the Bible. Here the light is strong and refulgent. Here we learn, that " God hath appointed a day, in which he will judge the world in righteousness;" that "we all shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ;" that " it is appointed unto men once to die, and after that the judgment;" and that "the small and great shall stand before God, and all be judged according to their works." It will be a day of deep interest to him who made and governs the world, as well as to its numbered inhabitants. The Scriptures speak of it as the " Great Day," and as the "Day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God." It must be a great and glorious day. But why will it be a day of such importance to Jesus Christ and what is there in the divine arrangements concerning it which will then render Him so ineffably glorious? The following thoughts may deserve some consideration, as a partial answer to this inquiry. In the first place, the time when the final judgment will take place, is determined with a view to his work as the acknowledged Redeemer. In the days of the apostles, there were those who taught that the " resurrection is past already," and others who taught that it was nigh at hand. In subsequent ages, prediction upon prediction has foretold the period; and in our own day there have not been wanting those who have fixed the date of this appearing of the Son of Man, and who have driven thousands to the frantic apprehensions, or the disappointed expectations of his coming. Not a few who discountenance the idea of his premillennial reign, still believe that what they consider the day of judgment, is an event which may come in ten years, or in one, at any hour or at any moment. That such views are without any foundation, is sufficiently obvious from the present state of the world, and from so many unfulfilled predictions which must occupy a longer period in the fulfillment than such views contemplate. The Millennium itself will occupy at least a thousand years. There are affecting events also which the Scriptures inform us are to take place between the Millennium and the end of the world, which necessarily put the final judgment at a distance from the close of the Millennium. The time is fixed by God, and remains a profound secret to all the rest of the universe. How long after the Millennium it will arrive, we may not conjecture. All that is revealed to us is, that, at the close of the thousand years, Satan will be let loose from his

chains for "a little season." From " the remnant" of wicked men who remain unsubdued by the gospel during that long-continued period of holiness, a generation will arise who will body forth afresh the spirit of the Beast and the False Prophet, and in whom there will be an inglorious resuscitation of anti-christian principles and influence, a fearful apostasy, an infatuated and presumptuous warfare against the saints of the Most High. " Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, to gather them together to battle; the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." As this will be the last, so it will probably be a most desperate conflict, and form a most interesting period in the history of time. Prostrate nations will contend against the church, besiege the beloved city, and become so merciless, that the only hope of the saints will be in that miracle of deliverance in which " fire comes down from God out of heaven and devours their enemies." This event will be the proximate precursor of the consummation of all things. It was immediately after this, that the prophet affirms, " And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." The time had come for the Last Judgment; the time fixed in the purpose of God; the time to which all preceding ages had looked forward. It will not come when men are looking and preparing for it; it will take them by surprise, when they least expect it, and are least preparing for it. It will come suddenly, and as " a thief in the night." Kings will be in the pride of their thronely power; armies will be marshaled on the battle-field; senates will be in the midst of their deliberations, orators of their triumph, banqueting halls of their festivity, bridal circles of their hopes and joy, and the thief and the murderer in the hot career of crime. The frantic world will be shouting its triumphs over a down-trodden, despondent church; when suddenly, and at some unlooked-for signal all faces shall gather blackness at the sight of the " Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven."

Nothing shall hasten his coming before the appointed time. The living saints may be impatient for his appearing, but until then he shall not appear. The spirits of the martyrs may have been for ages uttering the cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth;" but bitter and affecting as the cry has been, he would still give the world every opportunity of repentance. Nor would draw the curtain upon its last hope, until the bright period of millennial glory is past, nor until the " remnant" have so unequivocally manifested their wickedness, that the safety of his cause, and his own glory demand that the end should come. Nothing in the universe can then induce him to any further delay. Many a time has the scoffing infidel given utterance to the blasphemous demand, " Where is the promise of his coming;" many a time has Greek and Jew derided the doctrine of the resurrection and the judgment; and with them, many a time have those who have had their dwelling in God's sanctuaries turned a deaf ear to these solemn premonitions, and laughed at the thought of that everlasting retribution. Now men will no longer shut their eyes to the light; profligate infidelity will no longer question his coming; the day of scornful defiance will be at an end; and for the first time since the beginning of the world, ridicule, and reproach, and a lying tongue will honor the forbearance and the truth of the Son of God. The great purpose of his redemption, that purpose which lies near his heart, will then be consummated; and providence will seal up its great Statute Book, and this material creation will be arrested in its course. When his design is completed, theirs will be completed; when his work is done, theirs will be done. Events shall not crowd so fast, nor time fly so swiftly, as to prevent him from finishing his great work. If there is a remote tribe, or forgotten island of the sea to whom his gospel has not proclaimed its glad tidings; or if there is a benighted son or daughter of Adam whom he foresees will accept the salvation by putting off this final consummation; the day of

reckoning shall not come until that forgotten tribe is thought of, and that wandering sheep gathered into his fold. The day would have been past and gone, and we all should long since have entered upon an unalterable and eternal destiny, had not his great work of redemption been still going on. If there were not hereafter to be another sinner brought to the saving knowledge of Christ; the mystery of God would now be finished, and ere yonder sun has time to cross his meridian, the voice of the archangel and the trump of God would sound. God has committed all things into the hands of Christ as the appointed Mediator. It is signal glory to him that he has preserved the seasons in their revolutions; has kept the lights of heaven in their orbits, the ocean in its bed, and held the elements in his fists; that men and nations have been under his control, and all overruled and governed not only with a view to the disclosures and decisions of this Last Day, but to the most fitting time when they shall be made. It will be known then why this world has stood so long, and why it shall stand no longer; why the Day of Judgment arrived no sooner, and why so soon. Nor amid these wondrous disclosures will anything be more wondrous than his character who is the great Mediator, his glory who is God over all, blessed forever.

We remark, in the next place, it will be an emphatic expression of the glory of Christ, that he himself will be the Judge. After he rose from the dead, he said to his disciples, "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth." God has given to him this authority; and the time is coming when it shall be acknowledged from one extremity of the earth to the other. His cross is the consecrated symbol of empire. By solemn charter, written with the finger of God, and sealed with the blood of the everlasting covenant, he is "head over all things to his church." Nor will he surrender this authority until the close of the Final Judgment. He will sit as King upon the throne at the Last Day; and the last regal act of the God-Man shall be the process and decisions of that day.

There is wisdom and equity in this arrangement. It is altogether fitting that Christ should be the Judge, because he is the Son of God. It is his prerogative whose is the kingdom, and who is exalted as Head above all, to give law to the universe and become its Judge. His real and essential Divinity qualifies him for this high office. He could not have arranged the government of the universe with a view to the judgment; nor could he conduct the process of the Day itself, unless he were truly and essentially God. He could not raise the dead; nor call angels and men before his bar; nor open the books of providence and search the heart; nor judge the world in righteousness; if he were not possessed of every divine perfection. The Scriptures instruct us also that there is a peculiar fitness in his being the Judge, because he is the Son of Man. "The Father judgeth no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son." This is one of the features of the divine government. It is a beautiful arrangement, that the judge of men should sustain this intimate relation to the nature of those whom he calls before his bar. It is but carrying out the thought, that "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part in the same!" They are the brethren of his own family, the descendants of the same primeval parent, whom he thus summons before him. As by one man came sin and death, so has redemption come; and so shall the final judgment come by One, Jesus Christ.

It is in his character, therefore, as God and man the great Mediator and Redeemer that he will judge the world. The work of redemption began in his incarnation; it was advanced by his life, his miracles, and his preaching; it was perfected by his death; and there is a strong propriety in his still unfolding it, and making its grandest developments, and bringing it to its final issues on the Great and Last Day. It was for this that he rose from the dead, thus incontestably establishing his claims

to be the Judge of men at his " appearing and in his kingdom." When the Lord of all thus stooped to the form of a servant; when the eternal Lawgiver consented to become a subject; when he who was rich, and honored, and blessed for evermore, came to a world in which he had not where to lay his head, and hid not his face from shame and spitting, and sunk on the malefactor's cross; it was in view of this exaltation as the recognized and adored Judge of angels and men. " That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." He is the last being in the universe who will allow any injustice to be done to the Deity. Exhibiting as he does the transcendent glory of the Godhead, he will sit upon his throne as the selected and impartial vindicator of all its rights and claims, himself endorsing them all, and pledging his own rectitude not merely to save them harmless, but to crown them and their Author with glory and honor. He is also the last Being in the universe who will allow any injustice to be done to man. Identifying himself with humanity, and linking with it his own fortunes and honor, he occupies the throne as their Friend and Advocate; furnished with every plea on their behalf, and not less tender in his compassions, and not less touched with sympathy for them than when he wept over Jerusalem. From the commencement to the close of this judicial process, every kind sentiment of his bosom is enlisted on man's behalf. The most depressed of all his followers, and those who, in the present world, have been so burdened and crushed by a sense of their wickedness, that many a time they have thought they should not dare go up to his throne; when they look upon his face so radiant with love and mercy, shall stand with confidence before him. And even the despairing sinner may have this consolation, that if there be one mitigating circumstance in his history, it will not be overlooked nor unappreciated. Guilty man could not have a more friendly Arbiter, nor God, and justice one more safe and true.

Neither the Father, nor the Spirit could so fitly occupy the judicial throne, nor throw around it such brightness; nor could its decisions and sentence come from any lips with so much emphasis as from his. Every virtuous mind in the universe will rejoice when they behold the Mediator in the Person of the descending Judge, and see the Sufferer of Calvary on the throne. It is a delicate, as well as most responsible office which the Son of Man then executes. If it is the glory of an earthly judge to be so well qualified for his office, and so faithfully to have discharged its duties amid scenes of popular tumult and furious revolution, as to secure the approbation both of the government and the people; what glory will rest upon the Person, and encircle the Judgment Seat of the great Mediatorial judiciary, when God, angels, and men thus support his throne!

These thoughts will receive additional importance from a third general remark, which respects the manner in which He will come to judgment. The earth we inhabit will exhibit an unwonted appearance toward the close of that period of time which immediately precedes the General Judgment. If we now look up to these material heavens, or abroad upon the terraqueous globe, we do not perceive that as yet they indicate any mark of decay. The sun does not stagger in his place, nor throw out his beams less brilliantly; nor does the moon walk less majestically her nightly pilgrimage; nor do the planetary bodies move with less energy in their orbits, or exhibit a less sublime and attractive scenery, than they exhibited six thousand years ago. Nor does this earth on which we tread, with its oceans and continents, its lakes and rivers, its cities and villages, its cultivated soil and its uncultivated wastes, its mountains and its plains, and its ten thousand landscapes of inimitable beauty, show any signs of infirmity, or any reluctance or, incapacity to

sustain the myriads of animated beings which inhabit it. But the time is coming when they will all become white and withered with age. The Scriptures teach us that " the heavens shall wax old as doth a garment."

These brilliant lights shall be obscured, and gradually become dim. And this earth, so long scourged by the wickedness of man, but subjected to greater bondage when the age of millennial glory shall have passed away, shall give increasing proofs that it feels the burden, and " shall groan and travail in pain together" to the last. Its restless disquietude shall break out in terrible convulsions; in the ravages of burning volcanoes, destructive earthquakes, gloomy and terrific tempests; till worn out with the struggle, the earth itself also shall wax old, and become changed. And although, from the operation of those natural causes super induced by the wickedness of these last days, the number of its inhabitants will not probably be so great as during the Millennium, yet will it be occupied with a full and crowded population. The men of God, in that apostate age, will be few, but many, very many, and like the sands on the shore, will be the men of wickedness. Led on by the Prince of darkness, now for a short season loosed from his prison, they shall go up upon the length and breadth of the earth, infuriate with rage against the diminished church of God, " scoffers walking after their own lusts," buried in the guilty security of sin, and little dreaming that the sun of time is making his last circuit in the heavens.

It is then that that immortal morning will dawn when the Son of Man will come to judge the world in righteousness. We are told that " he shall come in his own glory." That personal glory which was beheld by Saul of Tarsus, and was seen by the disciples on the Holy Mount, where " his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light;" that glory which belongs to him as the God Incarnate, and which, unveiled, no human eye ever saw; shall be the robe in which he enwraps himself as he comes in the clouds of heaven. It is not as the babe of Bethlehem that he comes; nor to travel through those scenes of deep humiliation where Jew reproached him, and Roman blasphemed, and slaves smote, and the rabble spit upon him, and soldiers gorgeously and fantastically decked him for the altar; nor is his visage now marred more than any man's, nor his form more than the sons of men. He shall come, not only " in his own glory," but " in the glory of his Father. His Father's glory shall rest upon him in all its brightness; he shall be the great and only representative of the Deity in that day, and all divine glories shall be concentrated in his Person, And whatever there is of created glory in heaven shall also then encircle him. Angelic spirits that wait to do his pleasure, and whose bright appearance has, from time to time, in different periods of this world's history, flashed upon the eyes of men like lightning from heaven, shall appear with him, adding to the splendor of his advent. He shall be " revealed from heaven with his mighty angels;" he shall come " with power and great glory:" it will be " the glorious appearing" of the Great God, our Saviour.

Once he trod this earth in retirement. It was an unnoticed village where he was born, and rendered memorable only by his birth. It was an obscure and even ignominious hamlet where he was brought up. Many were the solitary places where he wept and prayed, unseen but by the Great Invisible, and those heavenly "Watchers" that hovered about his unknown and sequestered paths. Now he comes " in the clouds of heaven." And although he comes suddenly, and as "the lightning, when it shineth from the East into the West," the thoughtless world will have notice of his approach in the heralding trumpets of his glorious attendants. " The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God." Some unearthly blast, and

some brilliant object, just perceptible in the far distant heavens but drawing nearer and more near, shall first tell of his approach. No eye can be turned from the affecting sight even to look upon the obscured sun as it retires from its Maker's presence. The descending Judge fills every eye and every thought. Him, this astonished world is now gazing at with startled apprehension. "They shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven." " Behold! he cometh with clouds, and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." The one single object in the universe to which all eyes will be then directed, whether it be from heaven, earth, or hell, will be his great glory. Those who have thought and said that his Advent is far away; the millions who have taken refuge in their abjectness, as well as those who have gloried in their wealth and power; the " kings of 'the earth, and the great men, and the chief captains and mighty men," shall see him, and exclaim, " Who can abide the day of his coming?"

We remark again; his glory will be still more enhanced by the process and decisions of the judgment itself. His glorious appearing is no pageant. It is not designed for show, or entertainment, nor as a pompous triumph, in which the badges of his own regal and judicial authority are displayed for the purpose of dazzling the eyes of the beholders. The events and circumstances we have been contemplating are but preliminary to affairs of more serious moment, and to the great business in which every intelligent creature in the universe has a stake deep as eternity. When the voice of the archangel and the trump of God shall sound the summons, both the living and the dead shall come to judgment. That vast living population, scattered far and wide over the earth, from north to south, and from the rising to the setting sun; young and old, king and slave, rich and poor, righteous and wicked, shall come before his throne. And those mighty and forgotten regions of the dead, wherever their bodies were deposited, whether buried in the earth, or floating in the deep sea; whether consumed by the flames, or enriching the battle-field, or evaporate in the atmosphere; all " from Adam to the latest born," shall wend their way to the great arena of the judgment. Not one shall be overlooked, or forgotten; every limb, every perished bone, every floating and secret particle of dust shall obey the summons and come forth. The grave shall be spoiled of its proudest and its meanest triumphs: and now, if one could look upon the earth, he would see not only its empty graveyards, and vacant cemeteries, but the whole earth itself, and its caverned oceans, one mighty excavated globe, and wonder how these countless generations could have found a dwelling beneath its surface. For the first time and the last, the entire race of Adam, of every age, and kindred, and tongue, will be assembled in one congregation before the Son of Man. It is a sublime and graphic description of this assemblage given by the writer of the Apocalypse, in which he says, " And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead small and great stand before God; and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell gave up the dead which were in them." And to these shall be added every intelligent creature, from every world; not one shall be wanting of the entire moral creation. Holy angels will be there as the favored attendants of their divine Judge. And the unholy too, Satan with all his legions, those seducers of man, those corrupter's and destroyers of his race, those vaunting enemies of God and his Son, whom he has " reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the Great Day," shall be summoned from their dark abodes.

There will be a marked distinction then between the resurrection of the righteous and the wicked. Those there will be who will "awake to everlasting life;" and those there will be who "shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt." The ungodly and the sinner shall awake, from Cain down to the last reprobate of the human family. They may have glittered in the circles of fashion and beauty on the earth; they may have lived in honor and the adulations of their fellow-men may have followed them to the grave; but they are now stripped of their disguise, loaded with infamy, and held in detestation by every being in the universe. Their bodies will be a fit dwelling for their vile minds. With all those fearful and horrid expressions which every base and malignant passion wakes up in the human countenance, stamped upon it for eternity, and burnt in by the flaming fury of their own terrific wickedness, they will be condemned to look upon their own deformity, and to feel that they are fitted for the doom of outcasts. The bodies of the righteous will have no such loathsome attendants. "Sown in corruption, they will be raised in incorruption; sown in dishonor, they will be raised in glory; sown in weakness, they will be raised in power; sown a natural body, they will be raised a spiritual body." When the souls of the righteous, who have slept in their graves until the resurrection, shall be reunited to bodies thus incorruptible, glorious, vigorous, spiritual, and immortal, the union will be a most welcome and delightful union. They will have left all that was defiled by sin in the grave. There sleep the ashes of every vile appetite and passion. Sin perished within them when these bodies were committed to the dust; and God provided it a fitting burial. It sank in the silent depths of oblivion, buried so deep that the archangel's trump shall not waken it. No scar, no stain of infirmity shall remain upon their persons; they will be in delightful correspondence with their character, radiant with the beauties of holiness, lighted up with everlasting smiles, resplendent as the reflected glory of their risen Lord, and "like him, for they shall see him as he is." The glorious transformation is perfected of which all were the expectants, who "looked for the Lord Jesus, who shall change his vile body that it may be fashioned like unto their own glorious body." Of the comparatively few holy persons who are found alive on the earth, at this universal resurrection, we have a short, but satisfactory account. After the dead in Christ shall first have risen these living saints shall experience a transformation which is equivalent to the resurrection of those who slept in Jesus. Their bodies "shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed. The living righteous shall not anticipate or take the precedence of the sleeping dead. "We which are alive," says the apostle, "and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall first rise; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." The assembled universe will now stand at Christ's Judgment-seat. "Before him shall be gathered all nations. The dead, small and great, shall stand before God. And the books shall be opened; and another book, which is the book of life; and the dead shall be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works." There has been a minute inspection of the character of men in all the progressive ages of time, and an impartial and true record of what they have done, and what they have left undone. The eyes of Him who is seated on the throne have, from the beginning, been running to and fro throughout the earth, with a special view to the investigations, disclosures, and decisions of the Great Day. There has been no escape from his inspection, and there will be no escape from this judicial inquiry. Every son and daughter of Adam will then be found sustaining the same character, and in the same state in which they lived and

died. There will be no deception on their part; and there will be no collusion on the part of the Judge. The great inquiry will be, Who are the righteous, and who are the wicked; who are the friends of God, and who are his enemies? The decisions of the Judge will be made dependent upon the character. Men are to be "judged according to their works," because their works are indices of their character. " Every one will receive in his body according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," because these things show his character, and make it appear whether he is a good or a bad man. When the books shall be opened, there will be a full and convincing demonstration of the true character of all intelligent beings. The book of nature will then be opened; and since the want of knowledge diminishes both the turpitude of sin and its punishment, " as many as have sinned without the law, shall perish without law." The book of providence will then be opened; and the character of men will be tried by all the means and influences which have contributed to render it what it shall then be found. The book of grace will then be opened; and it shall be seen what character this countless multitude have formed under the power of gospel-truth, and what influence this method of redemption for the fallen and guilty has exerted upon them, and to whom it has proved a savor of life unto life, and to whom a savor of death unto death. Then too the book of conscience will be opened; and every one will intuitively and irresistibly perceive his own character, form his Own judgment, and pass his own sentence. And the Lamb's book of Life too will be opened, containing the record of their names, whose repentance, and faith, and love, and corresponding conduct evince that they are the friends of Christ, have taken refuge in the gospel of his grace, and have lived not unto themselves, but to him who died for them. As the Judge is just, these discriminations will be impartially made and universally recognized. This solemn investigation completed, that mighty host of beings shall then take their places, the righteous on the right hand, and the wicked on the left of the Judge. The separation will begin which will continue forever. Never till then will the full import of those words be understood, " Let both grow together till the harvest." The hour has come when " the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just." They may have dwelt together in this world, and have been partakers of the same sorrows and joys, worshiped in the same sanctuary, and eaten at the same table, and slept in the same grave. But these associations and sympathies are over; the line of separation is drawn between the friends of God and his enemies, however intimate their former associations. The strongest tie that here bound men together is not too strong to be severed by those ministering spirits sent forth to "sever the wicked from among the just." These bonds can hold together no longer; and these once indissoluble attachments shall be dissolved by their own uncongenial elements.

It is a heart-affecting view even to anticipate that solemn scene. There on the right hand are the followers of the Lamb of every age, and clime, and name. Princes are there who offered him their gifts, and kings who fell down before him; and there are peasants who feared God and loved his Son. The missionary of the cross is there, whose love to Christ led him to make his grave in foreign lands; and the humble islander is there, who only learned in ruder accents to speak his Redeemer's praise. The faithful minister is there, who lived and toiled not for the praise or the gold of men, but for his Master's honor and for the flock committed to his trust. And there is the flock which he guided in the way of life, and the strayed sheep and lambs which he gathered into the fold of the Great Shepherd. There are the matron and the sire whose household altar was consecrated to Israel's God; and for whose fidelity and prayers, their children, on that Great Day, rise up from one common grave with them to call them blessed. There is the long-lost wanderer

whom heaven's tenderest mercy sought and found, and took off his clothes of shame, and decked him in garments clean and white as the fine linen of the saints. There are the aged, whose hoary head was a crown of glory because found in the way of righteousness; and there the youthful piety, so full of promise, that bloomed for an early grave, and that now bears 'its immortal fruits; and there the smiling infancy of bygone centuries washed pure in the second Adam's blood, and folded in his bosom who took the little children in his arms. The Christian sisters meet there to part no more; and the parted bridegroom and his bride, and the widow and her husband, all bound in Christian bonds never to be sundered, meet there to celebrate their everlasting nuptials at the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.

" How fair the daughter of Jerusalem then!

How gloriously from Zion's hill she looks!

Clothed with the sun, and in her train the moon, And on her head a coronet of stars, And girdling round her waist with heavenly grace, The bow of mercy bright; and in her hand Immanuel's cross, her sceptre and her hope "

But what a strange assembly is that on the left of the Eternal Judge! There are all God's enemies of every name and degree. Kings who reigned in wickedness are there, but without their crowns. Rich men are there who laid up treasures on the earth, and were not rich toward God; but with none of the appendages of their wealth and pride. And poor men are there, whose poverty was their wickedness, and who learn too late, _____" that to do nothing was to serve The Devil, and transgress the laws of God."

There is the oppressor, but with no remaining power to oppress. There is the mighty chieftain famed in unjust and inglorious war, and now a bloody culprit at his bar who is the last Conqueror. There is the skeptic whose vaunting reason would not trust the word of God; and the man of science who sought all knowledge but the knowledge of his Maker; and the cunning craftsman, and the eloquent orator whose hand and tongue were all for self and evil. There is the thief and robber, and the practiced cheat and liar, waiting for their portion in the burning lake. There is the duelist, hot from the field of proud resentment and of blood; and there the suicide, who _____" tired of time, with his own hand Opened the portals of eternity, And sooner than devils hoped arrived In hell."

All the forms of voluptuousness and sensuality are there; the epicure, the reeling drunkard, the foul adulterer and adulteress, and the thousands who live for sport and merriment. There are the sons and daughters of fashion and of pleasure, who lived only to be seen and admired, and for whom the halls of mirth had more powerful attractions than the house of prayer. Nor are they these alone. There is the hypocrite, gone from the communion-table or from the pulpit to hear the voice, " I never knew you, depart from me ye that work iniquity." There are the thoughtless millions who _____" got no time To think, and never thought, till on the rock They dashed of ruin, anguish, and despair."

There is the delaying sinner who put off the work of repentance till death awoke him to his doom. And there are the multitudes, who when God called refused to hear, and who grieved his Spirit till the harvest was past. All these and kindred spirits are wicked and unholy, and despised God's great salvation. Their iniquity no longer keeps them in obscurity; their artifices no longer excuse

them; nor will they be protected by the impudence of sin. Those who have deceived themselves and those who have deceived others, as well as those who gloried in their shame, and scandalized the world, are now seen in their true character, and are confounded before God, angels and men. At the summons of the severing angels each separates for his own place. What a sublime, yet touching and mournful scene, when the breathless silence of that countless concourse shall be disturbed, and the righteous shall move in unbroken and outspread phalanx to the right hand of the Judge, and the wicked tread their mournful way to his left!

It is not merely a day of trial, but of judgment and decision. Listen to the affecting narrative of these closing scenes, told in the simple and impressive language of the great Judge himself: " When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall stand all nations. And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the king say to those on his light hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world! Then shall he say also to them on his left hand. Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And these go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal!" Such is the glory of the Judge, in the process and decisions of the judgment. His presence, his eye, his voice, his throne of justice and judgment, his edict, obeyed by angels, men and devils, these constitute his glory on that tremendously glorious day!

One more thought: The final issues of the Judgment more than all, disclose the glory of the Judge. We have seen what they are, as they respect the righteous and the wicked. And they will never alter. The edict is final. There is no appeal from this last and highest tribunal in the universe. The sentence is conclusive. The righteous do not fear, the wicked do not hope that it will ever be reversed. His glorious high throne who utters it, stands impregnable on the unchanging issues of this Last Day. It reads lessons for eternity which give it the most conspicuous place in the government of God. They are lessons upon the past, vindicating the ways of God to man; they are lessons upon the future, exalting him as God over all blessed forever. Nothing now remains but the destruction of this worn out earth and this material universe, and the commencement of that new order of things which shall never be disturbed. " The heavens pass away with a great noise, and the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up," and there shall " be found no place for them."

" See how the mountains, how the valleys burn; The Andes burn, the Alps, the Apennines, Taurus and Atlas; all the islands burn; The ocean burns, and rolls his waves of flame.

_____ Nature dies, and God And angels come to lay her in her grave;

O earth! thy hour is come! And the last sand falls from the glass of time."

Then shall appear " New heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness." Creation, providence and redemption shall have accomplished their object, and the end of the great Redeemer's incarnation, death and mediatorial reign be attained. A new era in the divine government shall commence, marked by no changes of character, or destiny, and only marked by its forth-going, and everlasting progress. The last revolution in the universe has taken place, because the plans of the " God only wise" require no further change, in order to their perfect

consummation. There will be no new form, and no new variety in the divine administrations. Time is the great interpreter of his mysterious designs, and time has had its course. Everything is tranquil now. No tempest bursts upon the calm surface. It is a new Dispensation; the last Dispensation; the Dispensation of eternity. And in these final issues, how is the Son of God glorified! Long and terrible has been his struggle; but the conflict is past. For thousands of years has he maintained it in the midst of a hostile world, and with principalities and powers of darkness, and through deep humiliation and agony. Nor does he regret it now, but looks back to the darkest hour with joy. For this end was he born, and for this cause came he into the world. For this did he become the Priest and Sacrifice that he might bear witness to the truth, and that truth and holiness might triumph. For this did he become the Teacher and the King in Zion, that he might thus be " Lord of the living and the dead." He is the Conqueror now over Sin, Death, and Hell. Grace and righteousness conquer and divide this last reward. What was once but the emblem of suffering and of hope has now become the signal of triumph. That bloody banner, the Cross, which was flung to the winds of time when he was " lifted up," now waves over the redeemed creation, and the song is everywhere heard, " SALVATION TO OUR GOD WHO SITTETH UPON THE THRONE, AND UNTO THE LAMB!" It is the " song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying GREAT AND MARVELOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; JUST AND TRUE ARE THY WAYS, THOU KING OF SAINTS! The Accuser is cast down; and he who is seated on the throne proclaims, " IT IS DONE: I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END!

Such is the glory of Christ as the Final Judge — manifested in the time when the Judgment will take place — in the fact that he himself is the Judge — in the manner in which he will come to the judgment — in the process and decisions of the judgment — and in the issues of that Great Day itself

If there be a subject in which every living man has an interest, it is this expression of the Redeemer's glory. All worlds will, on that day, gather round the judgment-seat to fix their eyes on this Son of Man. Your destiny and mine will then depend upon the fact whether we have lived to honor him, and whether the joy of our existence will be to do him honor forever. Every one of us must give an account of " himself unto God;" and this will be the test. Happy day will that be to millions. Happy will it be to the astonished Centurion who exclaimed at his cross, " Truly this was the Son of God!" Happy will it be to those daughters of grief, who went forth from Jerusalem, bathed in tears, to attend the forsaken Sufferer to the place of skulls! Happy will it be to the enraptured Paul, who, amid all the ignominy cast upon his divine Lord, could say, " God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom I am crucified to the world, and the world to me!" Happy will it be to all those who have " come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Happy will it be to all who love our Lord Jesus in sincerity; who have consented to take up their cross and follow him, through evil report and good report, and who were willing to suffer with him, that they might be glorified together. Happy will it be to those who were not ashamed of him and of his words in this evil and crooked generation, and of whom he will not be ashamed when he shall come in the glory of his Father and of the holy angels! A " wrathful day" will it be to every other son and daughter of Adam. Miserable, beyond utterance, will the man then be, who, in the Saviour he has rejected, sees the Judge from whom he cannot flee; and who because he despised him on the cross cannot stand

before him on the throne. The voice of the archangel will not utter a more tremendous sentence than those words, " If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be Anathema!"

I utter this closing paragraph then to you who do not love him. The best and most fitting thing we can say to you is, that repentance is the great doctrine, the revealed privilege, the sweet hope of his precious gospel. "God now commandeth all men everywhere to repent because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the WORLD in righteousness." Retrace your downward steps, and repair, in true and godly sorrow for your sins, to his cross. Mourn and be in bitterness, as one is in bitterness for his first born, over your rejection of him. So true is it that all holiness and all happiness are bound up in Christ, that severed from him there is nothing but wickedness, and therefore nothing but tribulation and anguish to every soul of man. Most glorious will he be, when he comes to judge the world. Upon his head the crown shall flourish, while all his enemies shall be clothed with shame.

19 — Destruction of His Enemies

Chapter 19 CHRIST GLORIOUS IN THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS ENEMIES

We would not willingly stand convicted either of the want of fidelity, or the want of tenderness, in speaking of the glory of Christ in the destruction of the wicked. The subject is one fitted to awaken both terror and compassion. It does, as it were, survey the great battle-field of the universe after the battle is over; where the Omnipotent One is the Conqueror, and those who have met him on terms of mortal defiance, are agonizing in the last struggle.

Those there have been who have denied all distinction between truth and falsehood, right and wrong, virtue and vice; and who therefore deny that there is any essential difference of character between the righteous and the wicked. What they deny is the great fact which the Sacred Writers assume in maintaining the authoritative and penal character of the divine government. If there be no such thing as good and evil, sin and holiness in the universe; then is there no difference of character in angels and devils, and in good men and bad. We cannot proceed a step in vindicating the Redeemer's glory in the destruction of his enemies, without recognizing the radical difference of character between his enemies and his friends. This great truth lies at the foundation both of his moral and mediatorial government; nor is there one which the Scriptures more abundantly recognize, or on which they more strongly insist. They recognize it in the different appellations they give to these two great classes of men, in the intelligible descriptions they give of their characters, by every truth they reveal, and every promise and threatening they utter. It is only by denying, or keeping this essential distinction out of sight, that subtle heretics have been able to deny the final separation between the righteous and the wicked in the future world. There is no one point of Christian doctrine on which the minds of men are more exposed to be corrupted by those who lie in wait to deceive, than this. Let a man once be persuaded that, after all, there is no great difference between good men and bad, and certainly no essential difference of character between them; and his conscience may sleep. There is no anodyne more effective, no poison more delicate and insinuating. This difference of character is the reason why the Supreme Judge treats them so differently in the eternal world. All men are by nature his enemies; but there are those whose enmity to him is subdued, and superseded by love and loyalty. These are his friends; they are the friends of truth and holiness, the friends of law and order, the friends of God and man, and will be found on his right hand when he comes to judge the world in righteousness. Those whose enmity remains unsubdued, and who prove fierce and intractable in their hostility are radically different from these, and are assigned to a very different destiny. They will be found on the left hand of the Judge, and to them he will say, " Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels!" We have seen some of the glories of his character; but is he glorious in the execution of this fearful sentence? This is the single question we propose to discuss in the present chapter. In doing this, it is necessary, in the first place, to direct our thoughts to the destruction itself which will be inflicted. For reasons unknown to us, but unquestionably wise, God has seen fit to shroud that world of darkness in a veil of impenetrable mystery. It would be in harmony with the emblematical representations of the heavenly world, if similar representations were adopted in

relation to the fearful allotment which awaits the ungodly. This is probably the case. The lake of fire — the worm that never dies — the bottomless pit — the ascending smoke of torment — the wine of God's wrath — the chains — the brimstone — the consuming of the flesh — the gnashing of teeth — the parched tongue and the unslaked thirst may be regarded as emblems fearfully descriptive of that state of mental and corporeal suffering which are reserved for the wicked. The very fact that the sacred writers, under the guidance of God's Spirit, have chosen such emblems is of fearful import. They do not seem to be capable of a literal construction because they are confused and contradictory; while they teach us that it must be a dreadful recompense which requires to be set forth by such fearful and energetic imagery. Our knowledge of the sufferings of the damned is a very imperfect knowledge. What God has revealed concerning it offers little gratification to restless curiosity. When his own hand lifts the veil from that unknown world and ushers the ungodly into their unalterable destiny, it will be time enough for them to know in full measure in what the woes of that place of torment consist. Some things we know concerning it, and they may be expressed in the following particulars.

We know, in the first instance, that there is such a place as hell. There is as much evidence that there is a hell, as that there is a heaven, and that it has a distinct existence and a local identity. We know not where it is, nor of what its deep foundations are composed, nor how its adamant walls are built; nor, in many particulars, do we know in what its suffering consists. But we know that there is such a world. Infidels may sneer at it; Universalists may scoff at the very name; carelessness and stupidity may not allow themselves to think of it; yet there it stands, supported by the pillars of eternal truth and justice, and neither skepticism nor obduracy can strike it out of existence. The Scriptures speak of it in scores of places both in the Old Testament and the New. They teach us that "the wicked shall be turned into hell;" that "hell hath enlarged herself;" that there are those who cannot "escape the damnation of hell;" that God is able "to destroy both body and soul in hell;" that God "spared not the angels, but cast them down to hell;" and that the punishment "prepared for the devil and his angels" will be the punishment of ungodly men. In some part of God's widely-extended dominions God has prepared this world of suffering, this place of residence for the lost. There are the souls of all who have died and will die in their sins, and there their bodies will be after the resurrection. There are all the elements of suffering which, after the final judgment, will be found in the universe; and there are all those means and instruments which the justice of the great God has prepared to express his everlasting abhorrence of sin, and to inflict deserved punishment on the sinner. This is that outer darkness and that lake of fire. Every token of divine anger distinguishes these regions of eternal doom. When Judas "went to his own place," this is the place where he went. When "Capernaum was brought down to hell," this is the place to which she was brought down. When licentious Sodom was wrapped in flames, this is the place to which she descended, "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." Over that dismal territory the enemies of God shall wander, unforgiving and unforgiven, outcasts from the New Jerusalem. This is the place of their punishment, their gloomy prison, deep and large, where omnipotence consigns them; the proper place of their punishment, their joyless and gloomy eternity. The next fact we know concerning that melancholy world is, that it is a world of actual, living, conscious existences. The Scriptures speak of the destruction of the wicked; but by this they never mean their annihilation. Annihilation is no punishment; when once these creatures of God are annihilated, there is nothing to punish. The penalty of sin is suffering, and therefore there is a sufferer. The redundant descriptions of the misery of the lost which are found in the Bible,

necessarily imply a state of conscious existence. The soul will not lose any of its intellectual or moral powers, or any of its capacities for suffering, because it is banished to hell. Its perceptions will be clear and vivid, its thoughts vigorous, its volitions strong, its memory retentive, its imagination brilliant, and all its sensitiveness quickened by its dismissal from this sluggish and material habitation of flesh and blood. Hell is no drowsy, slumbering world; "they rest not day nor night," There are no waters of forgetfulness there in which the mind can bathe and forget its sorrows; and no Lethean opiates whose draught can lull it to repose. Wicked men may trifle away their day of grace; they may sleep away their Sabbaths, and lock up their thoughts in profound stupidity, amid scenes which make devils tremble and angels weep; but there will be no stupidity and no trifling when once they awake in hell. It is no world of dreams; nor are there found there any fond conceits of unconscious being. Men who enter it, will know that they are; and when they suffer, they will know that it is the wrath of God they suffer, and for what they suffer it. Multiplied sins will rise up to their remembrance; lost Sabbaths, perverted means of grace, abused bounties of providence, a wasted life, and a death of impenitence and unbelief will all be recalled. Not one active principle of their nature will be eradicated or paralyzed. They will think, and be always thinking; and O what thoughts! they will feel and more keenly than they ever felt; they will live and still live if it were only to perpetuate the threatened, executed death of God's holy law. A third fact distinctly revealed concerning their destruction is, that they shall all be united with the most degrading and debasing society in the 'universe. It is a fearful allotment to be cut off from all intercourse with holy beings, and suffer an eternal separation of the soul from God, and from the presence of his glory; but the anguish is inconceivable to be shut up in hell with all the ungodly of every age of time, every nation and language, and of every degree of wickedness, and with the devil and his angels. The society of heaven is too pure and holy for them; they have no sympathies with that blessed world; it is a different companionship only for which they are fitted. However the less debased may shrink from such fellowship, this is the world and this the society in which they must dwell. The last sentence consigns all them who work iniquity in the universe to the society of the damned. Who can speak of the sources of wretchedness in a society where there is everything to debase and infuriate; where there is nothing but reciprocated malice and treachery, elimination and bitterness; and where their only fellowship is the fellowship of wicked passions, and where the storm of passion never passes away: visions of loveliness have vanished, and only these visions of deformity remain. Enmity takes the place of love; discord, of harmony; curses, of reverence; and the proud vindictive spirit of hell, embittered to madness, renders that cruel world like a furnace of fire.

We remark again, there will be sources of misery in hell arising from the state of mind of the guilty sufferers themselves. These mental ingredients are of various kinds.

One of them is their own wickedness. We know something of the desperate wickedness of the human heart in the present world. We have felt it in our own bosoms, have tasted the wormwood and the gall, and know too well how they embitter the fountains of our joy. We have seen it in others; in the discontent of the envious, in grasping ambition, in infuriated anger, in bitter malignity, in desponding gloom, and in the frenzied maniac. We have read of it in the triumphs of power and cruelty, until we have sickened at the recital, and turned with horror from the record of pollution and blood. But we know little of those sources of wretchedness which are found in the bosom of every ungodly man in that wretched world, where iniquity is unchecked by the kindly influences of

social life, unrestrained even by self-respect, and where the vilest and most malignant passions rage in all their ungoverned fury. The thought is not always present to our minds, that, when men are at last abandoned of God, not only are all the restraints upon their wickedness taken off, but exciting causes are there brought into action by which it is fearfully provoked and irritated. We read of those who "blaspheme the God of heaven, and gnaw their tongues for their pains." When the inhabitants of hell, after all their efforts and combinations, find themselves unable to resist or endure their sufferings; how will they foam out their blasphemies against the God of heaven and the friend of the saints! What flames of livid enmity will then be lighted up, and how will they burn and rage! Many a man has seen enough of himself to confess that he feared no worse hell than that which exists within his own bosom. But what a hell is that where rancorous enmity and infuriate malevolence break out in such frenzied violence that none shall quench them!

Another of these ingredients will be the mournful disappointment of the sufferers. They must now realize what perhaps they did not once believe; they must now suffer that which they secretly hoped to escape; they now find that intolerable which they once trifled with and made up their minds to endure. Instead of being too good to perish, as they once thought, they now find they are vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. This is one of the bitter ingredients in their cup. What defeat, what overwhelming reverse of expectation, when they see all their hopes shipwrecked, and they themselves launched out on the burning lake!

There will also be that deep sense of shame which will make the proud and aspiring spirit of incorrigible rebellion stoop. Men can suffer, if they may suffer alone, and no eye looks in upon them to detect the cause and expose the shame of their sufferings. Many a man has taken refuge in the wilderness and even in the grave, in order to shield himself from reproach. It is not improbable that wicked men will suffer quite as much from the shame, as from the pain of their punishment. They will "awake to shame and everlasting contempt." Their earthly honors were laid aside at the grave. Their true character will then be known, and all their wickedness exposed; and what wonder if they are despised, and become the objects of universal derision and contempt? God himself says "he will laugh at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh." The Scriptures instruct us that "the righteous also shall see and laugh at them." Their associates in wickedness, and devils shall scoff and exult over them, and the universe unite in turning their glory into shame. Nor is there any doubt that their suffering will be greatly aggravated by fear. Fear is a terrific passion when once it takes deep hold of the human mind. In that dreadful world "terror will take hold on them as waters, and fear will come upon them as desolation." They were afraid when they came to the bed of death, and grew pale and trembled. They quaked with fear when they heard the archangel's voice, and stood before the Son of Man in judgment. And now, when the gulf of perdition yawns, and every object that meets their eye, and every sound that falls upon their ear fills them with dismay; how do all faces gather paleness because the day of wrath is come, and with what fearful forebodings do they leap into the bottomless pit!

There will also be bitter remorse of conscience and with nothing to assuage the agony of its accusations. There will be a deep sense of black and damning guilt on the soul. Remorse with all its vipers stings the guilty sufferer, and hangs upon his bleeding heart like the never-dying worm. The guilty sinner is his own tormentor, while his restless conscience hurries him, 'alternately distracted by terror and remorse.' Deeds long since done rise up before him in new and irresistible horrors. The darkness of hell cannot hide them, nor its flames burn them out of his memory. He

lies down in his shame, and his confusion covers him.

Those poignant regrets also, that the day of mercy is past, and that they are shut up in hell; how will these aggravate their woes! There shall be mourning then. There " shall be weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth," when they see what they have lost, and what they must endure. Most truly will that be a world of tears. And besides these, they will be overwhelmed with ceaseless despair. Hope that casts a smile even upon the brow of sorrow; that sweet lenitive, that bright star in the darkest night, rises not on their dark eternity. Hopes have perished which can never return. That single sentence, uttered at the final consummation, " Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire," seals their doom, and leaves them " There to converse with everlasting groans, Unrespited, unpitied, unrelieved, Ages of hopeless end."

Myriads and myriads of ages will have come and gone, and " he who made them will not have mercy on them, and he who formed them will show them no favor." The last thought we suggest on this part of our subject therefore is, that it is the great God himself 'who is the punisher. We know not how he punishes, except as we know something of his nature, and see how he sometimes punishes in the present world, and what engines of wrath he often employs to execute his displeasure. Famine, fire, plague, sword, earthquake, flood, volcano, and every instrument of destruction have already been summoned to the work of fulfilling his purposes of justice. " It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." His wrath is infinite and eternal as his love, and omnipotent as his power. They are terrific descriptions of it which we find in the Bible. It is called his fierce anger, " the fierceness of his anger," the "power of his anger," and the " burning of his anger." Wicked men had better array against themselves all the principalities and powers in the universe, than throw themselves into the hands of such a punisher. When the omnipotent and angry God undertakes to 'punish; he will convince the universe that he does not gird himself for the work of retribution in vain. He has access to all the avenues of distress in the corporeal frame, and all the inlets to agony in the intellectual constitution, and he will cast " both body and soul into hell." He himself has told us that he " will show his wrath, and make his power known in the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Terrible will be that wrath and power which he thus sets himself to show and make 'known! O who shall tell what it is to be lost and damned forever!

" What harp of boundless, deep, exhaustless woe, Shall utter forth the groanings of the damned, And sing the obsequies of wicked souls, And wail their plunge in the eternal fire!"

Such is the destruction inflicted on all impenitent men. Such is the dreadful recompense of sin, and such the everlasting triumphs of law and justice. We feel that this is an awful subject, and that these are fearful thoughts. We ask ourselves, Is it right that any of God's creatures should thus perish? Can such a sentence ever be inflicted by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness; and is he glorious in executing it to the uttermost? On this grave question the following thoughts deserve' consideration.

1. In the first place, we are free to confess that it puts in requisition all our confidence in God in order to justify and approve this procedure of his government. It becomes us to be cautious and slow in questioning the equity and goodness of anything which God performs. That he does execute this sentence, we have just as much reason to believe, as to believe that the Bible is his word. We must fall back upon blank infidelity unless we believe this truth; and then where do we fall, and what catastrophe do we meet with? Yet we may not affirm there is no perplexity in

contemplating this stern feature of the divine government. It is not to be wondered at that smatterers in theology have treated it lightly; nor that declamatory zeal exhausts itself in these affecting denunciations without weighing its words, or sitting in judgment upon its own spirit; nor that fair and candid minds have regarded it with embarrassment. It must be more than a superficial view, or a traditional belief, or an instantaneous decision that satisfies on such a question. Nothing is more obvious than that Jesus Christ can do no wrong. The whole universe bears testimony to the excellence of his character. If such a being as the ever-blessed and glorious Saviour has formed the purpose thus to punish his incorrigible enemies; he has not formed it without calm forethought, and cool dispassionate deliberation. It is too important a measure to be the result of a wild and visionary mind, or to be hastily adopted; nor has the Son of God hastily adopted it. And we may well be satisfied with this single thought. Had I any embarrassment in contemplating it, this one thought would dissipate the last shade of mistrust. God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. The darkness is in our own minds. There must be the best reasons for this judicial sentence, else would it never go forth from the lips of the God-Man Mediator. We cannot weigh this grave subject as his infinite mind weighs it. We cannot comprehend the claims of his punitive justice; nor measure the ill-desert of sin; nor appreciate the great and everlasting interests, which present themselves to his thoughts, when he thus determines the punishment of the wicked. Our minds have also a wrong bias, from the fact that we ourselves are sinners. The condemned prisoner at the bar is not the man to determine the punishment his crime deserves; that belongs to the majesty and rectitude of the law. I look up to the throne of Judgment, and see who that great and glorious Being is that occupies it, and feel the force of the demand, " Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Take away the infinite perfection of the Judge, and I confess I look down upon that world of darkness with horror. I shudder over it as I shudder over some deep and dark abyss which is a perfect anomaly in nature. But when I think of Him there is a bright side to this dark cloud; there are divine glories reflected even from those walls of fire. They compose parts of a great and glorious design which has God for its Author, and which must therefore be wise and harmonious. To the cavils of the complaining, and the embarrassments of every honest mind, the voice of Wisdom utters the words, "Be still, and know that I am God!"

2. In the next place, from what we know of Christ, we have the perfect assurance that he takes no delight in sin and misery. We have seen who he is, and have traced a faint outline of his character and history, from the glory he had with the Father before the world was, to his incarnation; and from his incarnation to the cross, and to his ascension and return to his native heavens. There is no being in the universe whose heart is so full of tenderness as his. He "hears the ravens when they cry," and the " young lions when they wander for lack of meat." He would not inflict one needless pang, even upon a worm. His tears over Jerusalem and his prayer on the cross assure us that he would not needlessly wound his bitterest enemy; much more that he would not, from sheer delight in misery, consign him to everlasting burning. The principles on which he punishes the wicked are not always appreciated. If proud and overbearing man, so self-complacent in his little brief authority, did not so often punish from impulse, caprice, and malignity; he would have a better opinion of the great Judge of the universe than to admit the thought that he punishes from want of tenderness. Happiness is not the greatest good, nor is misery the greatest evil. If they had been, such lessons would never have been read to us, as have not been washed out by the waters of the deluge, nor burnt out by the flames of Sodom, nor obliterated from the cross of Christ. There would have been no gain to the universe from the agonies of that mighty Sufferer, if

the woes of Calvary were thrown into the scale simply to hold an even balance between the claims of human happiness and misery.

We ourselves often have strong convictions of the worth of principle. Men suffer for the sake of principle; torrents of blood have flowed for principle; and where the principles of truth and righteousness have prevailed, they are worth the sacrifice. There is no nobler spectacle than where a good man consents to make every sacrifice for principle. The happiness that is sacrificed and the suffering that it costs, are of minor account. Daniel was tempted to lie to the God of heaven; or, in the event of his refusal, to be cast into the burning fiery furnace. And who does not see that his unbending adherence to the principles of truth and rectitude was worth all the suffering which Babylon's furnace, seven times heated, could inflict? When once it is considered how much suffering has been endured in the world for righteousness sake; and how much is still endured for the sake of invigorating the strength of moral principle in good men; and how often they themselves have gratefully confessed that to have gained the victory over a single besetting sin, and to have made some sensible advance in the divine life, is worth all their suffering, twice told; the conviction must be strong on our minds that there are higher interests to be consulted by the divine government than the mere happiness or misery of its subjects. In the final issue, there must be no connivance at wickedness, be the sacrifice what it may.

It is because this truth is so important that the divine government is penal. Nor does it follow, because the penalty is executed; the great Lawgiver and Judge is not kind. Compassion that is superior to rectitude is weakness, is effeminacy, is sin. If the question of sending the incorrigible to hell were left to his compassion and tenderness only, they would relent; never could he inflict that exterminating sentence. But his rectitude never changes. He cannot do "evil that good may come." His tenderness and compassion are not lawless, but under the guidance of his rectitude. He cannot do wrong, even to save immortal beings from everlasting perdition. And who does not perceive that he is not the less amiable and glorious, because his love and tenderness are governed by his rectitude? Is not the sentence that banishes the wicked to hell just what it should be; a respecter of principles, rather than of the persons of men; an attachment to law rather than to the transgressor? Does it not deserve our confidence? and does not he deserve it who sits upon the throne? The suffering is fearful, but the rectitude is glorious.

3. There is another view of the subject in which a class of minds may perhaps take a deeper interest. We affirm that it is an expression of the Saviour's goodness thus to punish all his incorrigible creatures. When opposers of future punishment make their appeal to the Saviour's goodness they practice deception upon their own minds. Has goodness no tenderness for the obedient? Does law exhaust all its tenderness for the guilty, and has it none left for the virtuous? Must not the divine goodness aim at the highest and most comprehensive good; and can it be shown that this is consulted by allowing the lawless and obdurate to go unpunished? Would not this be an impeachment of goodness; and does not mercy revolt from this inconsiderate and reckless connivance at sin? When God caused "all his goodness to pass before Moses," one expression of it was in the words, "He will by no means clear the guilty." In that memorable song of the Psalmist, which celebrates the divine mercy are found such thoughts as these: "To him who smote Egypt;" to him who "overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red Sea;" to him who "smote great kings and slew famous kings;" for his "mercy endureth forever!" His mercy was illustrated by these acts of his justice; it was a sacrifice of the less to the greater; it was the deliverance of Israel

that was one inducement to cut off her enemies. Just as it is mercy to the living that the murderer should not live, it is mercy to the righteous that, in the final arrangements of God's government, the wicked should perish. There are other sources of happiness infinitely dear to Christ, beside those which might flow from unrestrained and unpunished wickedness.

We may not place so much confidence in this view of the subject as in some others; yet is it one which no benevolent mind can disregard. Even if the law of expediency were the great law of the divine government, it would demand the destruction of the ungodly. It would not be wise to jeopard and destroy the peace and safety of all virtuous minds, through interminable ages, for the sake of impunity to crime. The wicked must go to their own place; they are in league with the devil and his angels, and may not have their dwelling within the heavenly city. They are not fitted for it, but for their own chosen associates, and chosen hell. The Son of Man must "send his angels and gather out of his kingdom all things that offend." And the universe will stand in awe. It will be an awful and majestic deed, when he who hung on Calvary shall cast those who have trodden his blood under their feet into the "furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth;" but it will be a glorious deed, and the only and last resort by which his own throne and the tranquility of his obedient subjects can be secured.

4. The fourth and last thought by which the glory of Christ in this destruction is illustrated, is that it is required his justice. This is the true ground on which the Scriptures place this great subject. The government of the world belongs to God; it is a government of law; and is a perfect government. The precepts and prohibitions of it are equitable and right; and the penalty is commensurate with the ill-desert of transgression.

Justice gives man his due. It is essential to punitive justice that the penalty of transgression be proportioned to the magnitude of the offense. Justice, pure, equal justice inflicts penalty which neither goes beyond, nor falls short of the offender's ill-desert.

Such justice as this is one of the essential and immutable properties of the divine nature. God not only may be just, but must be just; he not only may punish, but must punish. He sits on the throne of eternal justice. He must forever hate sin, and forever be disposed to punish it, and actually punish it according to its desert; else is he no longer just. The consciences of men respond to this representation. They are conscious of having violated God's law, and are equally conscious that this renders them deserving of punishment. No arguments are necessary to establish the connecting bond between sin and punishment. No excuses, no reasoning, no theory, no hopes, no refuge can relieve the transgressors mind from this secret apprehension. His great Maker has so constituted him, that he is looking out for the ministers of vengeance — " a fire not blown consumes him;" the "shaking of a leaf " fills his mind with ominous forebodings, because he " knows the just judgment of God, and that they who do such things are worthy of death." When therefore God announces himself in his 'word to be a just God he makes his appeal to the sinner's conscience. When the sinner reads the curses that are written in his book, he cannot set aside this condemning power and sentence. And when we come before him to vindicate this sentence, and to show him, that the righteous Judge is glorious in executing it to the uttermost; our appeal is to his own sense of justice nor do we go beyond the resistless convictions of his own conscience, when we affirm that he deserves punishment. He deserves it wherever it exists and as long as it exists. We only ask that God may not be disrobed of the honors of his justice. We dishonor him if,

on the one hand, we suppose him to be indifferent to the destiny of wicked men; or, if on the other, we suppose him to be under the influence of those turbulent, ungoverned, furious passions which cannot be gratified by anything short of making them as miserable as it is possible to make them. But is it any dishonor to him that " he cannot look on sin;" that " to him belongeth vengeance and recompense;" and that he is clothed with righteousness as a garment? The true and impartial exercise of his justice is founded on the highest reason, and supported by the strongest virtue. Wicked men have done evil and nothing but evil; and therefore they are ill-deserving. The time will never come when these sufferers will cease to be conscious of their ill-desert. While therefore the divine justice leaves them without hope, it is Justice; and because it is justice, we may not fault it. It would not be justice, if they did not deserve it; and because they deserve it, the justice is glorious. It would not be justice if they were punished beyond their ill-desert; this would be injustice and there is no fear of this. They will suffer because they deserve it; they will always suffer because they will always deserve it; and because they forever deserve it, the justice that inflicts it will be forever glorious. The only reason why their punishment will be everlasting, is that their ill-desert is everlasting.

Such is the destruction of the ungodly, and such the considerations which show that Christ is glorious in inflicting it. We are sensible that it is no easy matter to persuade men of these truths. They often wonder at the adoring approbation with which holy beings are represented in the Scriptures as expressing toward these acts of God's judicial power. When Pharaoh and his host were cast into the Red Sea, Moses gave Israel the song, " Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power. Who is like unto thee among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" When the Psalmist sets forth the wickedness and the perdition of the ungodly, his language is, "The righteous shall rejoice when he seeth the vengeance." " Zion heard and was glad, and the daughters of Jerusalem rejoiced, because of thy judgments, O Lord!" When the seven angels appear with the seven last plagues, the saints are represented with harps in their hands, and singing, " Great and marvellous are thy works. Lord, God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints!" When mystical Babylon fell, the high command was issued, " Rejoice over her thou heaven, and ye holy Apostles and Martyrs, for God hath avenged you on her!" It was when the Apostle John was carried away in the Spirit into the wilderness, and there saw "a woman upon a scarlet-colored beast;" and he saw her " drunk with the blood of the saints," and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus, that he also " saw an angel come down from heaven, having great power, and the earth was lightened with his glory; and he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen!" And then he heard " a great voice of much people in heaven saying, Alleluia! Salvation, and glory, and honor, and power unto the Lord our God; for true and righteous are his judgments! And again they said Alleluia! and her smoke rose up forever and ever!" Nothing is more obvious, than that if we have emotions diverse from these, we are either in great darkness, or our habitual state of mind is not heavenly. The character of Christ, as the rewarder deserves our admiration and praise as well as theirs. If we are dissatisfied with this essential attribute of his nature, it is because we have a state of mind that is dissatisfied with him. To look upon his justice as odious, is to look on sin with indifference; to regard his justice as hard and cruel, is to take the part of his enemies. Beware of this state of moral feeling. No man can sit down with the saints in the kingdom of God, who cannot sing the song of Moses., as well as the song of the Lamb. There is a wide difference between the enemies of God and his friends. His enemies hate his justice, with implacable hatred; his friends

approve and adore it. In the view of his enemies, it is a blemish in his character; in the view of his friends, it is one of its' glories. Sterling virtue is not the enemy of justice. No man can from the heart accept God's pardoning mercy, until he approves his condemning justice. It is not possible to perceive and appreciate the grace of God in saving, if you neither perceive, nor appreciate his justice in punishing.

Most men live as though there were no such state of misery in the universe as that which we have described. Great multitudes, and among them some professing godliness, do not feel satisfied when they read or hear anything of the gospel but its glad tidings. Christ incarnate, Christ sinless, Christ commiserating and healing, Christ dying, Christ rising, ascending, reigning, — these are topics which interest them. And well they may; would to God that they interested them more intensely! But Christ on the throne of Judgment, Christ the Redeemer, Christ uttering and executing the sentence, " Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels!" This is a manifestation of his glory which they would rather have concealed. It is too overwhelming to be real; they wish it were not true, and wish it suppressed even if it be. I cannot but think this is one of the devices of Satan to destroy the souls of men. It is not more " a faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," than that he is glorious in the everlasting destruction of those who neglect this salvation. Never would he have died on Calvary if he did not mean to vindicate his high claims as the righteous Judge. His death would have answered no valuable purpose if incorrigible offenders go unpunished, and if it only served to proclaim impunity to crime.

O ye who are in the gall of bitterness and the bonds of iniquity, who are the prisoners of his justice, and for a few short hours the possessors of hope, will you not be persuaded to "flee to the stronghold?" We know we have uttered fearful truths; perhaps he who utters them may be accused as a stern prophet, and a prophet of wrath because he utters them. We have uttered them because, " knowing the terrors of the Lord, we would persuade men." The world of lost spirits is no idle figment, no melancholy conceit or invention of men. And there is but one method of escape from it. O how it exalts that wondrous redemption to think upon the woes from which it delivers, and that it shows the way of escape from bitter groans and endless burning! You are to exist eternal ages, and if it be a miserable existence, when it comes upon you there will be no escape. There is escape now, but before another sun shall rise, you may drop from your thoughtlessness into the pit of despair. O thou creature of guilt and misery! wilt thou not escape from this coming wrath? A few more Sabbaths of thoughtlessness and sin, and the storm will burst. The proffered salvation of him who is "a just God and Saviour," is in your hands; and we demand of you, by his authority and in his name, whether you will ascend with the redeemed to heaven, or whether, with the devil and his angels, you will make your bed in the lake of fire.

20 — Christ Himself the Glory of Heaven

Chapter 20 CHRIST HIMSELF THE GLORY OF HEAVEN

It is a beautiful remark of John in the Apocalypse, when speaking of the New Jerusalem, that " the City had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it." He had been describing it as no uninspired pen could have described. Death and hell had been cast into the lake of fire. The wicked of every land, and class, and name, from " the fearful and unbelieving" to " whore mongers and liars," had been doomed to their own place. Fear, sorrow, and pain were among " the former things that are passed away;" and the inspired narrator was borne away in his vision to " a great and high mountain," there to take a view, and furnish a sketch of the " Holy City, coming down from God out of heaven."

There are some strong peculiarities in this description. The great Architect had decked that bright world with unfading splendor; and this apostle was directed to avail himself of an accumulation of imagery, fitted to make the most vivid impressions of all that is beautiful and magnificent, and at the same time to convey some definite instruction. The City was " foursquare," symmetrical in its form, accessible from all sides, and on its foundations were inscribed "the names of the twelve Apostles of the Lamb." So vast was it, that it could not be measured by any human standard, but only " according to the measure of the Angel." It was adorned with the most expressive symbols of unwasting wealth and perpetual joy. There was "no Temple therein," because it was all temple; the same worship pervaded the whole, and incorporated itself with every service and place. There was no sun and no moon in it; there were brighter lights and more dazzling; and this was the zenith of its glory. The " GLORY OF GOD DID ENLIGHTEN IT, AND THE LAMB IS THE LIGHT THEREOF."

We are sensible that the theme is above our reach. " We know but in part." The indwelling Shekinah is behind the veil, and it is only the outer court of this celestial temple we are permitted to occupy.

There are four thoughts by which we would present some illustration of the truth, that CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE GLORY OF HEAVEN. The first is, that he is there the rightful and acknowledged Head of his redeemed people. It is not only one of his glories that he is the everlasting King of his church, but it is the glory of that holy and happy kingdom over which he reigns. There is a kingdom which he administers as the Mediator, which he will not administer in the heavenly world; one which is more extensive than his redeemed church, and which will continue only until the close of the final judgment. The objects of his Mediation will then have been so far secured, that all his enemies will have been "put under his feet," and all his followers gathered into heavenly mansions. The day of grace and the space for repentance will have been terminated; nothing more will remain for him to accomplish for the salvation of men; and then he will "deliver up" the kingdom which was delegated to him over " all things," to " God even the Father that God may be all in all." But this termination of his mediatorial reign, although it leaves the absolute and universal supremacy in the hands of the Eternal Godhead, involves no dissolution of the union between his

divine and human natures. It does not even terminate his priestly office; much less those outward manifestations of the invisible Deity, that are so wondrously and progressively made by God in human nature. " He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens," forever retaining his crown and sceptre, as the King and Heir of the redeemed universe. " His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away." He is to be the God-man forever; and in this character he is to reign as the King of Zion, the King of saints, the King of glory. For successive ages he has been preparing himself a KINGDOM; now he is in complete possession of it, and his crown beams in all its splendor. His ascension from the Mount of Olives was his installment and coronation; and then it was that herald angels conducted him to his palace, and " the everlasting doors were lifted up that the King of glory might come in!" From that day, he has been a Prince upon his throne, swaying a sceptre such as no earthly monarch ever held, reigning in immortal love and holiness, perpetuating his triumphs, and inviting " the children of Zion to rejoice in their King." It is their unspeakable joy now to know that he is upon the throne; but what will their joy become, when the mystery of God shall be perfected; when the last revolution in this convulsed universe shall be brought to its long predicted issues; and he " shall reign over the house of Jacob forever!" His subjects will be multiplied, so that no man can number them; and it will be his enduring honor to be at the head of so vast and holy an Empire. They shall come from far-distant lands, and from the islands of the sea; they will have been nurtured under all the diversities of time and circumstance, and amid all the varieties of intellectual and moral culture, and modes and forms to which the different families of the church of God were subject; but they shall be one in him, and he shall be their glory and crown.

It is not difficult to perceive why it is that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God." The perfect repose and safety which the redeemed will enjoy in having him for their Sovereign, are themselves enough to render him the glory of the heavenly world. In the new heavens and the new earth, "there shall be no more sea" for, it will be, " as it were, a sea of glass." Its surface is unruffled. Not a ripple stirs it. Nothing overlays it but the pure light and fragrant breath of heaven. Storms and tempests never gather over those tranquil regions. The changeable winds of passion are still. Nor are human kingdoms nor human hopes ever engulfed under the reign of this Prince of peace. Despotism and anarchy have done their work in this nether world. The "nations of the saved" now rest under the equitable monarchy of heaven, whose laws and principles shall never be repealed nor abated, but remain in full force and blessedness to all eternity.

Glorious supremacy and glorious world which can boast of such a Sovereign! There will be spectacles of admiration in his heavenly kingdom, and scenes of splendor such as mortal eyes never beheld; bright and embellished minds will be there, angelic and human, shining in all the blended and perfected beauties of holiness; but they will be like tapers under the splendors of his throne. So long as the redeemed were " present in the body they were absent from the Lord." The best of them had very imperfect views, and "saw through a glass darkly," They could do little more, even in their brightest hours, than stand on the shore of that ocean of light and love, and exclaim, " O the depth!" But they have come now to Mount Zion, where the King of glory unfolds his loveliness, and they see him without a veil. And if, during their pilgrimage in this dark world, they looked to him as their chief joy, and nothing charmed them like his beauty; what must be their delighted and rapturous admiration of him in that world where they have no need of the sun, or of the moon to shine on it, because " the glory of God enlightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof "

Thou art the King of glory, O Christ! Who would not take thy cross and become a partaker in thy humiliation, if he may thus become partaker in thy exaltation and glory! To be made "kings and priests unto God even his Father", and live and reign with him;" to be "fellow-heirs with him of the same kingdom," sit "down on his throne," and "enter into his joy;" what a heaven is this, and what else is it but to learn by blessed experience that Christ himself is its glory!

We illustrate this truth, in the next place, by the thought that Christ himself is the Author and Dispenser of all the blessedness of the heavenly world. Its " Builder and Maker" is God. His name is inscribed on every page of its history. " I go," said he to his early followers, " I go to prepare a place for you." There is no scene of loveliness or splendor there; nothing to delight the mind, cheer the heart, or regale the senses, refined and purified as they will be for immortality, but owes its loveliness and splendor to him. If the skies are genial, it is because he has " spread them out as a molten looking-glass." If there is no sickness, nor infirmity, nor decay, nor death, it is because he has shut them without the walls, and has made its inhabitants immortal. If no heart is wrung with disappointment and anguish, and no countenance dejected, and no eye heavy with sorrow, or dimmed with tears; it is because " the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne leads them, and God wipes away all tears from their eyes." If there is no serpent to sting and no tempter to ensnare, it is because he has crushed the serpent's head. If the wicked there cease from troubling, it is because he does not allow anything to enter that defileth. It is his own palace; and lest any invade or hurt it, he himself is its everlasting Warder. Its redeemed inhabitants are all the children of his power and grace. It is not their work by which they have found access to that glorious world, but his. The design of bringing them there originated with him, and was completed by him in whose blood they have washed their robes, and made them white. Take away Christ from heaven, and there are no hopes, no promises, no heaven itself for man. They were naturally fallen and apostate; but he saved them by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Their exalted and holy character was formed by him, and formed for eternity and heaven. It was the offspring of his grace when it was cradled here on earth. His hand burst the bandages of its infancy, and his voice first cheered it in its onward progress to immortal manhood. And now, in its perfection and richness, who is its recognized author and dispenser, if not he who presents it " not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing!" All the varieties of its excellence, mingling its most exalted with its' humblest emotions, its strongest lights with those that are the most delicate, its angelic purity with its human loveliness, are to be attributed to him who has thus "clothed his church with the garments of salvation, and covered her with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and a bride adorneth herself with her jewels." The sources of their blessedness are all either in him, or from him. Whatever of God they there enjoy, is through Christ and from Christ. Whatever of angel blessedness flows in upon them, his hand opens the channels in which it flows. There are social joys there; and the sacred intercourse and fellowship of that immense holy society are exalted and pure because the bond that unites them is perfect love to him. There are remembrances of the past, and personal recognitions, and endeared and responsible relationships fondly dwelt upon, and present amiableness of character, and mutual services, and reciprocated acts of kindness which make their cup of joy run over. All this, by sympathies and a fellowship never till then known, nor its source appreciated, will then be recognized as imparted by him, and he will be honored as the medium of these visions of loveliness, and the gracious dispenser of every joyous thought and emotion. That thirst for knowledge, there gratified to fulness; those sources of thought, so ample, and various; and that

reality and certitude of truth, which leaves no phantoms to be dissipated, and no probabilities to unsettle or perplex the mind, are radiations from him who is the "light of the world," and streams from that ocean of God's unsearchable wisdom and knowledge. If their affections are exalted and exalting, they are all in view of his imperishable truth, and excited and sustained by manifestations of his glory. And their acts of duty, whatever they may be, and wherever they may be required, are not less cheerful and happy than they are uniform and constant, because they are swift to do his will, "hearkening to the voice of his word." The permanency of heaven is also the work of Christ. He is the everlasting Rewarder. Those fields of light will be illumined with a splendor that never fades, because he "is the same, yesterday, to-day, and forever." When this earth has disappeared in the final conflagration, it will be seen that there is yet remaining "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The highest eminence hitherto occupied by Moses and Paul, is low compared with those sublime heights which they, and all the redeemed will occupy in the yet unexplored sources of blessedness that are treasured up in Christ. They will always have Christ, and therefore will always have heaven. They will be everlasting recipients, because he is the everlasting Giver. There is no present joy which Christ does not bestow; nor is there any such last limit to the believer's everlasting career of blessedness, that he can say, this is all that Christ can give.

We say therefore that Christ is the glory of heaven, because he is the dispenser of all its blessedness. Suppose a man like ourselves, to be so eminently favored of God as to be the author of all temporal blessings; the fabricator of all that is wise and good in human institutions and laws — the inventor of all that contributes to wealth and prosperity — the example and patron of every virtue, and the promoter, and guardian, and partaker of every joy; who so fitly as such a man would be the glory of his race? What then must Christ himself be to the heavenly world! We know the comparison fails. All comparisons are like atoms in the sunbeams, when we think of him whose infinite glory and blessedness are reflected in the natures of the saved.

We may derive a third illustration of this truth from the fact that Christ is the most happy of all the glorified inhabitants of heaven itself. It is no ordinary source of enjoyment, to see those happy whom we love; to virtuous and disinterested minds, there is no higher source of earthly joy than this. More especially are such sacred and delightful sympathies realized, when these joys are virtuous and holy, and the sources of them such as God approves. We cannot conceive of the blessedness of heaven, even in the meanest of the saints; much less in the brightest and most favored spirit that bows before the throne. It mitigates our sorrows, and makes us happy to think of their happiness, and that though they once toiled and suffered on the earth, they are gone to their heavenly rest. And how much more to think of the infinite blessedness of the Son of God! He is the most happy Being in heaven, because from the infinite perfection of his intellectual and moral nature, he is the most capable of happiness. Of all the bright minds in the universe, his is the most bright and holy, and can hold more joyous thoughts and emotions. And if it is "more blessed to give than to receive;" we may never forget he is the greatest of all Givers. Just think of his benevolent and generous mind surveying that Holy City, infinitely more resplendent with the memorials of his redeeming love than with the precious stones which garnish its walls, and its gates of pearl, and its streets of gold; and then, if you can, estimate the blessedness which flows in upon his holy soul from these unnumbered and hallowed sources. What joy in being able to make such gifts to millions who were so unworthy and ill-deserving, so poor and miserable, and

who, but for his bounty, had "lifted up their eyes in hell, being in torment!" To have saved such as these is his everlasting blessedness; and in bestowing this salvation he himself enjoys more than those who receive it. Just before he left the world he uttered the prayer. "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory, even the glory which I had with thee before the world was!" Heaven would scarcely be welcome to him without them. "I in them, and thou in me, that we may all be made perfect in One!" Everything contributes to his joy, now that he is glorified, and they are all glorified with him. He has finished his work on the earth; his redeemed are gathered in; and he has nothing more to ask as his reward. Every accession to their blessedness exalts his own. His infinite love has been indulged, expressed, and gratified.

It is this, his own divine blessedness that fills up the glory of heaven. The Redeemed themselves have no higher joy than to see their adorable Lord thus glorified and happy. Some of them had seen him a man of sorrows, debased and miserable, and all of them have known how he was once nailed to the cross. But the scene is changed. From insult and torture he has found a throne; from being once the greatest Sufferer, he is now the most honored and the most happy of all who dwell in that honored and joyous world. He once said to his disciples, "If ye love me, ye will rejoice because I said, I go to the Father." Blessed Master! who, of all thy followers does not rejoice in the thought, that thy last tear was shed on Calvary, and the last badge of thine undeserved infamy was left in the tomb! Sweet is the thought, that among all the lovely, he is the adornment of their loveliness; and of all the honored and happy, he is the most happy and the most honored. If we are ever permitted to have a place in some of those many mansions, the first Person we shall ask for will be, not the children whom God has given us, nor the friends we most loved, but "the Lamb that was slain." He will be the first and great object of attraction, in the full enjoyment of his own heaven, restored to that habitation of holiness, of which his own blessedness constitutes the glory and crown. What will it be to be permitted thus to enter into his joy, and ourselves to exemplify the truth, "The glory which thou hast given me I have given them!"

There is one more thought which illustrates the truth, that Christ himself is the glory of heaven; he is the object of their adoration and praise. Christ alone, as the Mediator, is not indeed the only object of celestial praise. The Eternal Godhead is there honored by the adoring and everlasting acknowledgments of all the unfallen, as well as all the redeemed creation. "They rest not day and night, saying Holy, holy, holy. Lord God Almighty., which was, and is, and is to come!" Spotless angels give "glory, and honor, and thanks to Him that sitteth upon the throne, who liveth forever and forever." The redeemed from among men "fall down before Him that sitteth upon the throne, and worship Him that liveth forever and ever; and cast their crowns before the throne, saying. Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they do exist, and were created." A beautiful view is this of the heavenly world, that the Great and Eternal Jehovah, in all the fulness of his infinite glory, is thus exalted by these grateful and adoring acts of praise.

Yet is it revealed to us that the God-man Mediator is, to redeemed men, the object of special adoration. He sustains a relation to them which he does not sustain toward the unfallen. It was not the angelic nature that he assumed, nor was it for them that he suffered and died, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven; lives and reigns, nor is it by virtue of anything he has accomplished for them, that he becomes the Final Judge and Rewarder of the living and the dead.

It was the human nature to which he became allied; it was that nature, in the persons of his redeemed, that he bought off from the curse of the law; rose for their justification; became the dispenser of those gracious influences by which they were fitted for heaven; and " raised them from the dead, and set them at his own right hand in heavenly places." He feels an interest in them therefore, which he does not feel for the unfallen. If " there is joy in heaven among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance;" what must be the interest and the joy which his benevolent mind experiences in repentant and redeemed myriads, above that which he feels in the character and blessedness of those who were never the objects of his mediation, nor the subjects of his grace? He is the Sovereign Lord of Angels; but to his redeemed people, he is the all-sufficient, gracious, faithful, once suffering and now glorified Redeemer. They are his people, his own blood bought inheritance; and can there be a doubt that they also feel an interest in him which the unfallen cannot feel, and maintain a more intimate and sensible relation to him?

Since then they have sources of enjoyment from him and in him, which angels cannot have; and feel towards him as angels cannot feel; and since his presence diffuses joys over their happy society which angels can never know; why should they not praise him in strains which the tongue of angels cannot utter? The Apostle John, in the Apocalypse, beheld them as they " fell down before THE LAMB, having every one of them harps; and they sung a new song saying. Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us unto God by thy blood." It is not creative power and persevering goodness, but redeeming grace which is thus extolled. The unfallen and unredeemed cannot extol him in accents such as these. It was " a voice as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder;" it was "the voice of harpers harping with their harps; and they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and no man could learn that song but those that were redeemed from among men

Christians in the present world often make Christ the special object of their praise. They are attached to the song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain;" and are never happier than in those favored moments, when anticipating the employments of heaven, their praise to him is thus intimately incorporated with their devotions. In the worship of heaven his Person and work hold a distinguished place. No part of the glory which belongs to him is there kept back, or expressed with reserve. The great and the gratified desire of the redeemed is to exalt and glorify him. A thousand grateful recollections constrain them to cast their crowns at his feet. The palms in their hands, and the pure robes they wear, are emblems of his victories. "The glorious company of the apostles praise him; the goodly fellowship of the prophets praise him; the noble army of martyrs praise him." The redeemed church from every kingdom, and language and tribe praise him. The ear and tongue and soul of man are formed for this celestial harmony. A great multitude which no man can number, once mourning pilgrims, but now at the end of their pilgrimage, and clothed with the garments of joy and salvation; once struggling with sin, self, and the world, but now conquerors through him that loved them; stand on that " sea of glass," unruffled as it is by the storms of earth, and unperturbed by the deep agitations of time, and " having the harps of God," " sing the song of Moses and the song of the Lamb;" but the chorus is the Lamb that was slain. Praise "sweet as the breath of love," and deep as the memory of their woes, and loud as the echo of his fame, bursts forth from every tongue. These harps of excelling excellence are divinely strung for the full echo of his glory. We cannot think of the song of the redeemed, without thinking of Christ. Nor do these

redeemed ones think of him without bowing the knee before him, and under the impulse of emotions that are sometimes tender and serene, always joyous, and sometimes rapturous and vehement, ascribing everlasting glory to the Lamb that was slain. What a world is that of which Christ is thus the glory! What a song is that when the full chorus of all the spirits of just men made perfect, from Adam down to the last redeemed of Adam's race, gifted as they never were before with melodious hearts and melodious sounds, and with a tongue sweeter than angels use, thus express their sweetest and most devout affections and transporting joys.

" And to the Lamb all glory and all praise, All glory and all praise at morn, at even, That come and go eternally, and find Us happy still, and thee forever blessed!

Glory to God, and to the Lamb, Amen!

Thousands of thousands, thousands infinite With voice of boundless love answered, Amen! And through eternity, near and remote. The world adoring echoed back Amen!"

We have thus endeavored to present some faint illustration of the thought, that Christ himself is the glory of heaven. Let us weigh this thought, and from it derive the following practical remarks: In the first place, let us learn from it what are the essential preparatives for the heavenly world. They are all comprised in that state of mind which cheerfully gives Christ the throne. This is the character of the redeemed in heaven, and this is the test of piety on the earth. Its measure and degree are not the same in the church below, but its nature is the same with the piety in the church above. Its humility and love and gratitude and praise and loyalty are imperfect here, but they are the same in kind. Here, these heavenly graces are in blossom; there, they are fully ripe. Here the tree is scathed by storms; there, it is in full bearing.

Let none please themselves with the illusion, that such a heaven has any attractions for an unholy mind. Wicked men know not what they ask when, with all their sinful propensities dominant, they ask for such a heaven as this. They cannot drink of the cup which the Saviour drank of, nor be baptized with the baptism with which he was baptized. Their false views of heaven neutralize all their efforts. It is not the heaven of the Bible which they are seeking; yet is there no other; no other heaven in the universe than that of which Christ is the glory, and his presence the fountain of joy. How fearful the disappointment, when they struggle at last to go up to that celestial city, and see inscribed on its archway, "There shall nothing enter that defileth!" Could those who are now living in sin, and estranged from Jesus Christ, whose treasure is on earth, and whose heart is there, to whom the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life furnish all their sources of enjoyment, see that holy and glorious and blessed world as it is, and as angels and the spirits of just men made perfect behold it; it would not be surprising if they should become strongly conscious that such a heaven has no attractions for their unholy minds. No, no; such a heaven is no place for an ungodly man. He has no sympathies either with its society its employments, its laws, its blessedness, or its great and glorious King. All who enter heaven desire and pursue that which constitutes its blessedness. " It is character that makes heaven; it is spiritual enjoyment that makes heaven; it is the presence and blessing of God that make heaven." It is Christ that makes heaven. To him who loves not, trusts not, obeys not, honors not Jesus Christ, such a heaven as this has no allurements. He must be a different man from what he is, ever to be happy in such a heaven. Well did the Saviour utter the words, " Verily, verily I say unto you, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." How is it possible for one who " loves darkness rather

than light," to be happy in a world which is thus filled with Christ's glory, and which he thus irradiates as with ten thousand suns? It is not heaven's spaciousness and splendor, nor its salubrious streams and healthful clime, nor yet its everlasting day and blooming immortality that can commend it to the moral temper and disposition of the soul that does not love Jesus Christ. Not until Christ himself retires from that glorious world, will it be a fitting residence for an ungodly man.. Quench its flame of holy love; dry up its fountains of holy joy; silence its song to the Lamb that was slain; then, and not till then, will it have charms for a mind that is " dead in trespasses and sins." The heaven where Jesus is, none can enjoy but the friends of Jesus. "The pure in heart shall see God." In the next place, how strongly does the thought that Christ himself is the glory of heaven urge upon the people of God a more heavenly mind and more heavenly anticipations. True followers of Christ love to think of heaven. It is a heaven of holiness, and where Christ is all in all. These are its charms, and these the sweet realities which give such sweetness to their hopes. What marvel if, in their more spiritual frames, they look toward these heavenly hills with eager expectation, and pant for those abodes of spotless purity where Jesus dwells, and where their perfect conformity to him constitutes the perfection of their blessedness!

We would fain stimulate them to think of it, and with sweeter hopes and brighter anticipations. How magnificent is that New Jerusalem, where the Lamb is the light thereof! When John saw even a mighty angel come down from heaven, the earth was lightened with his glory. How brilliant, then, and overpowering the light of heaven enlightened as it is by the Lord' of angels! It does not need the sun nor the moon to shine in it. The reason why "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, and as the stars forever and ever," is that Christ, the light of heaven, shines upon them in the effulgence of his glory.

If it is true that our minds become assimilated to the objects about which they are most employed, were it. not wise to cultivate more heavenly thoughts? We shall be the gainers by being more familiar with that holy and blessed world in our daily contemplations. " Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." There is a voice which speaks to thee, my Christian brother, in sweetest accents, " Arise thou, and depart hence, for this is not your rest!" A few more days in this distant land, and you shall behold him whom your soul loveth, and " be like him, because you shall see him as he is."

Few things probably would surprise angels more, than to be informed how reluctant the friends of Christ are to leave this world and go to their heavenly Father's house. The writers of the New Testament address those to whom they wrote as though they knew they were Christians. They lived in an age of trial, and the apostles everywhere spoke to them and of them as though they knew there was but a short distance between them and their unearthly home. And why have not Christians at the present day the same unembarrassed confidence? Why is it that you have any latent doubts of that " faithful saying, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners?" Turn back to the facts which have been demonstrated in the preceding pages, and inquire if there is not enough in these heavenly credentials of Mary's Son to warrant an assured faith. Not a few of your strongest hopes rest on dreams; but there is no illusion in these great realities. It is not one fact alone, but many facts, all bound together; there is a piling up of truth upon truth, none of them disjointed, but all of them compact and each in its place; all combining to silence the tempter and banish doubt. Again I ask, why is it that your faith in these great realities is not more tranquil and confident? Is it that you fear to die? Is it that you reluctate from breaking up these earthly

associations and enter that unseen world? Why should you fear to die when you see how death has been robbed of his sting? You need not anticipate darkness because you are approaching the regions of the departed. You will be cared for as you go down into the dark valley, and your flesh shall rest in hope. Why not a more cheering and brighter view than this? Why should you wish to be still a foreigner and an exile from that heaven of which your Saviour is the glory? What have you found in this sinning, suffering world to detain you when the summons comes? Why cling to the ashes of this burning earth, when the New Jerusalem is unfolding its gates, and angels bid you enter in? Why clank these fetters and bear this load when heaven's messenger comes to set you free? What more have you to do with these dark and cloudy habitations of wretchedness, when he who sitteth on the throne, and hath made you kings and priests unto God, commands you to come away? O that we lived more with our eyes and hearts on Christ and heaven! In the third and last place, these thoughts admonish all to labor into that heavenly rest. We do not forget that this is the closing chapter in our series. We do not know what good has been done by this series of thoughts, nor whether one soul has, through these humble means, been brought to the knowledge of Christ, and the hope of that heaven of which he is the glory. I am the more earnest therefore in urging you to strive to enter in at the strait gate — labor to enter " that rest, lest any of you should seem to come short of it." What a loss does he sustain who loses heaven! O there is no loss within the range of human thought like this. Nor can it ever be repaired. I have known those who were burdened to despondency, and miserable almost to distraction, because they could not obtain even to a comfortable hope of heaven. And if to be denied the mere hope is to be denied all that can cheer the mind in its earthly pilgrimage; what must the agony be when the loss is realized, and the despondency become despair! To go up to the gates of the Heavenly City and find them shut; to see the multitudes coming from the north, and the south, and the east, and the west, and sitting down with patriarchs and prophets, and Jesus himself in the kingdom of God, and you yourself cast out; what a fearful and mournful overthrow is this!

O that in that day when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed, it may be seen that these truths have not been without some hallowed influence upon the reader and the writer of this volume. There may he have some humble place, and some harp of gold; and there may they join in the sweet and everlasting song, "To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be dominion, and praise, and thanksgiving forever!" THE END.

21 — Authors Biography

A Short Bio of Gardiner Spring: from, Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gardiner_Spring
Gardiner Spring (February 24, 1785 - August 18, 1873) was an American minister and author.

Spring was born in Newburyport, Massachusetts, the oldest child of the politically well-connected Reverend Samuel Spring. His parents directed him towards the ministry, which he initially resisted.

He attended grammar school in Newburyport, but he was also privately tutored by Chief Justice Parsons. At the age of 15, he entered Yale College, where he became the class-mate of John C. Calhoun, and was one of the oldest graduate of that celebrated institution, delivering the valedictory address at the Commencement exercise in 1805. He did not then appear to incline toward the Church, and on leaving college pursued the studies of law in the office of Judge Daggett, in New Haven. The principal portion of his time, however, was occupied in teaching, and he established an English school in the Bermuda Islands, where he spent fifteen months. He was admitted to the Bar in 1808, and commenced practice under favorable auspices, but he subsequently abandoned the profession against the wishes of his wife, whom he married in 1803, and declared his intention of becoming a minister. This sudden change he himself attributed to the effect of a sermon preached by Reverend John Mason, in New Haven, from the text, "To the poor the Gospel is preached". He described the impression the discourse produced as miraculous; he could not restrain from tears, and from that moment he followed the ministry with zeal and piety.

Spring spent one year at Andover Theological Seminary, and was ordained in 1809. After receiving calls from several New England parishes he preached in Cedar-street Church in the following spring, and in the same year, by unanimous call, was invited to the pastorate of the old Brick Church in Bookman street in this city. Spring frequently received calls of higher trust and responsibility, including the presidencies of Dartmouth and Hamilton Colleges, but he did not desire to abandon his first field of labor, and during the sixty-three years of his pastoral care of that church he was regarded as second to no preacher in this city. His congregation moved to Murray Hill in 1851, and in the following year he accepted as his associate Rev. Wm. G. T. Shedd.

He was an industrious author, and his works, among others, included "The Attraction of the Cross," "The Mercy Seat; or Thoughts Suggested by the Lord's Prayer," "First Things," "The Glory of Christ," "The Power of the Pulpit," "Short Sermons to the People," "The Obligations of the World to the Bible," "Memoirs of the Late Hannah L. Murray," "The Restoration of Israel," "Dissertation on the Rule of Faith," "The Doctrine of Election," "Essays on Christian Character," "The Mission of Sorrow," "Fragments from the Study of a Pastor," "The Bible, Not Man," and "Pulpit Ministrations".

Further Reading: <http://www.shilohonline.org/authors/gspring.htm>

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