

Collectanea

by John Nelson Darby

John Nelson Darby's sermon 'Collectanea' emphasizes the Church's role in witnessing God's grace and the anticipation of future glory in the heavenly Jerusalem.

Scripture: Isaiah 60:17, Romans 11:30

Topics: "Grace", "The Church's Identity"

Description

John Nelson Darby discusses the duality of the heavenly and earthly Jerusalems, emphasizing the distinct roles of grace and righteousness in God's plan. He highlights the Church's current state as a reflection of the future heavenly Jerusalem, where believers will walk in righteousness and experience God's grace. Darby also addresses the importance of understanding the complete ruin of man and the necessity of knowing God to fully appreciate His love and grace. He encourages believers to look forward to the coming glory and to live in a way that reflects their identity in Christ, while also acknowledging the challenges of the present dispensation. The sermon serves as a reminder of the Church's role as a witness to God's grace amidst the world's darkness.

Transcript

Publisher's Note.

It may be necessary to say that the Papers making up this Book having fallen into the Publisher's hands some little time since, it was thought well to put them into print, both because they contain truth, and also because of the interest that attaches to them from the date (1839) at which the meetings were held.

Being put into print at this date (1882), it is impossible for those who uttered the Words to revise the Notes. What is printed here is but part of the MSS.; thus the name "Collectanea" is perhaps the truest one for the Book, it being simply a Collection of some of the subjects considered.

Edinburgh, December 1882.}

{The following six articles are from the above collection, the other articles in "Collectanea" are by J. G. Bellett and G. V. Wigram and are published on the 'Mighty Men' CD.}

(1) THE HEAVENLY AND EARTHLY JERUSALEMS.

When we find Christ spoken of as King, in connection with the bride, I believe it to refer to the earthly Jerusalem; while in the Revelation, I look upon the Lamb's wife as the heavenly Jerusalem; and in these there are different characters of blessedness. There are two principles in the character of God, - righteousness and grace; grace does not give up righteousness; but when the demands of righteousness have been provided for in Christ, it comes forth in the character of grace.

Jerusalem was intended to have been the place of righteousness, therefore when iniquity was found in it, it was cast off. In Isaiah 60, describing the state they had been in, the Lord says to them, "I will also make thy officers peace, and thine exactors righteousness. Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders." There was power, maintaining the seat of righteousness in Jerusalem. But the Lord sends the King of righteousness to them to establish their guilt, and having done this, brings in His grace.

Addressing the Gentiles, Paul says, "For as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief: even so have these now not believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy. For God hath concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." They did not believe in the Gentiles' mercy, and are therefore made the subjects of mercy. In Revelation 21 and 22, we see the Church set in a place exceedingly blessed. Grace is the character of the heavenly Jerusalem.

There we see the Church associated with Christ in blessing, and it is in anticipation of this future blessedness that the Church should now witness to the grace of God. I know of nothing more instructive, than to take the description of the heavenly Jerusalem as that which should be the state of the Church now in the energy of the Holy Ghost. I see the saints then living in righteousness; there is no need of power to secure it. "The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it."

It is much better than paradise, there was no such thing there, as we find shall be here, - the leaves of the tree of life for the healing of the nations. Instead of there being anything to defile our feet, and needing continual washing, the place where we are walking shall be righteousness. The street of the city was of pure gold, as it were transparent glass, representing purity, and the same as the laver in which the priests washed; we shall stand upon righteousness, we shall walk in righteousness.

The nations will discern in us the glory and the grace of Jesus. "There shall be no more curse," nothing but blessing. It is a profitable thing, beloved friends, for us to bring the light and glory of the future dispensation into all the circumstances of our present condition. Thus it has been in all past dispensations. Those who had faith in them, did not rest on the things they had, but looked out, and brought in the energy of the future things. And thus it is now with us. Faith puts forth its energies, grasps the coming glory, and this gives us strength in the circumstances in which we are.

Psalms 145 seems to be a conversation, as it were, of Messiah's with the Jewish remnant at that day. They had learned what God was in all their distress. They had learned themselves to utter the memory of His great goodness, and to sing of His righteousness, and therefore to give forth to others the character of God. And this is just what the Church should be doing now. The Church is Christ's letter of recommendation to the world, even as the Church at Corinth was Paul's epistle of recommendation. When sin came in, life was misery, and therefore God kept man from putting forth his hand, lest he should take of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever. But now the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

The glory of the Church is the consequence of His grace. When a person is the object of another's love, the desire is that that love should be manifested before others; and thus does our Lord display His grace and love to the Church, and thus we find Him saying, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." Very blessed this. He exhibits His love to the Church in the Father's love; a beautiful representation of this we have in the story of the prodigal. We are told, that when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and ran, and fell on his neck and kissed him. But when he brought him into his house, he brings forth the best robe and puts it on him, and puts a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet; he adorns him, that he may display him to all as his son. The first thing that is made known to our hearts in our discovery of ourselves as sinners, is the love of Christ. It is then the love of Christ that we see; as the Shepherd, who came to seek and to save that which was lost; as the one through whom we have obtained redemption, even the forgiveness of sins. But when Christ comes forth to display the Church to the world, He does not speak of Himself, but it is the love of the Father. He makes the Church the witness of his Father's love. The source of this love I do not speak of.

The Church was taken out of the second Adam. Speaking of the Church, we find the language of our Lord in Psalm 139, " My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Having washed and sanctified the Church with His blood, He presents it to Himself. He has divine delight in doing it. The Church is the Lamb's wife, because He has suffered for it, and the force of love cannot be brought out without suffering. There is nothing but the knowledge of this union that raises us up above all other good into communion with God. It is in the Church that God is displaying all the glory and variousness of His wisdom and power. So we find in Eph. 3:20, 21, " Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." The Church is set up at the head of all dispensations and ages, because it is set up in Christ.

Before we get the revelation of God as the Father, He revealed Himself first as God Almighty, and next as Jehovah. To the Jews He was known as Jehovah; to the Church as Father, as in 2 Cor. 6:17, where He says, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." But we often find the saints miserably doubting their sonship. Now the character of God in this dispensation being that of Father, if we do not know Him thus, we know nothing.

We find Abraham knowing God as the Almighty; and when we can enter into the power of the previous dispensation, we can depend upon Him too as the Jehovah; but in the dispensation yet future, we shall know Him as Lord God Almighty as well as Father. In Revelation 21, we see the saints in all the blessedness of familiar intercourse with God. In the first eight verses, there is nothing about the Lamb; it is all God. I quite agree with our brother as respects the nature of Messiah's kingdom, though I differ from him as to its duration.

There is a difference to my mind between a king reigning in righteousness, and an earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Where there is the dwelling of righteousness, power cannot be needed to preserve it. Now in that day when God will be all in all, there will be no need of a mediatorial securer of blessing. I conceive the time of millennial power to be analogous to Noah power, and that when God will be all in all, Christ will

be in the place of Adamic power. In Revelation 21, we have the tabernacle of God with man.

Now we have the angels saying at the incarnation of Jesus, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will toward men;" but on His entry into Jerusalem, which showed forth His coming in His kingdom, the song then was, not peace on earth, but "peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." As to the duration of Messiah's kingdom, the passage in Heb. 10:12, is only meant to show forth the work of Christ as high priest. He sits down, because He has finished it; and not the high priest on earth getting up, and getting up continuously; and that is all that the expression for ever, I believe, refers to.

The same is implied in verse 14th, "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." We have in Revelation 22:5, the promise that the saints shall reign for ever and ever; and yet it is said in Revelation 20, they lived and reigned with Christ but a thousand years. Thus I think the particular character of Christ's kingdom merges into the eternal perpetuity of it, and this is not giving it up. So I think, in a blessed sense, the Lord is King for ever and ever, though not as controlling and restraining evil, but reigning in righteousness.

The passages to which our brother referred in Ezekiel 37:24-28 and 1 Cor. 15, do not, I believe, relate to Messiah's kingdom at all; do not refer to Psalm 110, but to Psalm 8, in His character as Son of man, when He shall have dominion on earth as Man, as the second Adam. The power of judgment also belongs to Him as Son of man. "The Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son."

The title to this power of judgment and dominion belongs to Him now, though he has not yet taken it; if He had, He would now execute judgment. The world does not acknowledge His title, but His Church does; and there is the difference. Psalm 110 is not actually as to the question of reigning, but refers to His right of supremacy. Now in 1 Cor. 15, it is not that the kingdom is put down, but He lays aside all rule, and authority, and power. There is a difference too between the Father's putting the enemies under the Son's feet, and the Son's putting them under His own feet.

It is clear, if He is using death to destroy His enemies, there must be enemies to be destroyed; and then He drops the general question of death, because the ungodly do not put on incorruption. I understand by 1 Cor. 15:28, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost will be all in all. The kingdom of Christ will not be taken away in the sense that the other kingdoms are taken away. "The Lord God will give unto him the throne of his father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

At the period referred to in the beginning of Revelation 21, there will be the heavenly glory shining upon the earthly glory. But Messiah's kingdom is a distinct thing. The exaltation of man's will above God's was first set up by Satan in paradise, and it has been going on ripening ever since, and will bring in the apostacy, which will end in the judgment. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! for thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God."

Satan here is persuading the head of man's will that he is still in heaven, though he has just been cast out of heaven. The first man exalted himself, the second man humbled himself. "Wherefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." The character of the Lord's coming in judgment, will be as the man from heaven to destroy this wilful king; but this is not the establishment of Messiah's kingdom. There will be something at this time that will draw out the hearts of the Jews after Christ, and keep them from antichrist, and show them what a desperate thing they have done in crucifying

Messiah.

The Assyrian stirs up antichrist. When the Assyrian is destroyed, the indignation for a very little while shall cease. Then Christ associates Himself with Israel, and begins to secure His kingdom. Then comes the going forth of His gospel, which will be the fulfilment of the words in Matt. 24:14, &c. Then comes the scenes of Matt. 25; Christ having secured His kingdom by the judgment of His enemies, universal peace is established. Then the heathen shall know that the Lord does reign in Zion, and that He is sitting upon the throne of His holiness.

While men are planning and forming schemes for themselves, God looks at the stock of nations from the beginning. We see the beginning of all the glory and schemes of the nations of the world set up in Babel; and that is what God looks at. Almost all the nations have been brought up under two heads. The children of Israel were planted in the midst of the family of Ham. It is remarkable, that all the nations mentioned in dependence on the Eastern power, are now getting into that state; and those mentioned as connected with antichrist, are connecting themselves with Western Europe.

The king of the north, I judge to be Turkish Asia; the king of the south, Egypt. In the establishment of Messiah's kingdom, I would refer you to Isaiah 18. All the actions that were connected with Israel were placed on either side of these rivers of Ethiopia; there was no nation beyond these. These nations at this time will be standing up, not against the land, but against the Prince of princes.

The saints who are in the heavens, are not the instruments of vengeance; they are clothed with white robes, and not in real garments. I judge that the Jews will be the Lord's associates in judgment, as we read, "Judah is his horn in the day of battle." The ground on which a saint stands never can change, so long as God is the same; let it develop itself how it may, God is known in it. It is very important in every dispensation to have certain principles clear and distinct. The fellowship of the saints with God may vary in form, but it is the same in principle.

The basis of this fellowship is Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Therefore the standing of the saints cannot vary. This is the revelation that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. But when you come to the form of the standings of the saints on earth, we find them differing in character and essence. The millennium, as regards the saints on earth, will be judicial; now in grace. The Jewish economy was not of grace, but law. The Church cannot depart from its standing with God, and therefore cannot have to do with a judicial economy, which must have reference therefore to an earthly people.

The word that formed the Church was, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate." The Church is the calling of those whom the Lord has called out. In the Lord's dealing with the world, there is of necessity a manifestation of those who are saints and who are not. Now the Lord speaks of the Church as being light in the midst of darkness; and therefore, to speak of an invisible Church, is at once asserting its apostasy. The Lord intended the Church to have been as a city set on an hill.

God had a purpose about the Jews, but they failed too. A dispensation may be cast off, while those who have the principle of life in them cannot be. The Lord Jesus Christ gave Himself not for that nation only, but that He "might gather together in one, the children of God which were scattered abroad." Of this the Holy Ghost in the Church was to be the power of testimony, but the Church having failed in her responsibility, the world will not believe the grace of God that has appeared unto all men, which was the proper character of this dispensation; and God is now securing righteousness by the secret association of the saints with Christ, and by their testimony against the evil around them.

During the millennium there will be no fellowship with Christ in His sufferings, and therefore the saints now have by far this advantage. The trial of their faith is much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, and shall be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. This makes a most essential difference as to the standing of the saints now and during the millennium. Again, a man that is taught of God knows that all flesh is bad, he is made a partaker of the Divine nature, and this shows him what the other nature is.

Now the whole creation is made subject to vanity, but then it will not; it may be liable to vanity, but it will not be subject to it. There will not be the constant dominion of Satan over it. The fact is, that now in our fallen nature, we are holding the world under the power of Satan; but then, the more a saint is blessed, the more he will honour God. I believe there will be an enjoyment of creation then, when it will not be subject to vanity, that we have no idea of. The trees that God gave Adam for blessing, he made use of to hide himself from God.

When Christ takes the earth, the saints will be able to flow forth in all the fulness of joy, ministering to the good of everything, and entering into all the joy of that word, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." That will be a dispensation of righteousness. Now I have to watch, watch, watch; but then there will be no temptation to sin, there will be the full tide of unhindered blessing.

As to the fitting position of the saints, we find the Lord continually speaking to us according to the claims of the dispensation that we are in, and not according to our apprehension of it. But our power of speaking about it must be according to the measure of our own faith. The posture of the saints at this time, I believe, should be in heaven, should be in the knowledge of their redemption, and saying, "We shall reign with Christ." How far the body may hinder us, is a distinct question. Inasmuch as I am not yet in the redeemed body, I should be waiting for glory. In proportion as I am like Christ, I shall have joy. The object of my hope will then be, "when I shall see him as he is, then I shall be like him." Now, says Paul, I do not want to be unclothed, but to be swallowed up of life. Having the resurrection life in his soul, he reaches clean over everything that would come between; and this is the fitting posture of the saints. "We which are alive and remain, shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air." The Apostle was not looking for death, but to be caught up. Paul and Peter required an especial revelation to know they were to die. I know the kingdom and glory to be mine. What is the difference then between dying and not dying? all that I see is, in waiting here or waiting there. It is better to wait with Christ there than here. Christ is waiting, and to be joined with Christ in waiting, is just the link of power. All the value of the knowledge the saints can get, is by applying the facts of the glory to the circumstances in which we live. The fact of the upsetting of all things here just makes me say to them, I am not a debtor to you. By the word of the Lord all things first had their existence, so all things are kept by the word of the Lord. I was brought out of the world by the same word. The present position of the saint is suffering, therefore he is looking for that which is to deliver him from suffering, and that is the coming of the Lord Jesus. Dear friends, I say when these things begin to come to pass, that we know will come on the earth, do not be frightened. "Look up," says our Lord, do not look down, but "look up, for your redemption draweth nigh." The Lord give us power to look up! But while I believe the saints should be looking up, I believe also that the position of the saints should be one of thorough deep humiliation. "Ye have seen also the breaches of the city of David, that they are many; and ye gathered together the waters of the lower pool: and ye have numbered the houses of Jerusalem, and the houses have ye broken down to fortify the wall," &c. (Isaiah 22:9-14). Yet, beloved, though these things are so, though our house is pulled down, though our glory is gone, still what the Church has to do now, is to be looking for the Lord.

(2) Revelation 22:7-17.

I believe that which greatly keeps us from the strength of our joy, is our ignorance of the utter ruin of man. Not merely should we be acquainted with the evil into which the ruin has brought us, but also with the ruin itself. The moment that this ruin came into the world, everything went wrong. Not only has man gone wrong, but all his activities have gone wrong also. Now Christ has provided for us a way wherein the activities of the new man have their exercise. This is our own proper and peculiar portion; to have the mind of Christ, and to be brought into fellowship with God.

But for the enjoyment of this, it is essential that we should be introduced into a knowledge of the complete apostacy of our own natural will. The purpose of God for His children is, that they should be associated with Him in His own joy, and to this end we must know Him. Now, the main sorrow of Christ's life was man's ignorance of God. God was never understood; but the poor sinner understood Him much better than the self-righteous Pharisee. Jesus came forth from the bosom of the Father, having the knowledge of His mind, knowing that God loved the poor sinner; not merely the sinner's joy in being blest, but God's joy in blessing him; and this is the joy in which God would have us to be associated with Himself.

Another most blessed truth is, that we should be associated with Christ in His sufferings. "That the trial of our faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:7). There is a little verse in this chapter which shows the Church's tendency to depart from a knowledge of its nearness to God. The first departure of the Church from God, is a departure from the knowledge of its fulness in God and nearness to Him, its conscious sonship with God.

If I am one with Christ, I must be as He is. If I have anything at all, it must be what He has - what He is. There is no medium between being nothing in ourselves and being everything in Christ. If I have no title of my own, if I am nothing but wretchedness in myself, and have no natural understanding of God's goodwill to man, where is my claim? Therefore true humility is the knowing what I am in Christ. So the moment I say, I have not all the favour with God that Christ has, I come down to the flesh.

The moment I say, I am not as Christ, I lose the knowledge of my glory in Him and I stoop down to the flesh. This we see in John, when he fell down and worshipped the angel. Here was that voluntary humility and worshipping of angels which the Apostle warns us against. Had John remembered the glory he had in Christ, he would not have done this; for, "as he is, so are we in this world" (1 John 4:17). The Church's portion is as the washed, and cleansed, and glorified one in Him.

Christ has presented us to the Father without spot or blemish, and now He is the faithful witness in heaven, as He was on earth, making known to us the Father. Through Him then I know perfectly what God is. I know that His love does not wax cold because of our coldness. I know that His heart is not hardened because of our sins. I know through the risen Jesus what I am, - sitting in heavenly places, that death has lost his power for ever, and that the very life of God is mine.

Jesus says, "I am the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star." All the folly of David, all the apostacy of his seed, could not alter this truth, - God would be the sustainer of the blessings that He had promised. The morning will come, when that blessed light which was shut up in Christ will be unfolded, and the saint now enters into the hope of that day. When this light breaks forth, then will be the full display and understanding of this light, then will be the full enjoyment of it.

Now we say grace is a blessed thing, but it must bring sorrow. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not." Then will be the full effulgence of light without sorrow. The Spirit and the bride therefore say, Come. It is most blessed to see the Spirit taking up His place with the Church in her sorrow, having sympathy with her in her sighing, and making intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Well, He who now enters into the Church's sorrow, has fellowship with her in her hope, takes up the word and says, Come.

The Spirit and the bride say, Come, because the desire of Jesus for the Church will then be satisfied. Jesus must have joy in his own fulness now, but His satisfied joy will be the expression of this fulness in the Church ; and the time when this will be expressed with unhindered blessing, is on the revelation of Him to whom the Spirit and the bride say, Come. The moment the delight of God in dealing with us is understood, then we have association with Him, and say, Come. This is what we ought to be doing.

But this is not all. If the day-star is risen in our hearts, we shall say, "Let him that is athirst come." If we have discovered that this is a dry and thirsty land, where no water is, we shall say, "Whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely." The soul, entering into the fulness of the life of Christ, will go forth with the cry, Whosoever will let him come. But there is always defect in the invitation, if we have not entered into the power of Christ's love, and into His delight in bringing to the poor sinner the way of return to God.

The Church should be an helpmeet for Christ. But how can she be so, if she cannot enter into His heart? and if we do this, we must do it in sorrow. He is the master of the house, and we, the servants, must be as the Master. In the Gospel of Luke we see Christ as the man, - the anointed man. We see Him in works, giving proofs that He was the sent one, doing the will of Him that sent Him. But when the leper said to Him, "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean;" this necessarily brought out the sovereignty of the Godhead, - "I will be thou clean."

God never comes in with comfort to the flesh, but He breaks down the flesh, and then there is comfort to the spirit. Thus it was with Hezekiah; thus it was with Paul, and he had the sentence of death in himself that he should not trust in himself but in God, who raiseth the dead. The flesh must utterly be crumbled down, that we may be drawn up to the confession that God is all and in all. The flesh has no part with the sympathy of God. Glory indeed is our portion; and Jesus says to the Father, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them, that they may be one, as we are."

But with the flesh, its place is to be nothing. The purpose of Christ for His Church is, that she should be a conscious co-operator with God, - the expression of His love and fulness. When we know anything of God, when we know the misery of the flesh, then we desire it should be nothing. It is said, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." Not he that is humbled but he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted. In this theatre of Satan's power and the world's pride, to be the servant of all, I say this is the greatest proof of exaltation. We cannot do this in the flesh; but when we get a new nature, when we learn the glory of Christ, we can do it; then, and then only, can we humble ourselves.

(3) The Word of God, and the Knowledge of it.

We must bear in mind that all truth is the Spirit's teaching. I doubt if any can attain truth intellectually. There is a vast deal of truth taught now, which was hidden even from the greatest saints in the previous dispensation. As to the first question, - It is a solemn thing, I feel, to talk of the value of that which God has given. We get the expression of God's love in everything that He has given; and it is a solemn thing to be

questioning on the value of this and that. I believe the value of Scripture knowledge to be everything. I believe the understanding of Scripture to be a subject of vast importance. It is not that God's mind reveals merely a fact, but it is God's mind in that fact that we have to do with. I see the Apostles failing in this, with respect to the resurrection, in their going to the sepulchre after our Lord had risen; which proved, that though they had believed His words concerning the fact, they had not really entered into the mind of God in the matter. What is stated about the Church, is not only that there are things given, but that "ye may know the things that are freely given to us of God."

The resurrection happened before many eye-witnesses, but they had not the mind of God in the fact. The word to Abraham was, "Shall I hide," &c.; but the Church has it upon a larger ground than Abraham, it has "the mind of Christ," - "an unction from the Holy One." The spiritual mind discerneth all things. A most extraordinary prerogative and place of blessing the Church is put into, it has the power of judging all things. I am not now speaking of the measure of attainment, but of the principle.

The world can judge of evil, and so much the better, as they can keep a watch upon us; but they cannot judge anything about God. My knowledge must be essentially divine, that which belongs to God; for when I say I know all things, it must be from communion with God through the Word. The world may gather the elements of natural knowledge, but the Christian has the key to the whole, because he knows God. We must recollect, dear friends, that the Church is not merely a sacred body, but that it is left in the world to be a witness, and how should it be so without the Word? how could we know how to answer Satan, if we have not the weapon our Lord used against him? - "It is written."

The Lord Jesus had come into the world as a servant, and when Satan assaulted Him, He directly applied the Word to the circumstances in which He was placed, and so must we. It is not enough to know the Word, but we must bring that to bear on circumstances. These circumstances may be perfectly contrary to those of others. The circumstances of Isaiah with Hezekiah, and Jeremiah with Zedekiah, were directly opposite, but knowing the mind of God, they were enabled to act. This is what the Church of God has to do, and we have the Word to guide us under the different circumstances in which we are placed.

We have an instance, as our brother said, in the case of Nathan; and David ought to have known, by the revelation of God's mind concerning him, that it was not at all in God's heart that he should build the temple. It is a great mistake that good desires are a safe guide. It is well that we have them, but we should not carry them into effect till we have consulted the Lord. I believe the saints often think a thing is good to do, make up their minds to do it, and then ask God's blessing upon it.

The energy of faith sets men going. After a time faith gets cold, and that which is merely of man decays, and corruption comes in. The principle of subjection to the mind of God just leads us to this: What does God say about it? No truth is of any avail that does not come directly from God. I do not speak of instrumentality; God may use a child if He pleases, but then we shall know it to be from God. I believe it to be one of the happiest things, our dependence upon one another for blessing, God thus comforting the hearts of His saints by knitting their hearts to one another.

But the flesh takes advantage of this, gets lazy, and we lose sight of individual responsibility. Individual search keeps the soul alive, and open, and healthy, to receive the influences of God's love. God has made every individual responsible that He does not admit evil. How can I get responsibility but from God? I must either give myself implicitly to it, or, if I judge conscience at all, it must be by the testimony of God's truth. There is no possibility of connecting tradition and conscience.

The conscience is God's link with man, and therefore Satan tries to get between the conscience and God. The Word tells us there is peace in the blood; Satan steps in between, and seeks to destroy the power of the blood. Again he steps in, trying to destroy the consciousness of sin. You have an instance of the conscience being a link in John 4. Jesus spoke important truths to the woman of Samaria, but the moment He touched her conscience, she said, "Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet."

Scripture is God's blessed weapon on the conscience. It is possible to have a blinded conscience, as in the case of the Pharisees. The tradition of washing the hands may be apparently trifling, and perhaps some would have said it was unnecessarily wounding them, when Jesus answered and said unto them, "Well did Esaias prophesy of you hypocrites," &c. The tradition, our Lord knew, clothed man with respectability. A man's hands might be washed, and his conscience remain untouched.

It stepped in where God had the supreme right. "Laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men." Bring me a commandment of God; I get God's authority. "Full well," our Lord adds, "ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may hold your own tradition." Take all classes of men, and what do they like? their own tradition. He sums it up, "making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition which ye have delivered." The Word designates tradition as man's, not God's.

There is always sufficient in the Word to lay bare man's tradition. The worst evil has a religious character. I ask any one, Can he say what temptation will come upon him to-morrow? and has he Scripture to answer Satan with? Our Lord placed Himself as a servant in the midst of the ruin of man. He answered Satan in a manner suited to His circumstances. Satan brought forward those Scriptures which related to our Lord in power. Jesus did not come for that, He did not come to be ministered to, but to minister, and therefore said, "Man lives by the word; by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live." Did the Word come when man was in a state of innocence? No, it came in grace, when he was ruined; when death had come in, the Word of God came, as a living Word, to meet all man's ruined circumstances. Jesus repelled evil, but He touched it at every point. I say the saint cannot carry the life of God, without his having this body of light with him. There is nothing that can carry a saint rightly through the world, save this divine thing. "Man is become as one of us."

The Lord says, "He would have you simple concerning evil, and wise concerning that which is good;" and, beloved friends, this is what Scripture knowledge brings us to.

A saint may pass safe through all the evil of the world, because his heart is full of God; and how is he to get that, but through the Word?

Beloved, we do not really believe that we are brought into the family of God. I say the Church of God are children. As the Son knows the Father, so are we brought into communion; and how can we have this but in the knowledge of His mind? There is no other knowledge or way of glorifying God, but through the knowledge of His mind.

When the Lord Jesus Christ becomes the object of my love, it is impossible but that I must like to know more of Jesus. When is it that a soul is lifted up? I say it is when he is beholding the glory of Jesus. It carries us into the fulness of the Father's love in Christ. The moment that Jesus becomes the fulness of our hearts, I say, then Scripture becomes as honey to our mouths; every word comes with savour, because it testifies of Him.

Is it of value to know Jesus well? then that is the value of Scripture knowledge. It brings in a light that flows around the presence of God. I believe that the secret of not valuing the Scriptures, is that the person, the glories, the excellencies of Jesus are not prized.

The glory of Christ is what God has set up in competition with everything else in the world. Wherever we get the Spirit's teaching, we look up, and take the lowest place. It is impossible for me to see a thing in God, without seeing self as nothingness. When intellect is at work, I am under the power of my mind, and not in subjection of soul to something above it; it is always in being lowly I get up. All real progress and attainment is, when we feel something better and higher than ourselves. The sense of Divine love takes the place of self. "If any man thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." God will not say to us, Here is a soul equal to mine; we will talk about it together. But He must bring our mind into subjection to His, and then He can have communion with us.

(4) Revelation 1-20.

It is most manifest, and should be among us a subject for praise, the progress that has been made in the understanding of this book (Revelation). The importance of giving heed to the prophetic word bears two characters, not only as regarding things to come, but we find also there is such a thing as the day-star arising in your hearts (2 Peter 1:19). Now Peter had seen the glory, and this was not the result of statements of prophecy. The first thing that we must do, is to look at the day itself, to fix our eyes on the glory itself; this at once reaches all prophecy, and fixes it on the heart. Peter had beheld the majesty of the Lord Jesus Christ in the glory, and that was the thing that occupied his heart. The power of prophecy is the laying bare the things that are carrying on according to the course of this world, and takes them into judgment. If I know the judgment is coming, and that the tares are to be burned, I shall not have anything to do with the tares. We find our Lord referring to Isaiah's vision of the glory in John 12. When Isaiah had seen the glory, evil was brought out, and he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips" (Isaiah 6:5). And when the unbelief and hardness of heart in the Jews is spoken of, we read in John 12 and 41st verse, "These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." Thus it is, dear friends, that the effect of beholding the glory, is to bring us to a consciousness of our position; and thus we should bring the glory of Christ to bear on our circumstances.

The grand moral importance of giving heed to the prophetic word, is in separating us from this present evil world. Prophecy is a light which God holds up to the saints, that they may not only see the things which are, but see them as God sees them. Prophecy teaches us, that God will judge the world in power; and it is for us now, knowing this, to judge morally what God will judge judicially.

Prophecy is also the expression of the object of hope to the Church. "We are saved by hope; but hope that is seen is not hope; but if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. The expression, "coming of the Lord," is rather ambiguous, and involves two things. There is the coming of the Lord for His saints, and there is the coming of the Lord with His saints; and these two facts we get in the Epistles to the Thessalonians. The testimony to the world of a fact, should never be confounded with the intelligence about that fact.

Now, as to the resurrection of the dead, all that I can say to the world about it is, there is a resurrection both of the just and of the unjust. But when I speak about the Church, it is quite another thing; then I say, the Church is raised by the power of union to Christ. I would say to the saints, "If the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your

mortal bodies by his spirit that dwelleth in you." Thus the resurrection of the saints will be just a consummation of that already wrought in them. I see the same principle with reference to the Lord's coming. The Thessalonians were turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven; and this is the true standing of the saints.

Now, while I admit the broad fact of the coming of the Lord, yet when I come to investigate this truth, I find a peculiar thing connected with it, and that is the gathering of the saints to Him. The catching up of the Church is the witness of the complete justification of the whole body, and the world has nothing to do with it. One thing is quite clear, when the Lord comes, His saints will come with Him.

The spirit in which we should come to the prophetic word, I should say, is in order to be better taught about the Lord Himself, than by speaking much about it. Judgment cannot be the subject for my affections to rest upon.

But there is one thing connected with the coming of Christ, and this present evil world, which may give me joy, and that is, the stream of love and mercy flowing in to stop the tide of misery and wretchedness that exists. I can love to see Christ, but I cannot love to see antichrist. So we find the Thessalonians were troubled; but Paul writes to them, "Why should you be troubled about the day of the Lord? You will be caught up first; what have you to do with "the day?" The Church's separation from the world puts it into the place of prophecy. When Isaiah saw the glory in the temple above, he was laying the basis of his prophecy. I see Peter, the apostle of the circumcision; I see Paul, the apostle of the uncircumcision; and I see John, in the isle of Patmos, - all sustaining the Church in coming down from the glory to testify the hope of the Church in prophecy.

The book of Revelation has nothing to do with the Father and the children; it is not the Father guiding and teaching His children by the Spirit, but Christ sending the Revelation to His servant John by an angel.

The glory of the Lord Jesus is here presented to us as standing in the midst of the Church. John was to write the things that are, and the epistles to the seven Churches were evidently of this character. In chapters 4 and 5 we get a mystical synopsis of the whole thing. The throne was seen, and the whole result brought out. I do not acknowledge "the mystery of God" to be the gathering of the saints; the mystery of Christ and the Church, as we find in the Epistle to the Ephesians; but "the mystery of God," I believe, to be the gathering together in one all things in Christ, and put under His power, as the Son of man.

In chapter 4, we have the Spirits before the throne; in chapter 5, we get the Lamb taking the book; then we get the whole thing brought out in chapter 6. There is a clear difference between the Church of God caught up, and those suffering on earth during the time of antichrist, and caught up too. In Matt. 24, I do not see anything about the Church; it is entirely Jewish testimony. The gospel of the kingdom, that shall be preached to all nations for a witness, I see to be Jewish too. Their preaching was to be about that which was future; it was the gospel of the kingdom that was coming in power, that was to be established in righteousness. I believe the commission in Matthew 28, "Go ye therefore and teach all nations," was Jewish, and has never yet had its accomplishment in its particular form; and Matthew assumes the Jewish position in the kingdom as their right, and therefore speaks of the going out to the Gentiles, and has never therefore yet been accomplished. Instead of the twelve apostles accomplishing this commission, that was expressly given to them, God raises up another apostle to go to the Gentiles; but the literal command, in its primary character, will be accomplished too.

In chapter 6, we get the cry, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost not thou avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" Here we find the object of their hopes was not to be up there. Then, again, we have in chapter 5, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us unto our God kings and priests, and they shall reign over the earth." Here some had got the fulfilment of their expectation in being before the throne; but there was still a shall, which was the object of other's hopes. In chapter 5, we have the grand announcement of the whole thing in full blessing. But these saints in chapter 6 are taught to wait till another class of martyrs shall be killed. What is the answer to this cry? The powers of heaven are shaken; the sun became black; the moon became as blood; the stars fell unto the earth; and the heavens departed as a scroll. A process of preparatory judgment in God's hand is going on, and just introduces the occasion for the Lamb's coming forth. What in the meantime is the situation of the saints above? All things are getting ready there, and all getting ready below, for the marriage of the Lamb, and the descent of Christ and His Church.

In chapter 7, we find the saints have got a step higher, they are not under the altar, but before the throne; they are interesting themselves in the concerns of the throne, and they have got their white robes. Before the closing of the whole scene, we find judgments coming down upon the earth in answer to prayers. Before the seventh trumpet begins to sound, we get the development of the final iniquity; they did not own God to be the God of the earth, but worshipped devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and of wood, which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk. In the last half of Daniel's week, the abomination of desolation is set up, but the saints are taken up first. The beast out of the bottomless pit kills the witnesses. This was to be no time of testimony, but a time of vengeance. Our Lord's command was, "When ye see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, then let them which be in Judea flee to the mountains." Your testimony is ended. This testimony ceased the last three and a half years. The coming of the Lord is for the destruction of antichrist. And then when the Lord associates Himself with the Jews, He begins the judgment on the earth. The announcement of the seventh woe brings in the close.

In chapter 12, we get the woman, the man-child, and the great dragon. The man-child is taken out of the way; the woman is left to the consequences of weakness. It is perfectly clear that Christ, in the first place, is to rule, but the saints are to be caught up too. Christ cannot be manifested without His body, and therefore the saints are caught up. After they are caught up, Satan, having lost heaven for ever, rages on earth for three and a half years. The effect of this is, that the woman flees into the wilderness (Jesus told them to flee to get out of the way of Satan). In chapter 13, we get the thrones given to the beast. I do not believe that the beast is antichrist; for I do not believe antichrist will ever have his deadly wound healed, which the beast had; but I believe it to be the Roman empire in its last form, strengthened with the new power.

In chapter 14, we get the Lord reaping the earth; but first we get the connection of earth and heaven. Mount Zion, I believe to be the place of royal grace on the earth; and we find Christ in association with a suffering people upon the earth. Then goes forth the gospel, for the day of His judgment is come. The next thing we get, is the announcement of Babylon's fall, and the judgment of all those who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. In verse 13th, where it is said, "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Here we have not the saints that are caught up, but those who die on the earth.

In chapter 15, we get another sign, - all those that have suffered coming into holiness through judgment. Then we find the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony opened in heaven, but none could enter in. Now the time was come for the filling up of the wrath of God, and "the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God; and none could enter into it till the seven plagues were fulfilled," which we have in chapter 16.

Chapter 17:5, is, I believe, properly ecclesiastical. Here we find the woman, or great Babylon, riding the beast at her own will; but immediately after, we have the destruction of this Babylon, all her glory and splendour gone, and she become the habitation of devils, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird and beast. The ten horns hate the whore, and agree to give their power to the beast. Thus the corrupt system of the earth is turned into a diabolical one.

Then in chapter 19, we get the Church married to the Lamb. When everything was prepared, and the earth was made ready, the Lamb comes forth and displays his wife. He comes forth as a warrior, at the head of the heavenly army.

In chapter 20, we get the thrones of judgment. John saw here three classes of persons, - all these three reigning with Christ a thousand years. The remaining chapters will come into the question for to-morrow, - The glory of the Church, and the blessing flowing out of her. The Church is set in grace, - grace is our grand characteristic; and even when joined with the Lord in glory, grace will still be the distinctive character of the Church.

(5) 2 Samuel 22, 23:1-7.

David here retraces what specially marked out the path of the Lord Jesus Himself; also the judgment upon the condition of the failure of all on which man's hopes stood. That which primarily struck me in this passage, was the remarkable contrast between the song of David after he had done with Saul, and the song of David after he had done with himself; and it is remarkable that the Spirit of God has so placed them in juxtaposition here. In the first, there is exultation, victory, thanksgiving; in the second, the result of all is just this - "Although my house be not so with God."

The path of the Spirit of grace is always the path that Jesus took here; getting nothing in the world, but going on nearer and nearer to God. It is remarkable how in this Psalm the Lord Jesus is in Jewish circumstances, justice, judgment, and such like. We find at once here all that which is so fully true of Christ. The Lord Jesus Christ is here; and connected with this, we find most remarkable allusions to the whole history of Israel.

The next thing is, he goes on till he sets the Lord Jesus Christ as being avenged of His enemies, and having been made the head of the heathen. The history of Israel, looked at by the Spirit of God, is identified with the history of Christ as in Acts 23. In these last words of David, it is the God of Jacob, the Rock of Israel. In the 4th verse, he speaks of that one who should reign in peace over man; that true Solomon was what he was looking for. There must come in one with the power of judgment also to exterminate this evil, verses 6 and 7.

I would trace some traits of what David was up to the time of his contending with Goliath. We see in him the one forgotten of man, taken up of God (1 Sam. 18). Just the contrast with Saul; he the strength of the flesh, a goodly person, head and shoulders higher than the people, and so on; but all the strength of the flesh. What we specially see in David up to this time, is his humility and forgetfulness of himself, and his

simplicity of faith in doing the Lord's work as a matter of course. There is no boast about it. He kept the sheep; well, it was his duty to keep the sheep, and if a lion or a bear come amongst them, of course it was the shepherd's duty to send them away or to slay them. And it is here I see the power of faith, - the full consciousness of the Lord's working with him, and doing these energetic works with simple reference to duty.

While the energy of faith was found in Jonathan, there was a great deal of blessing accompanying the career of Saul. Wherever he turned, he vexed his enemies; and though he had been in a certain sense rejected, we find, for the sake of Israel, the Lord blessing him.

When David came to the camp, he had learned - not from what he saw around him, but from his own secret communion - the faithfulness of God. There was no other thought in his heart, and therefore he is astonished. "Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?" He identifies the glory of God with Israel, and, in the simple consciousness of His faithfulness and power, he knows that no uncircumcised man can have any power against Israel. There is no question about it; he knows that the same God, who helped him to slay the lion and the bear, will help him to slay the Philistine also. And afterwards in the character of David, I find the consciousness of weakness, the consciousness of infirmity; never thinking of taking vengeance against Saul, never (except in one instance, and he got well chastened for it) acting without consulting God. He always felt that he was in conflict with a power that he could not set aside; he had no strength, but in God, to put down any, though they may persecute him even to death. No matter who comes against him, whether Doeg the Edomite, or anybody else. Jonathan, if it could have been so (but it could not, because God had a faithful remnant even in the camp of Israel); I say he had no strength, but in direct simple reference to God in every circumstance. Therefore he says, "Shall I go down to Keilah?" The Lord says, "Go down to Keilah." "Shall I go up to the Philistines, wilt Thou deliver them into my hand?" God says, "Go up, I will deliver them into thy hand." In the cave of Adullam, what a company they were; but in the cave of Adullam was God's King, God's Prophet, God's Priest; and there was God's power, God Himself was with him.

When Jacob comes before Pharaoh, he blesses him; he is identified with the power of blessing, because he is identified with God. Beloved brethren, if we are seeking God's glory, we shall not want to justify ourselves. I do not mean that we should have this feeling, "I do not care for it; what do I care?" but, as Peter says, "doing well, suffering for it and taking it patiently." This was the picture of the Lord Jesus Christ, and should be the picture of every saint. But now the day is coming upon Saul, when he has the terrible consciousness that the Lord is not with him. But, not to dwell upon this, Saul dies, and David takes the power, and after this we find him acting in the strength of the flesh, not waiting upon the Lord, not consulting Him. About building the house, it was a good thought, but he did not consult the Lord; and in bringing up the ark, though it was not a bad thing, he had not consulted the Lord about it, and the Lord breaks forth upon Him; and it was only the sovereign mercy of the Lord that kept him from fighting against Israel, because He turned the hearts of the Philistines against him. And again, in numbering the people, and in the case of Uriah; wherefore the sword never departed from his house

We have a lovely character of David up to the time of his taking the kingdom; he was a man after God's own heart, and now, not like Saul, - beginning in the flesh, and ending in the flesh, - but the man in whom most precious grace shone, though the blessings, that were the result of faith, were too great for the faith that brought them to bear. And this is a most amazing warning; and the only thing to do, is to be always going down, down, to the Cross. And now, I ask, is there a single heart, that has the Spirit of Christ in it, that does not say, "Although my house be not so with God?" Can we say God's house is such as it should

be, for God to be satisfied in it? There is truly the everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure; but should we be contented with the ruin and evil that is now in the house? Surely we would not say that there is a covenant ordered in all things and sure, and that Christ's glory is a thing of no consequence. And, beloved friends, we look forward to the coming of the Lord; that is what brightens the heart, it is that upon which our affections can rest, as a scene and sphere of blessing where all our associations shall be pure and happy. Then the order and condition of the world shall come down from God, in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; even as life comes to us individually from Jesus now, so to the world then; and then all things will take their place in their proper relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Church, the Bride, the Lamb's wife, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Eph. 1); Head over all things to the Church, &c.; Israel, the Gentiles; and then all men shall call Him blessed. There is the sphere of blessing, and it is He Himself that is the thing manifested; and we are to look for no blessing apart from Him who is the centre of it all. The great characteristic of that day, is the blessing coming down according to God's mind. God is the centre of blessing, but He has not shut Himself up from us; God is love and it flows out from Him through one another.

David looked not for the setting right of his house then, but he looked beyond, for the morning without clouds, and so must we. The Apostle Paul said, "All seek their own," even in his time. See how soon his house was not so with God. Well, I say, we want something; we want not only to have the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of hope, but to see Him in the display and unfolding of the glory, in heaven and in earth, of which He will be the centre, and the thoughts of God's heart finding their rest in that glory.

I would close now with one practical remark, which I would urge upon you, and it is, that the effect of all this should be to throw us back into the first part of the history of David. Here we find David's heart in sympathy with the sufferings of Christ's heart; and oh! beloved friends, though we are called now to have fellowship with His sufferings, yet a little while, and He shall compass us about with songs of deliverance.

134th Hymn. {Lord of glory, we adore Thee . . .}

(6) The Dispensations and the Remnants.

A dispensation is any arranged dealing of God in which man has been set before his fall, and having been tried, has failed, and therefore God has been obliged to act by other means. Man was good for nothing; but in order to bring out the variousness of Christ's glory, and the resources we have in Him, man was put into these different circumstances. It was not simple promise, because this rests solely on the faithfulness of the promiser. Further, when we talk of a faithful remnant, there has been a remnant without a close at all. There has always been a dispensation, and always immediate failure, and consequently there has necessarily been a remnant all through. Joshua, Caleb, the seven thousand, - always a faithful few, who were just the exhibition in that sense of the Father's work. This is a very serious question, because it supposes that we are at the close of this dispensation. The responsibility is most important, but yet simple to them that understand, and plain to them that keep knowledge; and the Lord has said, "He that followeth me, shall not walk in darkness." The question supposes, that there has been a certain body in contrast to others; that there has been failure; and then that some should be faithful at the close, when judgment comes in. There has been one in every dispensation. If darkness had set in, it brought out the character of those who did not sink with the darkness. And then, beloved friends, our duty is not only faithfulness in ourselves, but most especially grace; the faithfulness is called for with reference to the evil, but our proper position is grace towards those who are in the darkness.

We find when the golden calf was made, - the first manifestation of this, - Moses takes the tabernacle of the congregation, which was not yet set up, without the camp. Joshua stays there, but Moses goes back to the people. Joshua, the type of the captain of salvation; but Moses had another character to bear, and in studying this, we shall find our position as a remnant. Before the proper dispensation of God, we get the world before the flood; not exactly a dispensation, but a body of men left, in a certain sense, to themselves. There was testimony, as in Enoch and Noah, but no dispensed order or system by which God acted as governing the earth. We find even in this, that God acts in the grace of His own character. Noah was a faithful witness; in him was the great principle, though this was not strictly a dispensation. Adam had not, before his fall, taken his character as head of the first-Adam family; so Christ, till after His resurrection, did not take His place as head of the second-Adam family. "The Lord said unto Noah," &c. (Gen. 7:1; 6:8, &c.), two things, "Thee have I seen righteous;" and, thou hast "found grace." The earth was corrupt, and there came the flood upon it; then the remnant was called out. To this faithful remnant, He communicates the result of His looking upon the earth, - as He did to Abraham respecting Sodom; so, before He destroys Babylon, He communicates His mind to His Church, or chosen ones. Another thing as regards the close of this dispensation is, that it does not come till all remedy is impossible; till then, God never acts in judgment; till then, He never destroys what His hands have created. At this time of Noah, all remedy was impossible, all flesh had corrupted itself; and it is not only that God knows all remedy is impossible, but He never acts till He has justified His own conduct, - towards the Amorites for instance.

In the Jewish dispensation there were always those that were to be saved; sozomenoi, the same as in Acts 2:47. The contrast is constantly put between the remnant and others in the prophets, &c. As regards this dispensation, it is just the same truth as regards the Jews (Rom. 11) out of the ten tribes, seven thousand preserved; so of the Church, if we take the epistles of John or Jude, we see evidently this faithful remnant, but under different circumstances, and placed in different positions, those in whom the Lord has proved His grace and faithfulness. As regards the remnant in Israel, they refused to go along with the evil around them. This precedes service, - God found Noah faithful; Lot showed love to the world, it was all selfishness; He chose Sodom, and then his righteous soul was vexed; and we read, God remembered Abraham, and delivered Lot &c. There will, I believe, be some coming out lame and weak, who have brought upon themselves sorrow of spirit, not having done as Caleb did, followed the Lord fully. There are many who will doubtless be saved so as by fire, but there will be some found faithful; so that in every dispensation the faithful were the remnant all through. At the beginning it was not so. Israel, the Church, were set in blessing, but evil came in, and then the faithful remnant. And it is not only faithfulness in the world, but faithfulness in the failure of what God had established to be faithful in the world. Failure now was not of the same grossly evil character as the breach of the ten commandments, but sin against the higher blessing, which is worse. The apostacy began in the time of the apostles. In John and Jude the same corruptions were there, and it was of those that Enoch spoke, who declared the judgment of the Lord. The real place of faithfulness is in the remnant that judges the dispensation, and not in the dispensation itself; more spiritual judgment is required now. It was so from the time of John (1 John 4:1). This is most important, for it was not in the corporate power of the dispensation. It is important to connect the remnant all through the dispensation with those who will testify at the close. By the spirit of prophecy, God has always wrought deliverance, and consequently brought in something future for the saint to cling to. In Noah no mediation, but always afterwards; like the

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