

The Prophetical Glory of the Redeemer

by Octavius Winslow

The prophetical writings reveal the glory of Christ as the God-man, uniting all true believers in His Deity and sustaining the unity of the Church.

Scripture: Isaiah 6:1, John 12:41

Topics: "Unity in the Church", "The Glory of Christ"

Description

Octavius Winslow emphasizes the prophetic glory of Jesus Christ as seen through the eyes of Isaiah, highlighting that the testimony of Jesus is the essence of prophecy. He explains how the prophets were inspired to reveal the coming Messiah, whose glory is central to their messages. Winslow encourages believers to recognize the unity of the Church in Christ, the importance of seeing His glory, and the transformative power of faith in understanding the Redeemer's work. He calls for a deeper contemplation of Christ's glory, urging Christians to reflect this glory in their lives and to promote unity within the body of Christ. Ultimately, he stresses that true understanding of Jesus leads to humility and a profound love for Him.

Transcript

These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him. John 12:41

Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him. John 12:41

Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he made this prediction, because he was given a vision of the Messiah's glory. John 12:41

How true is it that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy!" "To Him gave all the prophets witness." Of Him, as of one only glorious person, they delighted to testify- of Him, as of one only precious subject, they delighted to speak. Never did the Divine Spirit rest upon them with greater power- never did they strike their prophetic harps to strains so high, so rich, so sweet, as when Emmanuel was their theme. And is it too much to say, that magnificent as is the drapery in which their writings are clothed- gorgeous as is the imagery, and sublime the doctrines, in which these announcements are invested, they would possess no beauty, glory, or sweetness, but for- Jesus?

The confidence and the joy of the Church has ever been the prospective view she has had of the coming Messiah. Through the long vista of ages she saw Him advancing; and though the vision was distant and

dim, yet, persuaded of the promise, she embraced it, and rested in it, believing that God was able as He was willing to make good all that He had in covenant mercy pledged to do. The incarnate God was her hope, her joy, her trust; and living or dying, the "Consolation of Israel" was the pole-star on which the eye of her faith was ever and immovably fixed.

It pleased God to raise up a school of prophets, whom He endowed with extraordinary powers of inspiration, filling them with the Holy Spirit, whose especial office it was to feed this desire, to animate this hope, and to strengthen this expectation of faith, by keeping the glorious truth of the approaching Savior constantly and prominently before the eye of the Church. "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you: searching what person, or what period of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, when He testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow."

That we are justified in looking into the prophetic Scriptures for peculiar revelations of the glory of Christ will appear clear from a reference to a few passages bearing upon this subject. Our Lord's conversation with the two disciples journeying to Emmaus is strikingly in point. In the first place, Jesus gently chides them for their lack of faith in the prophetic writings relating to Himself. "O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." He then passes to the great subject before Him, "And beginning at Moses, and all the prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

The same day, and on another occasion, appearing in their assembled midst, "He said unto them, These are the words which I spoke unto you while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures." In a conversation He held with the Jews, how pointedly did He refer to His glory as beaming from beneath the veil of the Mosaic writings!

"Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuses you, even Moses, in whom you trust. For had you believed Moses, you would have believed me, for he wrote of me." And well did He exhort them to "search the Scriptures; for in them you think you have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me." Thus invited and encouraged, let us address ourselves to the pleasing task of drawing aside the prophetic veil, thus revealing the hidden glories of our Emmanuel.

The unfolding of this subject will be found to present a brief exposition of those striking words of the evangelist: "These things said Elijah, when he saw His glory, and spoke of Him." We commence with the testimony which the prophetic Scriptures bring to the doctrine of our Lord's Deity. Clearer intimations of the Divinity of Christ are nowhere found than in the Old Testament writings. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, 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 face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of Him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

What an august revelation of the glory of Christ's Godhead was this which broke upon the view of the lowly prophet! How instructive is each particular of his beatific vision! Mark the profound humility of the

seraphim- they veiled with their wings their faces and their feet. They were in the presence of Jesus. They saw the King in His beauty, and covered themselves. But the effect of this view of our Lord's Divine glory upon the mind of the prophet, is still more impressive: "Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips ... for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

What prostrated his soul thus low in the dust? What filled him with this self-abasement? What overwhelmed him with this keen sense of his vileness? Oh, it was the unclouded view he had of the essential glory of the Son of God! And thus will it ever be. The beaming forth of Christ's glory in the soul, reveals its hidden evil; the knowledge of this evil lays the believer low before God with the confession, "I abhor myself. Woe is me, for I am undone!" Beloved, let this truth be ever present to your mind, that as we increasingly see glory in Jesus, we shall increasingly see that there is no glory in ourselves.

Jesus is the Sun which reveals the pollutions and defilements that are within. The chambers of abomination are all closed until Christ shines in upon the soul. Oh, then it is these deep-seated and long-veiled deformities are revealed; and we, no longer gazing with a complaisant eye upon self, sink in the dust before God, overwhelmed with shame, and covered with confusion of face. Holy posture! Blessed spectacle! A soul prostrate before the glory of the incarnate God! All high and lofty views of its own false glory annihilated by clear and close views of the true glory of Jesus.

As when the sun appears, all the less lights vanish into darkness, so when Jesus rises in noontide glory upon the soul, all other glory retires, and He alone fixes the eye, and fills the mind. "With twain they covered their faces, and with twain they covered their feet." Their own perfections and beauty were not to be seen in the presence of the glory of the Lord. How much more profound should be the humility and self-abasement of man! Have we covered ourselves- not with the pure wings of the holy cherubim- but with sackcloth and ashes, before the Lord?

Have we sought to veil- not our beauties, for beauties we have none; but our innumerable and flagrant deformities, even the "spots upon our feasts of love," the sins of our best and holiest things; and, renouncing all self-glory, have we sunk, as into nothing, before God? Oh, we are yet strangers to the vision of Christ's glory, if we have not! If the constellations of human gifts and attainments, distinctions and usefulness, on which unsanctified and unmortified self so delights to gaze, have not retired into oblivion, the Sun of Righteousness has yet to rise upon our souls with healing in His wings.

His glory as the God-man is reflected with equal clearness from the prophetic page. Thus was it predicted that the eternal Son of God should assume an inferior and a human form. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel." "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Could any truth be more emphatically or distinctly stated?

Oh, what love in the Father does it unfold, that not only He should have promised His dear Son, but that He should have held out that promise at so distant a period, and in such terms, as would lay an unequivocal foundation for the faith, hope, and joy of the saints, in all ages of the world! His Divine anointing, constituting an important feature of His official glory, and opening a channel of the most costly blessing to the Church, forms a distinct and sacred theme of the prophetic writings.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me." "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest

upon him." This anointing was upon the Redeemer, in infinite richness and fragrance. "God gives not the Spirit by measure unto him." As essentially Jehovah, He needed it not; but as the great High Priest, and the mediatorial Head of His "Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all," it was necessary that the anointing oil should be upon Him in its utmost plenitude.

As one with Him, all the members alike participate. "It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went to the skirts of his garment;" even to the lowest believer- Ah! and he that lies the lowest, obtains the most of this "precious ointment," as it descends from Jesus: the hand of faith that touches but the hem of His garment, receives from Him who was "anointed with the oil of gladness above His fellows." Dear reader, are you professedly one with Jesus and His saints? then seek, oh diligently seek, a large and still larger degree of this holy and fragrant anointing.

Rest not short of it. Do not be satisfied to proceed another step without it. Do not be content with a mere profession, having a name to live, yet lacking all the essential evidences of real life, while discovering many of the fearful attributes of actual death. The possession of this anointing of the Holy Spirit will decide the momentous, and perhaps with you doubtful, question of your union with Christ. Men will take knowledge of you that you have been with Jesus, and learned from Him.

Your life will be a reflection, faint at best, yet a reflection of His holy life. You will bear some resemblance to the "altogether lovely" one; your spirit will breathe His meekness; your demeanor will be stamped with His gentleness; your whole conversation will be seasoned with His grace; all your "garments will smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces;" an unction will pervade your prayers, a power irresistible will accompany your labors, and in every place you will be a sweet savor of Christ, blessed and a blessing.

Christ, the foundation of the Church, was a truth, the great glory of which the evangelical prophet also saw and spoke of. "Thus says the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation." How identical of the Redeemer is this splendid prophecy! Every word in the passage, and every quality of the figure, is expressive of some essential part of His character and work. Jesus is fitly compared to a "stone" for strength and durability.

He is a "Savior, and a great one" "mighty to save." "I have laid help upon one that is mighty." If it were probable that the fact of His Deity should be announced in a voice of thunder from the eternal throne, can we suppose it would be uttered in terms more decided and explicit than those which fell upon the ear of the exiled evangelist from the lips of Christ Himself? "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the ending, says the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

And what a needed truth is this! None but an Almighty ransom could have saved from going down to the pit. Jesus is our ransom, and Jesus is the Almighty. The Redeemer is not only a stone, but a "tried stone." The grand experiment has been made- the great test has been applied, and, to answer all the ends for which the Lord God laid it in Zion, it has proved completely adequate. Never was a foundation tried as this. In the eternal purpose of Redemption, Omnipotence tried it. In the Divine mind there existed no lurking suspicion, no embarrassing uncertainty, as to the result.

The Father knew all that this foundation was to sustain, and well He knew, too, that it was capable of sustaining all. Stupendous were the consequences. His own glory and the honor of His government were involved; the salvation of His elect was to be secured; death, with all its horrors, was to be abolished; life, with all its immortal, untold glories, was to be revealed; hell was to be closed, and heaven opened to all

believers. With such momentous realities pending- with such mighty and glorious results at stake, the Eternal mind, in its purpose of grace and glory, would lay for a foundation a "tried stone."

Blessed Emmanuel! how effulgently does your glory beam from beneath Your prophetic veil! You are that "tried stone,"- tried by the Father when He laid upon You all His people's sins and transgressions, bruised You and put You to grief. Tried by the law, when it exacted and received from You Your utmost obedience to its precepts. Tried by Divine justice, when it kindled around You its fiercest flame, yet consumed You not. Tried by the Church, built upon You so securely that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her.

Tried by poor sinners, who have brought their burdens of guilt to Your blood, and have found pardon and peace. Tried by believers, who have taken their trials to Your sympathy, their sorrows to Your love, their wounds to Your healing, their weakness to your strength, their emptiness to Your fulness, their petitions to Your ear, and have never, never been disappointed. Oh yes, You are that "tried stone," to whom I would come moment by moment. "A precious corner stone." Of whom does the prophet speak this, but of Jesus, compared with whom nothing is precious?

He alone is worthy of the term, who alone can smooth life's rugged path, sweeten life's bitter trials, lighten life's heavy burdens, and this by daily and hourly emanations of His own life, grace, and preciousness. Oh, how precious- what language can express it? Is this precious stone to him who, conscious of his vileness, poverty, and nothingness, or with a spirit oppressed with deep trial, or bleeding from painful bereavement, wades to it through the billows, exclaiming, "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the Rock that is higher than I."

Precious in His all-atoning blood; precious in His all-justifying righteousness; precious in His infinite fulness; precious in every office that He fills; in every work that He performs; in every promise that He makes; is Christ to him who, finding all other foundations but as sliding sand, builds his hope of glory upon the incarnate God. "To you, therefore, that believe, He is precious." A "corner stone," too, is our glorious Redeemer. The important position which this occupies in the spiritual building- its essential relation to the compactness, strength, and durability of the whole fabric, we fear, is not duly considered by many who are professedly "living stones in the spiritual house."

And yet how momentous and how holy is the instruction it conveys! The corner stone is that which unites the parts of the edifice: it is to the building what the key stone is to the arch; it imparts unity, symmetry, and strength. The Lord Jesus has been the uniting stone of the Church in all ages. The saints of the Patriarchal, Levitical, and Christian Churches, all meet and form, in Him, one glorious temple of the living God. "No longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God:" they are "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief Corner Stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, grows unto a holy temple in the Lord," and thus becomes "a habitation of God through the Spirit."

To allude to another figure employed by the Holy Spirit to illustrate and enforce the same blessed truth- the unity of the Church- the Lord Jesus is declared to be the one spiritual HEAD of His "Church, who is His body, the fulness of Him that fills all in all." Thus in itself one by its oneness with Him, it is represented as "growing up into Him in all things, who is the Head, even Christ: from whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplies, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, makes increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

"There" (in Christ)- "is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus," and "Christ is all and in all." To the consideration of this holy and precious theme- THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH- let us for a few moments turn our attention. That there are divisions in the Church of God, visible and painful; that the one body is sadly dismembered, the seamless robe rudely torn and disfigured, is a truth too glaring to conceal, and almost too painful and humiliating to acknowledge.

Alas that it should be so! Oh, how much is the unity of the Church lost sight of in the din of religious controversy, and in the heat of party zeal! How does brother look coldly upon brother, and minister glance suspiciously at minister, and church stand aloof from church! Ought this so to be? And to what may it in a great degree be traced? We believe, to a forgetfulness of the truth, that all true believers are "one in Christ Jesus;" that the blood of the Lamb is the bond of union of the saints; that He is the "corner stone," uniting all the parts of the one edifice; and that, if built upon Him, we are one with that Church, and that Church is one with Christ.

The unity of the mystical Church of God consists not in a unity of creed. A higher, a diviner, and a more endearing principle unites her than this. Ardently as it should be desired, and fervently as it should be prayed for, that the promised day of millennial blessedness may speedily come, when the "watchmen shall see eye to eye," when from every battlement in Zion the silver trumpets shall emit one sweet harmonious sound; yet, even then, not more essentially will the Church of God be one than she is now.

True, her unity will be more visible, her divisions will be healed, her bleeding wounds will be stanchd, her internal conflicts will have ceased; "Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim any more;" and the harsh sounds of strife, now so loud and discordant, be lost in the sweet strains of peace and love floating from every lip; yet is the Church at this moment essentially one and indivisible. Not, then, in a unity of creed, or of ecclesiastical polity, does the real unity of the Church consist, but in the "unity of the Spirit," that unity sustained by the "bond of peace."

She has been baptized, not into one form of church government, or into one system of doctrinal truth, but "by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, whether we are bond or free; and have all been made to drink into the same Spirit." The "one Spirit" regenerating all the children of God, fashioning their hearts alike, uniting them by a living faith to the Head, equally dwelling in, teaching and guiding, comforting and sanctifying them, demonstrates the perfect oneness of Christ's body.

And thus, then, when an individual crosses our path in whom the spirit of Jesus breathes, who manifests a union to the Head, and who speaks the language and bears the image of the Father, and a resemblance to the one family, be his climate and color, be his name and minor points of creed, what they may, it becomes our solemn duty, as it is our great privilege, to extend to him the recognition, and to greet him with the tender and holy affection of the one brotherhood. In the Lord's eye he is a member of His body, and he should be so in ours.

And if, refusing to own the relationship, we withdraw the hand of Christian love, we render our own regeneration doubtful, we wound and grieve and deny the Spirit in him. It is written, yes, it is written by the pen of the Holy Spirit, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God; and every one that loves Him that begat, loves Him also that is begotten by Him." I would recur to what may be considered one of the most fruitful and painful causes of the defective Christian union which so much mars the beauty and impairs the moral power of the Church of God in our day.

I allude to the great distance from Christ which characterizes the spiritual walk of so many believers. The effect of this upon the operation of Christian love is obvious. A distance in spirit from the Head, leads to a distance in spirit from the members of the body. As with the beams of the sun, the further they recede from their center, the wider are they separated from each other; so it is with the "children of the light." Each believer is a solar beam- an emanation from the Sun of Righteousness.

The more remote he lives from Christ- the center of the soul- the wider will he be alienated in affection and in spirit from the members of Christ. His eye less simply and constantly looking unto Jesus, his sense of union to, and communion with, Him weakened, love waning, faith declining, there will of necessity be a lessening attachment to the Church of Christ. But the converse, oh, how precious! The rays of light reflected back to the sun, meeting and rejoicing in their center, meet and rejoice in themselves.

So with the saints. Drawn closer to Jesus- our wandering steps retraced- restored by those sanctifying unfoldings of the cross, which the Spirit delights to impart, the eye of penitence and faith, swimming though it be in tears, once more turned on Christ, love rekindled in the heart, oh, how will the affections, in their fondest and holiest power, go forth towards "all them who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!" His image will be their passport to our hearts; His name will secure their welcome to our homes.

Have you felt, dear reader, the sanctifying, cementing power of the Redeemer's love in your heart? Then, with all affectionate fidelity is the question proposed- how far do you deem yourself justified in regarding with frigid affection and distance of spirit any believer in Jesus, or in declining communion at the throne of grace, or alliance and confederation in the cause of our common Lord, with any portion of the Church of God, on the plea of a lack of ecclesiastical uniformity, or unity of doctrinal creed as a basis of union?

Is this the unity of the Church spoken of in the word of God? Are you prepared for the result to which this plea for separation will lead you? Are you willing to defend it on a dying-bed, and go with it to the judgment-seat of Christ? Examine it in the light of God's word, and see where it springs, what is its nature, and what are its tendencies. Remember the words of our Lord, in His reply to the disciple who frowned upon an expression of zeal for the glory of Christ, because it was not from one of their own party- "And Jesus said, Forbid him not; for there is no man who shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of me."

And is it not a solemn thought, that in turning our back upon any holy, consistent member of Christ, we turn our back upon Christ Himself; and that in standing aloof from any holy confederation or Christian enterprise for the advancement of His truth and kingdom, because its promoters follow not with us, our very neutrality may be justly interpreted as criminal indifference, and our refusal to lend our cooperation, an act of hostility to Him whose subjects we profess to be! Oh that for the "divisions of Reuben there were great searchings of heart!"

Yes, Jesus is the "corner stone" of the one Church, and the more firmly we build on, and the more closely we adhere to Him, the more tenderly and closely will the hearts of all the saints be "knit together in love." Precious Jesus! draw us nearer to Yourself; then shall we be drawn nearer to Your one family, redeemed by Your most precious blood! "A sure foundation," is the last quality of excellence specified concerning this precious Stone. As if, in so momentous a matter as the salvation of the soul, to remove all lingering doubt from the mind, to annihilate all imaginary and shadowy conceptions of Jesus, Jehovah, the great Builder of the Church, declares the foundation thus laid to be a real and substantial one.

Confidently here may the weary rest, and the sinner build his hope of heaven. All is sure. Sure that the word he credits is true- sure that the invitation that woos him is sincere- sure that the welcome extended to him is cordial. Sure, in coming to Jesus, of free forgiveness, of full justification, of complete and eternal acceptance with the reconciled God. Sure that, in renouncing all self-dependence, and building high his hope of glory on this foundation, he "shall not be ashamed nor confounded, world without end."

All, too, is sure to the believer in the covenant of grace, of which Jesus is the Surety and Mediator. Every promise is sure- the full supply of all our needs- the daily efficacy of the atoning blood- the answer to our prayers, though long delayed- the hope of being forever with Jesus- all, all is certain and sure, because based on Jesus, and springing from the heart of the unchangeable God, and confirmed by the oath of Him who has said, "Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David."

There is yet another prophecy of our glorious Redeemer, as remarkable for its literal fulfilment as for its affecting nature and solemn instruction. It is that He should be a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offence," and that Jew and Gentile should be confederated against Him. "And He shall be . . . for a stone of stumbling, and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel." "Israel, who followed after the law of righteousness, have not attained to the law of righteousness.

Why? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law: for they stumbled at that stumbling stone; as it is written, Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offence." What a literal fulfilment has this prophecy received! To the Jews, once God's favorite people; now a "nation scattered and peeled," wandering over the face of the earth- for where have human footsteps trodden that the Israelite has not penetrated? "without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim," but in whose history promises of mercy and restoration are strangely blended with predictions of their apostasy and dispersion; even to them has the Messiah ever been, as He now is, a "stone of stumbling and a rock of offence."

But not Jews only- Jews and Gentiles confederated together against the Son of God, form a gloomy portion of prophetic announcement, containing a yet more mournful shadow- a large portion of the Gospel record. "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed." "And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together, for before they were at enmity between themselves." Compare these passages with Acts 4. 8-11.

How striking and solemn the instruction conveyed in this incident! Pilate and Herod, standing in the attitude of the deadliest hate to each other, are now made friends! And what strange, but mighty power has thus suddenly subdued their animosity, and turned their hatred into love? What mystic chain has drawn and bound together these hostile rulers? Their mutual and deep enmity against Jesus! Believers in Christ! are the enemies of our glorious Redeemer, inspired by a natural and kindred feeling of hatred, induced to forget their private quarrels, and merge their differences in one common confederation to crush the Son of God, the object of their mutual hostility- and shall not the friends of the Redeemer, constrained by that Divine principle of love which dwells in the hearts of all who are born of God, quench their heart-burnings, bury their antipathies, and draw more closely together, in one holy, vigorous, and determined alliance to exalt the Son of God, the glorious and precious Object of their mutual affection?

Oh, if Jesus is the bond of union to those who hate Him, how much more should He be the bond of union to those who love Him! Beneath His cross how should all unholy jealousy, and bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and uncharitableness, be mourned over, confessed, abhorred, and renounced by the

children of the one family; and how should all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, be unhesitatingly and cordially recognized as such, thus "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!"

What a distinct prophetic view had Isaiah also of the NATURE AND GLORY OF THE REDEEMER'S WORK! He thus foretells it: "Behold, the Lord has proclaimed unto the end of the world, Say you to the daughter of Zion, Behold, your salvation comes; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him." And he thus describes it: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound."

We can with difficulty realize, as the eye traces this evangelical declaration, that we are reading the prophecy, and not its fulfilment; the shadowy writings of the Old, and not the noontide revelation of the New Testament, so luminous with the Gospel, so fragrant with the name, so replete with the work, of Jesus is it. Oh, what tidings of joy and gladness are here to the heart-broken, burdened captive! Could announcements be more suited to his case, more appropriate to his circumstances, more soothing to his heart?

Here, from the very heart of the Bible, Jesus Himself speaks. And never, in the days of His flesh, when preaching from the mountain, or in the synagogue, were sweeter sounds uttered from His lips than these. This was the work that was before Him, to seek and to save lost sinners, to save them as sinners, to rend asunder their chains, to deliver them from their captivity, and to introduce them into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. THE QUIET, LOWLY, UNOSTENTATIOUS CHARACTER OF JESUS, blending with the most exquisite tenderness of heart, the pen of the evangelical prophet with equal vividness and beauty portrays.

"He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause His voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench." Compare this beautiful prophecy with Matt. 12. 15-20. Could the fulfilment be more perfect? Was not the entire life of our Lord in exact harmony with this prophetic portrait? Did not the glory of His lowly life, which Isaiah saw with a prophet's far-reaching eye, illumine, as with a living light, every step and every act of His history!

Verily it did! Truly might He say, "Learn from me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." The most sublime miracles, the most stupendous exertions of power, and the most brilliant displays of philanthropy, on which a self-aggrandizing man would have established successfully his claims to profound and universal homage, He only referred to as sustaining the glory of His Father in His Divine mission; while all earthly honor and temporal power that might have accrued separately to Himself He utterly rejected, veiling His own person in the deep folds of that humility which clothed Him as a garment.

Shrinking from the intense gaze of a delighted multitude, and from the murmuring breath of popular applause, He would vanish as in a moment from the scene of His benevolence, either to lavish His boundless compassion on other and more wretched objects of suffering and woe, or to hide Himself amid the gloom and solitude of the desert. Never was humility like Yours, meek and lowly Lamb of God! Subdue this hated self in us- lay low this pride- suppress these inward risings, and draw, in fairer and deeper lines, Your own image on our souls!

The limits of this chapter will not permit us any further to linger amid these delightful twilight unfoldings of the Redeemer's glory; else it would be easy, and perhaps profitable, to show how distinctly were foretold, and how literally were fulfilled, all the events and circumstances associated with His mysterious

humiliation, sufferings, and death. There are, however, two points connected with Isaiah's unfolding of the prophetic glory of the Redeemer, too instructive in the spiritual and important truth which they convey to be entirely overlooked.

It will be observed, that John observes of Isaiah that he saw the glory of Christ. "These things said Elijah, when he saw His glory." The glory of the Redeemer has ever been an object visible to the spiritual eye. What the evangelist here records of the prophet, he also avers of himself and his fellow disciples. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory." Here is a point of vital moment, entering deeply into the very soul of experimental Christianity.

May the Spirit of all truth give us a clear and solemn perception of it! If a man sees not the glory of Christ, we hesitate not to say of him, that with regard to all other spiritual objects he is totally blind- he is yet a stranger to the illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit. To see the Redeemer's glory, the eye must be spiritual; a spiritual object being only discerned by a spiritual organ. Hence the apostle prays in behalf of the Ephesian Christians, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: that the eyes of your understanding being enlightened."

So self-evident is this truth, that a lengthened argument to establish it would seem unnecessary. As an intellectual mind alone can grapple with an abstruse problem in science, and as a mechanical genius alone is fitted to comprehend the movements of a complicated piece of mechanism, so, in revealed truth there must be an adaptation of the mind to the nature of the truth investigated. The eyes of the understanding must be enlightened; the soul must be brought into harmony with Divine truth, or rather into harmony with the God of truth.

We are willing to concede, that to a man of intellect and taste, there is much of the Scriptures of truth peculiarly and powerfully attractive. The literature of the Bible, confessedly of the loftiest character, is especially alluring to such a mind. The beauty of its diction- the boldness of its conception- the richness of its imagery- the profoundness of its philosophy- the sublimity of its poetry- the antiquity of its history, conspire to throw around it an interest and a charm peculiarly fascinating to a man of profound thought, to the philosopher, the poet, and the historian.

It is just possible enough for an individual to study the Bible as he would study any branch of human science, or investigate the authenticity of any historical document: he may perceive the beauty of its evidence, and feel the power of its demonstration, and this shall be the utmost limit of his knowledge of the word of God! The "sword of the Spirit" maybe so sheathed in the intellect, or wreathed with the flowers of a poetic fancy, that the heart may never have felt the keenness of its double edge, piercing and separating it from its sinful and idolatrous self.

"For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart." We will venture a step further. As a natural man, I may, on certain indisputable evidence, admit the Bible to be a record from God. I may give to its sublime revelations my firm credence, to its Divine character my profound reverence, to its pure ethics my warmest admiration, and to its holy doctrines my strongest adherence and most zealous advocacy.

I may believe Jesus to be no impostor, and His religion no cunningly devised fable, and His name the only name given under heaven whereby we may be saved, and yet remain totally blind to the true glory of the

Redeemer! All the while that I am thus examining the outworks of Christianity, or traversing the outer courts of the great sanctuary of truth, I have not yet taken a single step within the sanctuary of my own bosom, exploring its hidden plague, and searching out that direst of all evils that ever tainted and ruined a finite creature- the heart's natural, deep, and deadly enmity against God!

Blind to my own guilt, wretchedness, and woe, is it a thing incredible that I should be blind to the true glory of the Savior; and that to me His obedience, sufferings, and death- facts of transcendent magnitude and importance, interwoven with my dearest interests, and kindling an undying light around my every step to eternity- should be to me but as the dreams of my boyhood? So true is it, "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

But, enlightened by the Spirit of God, the believer beholds the glory of Jesus. Brought to see no glory in himself, yes, nothing but deformity in that on which the eye once so complacently rested; the glory of the Redeemer, as it is reflected in His person, in His atoning blood and justifying righteousness, His infinite fulness of grace to pardon and to sanctify, fills now the entire scope of his moral vision, and lifts his soul in admiring and adoring thoughts of the holiness and love of God!

More than this, such is its transforming influence, he comes to be a partaker, in a degree, of that very glory which has arrested his eye and ravished his heart. On him the glory of the Lord has shined, the Sun of Righteousness has risen, he rises from the dust, and shines arrayed in garments of light from Christ's reflecting light. A sight of Jesus assimilates the soul to His Spirit: a contemplation of His beauty transforms the believer more and more into the "child of the light;" and thus perpetually "looking unto Jesus," the path he treads kindles and glows with an increasing effulgence, until its luster expands into perfect, cloudless day.

"We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The medium through which the spiritual eye beholds the glory of Christ, is faith. It is a hidden glory until the Eternal Spirit imparts this mighty principle to the soul. The eye of reason cannot discern it, the eye of intellect and of sense cannot behold it- it remains a veiled thing, 'dark with excessive brightness,' until God the Holy Spirit utters His voice, "Let there be light."

"Abraham," says Christ, "rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." At that remote period, how did he see it? -by faith. Through the long and dreary vista of advancing ages he saw the day dawning, the sun rising. By faith he beheld Jesus approaching. He saw His blood, His righteousness, and his own interest there, "and he was glad." The beamy prospect dilated the patriarch's heart with joy. Oh yes, a sight of Jesus by faith, be it distant and dim, be it shadowy and imperfect, fills the soul with ineffable gladness, lights up its onward way, sweetens its solitude; enlivens its loneliness, and soothes it amid its deepest sorrows.

Isaiah not only beheld the glory of Christ, but he also "spoke of it." While he mused upon the wondrous sight, "the fire burned, then spoke he with his tongue." He could not but speak of that which he saw and felt. And who can behold the glory of the Redeemer, and not speak of it? Who can see His beauty and not extol it- who can taste His love and not laud it? "Come," will be the invitation, "see a man who told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" The Church of old, as her eye wandered over the beauties of her Lord, broke forth in expressions of wonder and praise; and, after particularizing and extolling these beauties, she then exclaims, as if all language were exhausted, "Yes, He is altogether lovely."

This is my beloved, and this is my friend." "In His temple does every one speak of His glory." So did the sweet singer of Israel. "I will speak of the glorious honor of Your majesty, and of Your wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Your terrible acts; and I will declare Your greatness. They shall abundantly utter the memory of Your great goodness, and shall sing of Your righteousness. They shall speak of the glory of Your kingdom, and talk of Your power; to make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom."

"We beheld His glory," is the testimony of John. And in his preface to his First Epistle he could testify, "That which we have seen and heard (of the Word of life) declare we unto you." Yes, the saints of the Most High must speak of the King in His beauty. They are constrained to show forth His praise, and tell of His love and loveliness, who is to them more precious than the gold of Ophir; yes, dearer than life itself. The Pharisee may murmur, the worldling may scorn, and the cold-hearted professor may rebuke; yet, "if these should hold their peace," who have been redeemed by His most precious blood, and who are looking forward to His second appearing, as an event which will fully introduce them to His glory, and conform them to His likeness, "the stones would immediately cry out."

Some important CONCLUSIONS flow from the subject which it has been the attempt of this chapter to unfold. The first that it suggests to the mind is, the perfect harmony of the Old and the New Testaments, thus confirming our faith in the Divine authenticity of the Scriptures of truth. Upon what other ground can we account for this singular agreement of the Word with itself, and for this exact and literal fulfilment of its predictions, but on that of its divinity? "Your word is truth," is the glorious and triumphant inference fairly deducible from a fact so striking and self-evident as this.

And in what particular is this beautiful harmony especially seen? -in exalting the Lamb of God. The Old and the New Testament Scriptures of truth do for Christ, what Pilate and Herod did against Him- they confederate together. They unite in a holy alliance, in a sublime unity of purpose, to show forth the glory of the incarnate God. Divine book! Precious volume! Behold an illustration of what the Church of the living God should be, a transparent body, illumined with the glory of Immanuel, and scattering its beams of light and beauty over the surface of a lost and benighted world.

How much does a perfect representation of the glory of the Redeemer by the Church depend upon her visible union! A mirror broken into a thousand fragments, cannot reflect the glory of the sun with the same brilliancy, power, and effect, as if a perfect whole. Nor can the Church of God, dismembered, divided, and broken, present to the world the same harmonious, convincing, and effective testimony to the glory of Jesus, as when, in her unimpaired oneness, she is seen "looking forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Oh then, by all that is fragrant in the name of Jesus, by all that is sanctifying in His glory and attractive in His cross, by all that is sweet and persuasive in Christian love, by all that is solemn in the near approach of death and eternity, and by all that is blissful in the hope of eternal life, springing from the one atonement, reader, seek to promote the visible unity of Christ's Church. Resolve, beneath the cross, and by the grace of God, that you will not be a hindrance to the accomplishment of so blessed, so holy an end.

Hold the faith with a firm hand, but hold it in righteousness. Speak the truth with all boldness, but speak it in love. Concede to others what you claim for yourself- the right of private judgment, and the free exercise of an enlightened conscience. And where you see the image of Jesus reflected, the love of Jesus influencing, and the glory of Jesus simply and solely sought, there extend your hand, offer your heart,

breathe your blessing and your prayer. Oh, this were to be like Christ; and to be like Christ is grace below, and glory above!

This subject, of momentous importance, admits of an individual application. Reader, what do you think of Christ? What are your apprehensions of His glory, as it has thus far been placed before you? Do you see beauty, surpassing beauty, in Emmanuel? Has His glory broken upon your view? Has it beamed in upon your mind? Has a sight of Jesus, seen by faith, cast you in the dust, exclaiming, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear: but now my eye sees You. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes"?

Your honest reply to these searching questions will decide the nature and the ground of your present hope for eternity. On the confines of that eternity you are now standing. Solemn consideration! It is of infinite moment, then, that your views of the Son of God should be thoroughly examined, sifted, and compared with the inspired word. A crown now lowered on your brow, a kingdom stretched at your feet, a world gained and grasped, were as infants' baubles, compared with the tremendous interest involved in the question, "What do you think of Christ?"

And what do you think of Him? Is He all your salvation and all your desire? Have you laid sinful self and righteous self beneath His cross? and in all your poverty, nakedness, and vileness, have you received Him as made of God unto you, "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption"? Does His glory dim all other glory; and does His beauty eclipse all other beauty in your eye? Can you point to Him and say, in the humble confidence of faith and joy of love, "This is my Beloved, and this is my Friend"?

Eternal God! but for the righteousness of Your Son, I sink in all my pollution! but for the atoning blood of Emmanuel, I perish in all my guilt! Holy Father, look not on me, but behold my Shield, and look upon the face of your Anointed! And when Your glory passes by- the glory of Your majesty, Your holiness, and Your justice- then put me in the cleft of the rock, and cover me with Your hand while You pass by. Cultivate frequent and devout contemplations of the glory of Christ.

Immense will be the benefit accruing to your soul. The mind thus preoccupied, filled, and expanded, will be enabled to present a stronger resistance to the ever advancing and insidious encroachments of the world without. No place will be found for vain thoughts, and no desire or time for carnal enjoyments. Oh, how crucifying and sanctifying are clear views of the glory of Emmanuel! How emptying, humbling, and abasing! With the patriarch, we then exclaim, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

And with the prophet, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips . . . My eyes have seen the King." And with the apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." Oh, then, aim to get your mind filled with enlarged and yet expanding views of the glory of the Redeemer. Let it, in all the discoveries it affords of the Divine mind and majesty, be the one subject of your thoughts, the one theme of your conversation.

Place no limit to your knowledge of Christ. Ever consider that you have but read the preface to the volume, you have but touched the margin of the sea. Stretching far away beyond you, are undiscovered beauties, and precious views, and sparkling glories, each encouraging your advance, inviting your research, and asking the homage of your faith, the tribute of your love, and the dedication of your life. Go forward, then! The glories that yet must be revealed to you in a growing knowledge of Jesus, what imagination can conceive, what pen can describe them?

"You shall see greater things than these," is the promise that bids you advance. Jesus stands ready to unveil all the beauties of His person- and to admit you into the very arcade of His love. There is not a chamber of His heart that He will not throw open to you; not a blessing that He will not bestow upon you; not a glory that He will not show to you. You shall see greater things than you have yet seen: greater depths of sin in your fallen nature shall be revealed; deeper sense of the cleansing efficacy of the atoning blood shall be felt; clearer views of your acceptance in the Beloved; greater discoveries of God's love; and greater depths of grace and glory in Jesus shall be enjoyed.

Your communion with God shall be closer, and more the fruit of adopting love in your heart; your feet shall be as hinds' feet, and you shall walk on your high places. Your "peace shall flow as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." Sorrow shall wound you less deeply; affliction shall press you less heavily; tribulation shall affect you less keenly; all this, and infinitely more, will result from your deeper knowledge of Jesus. Ah, wonder not that the heaving, panting, thirsting soul of the apostle exclaimed, "Doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Let your life be a clear reflection of the glory of the Redeemer. The saints of God are the only witnesses to this glory- the only reflectors the Lord has in this dark and Christ-denying world. HOLINESS, springing from the fount of the Spirit's indwelling grace, cherished and matured by close views of the cross, and imparting a character of sanctity and beauty to every act of your life, will be the highest testimony you can bear to the Redeemer's glory.

That glory is intrusted to your hands. It is committed to your guardianship. Seeing, then, that it is so, "what manner of people ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness"! How exact in principles, and upright in conduct- how watchful over temper, and how vigilant where most assailed, how broad awake to the wiles of the devil, and how watchful against the encroachments of sin- how strict in all transactions with the world; and how tender, and charitable, and meek, and forgiving, in all our conduct with the saints!

Alas! we are at best but dim reflectors of this great glory of our Lord. We are unworthy and unfaithful depositories of so rich a treasure! How much of clinging infirmity, of unmortified sin, of carelessness of spirit, of unsanctified temper, of tampering with temptation, of a lack of strict integrity and uprightness, dims our light, neutralizes our testimony for God, and weakens, if not entirely destroys, our spiritual influence! We are not more eminently useful, because we are not more eminently holy.

We bring so little glory to Christ, because we seek so much our own. We reflect so faint and flickering a beam, because our posture is so seldom that of the apocalyptic angel, "standing in the sun." We realize so imperfectly our oneness with, and standing in, Christ; and this will ever foster a feeble, fruitless, and drooping profession of Christianity. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can you, except you abide in me." Oh to know more of this abiding in Christ!

See how Jesus invites His saints to it. Are they fallen? He bids them take hold of His strength. Are they burdened? He bids them cast that burden on His arm. Are they wearied? He bids them recline on Him for rest. Does the world persecute them, do the "daughters of Jerusalem" smite them, does the watchman treat them unkindly? He bids them take refuge within the hallowed sanctuary of His own pierced and loving heart. Do they need grace? He bids them sink their empty vessel beneath the depths of His ocean fulness, and draw freely "more grace."

Whatever corruptions distress them, whatever temptations assail them, whatever adversity grieves them, whatever cloud darkens them, whatever necessity presses upon them; as the watchful Shepherd, as the tender Brother, as the faithful Friend, as the great High Priest, He bids His saints draw near, and repose in His love. Oh, He has a capacious bosom: there is room, there is a chamber in that heart for you, my Christian reader! Do not think your lot is desolate, and lonely, and friendless.

Do not think that all have forsaken you, and that in sadness and in solitude you are threading your way through an intricate desert. There is One that loves you, that thinks of you, that has His eye upon you, and is at this moment guiding, upholding, and caring for you: that one is Jesus! Oh that you could but look into His heart, and see how He loves you; oh that you could but hear Him say, so gently, so earnestly, "Abide in my love!" Cheer up; you are in Christ's heart, and Christ is in your heart.

You are not alone: your God, even your Father, is with you. Your Shepherd guides you; the Comforter spreads around you His wings, and heaven is bright before you. Soon you will be there. The pilgrim will repose his weary limbs; the voyager will be moored in his harbor of rest; the warrior will put off his armor, and shout his song of triumph. Then look up! Christ is yours, God is yours, heaven is yours. If God is for you, who can be against you? And if you find disappointment in created good, it will but endear Jesus; and if you know more of the inward plague, it will but drive you to the atoning blood; and if you have storms and tempests, they will but shorten the voyage, and waft you the quicker to glory. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift!"

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