BIBLE TREASURY VOLUME 11

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Bible Treasury Volume 11, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

186 Chapters

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Chapter 0

Bible Treasury Volume 11

Notes on 1 Chronicles 13-17

God is graciously pleased to reveal Himself in different ways and at different times. He formerly made Himself known by prophets, but in these last times He has manifested Himself in His Son; and in whatever way He has chosen to reveal Himself, He has been rejected in them all.

For instance, the ark was the sign of the presence of Jehovah in the midst of His people; well, the ark was abandoned (1 Sam. 7:2), just as to-day the Holy Spirit, by which God is in the midst of His people, is despised. God was then present by the ark as He is to-day by the Holy Ghost, and as He was rejected by the abandonment of the ark, He is rejected to-day, in as far as the Spirit is not honored.

But although the people might thus have forgotten and despised Jehovah, David could have no joy nor rest until the ark was brought back, and the presence of the Lord recognized. He knew that peace and blessing are only to be had where God is, and longed ardently for His presence. We have the cry of David's soul in Psa. 63 “And let us bring again the ark of our God to us; for we inquired not at it in the days of Saul.” (Ver. 8.)

The king's great occupation was to seek how he could accomplish that which he had in his heart; and we see in the first and fourth verses that he consulted all the people, and that they agreed to his proposal. But although it was a holy desire in David and in Israel for the return of the ark, it ought only to have been accomplished according to the will of God, who alone could teach them how they ought to set about it in order that His name might be glorified. But David's having consulted the people, instead of consulting the Lord, caused the ark of God to be brought upon a new cart from the house of Abinadab, “and Uzza and Ahio drave the cart.” (Ver. 7.)

All this was bad, for it was against the commandment of the Lord, and God could neither recognize nor bless this act. He had said that the ark ought to be borne by the children of Kohath, that is to say, by the Levites (Num. 4:15), and if David had consulted the Lord, he would have been taught about this, and the ark would have been neither placed on a cart nor conducted by Uzza and Ahio; but David took counsel with the people and they executed their holy desire according to their own thoughts, and not according to God's. Uzza acted also on the same principle; he was not led by the Lord to hold the ark, but by his own judgment. He was not a man who felt his weakness and who allowed himself to be ruled and guided by the Lord, and consequently he put forth his hand and touched the ark. Thus every child of God who puts his hand to the Lord's work, presuming that he is able to act in his own strength, resembles Uzza. It is God alone who is to be glorified, and it is He alone who can say how He wishes to be glorified; and if David had inquired of Him, he would have learned that God would glorify Himself.

We see in verso 10 what were the sad consequences of Uzza's conduct, and in verse 11 we see that David was greatly afflicted at the breach the Lord made upon Uzza; but it was needful for him to learn in this way, that we have to wait and let the Lord do His work in His own way. May we also keep this instruction, of which we all have need, and not act in our own strength! Let us remember

that Uzza drew upon himself the wrath of God by putting his hand to the ark. All the work was spoiled by his folly: the ark instead of being brought in triumph was put aside and placed in the house of Obed-Edom, and all this because in the first place David had not consulted the Lord, and secondly Uzza acted himself instead of letting the Lord act.

These circumstances were calculated to humble David greatly: he was first afflicted, then afraid of God (vers. 11, 12); but all that happened taught him wherein he had failed. Thus we see in the following chapter (xiv.) that he acted very differently.

The Philistines having spread themselves in the valley of Rephaim (Ver. 9), did David assemble all his army and prepare immediately for battle? No, he consulted God, saying, “Shall I show myself against the Philistines, and wilt Thou deliver them into my hand?” Now it is no more the people that David consults, it is the Lord; thus the consequence is very different from that of the first circumstance. In chapter 13:11 the breach is made in the midst of David's people; but here it is made in the midst of his enemies, for God acts for him. (Chap. 14:11.)

We may be very zealous for the glory of God; but the greater our zeal is, the more harm it will do if it is not according to knowledge; we shall spoil everything like David in chapter 13 if we do not understand our incapacity and dependence; and we can only acquire the knowledge that we need, in order that our zeal be not destructive, by consulting the Lord.

A remarkable thing is, that trials and chastisement are always needed to bring us back to God's order: it was in the midst of much affliction that David learned God's intention, and these afflictions served to make the lesson he had received penetrate deeply into his soul. In chapter 14:13, 14, we see that, the Philistines having again returned, David again consults the Lord. This time the Lord does not say to David to go up to the Philistines and that he will have the victory, for God wished to prove him still more. God told him not to go up to his enemies, but to wait for a noise in the tops of the mulberry trees. What had the mulberry trees to do with the battle? Nothing, but God Wanted to be recognized; this was the lesson that David further learned. He obeyed the Lord; and we see the consequence was, that the Lord was glorified and David's reputation spread abroad. David having owned the Lord, the Lord could everywhere own David.

What magnificent instruction is found in these chapters! May we keep it and be led by it every day in order that God may be glorified in us. Let us remember to leave God to do His own work, and if He wish to use us for something, what we have to do is, to consult Him about it, and not So-and-so. Thus, instead of putting obstacles in the way of His work, we shall be blessed in that which He will do through us.

In chapter 15:2 David says, “None ought to carry the ark of the Lord but the Levites.” He remembers his fall, and the lesson is learned; he applies himself now to act according to God's intention; thus we see, the work of the man no longer spoils that of God, and God is glorified, the people are joyful, the ark of the Lord has again taken its place in their midst, and the blessing is so great that the psalms which they sing are those which will be sung in the millennium, when the Lord will return to Israel. (Vers. 25-29.) In chapter 16:7-23 they sing Psa. 105 and from verses 23 to 83 they sing Psa. 96. How different are the results which we find in chapter 13, where David acts by himself without consulting the Lord, and he and all his people are plunged into affliction! But, here, where it is God who acts, the blessing is so great that David and all his people call on

the heavens and earth to rejoice at it.

In chapter 17 we again see a holy desire in David: he wished to build a house for the ark, but was this the will of God?" Nathan told David to do all that was in his heart. (Ver. 2.) Ah, Nathan had not learned the lesson, for he answered without learning from the Lord His intention, and in the same night God charged him to go and tell David, "Thou shalt not build me an house to dwell in." David wished to give something to the Lord, but the Lord was going to give to him. David wanted to build a house for the

Lord, but the Lord was going to build one for David. (Ver. 10.) "For it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35), and giving is God's part. This is another lesson that David learned. The Lord does not need us to bless Him but He is pleased to bless us: what He asks of us is to sit at Jesus' feet and receive the abundant grace He bestows on us. From verse 16 to 21, one sees that David has understood this lesson; his thoughts are no more, as at the beginning of the chapter, occupied with the construction of a house, but with God Himself (ver. 20); and he is humble and grateful before the Lord. All that he says in these verses shows that he has learned of God; he thinks no more of himself, nor his zeal, nor his projects, he has forgotten all that is of himself in thinking of the Lord. Oh let us imitate David in this! May our thoughts center in God and we shall no longer be occupied with ourselves, nor with what we wish to do. (Vers. 5, 6-8.)

Let us remark another very touching truth in these verses. So long as Jehovah's people crossed the desert and had enemies to fight, Jehovah had no resting place on the earth, and journeyed in the tabernacle with His people, "In all their affliction he was afflicted." (Isa. 63:9.) And it was only when His people could rest that God allowed them to build Him a house wherein He might rest.

Chapter 2

Notes on 1 Corinthians 9:1-14

The apostle now enters on the vindication of his office which some in Corinth had sought to undermine and of ministry in general which they tended to corrupt. Title is asserted, but with full room for grace. For ministry is of Christ the Lord, not of the first man, and the spirit of man or of the world if allowed is its ruin.

“Am I not free? am I not an apostle? have I not seen Jesus our Lord? my work are not ye in [the] Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet at least I am to you; for the seal of my apostleship ye are in [the] Lord. My defense to those that examine me is this. Have we not authority to eat and drink? have we not authority to take about a sister wife, as also the other apostles and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas? or I alone and Barnabas, have we not authority to abstain from working [lit. not to work]?” (Vers. 16.)

Most strongly had he declared his readiness to give up anything for natural life rather than jeopardize his brother. Yet does he affirm his independence of human yoke as distinctly as his apostleship. Liberty thus went hand in hand with the highest responsibility. Nor was his office vague or secondary. He had seen Jesus our Lord. His detractors were thus far right: he had derived no degree from the apostolic college, no mission from Jerusalem. From the twelve others might pretend to succession, and falsely: Paul had his authority immediately from the Lord seen on high. Were the Corinthians the men to question this?—the “much people” whom the Lord had in that city? whom Paul had begotten through the gospel? Was this their love in the Spirit? If not an apostle to others, surely such should not deny it who were its seal in the Lord. But what may not the saint do or say who slips out of the Lord's presence? Too, too like Jeremiah's figs; the good figs, very good; and the evil, very evil, that cannot be eaten, they are so evil. In none is evil worse than in the Christian. The corruption of the best thing is not the least corruption. Was it come to this, that Paul was put on his trial, on the preliminary inquiry at least, to see whether an action would lie against him, and that he had to make his plea or speech in defense to his own Corinthian children in the faith? He then asserts the title of an apostle, as we may say too in general of him who ministers in the word, and here in the gospel particularly. “Have we not authority to eat and drink?” that is, right to maintenance. “Have we not authority to take about a sister wife, as also the other apostles and the brethren in the Lord and Cephas?” that is, not only to marry a sister but to introduce her where he himself went, an object of loving care to the saints with himself. So it was with the apostles in general, notably with the Lord's brethren or kinsmen and above all with Peter. (See Matt. 8:14.) “Or I only and Barnabas, have we not authority not to work?” This is the alternative ordinarily where support is not given. But the saints should never take advantage of the grace that foregoes such a title to relax in their own plain and positive duty. To cut off the plausible self-seeking of false apostles who wished to ingratiate themselves and to insinuate evil against the true, the apostle did not use his title, especially at Corinth, but wrought with his own hands, as it would seem Barnabas did also. But he is careful to lay down as unquestionable the title of the spiritual workman to a living for himself and his family.

Very fittingly does this follow his exhortation in the preceding chapter, where he reproves such an use of liberty as might stumble the weak. It was certainly not so with him who did not even use his right to support when in their midst; so had he done as to marriage (1 Cor. 7) through all his career in order to serve the Lord the more undividedly; even as he could tell the Ephesian elders at a later day how they themselves knew that his hands had ministered to his wants and the wants of those who were with him, and had shown them everyway that so toiling we ought to come in aid of the weak and call to mind the words of the Lord Jesus, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

But he proceeds to show that even nature teaches better than to neglect those who serve the Lord in His saints or gospel. “Whoever serveth in war at his own charges? Who planteth a vineyard and eateth not of its fruit? or who tendeth a flock and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Do I speak these things as a man, or doth not the law also say these things? For in the law of Moses it is written, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that is treading out corn. Is it for the oxen that God careth, or doth he say it altogether on our account? For it was written on our account, because the plower ought to plow in hope and the thresher in hope of partaking. If we sowed for you the spiritual things, [is it] a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things? If others partake of the authority over you, should not we more? But we used not this authority, but bear all things that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of the Christ. Know ye not that those that minister about the holy things eat of the temple and those that attend the altar share with the altar? So also the Lord ordained those that announce the gospel to live of the gospel.” (Vers. 7-14).

All live on the return of their work, soldier, husbandman, shepherd. The propriety of this, according to man, is unimpeachable: did the law of God speak otherwise? It is even stronger in the same direction; and if He spoke of not muzzling the ox when treading out corn, He had not cattle in view but His people, His servants in the word. The figure is kept up accurately. The plower ought to plow in hope, and the thresher (ought to thresh) in hope of partaking, the last phrase being more appropriate when the time for a share was obviously near.

There is also, it may be well to notice, in verse 11 a guard against him who would object that the analogy falls, in that the laborer thus specified received in kind, whereas the spiritual laborer might need help in the things of this life. The apostle meets the senseless or selfish cavil by showing the duty of a recompense a fortiori, as what is of the Spirit transcends what is of flesh. If we for you sowed the spiritual, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal?” He appeals in verse 12 to their own practice as owning the title of others. “If others partake of the authority over you, should not we more?” He takes care however to show that he was wholly above selfish aims in thus pleading for the spiritual laborer and his title to support: “Yet we used not this authority, but bear all things that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of the Christ.” He would plead for others and their title, and the duty of the saints ministered to on a right consideration of the work done; but he used not the right for himself, on the contrary bearing all sorts of trial in order to afford no hindrance to the gospel.

Lastly the apostle draws a testimony from the Levitical system in contrast as it is in many respects with the gospel, in that it identified the ministrants with what was brought into the temple and laid on the altar. Jehovah being the part and inheritance of the priestly name among the sons of Israel, He gave them a share in His offerings and sacrifices. So now under the gospel the Lord forgets not those who preach it but appoints them to derive their maintenance from it, though there may

be exceptional cases as in his who has written the rule for us.

Notes in 1 Corinthians 9:15-27

The apostle had now affirmed the principle. It was for others however, not for himself. He is careful to make this understood by the Corinthians. He had written in love for the glory of the Lord, “but,” says he, “I have used none of these things. And I have not written these things that it should be thus in my case, for [it were] good for me to die rather than that any one should make vain my boast. For if I preach the gospel I have nothing to boast, for necessity is laid upon me, for woe is to me if I preach not the gospel. For if I do this willingly, I have a reward; but if I unwillingly, I have an administration entrusted to me.” (Vers. 15-17.) Divine love cares for others, and sacrifices self. The apostle was the living exemplification of the gospel he preached. There were rights, and grace does not forget them for others—does not avail itself of them. He is even warm in repudiating any such thought in the present case. It was living Christ so to feel and act, who taught that it was more blessed to give than to receive. His own life and death were the fullness of its truth; but the apostle was no mean witness of it, though a man of like passions with us. Nor has he been without his imitators in this, even as he also was of Christ. He would not afford a handle to those who sought it at Corinth. Others have had grounds equally grave for a similar course.

It is important to see also that to preach is not a thing to boast of. It is an obligation—a duty to Him who has called one, and conferred a gift for this very purpose. It is thus a necessity laid on all such, not an office of honor to claim, nor a right to plead. Christ has the right to send, and He does send, laborers into His vineyard. This makes it truly a necessity laid on him who is sent. According to scripture, the church never sends any to preach the gospel. Relations are falsified by any such pretension. Again He who sends directs the laborer. It is of capital importance that this should be maintained with immediate responsibility to the Lord. Therefore it is that the apostle adds, “For woe is to me if I preach not the gospel.” Undoubtedly, he who does this voluntarily has a reward, and the heart goes with the blessed work, whatever the hardness and reproach which accompany it. But if not of one's own will, an administration, or stewardship, is entrusted to one. Now of the steward it is sought that a man be found faithful.

“What then is my reward? That in preaching the gospel I may make the gospel without charge. So that I use not for myself any authority in the gospel.” (Ver. 18.) It was meet that such an one as the apostle, extraordinarily called, should act in extraordinary grace; and this he does. He made the gospel without cost to others, at all cost to himself. He did not use his right to a support for himself. It is no question here of “abuse,” any more than in chapter vii. 31. It is the giving up of one's right for special reasons of grace, and it is the more beautiful in one who had as deep a sense of righteousness as any man, perhaps, who ever lived. The plea for the rights of others was therefore so much the more unimpeachable, because it was absolutely unmixed with any desire for himself.

"For being free from all, I made myself bondman to all, that I might gain the most. And I became to the Jews as a Jew, that I might gain Jews; and to those under law, as under law, not being myself under law, that I might gain those under law; to those without law, as without law, not being without law to God, but under law to Christ, that I might gain those without law. To the weak I became

weak, that I might gain the weak; to all I have become all things, that by all means I might save some. And all things I do for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it." (Vers. 19-23.) How bright a reflection of the spirit of the gospel! The apostle was ready to yield at every side where Christ was not concerned. He was free, but free to be a bondman of any and everyone, in order that he might gain, not ends of his own, but the most possible for Christ. Hence among the Jews he raised no question about Judaism. His heart was set on their salvation; he would not be turned aside by legal questions. He became as a Jew; but while he declares that to those under law he was as under law, he carefully guards his own standing in grace by the clause left out in so many of the more modern copies, "not being myself under law," that he might gain those under it. Such was the only gain he sought—not theirs, but them; and them for God, not to mold after any opinions or prejudices of his own.

He was just the same with the Gentiles. (Compare Gal. 4:12.) Such is the elasticity of grace. "To those without law, as without law," while he carefully adds, not being without law to God, but duly or legitimately subject to Christ, that he might gain those without law. It is in vain to speak of natural character or education. If there ever was a soul rigidly bound by Pharisaic tradition within the straitest limits, it was Saul of Tarsus. But if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation. The old things passed; behold they are become new. Such was Paul the apostle; and so he lived, labored, and speaks to us livingly. He would not wound the scruples of the feeblest; nay, to the weak he became weak, that he might gain the weak; in short, he could, and does, say, "to all I am become all things, that I may by all means save some." It was not, as some basely misuse his words, to excuse tampering with the world, and so spare one's own flesh, which is really to become the prey of Satan. His was self-sacrifice in a faith which had only Christ for its object, and the bringing of every soul within one's reach into contact with His love.

"Know ye not that they who run in a racecourse run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And everyone that contendeth is temperate in all things. They indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, as not uncertainly—so combat, as not beating air. But I buffet my body, and lead [it] captive, lest by any means, having preached to others, I myself should be reprobate." (Vers. 24-27.) The figure from these games would be most striking to the Corinthians accustomed to those of the Isthmus. Indeed, the use is plain to anyone. Spiritually, the prize is not for one, but for all, if all ran well. But even in the games the candidates must be temperate in all things, though theirs were but a fading crown, ours an everlasting.

The apostle then applies it with touching beauty, not to the faulty Corinthians, but to himself. His was no rhetoric of the schools or the law courts, but of Christ for heaven. He therefore transfers the application to himself for their sakes, if I may apply his own language in chapter 4. "I therefore so run as not uncertainly." How was it with them? I "so combat, as not beating air." To this alas! they were habitually prone, as the epistle shows throughout, especially chapters 14 and 15. "But I buffet my body, and lead it captive, lest by any means, having preached to others, I myself should be reprobate."

Would that the Corinthians had so dealt with themselves! Alas! they were reigning as kings, while the apostles were, as it were, appointed to death. It is an utter mistake to suppose that the language of the apostle supposes any fear of perdition for his own soul. He had grave fears for

those who were living at ease and carelessly. It is very possible for a man to preach to others, and be lost himself; but such an one does not buffet the body, nor bring it into subjection. Had the apostle lived without conscience, he must have assuredly been lost, as indeed one of the twelve was. Here we are shown the inseparable connection between a holy walk along the way, and eternal life at the end of it. Who can doubt it? and why should any man make a difficulty in the passage? There would be difficulty indeed, if the apostle spoke of having been born again and afterward becoming a castaway. In this case life would not be eternal. But he says nothing of the sort. He only shows the solemn danger and certain ruin of preaching without a practice according to it. This the Corinthians needed to hear then, as we to weigh now. Preaching or teaching truth to men without reality, self-judgment, and self-denial before God, is ruinous. It is to deceive ourselves, not Him who is not mocked.

Chapter 4

Notes on 1 Corinthians 10:1-11

The apostle had warned the Corinthians against carelessness and self-indulgence, instancing himself as one who must be a reprobate if he preached without keeping the body under. He now makes a pointed application of Israelitish history in scripture to clench the exhortation.

"For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they were drinking of a spiritual attendant rock (and the rock was Christ); but in the most of them God had no pleasure, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. But these things happened [as] types of us, that we should not be lusters after evil things, even as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, even as some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, even as some of them committed, and there fell in one day twenty-three thousand. Neither let us tempt the Lord, even as some of them tempted, and were perishing by the serpents. Neither murmur ye, according as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer. Now all these things happened to them typically, and were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have reached." (Vers. 1-11)

Israel are adduced as a warning to those who professed Christ. Did the Corinthians boast of their privileges and endowments? They are here shown how little security such institutions as baptism and the Lord's supper confer on those who rest in them. "For [this is the true reading, γ■ρ, not δ■, now, or moreover] I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." It was not only that preachers were in danger, but professors—not some, but all. Witness the ancient people of God, who similarly trusted not in God but in His acts and ordinances, their own special favors; and this from the beginning, not in days of coldness and deadness. So ready is the heart of unbelief to depart from the living God. To presume on institutions of the Lord, initiatory or even continuous, is fatal. A recent commentator regarded this passage as an inspired protest against those who, whether as individuals or sects, would lower the dignity of sacraments, or deny their necessity. To my mind the aim seems wholly different, to guard those who were baptized, and joined in the Lord's supper, from the illusion that all was therefore right and safe, that such might not grievously sin and miserably perish. The apostle solemnly disproves the superstitious and Antinomian error that men must have life because they partake of these rites. Not so; they were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, they might all therefore be said to be there and then baptized to Moses; but what was the end? It is impossible however to suppose here an outward professing mass, who had the initiatory privilege, and no more; for he takes particular pains to show that they "did all eat the same spiritual meat, and did all drink [■πιον] the same spiritual drink; for they were drinking [■πινον] of a spiritual attendant rock (and the rock was Christ)."

Here we have figuratively the highest outward sign, that which answers to the Lord's supper, and not to baptism only. But the express point is to deny that there was necessarily life in the participants, still less efficacy in the signs. It is really the importance of the holy walk of faith in those who partook that the apostle is pressing, not at all to cry up the sacraments, still less to affirm the necessity of what nobody thought of denying.

But we must also beware of a mistaken notion which has misled most Protestants, some more partially, others completely, but all with inconsistency enough. They assume that by the expression, “all our fathers,” the Christian church is regarded as a continuation of the Jewish, and the believer as the true descendant of Abraham. Whatever is taught elsewhere under certain limits, it is plain that here the apostle teaches nothing of the sort. “For I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that all our fathers,” &c, maintains the distinction which is sought to be got rid of. There is no fusion of the Jews of the past with the Gentiles who now believed. The same distinction is maintained in Ephesians and in Galatians. Within the church and in Christ the difference vanishes. There is oneness in Him, and such is the effect of the Spirit's baptism, who forms the one body. But it is not true retrospectively, as is commonly supposed, and drawn unintelligently from, such words as these.

Again, even so sensible a writer fell into the kindred but yet grosser view, that the apostle, by the words “the same,” identifies the sacraments of the old and of the new economies. “It is a well known dogma of the schoolmen, that the sacraments of the ancient law were emblems of grace, but ours confer it. This passage is admirably suited to refute that error, for it shows that the reality of the sacrament was presented to the ancient people of God no less than to us. It is therefore a base fancy of the Sorbonists, that the holy father? under the law had the signs without the reality. I grant, indeed, that the efficacy of the signs is furnished to us at once more clearly and more abundantly from the time of Christ's manifestation in the flesh than it was possessed by the fathers.....Some explain it to mean that the Israelites ate the same meat together among themselves, and do not wish us to understand that there is a comparison between us and them; but these do not consider Paul's object. For what does he mean to say here, but that the ancient people of God were honored with the same benefits with us, and were partakers of the same sacraments, that we might not, from confiding in any peculiar privilege, imagine that we would be exempted from the punishment which they endured?"

That the apostle is drawing an analogy between Israel and Christians is plain; but the very language employed, that their things were “types” or figures of us, should have prevented the identification either of them and us, or of the facts that resemble baptism and the Lord's supper more or less. Doubtless the doctors of the Sorbonne were wrong in virtually denying quickening faith to the fathers under the law; but Calvin is even more culpably wrong, if deluded by their error of saving sacraments now, he conceives that the signs under the law were thus efficacious also. Christ alone, received by faith, has quickening power, through the Holy Spirit, either of old or now; but now there is accomplishment, as then there was only promise. Then was only pretermission of sins; now remission, and life more abundantly, and the gift of the Spirit. This is a vast deal more than a difference in degree only, as so many Protestants dream, not to speak of Popish darkness; but their legalism, where they are not the victims of rationalism, deprives them of perception as well as power. The veil is on their eyes, though not on their hearts.

As a question of interpretation, it is evident that by all eating the same spiritual meat the apostle is speaking of the fathers, not of the Corinthians or other Christians, the point of warning and instruction being, that in the most of them God took no pleasure, for they were overthrown in the wilderness. He is speaking therefore in these verses solely of Israel, and in no way predicating the sameness of their manna and water with our signs of Christ's death, or what men call the sacraments. The sense then is, not that they were in the very same condition with us, or had the same sacraments with us, but that, though they all partook of the same spiritual meat and drink, in the most of them God had no pleasure. Title as God's people, and participation in sacred privileges, which are expressly made like to the two institutions so familiar to us in Christendom, did not save the mass from being overthrown, by divine judgments, in the wilderness.

Next the apostle shows us how the things that happened in their case are “types of us (ver. 6), that we should not be lusters after evil things, even as they also lusted.” This is general; but those things are successively specified which were perilous to the Corinthians. “Neither be idolaters, even as some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” There was, in the first place, a yielding to fleshly gratification, then pleasurable excitement followed, which told the result one sees in the scripture cited—the judgment. Were not the Corinthians in danger? “Neither let us commit fornication, even as some of them committed fornication, and fell in one day twenty-three thousand,” In the history (Num. 26) where twenty-four thousand are said to have died in the plague, it is not said “in one day,” as here, where we hear of a thousand less. To me such a difference implies the greatest accuracy, nor have I named all the points of distinction which deserve the thoughtful reader's consideration, small as the matter may seem, and to some grave men only a question of general numbers on either side of the precise amount. “Neither let us tempt the Lord, even as some of them tempted, and were perishing by the serpents” To tempt was to doubt His presence and action on their behalf, as Israel, not only “ten times” (Num. 14), but also just before Jehovah sent fiery serpents to cut them off. “Neither murmur, even as some of them murmured, and perished by the destroyer.” This, if it be not more general, seems to allude to the gainsaying of Korah and his company, which so excited the evil tongue in Israel.

“Now these things happened to them typically, and were written for our admonition, unto whom the ends of the ages have reached.” There cannot be a more important canon for our intelligent and profitable reading of these Old Testament oracles. The facts happened to them, but they were divinely cast in systematical figures, or forms of truth, for admonishing us who find ourselves at be critical a juncture of the world's history. They contain therefore far more than moral lessons, however weighty. They do disclose man's heart, and let out God's mind and affections but they have the larger and deeper instruction of events which illustrate immense principles, such as sovereign grace, on the one hand, and pure law on the other, with a mingled system of government on legal ground, while mercy and goodness availed through a mediator, which came in when the people worshipped a calf at Horeb. There is thus an orderly, as well as prophetic, character in the way these incidents are presented, which, when lit up with the light of Christ and His redemption and the truth now revealed, prove their inspiration in a self-evident way to him who has the teaching of the Holy Ghost. Israel only witnessed the facts, and the writer was enabled, by the Spirit of God, to record them in an order which was far beyond his own thoughts, or the intelligence of any before redemption; but now that this mighty work of God is accomplished, their

figurative meaning stands out in the fullness of a wide system, and with a depth which reveals God, not man, as the true Author. Be it our happiness not only to know but to do the truth!

Notes on 1 Corinthians 10:12-22

The scriptural history of Israel is thus exceedingly solemn as well as instructive. It was so recounted by the Spirit as to be typical of us. “So then let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. No temptation hath taken you save a human one: but God [is] faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted above what ye are able, but will make with the temptation also the issue that ye may be able to bear [it].” (Vers. 12,18.)

On the one hand the self-confidence of the Corinthians, as of every one else, is precisely the source of danger. In the world as it is, and in man as he is, there must be constant exposure; for evil exists, and an enemy is not wanting to avail himself of it; and the people of God are the especial aim of his malicious activity to dishonor the Lord by their means. If others slumber in unremoved death, those that are alive to God in Christ need to watch and pray. On the other hand they had been tried by no temptation beyond the lot of man: Christ was tried beyond it in the days of His flesh, not only at the end of His service but at the beginning; not only in all things in like manner, apart from sin, but beyond what belongs to man, tempted as He was for forty days in the wilderness. But we can only overcome in our little trials as He in His great ones by dependence on God and obedience of His word which the Spirit clothes with might against Satan. We may and ought to confide in God. If He is faithful who called us to the fellowship of His Son, equally so is He in not permitting us to be tempted beyond measure. It is His power by which the saints are kept through faith, not by their perseverance. Hence with the trial He makes also the issue or escape, and this not by removing the trial but by enabling His own to endure.

Now comes the special warning. “Wherefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to prudent [men]: judge ye what I say. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not fellowship with the blood of the Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not fellowship with the body, of the Christ? Because we, the many, are one loaf, one body, for we all partake of the one loaf.” (Vers. 14-17) To count idolatry impossible for a Christian is to trifle. This the Corinthians were doing. They knew, said they, that the idol was a nullity, and therefore it was nothing to them to eat meat which had been offered to heathen idols; nay, they could go a step farther and sit and eat in the heathen temples. The apostle on the contrary maintains the principle of partaking in an evil which you may not yourself do, and especially in things sacred. The true wisdom in such cases is to keep wholly aloof. It is a misuse of knowledge to participate, or even give the appearance of participating, in what is religiously false. It is in vain to plead that the heart is not in what one allows outwardly, not only on moral grounds but because it slights Christ and ignores Satan's wiles. Is not the Christian redeemed from bondage to the enemy? Is he not bought with a price to glorify God? At once the apostle makes themselves judges by putting them in presence of the central and standing institution of church fellowship. Where was their practical understanding now? “The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not fellowship with the blood of the Christ? The loaf which we break, is it not fellowship with the body of the Christ?"

Clearly the apostle reasons from the public symbol of Christian communion; he is not laying it down to correct wrong any observance: else he would not have put the cup before the loaf here. He begins his appeal with that which had the deepest meaning as to Christ; he leaves for the next place what most impressively conveys the fellowship of the saints with Christ as one body. It is so viewed as to compare it best with the peace offerings of Israel and the sacrifices of the heathen. Fellowship there is in each. The worshippers share in common what distinguishes them from all others. In the church's case it is the blood and body of Christ. The blood of Christ awakens the gravest thoughts in the Christian; the body of Christ, the most intimate unity possible, “because we, the many, are one loaf, one body; for we all partake of the one loaf.” There is neither transubstantiation nor con substantiation. It is the loaf that we break, it is the one loaf of which we all partake. Representatively it is the one body of Christ; and if the loaf be that body, just so we, the many, are that one loaf also. This scripture, like the rest which speak of it, is wholly irreconcilable with Romanism or Lutheranism, which here present mere superstitions, not the truth of God. The words on which they essay to base their errors do really refute them.

There is not a thought of sacerdotal consecration of the elements. “The cup of blessing which we bless,” “the loaf which we break,” prove that it is no act of one endued with extraordinary power and transmitted authority. It is “we” and “we, the many,” in the very context which speaks of “I” and “ye.” But all such individuality vanishes from this feast, as being radically opposed to its nature. None that truly entered into its spirit could have so marred the fellowship as to make the minister first receive in both kinds himself, and then proceed to deliver the same to the clergy if present, and after that to the people also in order. Who that is faithful to its scriptural meaning could say, The body.... which was given for thee, the blood.... which was shed for thee? Still less could there have been such a contrast with the Lord's words in letter and spirit, such an oblivion even of the form as a wafer expressly unbroken placed by the priest on the tongue and no cup whatever for the communicant. These are the palpable and fatal signs of a Christendom at war with the Lord, of His word set at naught, and the Holy Spirit quenched. One of course may give thanks at the breaking of the bread; but in truth, if duly done according to Christ, it is all the saints that bless, all that break the loaf. Such is the essence of its meaning; and he who departs from it must account for it to the Lord who commanded all that are His to do thus.

It may be added that in the Gospels of Matthew and Mark we read of the Lord, after taking the loaf, blessing, and then giving thanks after taking the cup. In Luke He is said to give thanks after taking a loaf. The decisive disproof however of what gross ignorance mistakenly infers from it is that, on the occasion of feeding the multitude with bread, the very same language is used; that is, when a sacrament confessedly was out of the question, He took the five loaves and two fishes, and, looking up to heaven, blessed them. (Luke 9) It is not that ενλογεω is exactly equivalent to ενχαριστεω, but clearly they can be used to a certain extent interchangeably; they express with a shade of difference the selfsame act, neither prayer for a miracle nor the form of effecting one, but very simply a benediction or thanksgiving. If our ordinary food be sanctified by the word of God and prayer, who could think of the supper of the Lord without blessing and thanksgiving?

Again that not faith only is possessed but the Spirit of God is supposed to have sealed the communicants is plain from all that is said. Nobody doubts that a hypocrite or selfdeceived soul might partake; but the Lord's intention is as clear as that the character of the feast excludes such. They may drink the wine or break the bread; but they are as distant as ever from the grace and

truth therein celebrated, and only add presumptuous sin to the selfwill and unbelief of their habitual life. Individually the believer has already eaten the flesh of the Son of man and drunk His blood; he eats it, knowing that he has eternal life in Him, and otherwise no life in himself. Together we bless the cup, together we break the bread in thanksgiving before Him who has blessed us beyond all thought; and herein is communion. To suppose that unbelievers share it is profanity, and deliberate profanity if we systematically open the door for them and invite them in.

But the point before the apostle was rather that the Christian cannot go out to another fellowship if he enjoy this. Communion is the joint participation of the blessing for all whom it concerns; but it excludes as rigorously those who have no part or lot in it. Further it forbids from any other fellowship those who share this. Even the Israelite after the flesh who ate the sacrifices was a partaker with the altar of Jehovah, and severed in principle and fact from the vanities of the heathen. “See Israel according to flesh: are not they that eat the sacrifices in fellowship with the altar?” How much more did it become the Christian to judge and walk according to God! If they lived in the Spirit, let them walk in the Spirit.

“What say I then? that an idol-sacrifice is anything, or that an idol is anything? but that what they sacrifice: they sacrificed to demons and not to God; and I wish you not to be in fellowship with demons. Ye cannot drink [the] Lord's cup and of a cup of demons; ye cannot partake of [the] Lord's table and of a table of demons. What! do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?” (Vers. 19-22.)

To eat of sacrificial offerings was evidently then no light matter. As the Jew who ate was in communion with the altar, so he who partook of what was offered to an idol had fellowship with the idol. Such is its real meaning. Does this contradict the previous reasoning of the apostle as of the prophets of old, that the idol was a mere nonentity? Not at all. But if such products of man's device have no existence and their images see not nor hear, demons are very real and avail themselves of man's imagination and his fears and arrogate to themselves the idol sacrifices. The emptiness of idols is therefore no ground for partaking of meats sacrificed to them; for “what they sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God.” (See Deut. 32:17; Psa. 95:5.) The idols and their sacrifices maybe utterly powerless; but demons hiding behind can and do thereby shut out the true God from souls and usurp the homage due to Him alone. This is the effect of heathen worship, not the intention of the worshippers or of those who partake in their sacrifices. They no more purposed to revere demons or fallen and evil spirits than the unconverted now mean to serve Satan. But they did and do so none the less. The truth puts things in their real light which the reasoning, the imagination, or the indifference of man leaves in the shade.

The Corinthians loved ease and sought to escape the cross. Why trouble, they might argue, about trifles? The idol is nothing, nor its sacrifices, nor its temple. How unwise then to offend for nothing! Communion with demons, answers the apostle, is the result. He that eats and drinks where the Lord's blessing is not, partakes in the demon's curse. We shall see in the next chapter what it is to eat and drink unworthily at the Lord's supper. Here it is the real character of the evil where one partook of things sacrificed to idols, which the vain Corinthians prided themselves on doing freely because of their superior knowledge. But no one can have fellowship with the Lord and with demons: if he tampers with demons, has he not virtually abandoned the Lord? They may delight to have and harm the Christian professor; the Lord refuses His fellowship to the idolater. If fellowship

is inclusive, it is exclusive. “He that is not with me is against me,” said He Himself; “and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” (Matt. 12) “What! do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stronger than he?” Love cannot but be jealous of wandering affections; it were not love if it did not resent unfaithfulness. And is He so powerless that we can despise Him with impunity? Are we stronger than He? Do we court destruction?

Notes on 1 Corinthians 10:23 and 11:1

Thus had the apostle shown the danger of idolatry, from the inveterate tendency, not of the Gentiles merely in their habitual worship of idols, but of the very people separated to Jehovah as His witnesses against it. He had also proved that to partake of sacrificial feasts in a heathen temple is none the less idolatrous, because, if the idol is nothing, the demons are very serious indeed, as the enemies of God and man. The meat in itself maybe harmless, but to eat it thus is to have communion with the demons behind the idol, and so to renounce the fellowship of Christ. For one cannot have both: Christianity, Judaism, heathenism, are exclusive of each other. The Lord must feel and judge such unfaithfulness on the part of His own; His love and honor could not pass by a virtual renunciation of Himself.

But if a Christian should abstain from idol sacrifice out of love to a weak brother, and yet more for fear of provoking the Lord's jealousy, is it wrong in itself to eat such meat? Certainly not. As he began, so he closes. “All things are lawful, but do not profit; all things are lawful, but do not edify. Let no one seek his own [advantage], but his neighbor's [literally, that of the other].” (Vers. 28, 24.) The principle laid down in chapter 6 is enlarged. It is not merely lawful “to me,” nor it is a question here of being brought under the power of any. There indifference as to meats exposed some to impurity, here to idolatry. The apostle urges not merely exemption from evil, but positive edification. This love alone secures; because it looks not at its own things, and seeks the good of others. It would please one's neighbor, with a view to good to edification. Even Christ, in whom was no evil, did not please Himself, but rather took on Himself the reproaches of those that reproached Jehovah. Thus it is not enough to avoid being brought under the power of anything, but one should seek the profit, not of self, but of others, and the building up of all.

Hence we have the principle applied in general, and tested particularly, in verses 25-80. “Everything that is offered for sale in the shambles eat, examining nothing for conscience sake: for the earth [is] the Lord's, and its fullness. And if any of the unbelieving inviteth you, and ye desire to go, all that is set before you eat, examining nothing for conscience sake. But if any say to you, This is sacrificed, eat not for his sake that pointed [it] out and conscience, but conscience, I say, not one's own, but the other's; for why is my liberty judged by another conscience? If I partake with thanks, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?” Thus the principle of God's creation holds good for all that is on sale in the market, as well as for what might be on an unbeliever's table, if one should go there, and one may eat in either case without special inquiry. It is otherwise, not merely in an idol temple, but even in private, where one should say, This is offered to holy purposes, because he evidently has a conscience about it, though one otherwise might have perfect liberty. It is good in such a case to deny oneself, and not expose one's liberty to be judged by another, or incur evil speaking for the thing for which I give thanks. One must in love respect the scruple of the weakest saint, while holding fast by the intelligence and liberty of Christ.

The apostle then lays down the still larger and golden rule of Christian conduct: “Whether, then, ye eat or drink, or do anything, do all things unto God's glory. Give no occasion of stumbling, either to

Jews or Greeks, or to the church of God; even as I too please all in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but that of the many, that they be saved. Be imitators of me, even as I too am of Christ." (Ver. 31; 11:1) Thus, if one does all to God's glory, self is not sought to be gratified, but given up; and in this way is no stumblingblock presented to man, on the one hand, whether Jews or Gentiles, or to God's assembly, on the other. Love alone so walks, seeking God's glory and man's good. Against the fruit of the Spirit there is no law, even among those who vaunt law most, and least love grace. So it was with the apostle habitually; the most uncompromising of all the apostles, none equaled him in gracious concession, where it could be consistently with Christ.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 11:2-16

It is not without instruction for us that the apostle can praise in the midst of so much too justly merited reproof. He loved to approve all he could.

“Now I praise you that in all things ye remember me, and hold fast the traditions according as I delivered [them] to you.” (Ver. 2) Tradition in scripture is used, not only for the added maxims of men, as in Matt. 15, but for what the apostles enjoined on the saints, first orally, then in inspired writings, as also in both ways, while the canon was in course and not yet complete. Compare also Rom. 6:17 Thess. 2:15.

“But I wish you to know that the head of every man is the Christ, and woman's head the man, and the Christ's head God. Every man praying or prophesying with head covered [literally, having something] on [his] head shameth his head. But every woman praying or prophesying with the head uncovered shameth her own head; for it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. For if a woman is not covered, let her also be shorn; but if [it is] shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For man indeed ought not to have his head covered, being God's image and glory; but the woman is man's glory. For man is not of woman, but woman of man. For also man was not created on account of woman, but woman on account of man. On this account ought the woman to have authority on the head on account of the angels. However; neither [is] woman without man, nor man without woman, in [the] Lord; for as the woman [is] of the man, so also [is] the man by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman should pray to God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you that, if man have long hair, it is a dishonor to him; but if woman have long hair, it is a glory to her? Because the hair hath been given her instead of a veil. But if any one seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor yet the assemblies of God.” (Vers. 316.)

This is a most characteristic specimen of the apostle's dealing with a point of order. He deduces the solution from first principles involved in divine dealings from the beginning. It is an admirable way of settling questions, not by mere abstract authority, even where the highest lay, but by conveying to others the ways of God in creation and providence, which drew out the admiration as well as submission of his heart. It is no question of new creation. There difference disappears. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. But here on earth there is a relative order established of God; and as the man is woman's head, so the Christ is the head of every man, and God is the Christ's head. It were still more perilously false to use these words to disparage Christ than to turn aside their force to deny the subjection of woman to man. The Christ is viewed as such, not in His own intrinsic personal glory, or in the, communion of the divine nature, but in the place He entered and took as the Anointed. God, therefore, is the head of the highest; and as woman is bound to own the place given her by God, so is man to fill suitably his own assigned relationship. The principle is applied to correct some Christian women at Corinth who out stepped the limits of propriety. The apostle puts the entire case, and even a man's mistake as to it, though it would appear that it was

as yet a question of the other sex. For a man to have his head covered would falsify his witness to Christ; so for a woman not to be. It is not argued on grounds of habit, modesty, or the like, but of the facts as revealed by God. It would be the sign of authority taken by the woman, of authority abandoned by the man. A woman without a veil is like a man, without being really so. It is to renounce, as far as the act goes, the subjection she owes to man; it is one and the same thing as if she were shaven. Let her also be shorn, says the indignant servant of the Lord; but if either be shameful for a woman, he adds, let her be covered. (Vers. 26.)

There is a still farther opening of the ground as to man and woman in the verses which follow. “For man indeed ought not to have his head covered, being God's image and glory; but the woman is man's glory. For man is not of woman, but woman of man. For also man was not created on account of woman, but woman on account of man. On this account ought the woman to have authority on the head on account of the angels. However, neither [is] woman without man, nor man without woman, in [the] Lord; for as the woman [is] of the man, so also [is] the man by the woman; but all things of God.” (Vers. 7-12.)

Thus the apostle points out man's standing directly as God's image and glory: woman is man's glory, having no such place of public representation for God. Whatever she has relatively is essentially mediate and derivative. Creation is the proof, not of course the ordinary course of things since. It is impossible, therefore, to form a right estimate without looking to the beginning. If verse 7 then refers to the origination of man and woman respectively, verse 8 sets forth the making of the woman for, and subsequently to, the man, as grounds of woman's subordination to man. It is easy to see that, where creation is denied, or even ignored, men naturally reason and labor for their equality. But there is another consideration, which only faith could admit—the testimony to divine order which should be given by man and woman to those spiritual beings whom scripture declares to have the most intimate connection with the heirs of salvation. (Compare 1 Cor. 4:9; Eph. 3) “For this reason ought the woman to have power on the head on account of the angels” a sentiment entirely mistaken by the mass of commentators, who have gone off, some into degrading thoughts about bad angels, others into lowering the word to the sense of the righteous themselves, the Christian prophets, the presidents of the assemblies, the nuntii desponsationum or persons deputed to effect betrothals, or mere spies sent there by the unfaithful.

So also the expression, “authority on the head,” has given rise to endless discussion. To have authority on the head unquestionably means to wear the sign of it in a covering or veil. On the other hand, in verses 11, 12, the apostle is careful to insist on the mutuality of man and woman, denying their independence of one another, affirming God the source of them respectively, and of all things.

Further, he appeals to the sense of propriety grounded on the constitution of both man and woman. “In your own selves judge: is it becoming that a woman uncovered should pray to God? Doth not even nature itself teach you,” &c. If it be as natural for man to have short hair as for woman to have long, is it not a revolt against the nature of each to reverse this in practice? God's creation must govern where the word of His grace does not call to higher things, and this could not be pretended here.

Finally, the habitual usage of the churches, as regulated by apostolic wisdom, is no light thing to disturb, and this the apostle puts with great moral force. “But if any one seemeth to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor yet the churches of God.” It is a contemptible sort of independence which sets itself up, not only against the spiritual feeling of all the public witness in God's assemblies, but above those endowed with heavenly wisdom to direct all. It is neither conscience nor spirituality, but a fleshly love of differing from others, and at bottom sheer vanity. The “custom” negated was the Corinthian innovation, which confounded God's order in nature, not disputatiousness, as many ancients and moderns strangely conclude,

Chapter 8

Notes on 1 Corinthians 11:17-26

The apostle had settled the point of comely order as respects women. He now turns to a still graver matter, the Lord's mind about His supper. From this the Corinthians had sadly departed there and then, slipping into the grossest evils, as we shall see.

Yet is it important to take note before we go into detail that, according to the modern mode of administering the sacrament, such a disorder was impossible. The reason is beyond measure a grave one. Christendom has radically altered the supper—a more serious state of things than even the distressing and immoral levity which then disgraced the Corinthian assembly. The latter could be judged and rectified; the former demands a return to first principles which have been wholly given up, not merely as to the institution itself but as to the nature of both ministry and church, and their mutual relations.

What gave occasion to the grievous impropriety of the assembly in its then low and careless estate was apparently the mixing up the love feast with the Lord's supper. The love feast (or Agape) was a meal of which the early Christians partook in common, the aim being to cultivate social intercourse among those who are strangers and pilgrims called to suffer on earth and to spend eternity together in glory with the Lord. The Corinthians however had lost the sense of Christian strangership, and as they had lot in the rivalry of the schools from the world in zeal for favorite teachers, so they degraded even the Agape by holding to class distinctions, the rich feasting on their own contributions to the meal, while those who had nothing to give were made keenly to feel their poverty. Thus the principle of Christian society was destroyed at the very meal which ought to have displayed it in practice; and as they thus selfishly forgot wherefore they thus came together, God gave them up to the deeper sin of degrading the Lord's supper, which was partaken of at the same time, by the effects of their license in eating and drinking.

This doubtless was a scandalous irreverence; but the sacrament as now observed is the deliberate and systematic abandonment even of the form of the supper, the change of it into a superstitious ordinance from the thanksgiving of God's family in view of the deepest solemnity in time, nay for eternity, the death of our Lord on which it is based with the remembrance of Himself in infinite love, humiliation, and suffering for our sins. Nothing but the appreciation of its spiritual aim preserved it from becoming a scene of shame; if not kept in the Spirit, it quickly passed into fleshly lightness; and this is the will of God in order that it may necessitate the looking to the Lord who promises His presence to those gathered to His name. It is with the supper as with all other parts of Christian worship and service. They are nothing if not sustained by the Spirit according to the word of God. Change their principle in order to secure appearances, and all is ruined. This is precisely what tradition has done in the Lord's supper as elsewhere. From the sacramental eucharist of post-apostolic times the Corinthian excesses were excluded, but so was the Holy Spirit from guiding the saints according to the word. Clericalism was introduced to preside, formalism and distance imposed on the rest, and the rite made more or less a saving ordinance, instead of the communion of Christ's body and blood enjoyed by His members in His presence.

But let us weigh the apostle's words. “Now in enjoining this I praise [you] not, because ye come together not for the better but for the worse. For first, when ye come together in an assembly, I hear that divisions exist among you, and in some measure I believe [it]; for there must be even sects among you that the approved may become manifest among you.” (Vers. 18,19.) We have here important help toward deciding the difference between these terms as well as the precise nature of each. Schism is a division within the assembly, while they nil still abide in the same association as before, even if severed in thought or feeling through fleshly partiality or aversion. Heresy, in its ordinary scriptural application as here (not its ecclesiastical usage), means a party among the saints, separating from the rest in consequence of a still stronger following of their own will. A schism within if unjudged tends to a sect or party without, when on the one hand the approved become manifest, who reject these narrow and selfish ways, and on the other the party man is self-condemned, as preferring his own particular views to the fellowship of all saints in the truth. (Compare Titus 3:10, 11.)

They met in one place. “When ye come together therefore into the same [place], it is not to eat [the] Lord's supper. For each in eating taketh his own supper before [others], and one is hungry, and another drinketh excessively. Have ye not then houses for eating and drinking? or despise ye the church of God, and put shame on those that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you? In this I do not praise.” (Vers. 20-22.) They had not as yet broken up into sects: this evil was reserved for a later and worse day. If however they did come together into one place, the apostle will not allow that it was to eat the Lord's supper, but each their own: so utterly were they losing the truth of things while the form lingered on. Not only was Christ gone, but even the social element. They were a spectacle of greed; and, what made it more flagrant, those who had means were the worse, despising the church of God, and putting to shame the poor. With all his desire to praise the Corinthians, in this the apostle could not.

This leads to the revelation on the subject vouchsafed by the Lord. “For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which he was being delivered up, took bread, and, having given thanks, brake [it] and said, This is my body which [is] for you: this do in remembrance of me; in like manner also the cup after having supped, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink [it], in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye announce the death of the Lord till he come.” (Vers. 23-26.)

It is interesting to notice that to Paul was given a revelation of the supper, not of baptism. He was baptized like another himself, not by an apostle even, lest this might be perverted to make him dependent on the twelve, but by a simple disciple, Ananias. Baptism attaches to the individual confessor and would have its place as the sign of the great Christian basis, the death and resurrection of Christ, if there had been no such thing as the baptizing believers by the Spirit into one body, the church. But the supper, besides being the memorial of Christ and emphatically of His death, is now bound up with the body of Christ, as we have seen in chapter 10:16, 17. This is so true that he who willfully or under an act of discipline does not partake of that one loaf ceases to enjoy the privileges of God's assembly on earth; he who partakes of it cannot free himself from the responsibilities of that holy fellowship. And as Paul was the chosen vessel by whom was to be revealed the mystery of Christ and the church, so did it seem good to the Lord that he should receive a special revelation of His supper, the standing sign of its unity, and public witness of its

communion.

It is striking to observe that, plainly as the Lord has revealed His mind here, even the Protestant Reformers failed to recover its lineaments. They have individualized the Lord's supper. They make it “for thee.” “Take thou,” &c. This is consistent. They had not seen the one body and one Spirit. Even if they had limited it to those who were believed to be justified by faith, still this would have been only an aggregate of individuals. They never received the truth of the church as Christ's body on earth. On the contrary they began the system of distinct or independent national churches on earth; they delegated the unity of the church to heaven. The one body, as an existing relationship to which the Christian belongs now, and on which he is bound to act continually, was unknown as a present reality; and this ignorance betrayed itself even in their mode of celebrating the Sacrament, as it does to this day.

Even where there is no such form of individuality, there is as little sense or expression of the one body. The reason is obvious. They do not contemplate all the faithful, being avowedly associations of certain souls, on the ground of points of difference (that is, sects), or embracing the world as well as believers. In either way dissenting or nationalist, being off the basis of God's church, they naturally drop the words, as they are revealed for God's order of things, and change them, perhaps unconsciously, into what suits their own condition. Communion there cannot be but in the Spirit, who exalts Christ, not opinions, and goes out toward all saints, not some only, nor the world at all in such worship.

It is the holy, gracious, and deep meaning of the Lord's supper, and in no way the elements or the ministrant, which invests it with such value and blessing. He is in the midst of His own to give them the enjoyment of His love in present power, but as recalling their hearts to the sacrifice of Himself for their sins to place them without charge or question before God. The bread remains bread, and so does the wine; the thanksgiving, or blessing, we find as at all times of ordinary life in receiving the creatures of God; of miracle at this time the word of God whispers not a word. The Lord breaks the bread and says, This is My body which is on your behalf: this do in remembrance of Me; in like manner the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood: this do as often as ye drink it in remembrance of Me.

The Lord's supper then is to remind us of Christ, of His death; not of our sins but of our sins remitted and ourselves loved. It is in no wise the old covenant of condemnation, but the new covenant, God known in grace, iniquity forgiven, and sins remembered no more; not yet made with the houses of Israel set forever in the land under the reign of Messiah, but the blood is shed which is its foundation, and we who believe, Jew or Gentile, have it in spirit, not in letter. (See 2 Cor. 3) Of this the cup especially is the pledge.

But Romanism takes away the cup from its votaries, and consistently enough; for as a system it supposes sacrifice going on, not finished, and consequently it administers a sacrament of non-redemption. The bread, say they, contains the blood, flesh, soul, divinity, all in the body; that is, the blood is not shed, and therefore no remission of sins, no perfecting of the sanctified, for the one offering is always going on and not yet accomplished or accepted. Romanism therefore stands in contrast with Christianity in the capital truth of the efficacy of Christ's death, indispensable both to God's glory and to the cleansing of the conscience of the Christian.

But Protestantism has infringed on Christ's institution, not only by impairing the grace of God in the Lord's supper, but by letting in the world as we have seen and by insisting for the most part on an authorized official to administer it. All these ruin its simple, profound, and most affecting significance. Not that one denies for a moment ministry or rule; they are of exceeding moment and will be treated of in their place according to scripture. Yet in the Lord's supper, not only as He instituted it at first but as it was revealed by Him to the apostle in its final shape, none of these things appear. It is essentially as members of the one body that we communicate. Even the gifts are introduced separately and afterward. Elders, if any, are ignored; and this is the more remarkable, as the occasion might have seemed exactly one to have reminded them of the disorder allowed at Corinth, if it had really been their duty to preside at the supper. But, instead of reprehending any one's neglect as specially responsible, the apostle deals with the hearts and consciences of all the saints and brings out its true meaning, object, and guard for the instruction of the entire church of God. To discern the body, to appreciate the unfathomable grace of our Lord in His death for our sins, is the true corrective for all who have faith in Him who deigns to be in their midst as thus gathered to His name. To introduce a human order however reverent in appearance, without divine warrant, for the purpose of shutting out the Corinthian excesses or any others, is more offensive to him that trembles at the word of the Lord than any abuse of His supper as it was instituted. Even under such circumstances as those of Corinth the apostle adds nothing, takes away nothing, corrects nothing of that institution; in which we are called to announce the death of the Lord until He shall have come.

These last words convict of a great, perilous, and irreverent error those who count the Lord's supper a relic of Judaism and argue for its disuse among Christians like the community of goods practiced only for a brief space after Pentecost. A fresh revelation to the apostle of the Gentiles ought to have put such a notion to the rout, even apart from words such as those of verse 26 which suppose the constant and frequent observance of the supper till Christ returns in glory. And in fact the history of such theorists as the Society of Friends is the strongest proof of their error; for no Christian sect has more thoroughly lost the force of the truth of redemption, in discarding its signs. As is well known, they refuse as a whole (I speak not of evangelical individuals) both baptism and the Lord's supper. In accordance with this they do not see death sealed on the race, nor the efficacy of Christ's death in grace for the believer. They think of Christ as putting all mankind into a state of indefinite improvableness and so of saving those who do their best, Jew, Turk, or heathen; they repudiate therefore both institutions which set forth objectively that one can have no part with Christ risen but through His death. Subject to the word, we were buried with Him by baptism to death; and now continually announce His death till He come. Self is thus judged, yet are we kept in the constant sense of His grace. Is it not the truth as to ourselves, and due to Him? Is it not in perfect harmony with the gospel, which combines peace and salvation in Him with the confession of good-for-nothingness in those who are thus blessed to the praise of God's mercy in Christ?

Notes on 1 Corinthians 11:27-34

Such is the institution and the aim of the Lord's supper. Let us pursue the consequences pressed by the apostle.

“Wherefore whoever eateth the bread or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty as to the body and the blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body. For this cause many [are] weak and sickly among you, and many are falling asleep. But if we were discerning ourselves, we should not be judged; but when judged we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Wherefore, my brethren, when coming together to eat, wait for each other. If any one is hungry, let him eat at home, that ye may not come together for judgment. But the rest will I arrange when I come.” (Vers. 27-34.)

But the more precious the Lord's supper is, as the gathering of Christian affection to a focus in the remembrance of His death, the greater the danger, if the heart be careless, or the conscience not before God. It is not a question of allowing unworthy persons to communicate. Low as the Corinthians might be through their unjudged carnal thoughts and worldly desires, they had not fallen so grievously as that; they had not yet learned to make excuses for admitting the unrenewed and open enemies of the Lord to His table. But they were in danger of reducing its observance to a form for themselves, of partaking in the supper without exercise of soul, either as to their own ways, or as to His unspeakable love who was thus reminding them of His death for them. Hence the solemn admonition of the apostle, “Wherefore whosoever eateth the bread (for the added emphasis of the common text is uncalled for), or drinketh the cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord.” To eat or drink it as an ordinary meal, or a common thing, without reflection or self-judgment, is to eat and drink “unworthily;” and the more so because it is a Christian who does so; for of all men he should feel most what he owes the Lord, and what the Lord expressly brings to his remembrance at that serious moment. It is to be guilty of an offense, not merely against Himself in general, but in respect of His body and His blood, if he treat their memorials with indifference. There meet together the extremity of our need and guilt, the fullness of suffering in Christ, the deepest possible judgment of sin, yet withal grace to the uttermost, leaving not a sin unforgiven: what facts, feelings, motives, results, surround the cross of the Lord Jesus! It therefore appeals, as nothing else can, to the believer's heart, as well as to his conscience, and therefore does the apostle censure and stigmatize the Corinthians' fault so strongly.

“But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body.” Grace is thus maintained, but through righteousness, as ever. Each is to put himself to the proof, and so to eat and drink. The Lord would have His own to come, but not with negligence of spirit or levity; this were to be a party both to His own dishonor, and the deeper evil of his followers. Still He invites all, if He urges the trying of our ways. Self-judgment is with a view to coming, not to staying away. For

it is a question of those whom grace counts worthy; whatever their past or personal unworthiness, they are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Having the Spirit, not of fear, but of power and love and a sound mind, they are assumed to be in peace with God, and delivered from the law of sin; they are contemplated as jealous for the Lord's glory, and hating what grieves the Holy Spirit of God, whereby they are sealed unto the day of redemption.

It is not supposed that they could persevere in evil that they discover themselves exposed to, or that they confess sin in which they begin again to indulge, as if God were mocked by an acknowledgment which would thus aggravate their wickedness. Grace strengthens the man who tries himself with integrity, and it emboldens him to come. Where there is lightness on the other hand, the Lord shows Himself there to judge. “For he that eateth and drinketh (most add “unworthily,” but the most ancient omit) eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body,” that is, the Lord's body, as the mass add, in both cases needlessly, though right enough for the sense which is implied. To bring in the church would falsify the thought: the wrong was forgetfulness of the Lord's self-sacrificing love. He instituted the supper to remind us of it continually.

But there is another error still more prevalent, and even long and widely consecrated, which has wrought as much mischief as almost any other single mistranslation of a scripture. It is not “damnation” of which verse 29 speaks, but in contrast with it, judgment, κρ■μα. Yet all the celebrated English versions, from Wiclif downward, have sanctioned the grievous mistake, save the worst of them, the Rhemish, through their servile adherence to the Vulgate, which here happens to give judicium rightly. The curious fact however is, that of all systems none is really so tainted with the unbelief which led to the mistranslation as the Romanist. For it naturally regards with the utmost superstition the Lord's supper, and with it interweaves its idolatry of the real presence. Hence its interpretation of guilt as to the body and the blood of the Lord. Hence its notion of “damnation” attaching to a misuse of the sacrament, followed by almost all the Protestant associations. But the Protestant is misled by his version, while the Romanist is the less excusable, inasmuch as his Vulgate and vernacular versions are so far right, yet he is even more deeply under the delusion which denies Christian relationship and an atom of grace in God.

Here the Spirit really teaches us that, where the true and holy aim of the Lord's supper is slighted, and the communicant does not discern the body (that is, does not discriminate between the memorial of Christ and an ordinary meal), he eats and drinks judgment as a present thing. He brings on himself the chastening hand of the Lord in vindication of His honor and His love. Hence it is added, “For this cause [are] many weak and sick among you, and a considerable number are falling asleep.” There sin sickness was to death. And there is still further intimation: “For if we discerned ourselves we should not be judged; but when judged we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.” This is conclusive. The express aim of the Lord in inflicting these bodily sufferings at the present is in order that His faulty saints may escape damnation. Condemnation awaits the world because, rejecting the Lord, it must bear, its own doom. He has borne the sins of the faithful; but if they are light about His grace, they come under His present rebukes, that they may be spared condemnation with the world whom they so far resemble. If they discerned the evil in its working within, they would avoid, not only its manifestation without, but His chastening; if they fail in this self-judgment, He does not fail in

watchful care, and deals with them; but even such judgment flows from His love, and takes the shape of chastening, that they may not perish in the condemnation which falls on the guilty world. How grievous on the part of the saints; how gracious and holy on His part! But it is evidently and only present judgment that they may not fall into future condemnation; that is, it is in contrast with “damnation."

The apostle closes his grave censure and instruction with the exhortation to wait for each other when coming together to eat; self would thus he judged, and love in active exercise. “If any one is hungry, let him eat at home, that ye may not come together for judgment.” The indulgence of flesh in one provokes flesh in another, and the Lord must then judge more than him who first dishonored Him. The apostle did not say all he might. “The rest will I arrange when I come.” It would not be for the best interests of the assembly if all were laid down formally. The Spirit in living power is the true supplement to the written word as the unerring standard, not tradition. We need and have the Holy Ghost as well as scripture; but scripture is the rule, not the Spirit, though we cannot use it aright without Him.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 12:1-6

It may be well to remark here the wisdom of God in furnishing the revelation of the due object and order of the Lord's supper before He treats of the Spirit's presence and operations in the assembly. The observance of that holy feast is independent, not only of the presence of elders or bishops, as we have seen, but of the display of power in the assembly. Not that grace now withholds the Spirit's working, but that God would have us to know that His saints are free, and bound, to remember Christ in this solemn and appointed way of His love, apart from this, or that, or any form of gift. The unfolding of the ways of the Spirit in the church follows as a fresh topic, and is thus kept quite distinct from the standing sign of our fellowship in showing forth the Lord's death.

Nor can there be a doubt to the intelligent believer that an apostle had authority from Christ to act, speak, and write of Him in all that concerns the church, its doctrines and discipline, its order and worship; and that these regulations found in the written word bind the church at all times. It is in the despising of these institutes, and the deliberate abandonment of them, consists the sin and ruin of the church; as, again, those who have ears to hear prove it in their practical submission and obedience. For it is not enough to do the will of the Lord in our individual ways. After being awakened of the Holy Spirit, and brought to God, we find, if we believe scripture, that we are not units but living parts of an organic whole. We belong to God, but also are members of a body on earth—the body of Christ, the church, in which the Holy Spirit acts with a view to glorifying the Lord Jesus. We are not left to our own wisdom as to this, but instructed and directed by the word of God, and very especially by such apostolic epistles as the present. Hence the all-importance of diligent attention to these inspired words, with dependence on God and distrust of ourselves; for the aim of Satan is by all means to thwart what is so near to His glory, and so full of blessing to the saints themselves. Self-confidence may be the snare of some; others may be exposed to the influence of tradition, public opinion, and human learning. The truth is that we must be taught of God, though this be in the godly use of every means His word warrants for our help. But then we have the assurance that “they shall be all taught of God” —a word which our Lord drew from the prophets, and applies to the present, so that we may confidently look for its verification in the measure of our waiting on Him in faith.

We shall also see, as we study this new section of the epistle (chaps, 12, 14), how grace turns the errors and faults of the Corinthians to the standing profit of all who desire to learn and walk faithfully. Power is wholly distinct from spirituality. What assembly among the Gentiles surpassed that in the capital of Achaia for the display of energy evidently supernatural? Yet was their communion with God's mind at the lowest ebb. This should have checked the yearning, in our day as in the past, after such manifestations of the Spirit as abounded in their midst; and the rather, as we live when Christendom has grown so inured to its own ways, that though God's word seem to many saints peculiar and eccentric, they have forgotten, if they ever knew, that the most ancient tradition is but an innovation on the “old path” marked down unerringly in scripture. The Corinthians had slipped away from God's end of glorifying the Lord Jesus in the assembly; and hence flesh was active, which forgets the common grace in Christ, and leads us to measure

ourselves by ourselves, and to compare ourselves with ourselves. It is vanity, not intelligence; and the fruit is puffing up, not edification. But the watchful eye of the apostle was led to use it for God in his care for all the churches, yea, for the church at all times. Scripture needs every need. It is God's word, and in view of all wants, though He availed Himself only of what then pressed, but after a divine sort.

There are indeed two great and widely prevalent snares: that of sacrificing the individual to the assembly; and that of forgetting the assembly for the individual. Romanism illustrates the former, as Protestantism the latter. In Romanism the church is all; there alone is the Spirit, the truth, holiness, everything: the individual is nothing, not even a saint. It were presumption; the church must settle it, if at all, fifty years after he is dead. The individual cannot even pretend to know his sins forgiven; anathema, says the Council of Trent, to him who says justification is by faith alone, anathema to him who says he can know it for his soul. Thus is the gospel ignored and denied in principle, and most distinctly for every individual within the bosom of Rome; and this to aggrandize the church, which arrogates to itself alone to speak, but speaks here falsehood in Christ's name. And as to any individuals pretending to say that their body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in them, which they have of God, it could only sound still more awful presumption, if not blasphemy. And no wonder, for it is wholly inconsistent with the sacrifice of the Mass, or the subsistence of an earthly priesthood, which are the Jachin and Boaz of the Romish temple. It is of no avail that the apostolic doctrine is plain, precise, and conclusive that every Christian should know this transcendent privilege of himself now on earth. Romanism boldly sets it aside, and every other which belongs to the individual, in order to swell the church's power and glory. “Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” (Matt. 15:7-9.)

But there is an opposite snare, not so destructive of man's salvation, but equally at issue with God's glory. It is the Protestant scheme, which rightly affirms justification by faith, and God's title to address every man's conscience in His word, though enfeebled and spoiled by putting it as man's right to a private judgment on it. But Protestantism ignores the church of God, and in claiming a coordinate place for churches, national and dissenting and what not, virtually denies the one body on earth. It may dream of one body in heaven, where scripture never speaks of such a thing, but it recognizes ever so many bodies on earth, each independent, which scripture expressly sets aside.

The word of God guards the truth as to both points, and excludes all error. According to it the gospel deals with each soul first of all. By faith the individual has life and is justified, adopted as a child of God, blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. Then, over and above his faith, he is sealed by the Spirit. In virtue of one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all given to drink into one Spirit. Thus, and thus only, is the body, the church, formed; it supposed the individual question settled by faith, and then the corporate relationship begins, and is established by the Holy Spirit; and this now on earth, as a privilege indeed of the highest kind, yet at once involving responsibilities thenceforth of the gravest. If the known individual blessedness by faith delivers the soul from Romanism, no less surely does the corporate place of the church, when understood, lift one outside and above Protestantism in all its manifold and varying phases. How could you, intelligibly or consistently, join this or that body, when you are consciously of the “one body,” and responsible to walk according

to God's will in that relationship? If I hear God's word, I am first in Christ, then in the church; I know the Spirit dwells in me, and know also that He dwells in the church, which is therefore one above the earth, not merely alike in doctrine, discipline, and polity, which might be in many independent societies, but one body here below. And this is so true and grave, that the truth would call one out of Romanism, if Rome had not an image nor a superstition, and out of Protestantism, if its sects had not a single unconverted member or minister. All this, however, and more, will appear plainly as we pursue the teaching of the apostle.

“Now concerning spiritual things, brethren, I do not wish you to be ignorant. Ye know that, when ye were Gentiles, [ye were] led away unto the dumb idol as ye might be led. Wherefore I give you to know that no one speaking in [the] Spirit of God saith, Jesus [is] accursed, and no one can say, Lord Jesus, unless in [the] Holy Spirit. Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit, and there are differences of services, and the same Lord, and there are differences of operations, but the same God that operateth all things in all.” (Vers. 16.)

The Authorized translation, with almost all others, inserts “gifts” after “spiritual” in the first verse; but this is scarcely comprehensive enough, for it does not properly contemplate the presence of the Spirit Himself, which clearly is far more momentous than any gift, and in itself distinct from them, they depending on Him rather than He on them. Hence “manifestations” has been suggested. But this, though better, seems inadequate to express the great truth in question, as we may learn from verse 7, where “the manifestation of the Spirit” refers to what is given to each, as distinct from the baptism of the Spirit, which forms all into one body. The sense is the entire range of what pertains to the Spirit; and if our language could bear “spirituals,” this would seem the best way of rendering τ■ν πνευματικ■ν. A Christian usage has already adopted “heavenlies” in Ephesians. There seems at least as much need for a similar modification here in Corinthians. There is no sufficient reason, with Locke and others, to suppose that spiritual men are meant here again, as in chapter 14:37, 2:15; Gal. 6. Compare verse 31 and 14:1. This would narrow the field even more than the common version, and thus be more objectionable still.

The apostle, then, would have them acquainted with the source, character, and object of all that flows from the Spirit in the assembly, and of His manifestation in each member of Christ. And, first he reminds them of their pitiable condition when heathen. They were led away to the dumb idols so familiar to all, as they happened to be led. Their own will, doubtless, wrought and exposed them to unseen beings, who availed themselves of those senseless objects of adoration. The more, therefore, did they need to learn what had a wholly different origin and intent. This brings in the criterion of the Holy Spirit, the confession of Jesus as Lord, in contrast with the aim of evil spirits, who said, ‘Curse on Jesus.' Alas! this was not confined to Gentiles, for so cried the Jews under Satan's influence at the late crisis of their history. It would be to lose much, however, to reduce this twofold test to such gross forms alone. We may justly infer that, as the Holy Spirit ever works to exalt Jesus, so does the enemy to degrade Him. And this appears to be the point here, not the ascertainment of true believers among professors, but the character of what is taught in the assembly, whether of God's Spirit or of Satan. So it is even in 1 John 4:2, 8 John 7.

Next, the apostle descends from this broad and absolute test, in which all true confessors must unite, to the varieties, and these in relation to their source and aim. “Now there are differences of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of ministries, and the same Lord; and there are

differences of operations, but the same God that operateth all things in all." It is not, on the one hand, the Trinity, as such, which we have here, though unquestionably "the Spirit" and "the Lord" could not be thus introduced if they were not God equally with the Father. But it is plain that our Lord appears not so much in His divine glory as the Son, but rather in the official position conferred on Him. And God is spoken of as such, not in His personal distinctiveness as Father. On the other hand, it is not a division into three classes of gifts, but the same thing in substance viewed in three relations: gifts, in relation to the Spirit, through whom they come; services, in relation to the Lord, under whom and for whose glory they are responsibly exercised; and operations or workings or effects, in relation to God, for it is God, and not man, that works the whole in all. Thus, if by the Spirit there be a gift, its exercise is a ministry or service of the Lord, by whose authority it is carried on; and it is God who works it all effectually. Compare 1 Cor. 3:5-9 and chapter 2.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 12:7-13

WE come next to individual distinctions, the special forms of the Spirit's working in Christians.

“But to each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for profit. For to one, through the Spirit, is given [the] word of wisdom, and to another [the] word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; to a different one faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, and to another operations of powers, and to another prophecy, and to another discerning of spirits; to a different one kinds of tongues, and to another interpretation of tongues. But all these things operateth the one and the same Spirit, dividing in particular to each as he pleaseth.” (Vers. 7-11.)

It is well to remark that the apostle is speaking only of the assembly, of each one there and not in the world. This might seem needless to notice, did we not know that a whole community in Christendom is based on the opposed assumption that a manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man on earth without restriction. Here the apostle is treating strictly of the church: to each within it is the manifestation of the Spirit given, and that with a view to the common good, not for personal influence or display. Chrysostom is quite in error in supposing that the term “manifestation” is here used because unbelievers do not own God, save by visible wonders. For it is not a question of miracles only, as the very first samples (the word of wisdom and that of knowledge) prove; nor is it a sign to unbelievers, but for the profit of believers.

The way of the Spirit too is not concentration of all His powers in a single person, but distribution to a variety of individuals; and this because the assembly is contemplated, not a chief man but the church, by the different constituents of which God is pleased to work for the good of all. “For to one, through the Spirit, is given [the] word of wisdom, and to another [the] word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit.” The apostle takes care to begin with what would be called non-miraculous gifts, the better to counteract the fleshly mind, whether of the Corinthians or of any others, which sets an inordinate value on what strikes the eye, the mind, or the imagination by undeniable effects of power. Though not miraculous however, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge are as expressly of the Holy Spirit as the most striking sign-gifts. It is not through a commanding, or a merely “sanctified,” intellect that the word of wisdom comes; it “is given through the Spirit,” “According to the same Spirit” is given the word of knowledge. They are thus no less supernatural, though not in the ordinary sense miraculous. They are the fruit neither of innate powers nor of acquirement, but of the Spirit, just as is the new birth of every believer; and far more important than any miracle, grave as it may be and glorifying to God in its own place and for its own purpose.

What then is “wisdom” as distinguished from “knowledge?” Wisdom seems to me that moral discernment given by God of things as they are before Him, and consequently as they truly are in themselves, and in relation to one another, which is of prime value for practical judgment and conduct here below. Good and evil, right and wrong, are thus seen intuitively, because of familiarity with the presence of God, not only in their results but in their principles and springs. Knowledge is rather that understanding of revealed truth, which of course therefore is given

through a diligent use of the scriptures, and is of great value for appreciating the ways as well as word of God, though the abuse of it issues in systems of divinity, of prophecy, and the like. The “word” in the two instances means or implies the faculty of communicating to others the wisdom or knowledge, as the case may be. It does not seem correct to infer that the prophets were characterized by the latter as apostles undoubtedly were by the former. It would be more according to scripture if one said that “the word of knowledge” pertained to the teacher, always remembering that an apostle or a prophet might also be a teacher and a preacher, as Paul himself was beyond all controversy. But his was a rare combination of gifts, and all of them rich, deep, and ample in order to accomplish the special work for which he was called of the Lord.

But; next follow very different manifestations of the Spirit. “To a different one faith by (■ν) the same Spirit; and to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, and to another operations of powers, and to another prophecy, and to another discerning of spirits,” &c. Clearly “faith” here, as sometimes elsewhere, does not mean a soul's believing in Christ or the gospel for salvation, being a manifestation of the Spirit, and this to one here or there among the Christians. It is that distinctive gift from God which enables its possessor to face foes and dangers, and rise above hindrances or difficulties, and be assured of the issue, where others, even saints, are perplexed and disquieted. It is thus distinct from healings, powers, prophecy, &c.

There seems no need of dwelling on “gifts of healings in virtue of (■ν) the same Spirit,” further than to say that it is not more comprehensive, but less, than “faith.” There was faith in him who exercised spiritual powers in healing the sick, but gifts of healings were restricted of course to their own peculiar domain. “Faith,” as such, might be exercised in a great variety of ways besides that which strengthened some to be martyrs or confessors. Again, another might have “operations of powers” (erroneously rendered in the Rhemish and the Authorized Versions, “the working of miracles"), which were not “healings,” but such superiority to things material, or beings spiritual, as we see promised in Mark 16:17, 18, and illustrated in the Acts of the Apostles. “Prophecy” another might have given him, which was an energy of the Holy Ghost in the purely spiritual domain, enabling him to give out the mind of God as to the present or future. This definition embraces the twofold application of the term in scripture, whether to the narrow field of prediction, or to the larger one of declaring God's mind and will, so as to act on conscience with unfailing, divine conviction. (See for the latter 1 Cor. 14; for the former Acts 11) “Discerning of spirits” is another gift, which means the faculty of deciding, not between true and spurious professors of the Lord Jesus, but between the Spirit's teaching and that which simulated it by evil spirits. The general responsibility to try or prove the spirits if they are of God we see in 1 John 4, because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Here it is a special gift. The danger, or rather the fact, of misleading some is also fore shown in 1 Tim. 4. The designed distribution of these gifts is strikingly shown in the last two, where “kinds of tongues,” or a variety of languages naturally unknown to the speaker we find distinguished from “interpretation of tongues” given to another, though 1 Cor. 14:13 intimates the desirableness of their combination.

“But all these operateth the one and the same Spirit, dividing in particular to each according as he pleaseth.” (Ver. 11.) The unity of the Spirit, who not only distributes each to each but works all the gifts, thus keeping up dependence on His power, is thus set forth, no less than His sovereign activity as a divine person, however truly come down to work in subservience to the glory of the Lord Jesus. Evil and error may have as many springs as there are men and demons with their

varied and often conflicting wills, lusts, and passions. But the selfsame Spirit works all that glorifies Christ in these different gifts, distributed respectively at His pleasure to each servant of the Lord. How this diversity with unity characterizes the church will appear from the reason given in the subjoined comparison, as little understood in its force as it is familiar in its forms or phrases, yet of all moment for His glory and our blessing.

“For even as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of the body, being many, are one body, so also [is] Christ. For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit.” (Vers. 12, 13.) Thus the assembly, being an organic unity, while it consists of many parts or members, harmonizes with the various gifts which the Spirit distributes according to His will. Just such is, as the apostle pointedly says, “the Christ;” we would have said the church. The apostle looks at Christ and. the assembly as one mystic man, which, while one, has many members, and yet all the members, many as they are, forming but one body. “So also is the Christ.” The assembly is identified with Him, and this because “by (■ν, in virtue of) one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether bond or free, and were all made to drink of one Spirit."

It is important to observe that it was not by faith, precious and mighty as it is, that this unity was formed, but by the Holy Spirit personally sent down from heaven. Faith is individual, it does not unite, though fitting for union morally. One believes the gospel for one's own soul; and the believer receives life for himself in the Son of God, who is life and quickens the dead. But the baptism of the Spirit is over and above life, and is given therefore not to the dead unbeliever but to those already quickened, and the issue is the one body. So the Lord, who had already quickened the disciples, and this even with life more abundantly in resurrection (John 10; 20), promised them just before His ascension that they should be baptized with the Holy Spirit, which accordingly was fulfilled not many clays after at Pentecost. (Compare Acts 1:6; 2; also viii. 15, 16; x. 44, 45; xi. 15-17; xix. 2-6.) The one body had never existed; from Pentecost it begins, as a present fact, on earth, because the Spirit is thus sent to baptize as He never did before; and this continuously, for He when given was to abide in and with us forever. (John 14:16, 17.) No difference in religion, or in social standing, hinders. There is one body and one Spirit. The figures employed in the verse before us seem to allude to baptism and the Lord's supper, the latter being the standing sign of the church's unity.

But it must be borne in mind that scripture nowhere identifies water-baptism with the baptism of the Spirit. Thus, on the grandest occasion of all, the disciples in Jerusalem, waiting for power from on high, were not baptized with water that day; and the convicted souls from among the Jews were told to repent and be baptized each of them, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and they should receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The disconnection of the two is still more manifest in the case of the Samaritan converts a little after, and of the Ephesian disciples long after. If possible more evidently false is the hypothesis which binds them together in Cornelius' case, with his household and friends, who received the gift of the Holy Spirit before they were baptized with water.

It is not only Catholics then but Protestants also, who are utterly wrong in adducing this text for the effect of baptism. We are not, though Calvin puts it into the lips of the apostle, “engrafted by baptism into Christ's body." Baptism is not an engrafting into the body; it associates the believer

with His death. It means that we were buried with Christ unto death, a strictly individual truth, and` wholly distinct from making us members of His body, which is always attributed to the Holy Spirit, whether we were or were not. baptized with water at that time. Nor is it possible to attribute to the cup the keeping up of the unity, or the conducting us by degrees to the same unity, for the phrase implies a single finished act (17roTicrOlipEv, like gpaw-riothiliev, both aorists). It is at most therefore a glance at the two institutions of our Lord, and in no way a doctrinal connection. They are separable, and in fact separated, even when true believers are concerned; and, blessed as is the aim and the effect of the Lord's supper, it has nothing whatever to do with our reception of the Spirit, though doubtless the Spirit, when received, gives an immense accession to the enjoyment of the grace of Christ in the supper, and this in communion with one another. They are not sacramentally bound together, even baptism being to death with Christ, not to life, still less to union or the one body which is by the baptism of the Spirit.

Further, it will have been gathered by the thoughtful reader that the baptism of the Spirit is wholly distinct from the new birth, as in John 3. Hence it is incorrect to think that any communication of the Holy Spirit is called His baptism. Neither the new birth nor sanctification of the Spirit is so designated, any more than His inspiration, but only the gift, Himself personally received by the believer, not His quickening operation which makes a believer or gives one faith.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 12:14-25

The apostle proceeds to employ the idea of the body to illustrate the assembly of God as now existing on earth. Doubtless it was in season for the state of things then in Corinth; but it is over needed while we are here below, and never more so than now, when the state of Christendom renders it, on the one hand, harder to seize and apply the truth, and, on the other, still more imperatively due to the injured honor of the Lord, whose word and will are in general so grievously set at naught and ignored.

“For also the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not a hand I am not of the body, it is not on this account not of the body; and if the ear say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body, it is not on this account not of the body. If the whole body [were] an eye, where the hearing? If all hearing, where the smelling? But now God set the members each one of them in the body according as he pleased. And if they all were one member, where the body? But now [are there] many members, and one body. And the eye cannot Bay to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. But much more the members of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary; and those which we think to be less honorable [members] of the body, on these we put more abundant honor, and our uncomely [members] have more abundant comeliness; but our comely [members] have no need. But God blended the body together, having given more abundant honor to that which lacked, that there might be no division in the body, but that the members might have the same concern one for another.” (Vers. 14-25.)

The great and most obvious characteristic of the body is that it consists of not one member but many. This is so essential to its nature that it could not be called “the body” if it consisted of but one member, and not of many. It would be a monstrous formation, not the beautiful unity with diversity seen in the human body, as indeed in every other organization. It is exactly so with the assembly of God. It is not only His house, but Christ's body in virtue of the one Spirit who has baptized all the believers, whatever their antecedent and their otherwise irreconcilable differences, into one: an unity which subsists now, and not by-and-by alone, on earth, and not merely in heaven. Indeed we may go farther, and say that the sole object of the Spirit's instruction here is the church now on earth, and not at all in heaven, where we hear of the bride and the new Jerusalem, never the one body or the many members.

But it is important to observe that the instruction has no bearing on denominations, save simply to blot them out. So far are they from being contemplated in the exhortation, that the truth of the one body utterly condemns them, root and branch. In no extent or way, then, can the apostle's words be applied to the different denominations which now exist. It is opposed to the fundamental unity of the body on which Paul insists, that one denomination stands in need of another. The body has many members, not denominations, which only exist antagonistically to that unity. Far from being necessary to the due working of the church, like the many members of the body, they frustrate the truth, allowed in theory perhaps, but always denied in practice, as indeed they are dead against

the will of the Lord.

The first practical inconsistency with the church's constitution which the apostle warns against (vers. 15, 16) is the discontent of inferior members with their position. They were in danger of ignoring and neglecting their own functions, from envy of those who had a higher place. “If the foot say, Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body, it is not [or, is it] on that account not of the body. And if the ear say, Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body, it is not (or, is it) on this account not of the body.” Such disaffection, if carried out, would destroy the church. Each has its own office, but for the assembly, not for itself; as the foot and hand, the eye and ear, act for the entire body.

Next the absurdity of such wishes is shown. If one member might desire lawfully some special place, so might all the rest; the consequence of which would be the ruin of the body. “If the whole body [were] an eye, where the hearing? If all hearing, where the smelling?” (Ver. 17.) The admirable co-ordination and sub-ordination of the various members in the one body would be at an end.

Nor is this a question of a true theory or of a wise practice, but of the divine will. God has so ordained it; and those who wish otherwise are fighting against His word. “But now God set the members each one of them in the body according as he pleased.” (Ver. 18.) It is not merely the providential fact of one being in the wilderness, and another in a city; nor is it one led of the Spirit to go here, and another there. As the assembly is according to God's design and constitution, each is set in a place arranged by God in the body of Christ, with a gift suitable for it. One's own choice is excluded; and so is selection by other men. It is neither self, nor man, nor the church, but God, who can, or ought to, set the members and He set them, each one of them, in the body according as He pleased. He determines for the least as well as for the greatest. Any other ordering is at issue with God's ways and pleasure. It is God's church, and He, not man, orders the place of each and all in it.

"And if they all [were] one member, where the body?” (Ver. 19.) It is the remark of another that as the former proof of absurdity (ver. 17) appealed to the concrete, so does this to the abstract; I add that as there is shown that the distinctness of the members would be destroyed by forgetting the truth, so here the completeness of the body. “But now are they many members, and but one body.” (Ver. 20.) The unity of the body perfectly consists with diversity in the members, and the diversity of the members with that one body. And so, in fact, it is according to God's mind, It is the departure from this which constitutes mainly the present disorganized state of the church which we see in Christendom. For the moat part all the gifts which can find expression must be in one member in a congregation, and there is not one body, as far as facts attest, but many bodies, differing and opposed. The root of the evil is that the one Spirit is not really owned, but human acquirements and appointment of varying form. And the eye does, in present practice say to the hand, I have no need of thee, and the head to the feet, I have no need of you, the eye and head coalescing in the one sole minister.

Thus openly is the truth enunciated by the apostle set at naught; for he is proving that, as this cannot be without ruin in the natural body, so is the body of Christ framed in the grace of God. “And the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee; or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you.” Disdain is thereby put down even more strongly here, on the part of the higher

members toward the lower, than was discontent, as we saw, in the lesser toward the greater. The highest cannot do without the least. God has made nothing, gives nothing, in vain; yea, the truth demands more than this. “But much more, the members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary; and those [members] of the body which we think to be less honorable, these we invest with more abundant honor; and our uncomely [members] have more abundant comeliness: but our comely [members] have no need. But God blended the body together, having given more abundant honor to that which lacked, that there might be no divisions in the body, but that the members might have the same concern one for another."

By this instinctive sense implanted in us, we feel that the most attractive features can do without the care which is freely bestowed on the less comely; while we know that there are parts of the body which seem weaker, and yet are necessary to its wellbeing, or even life, which last is not the case with some possessed of show and strength, and having a good place, if not so essential. Nature itself teaches us to cover or adorn what is not pleasant or proper to see, while what is fair can appear freely.

So is it according to God with the body of Christ. Much that appears not is of the utmost importance; those that labored like Epaphras are far more necessary than some who shone at Corinth with miracles or tongues. As we cover the feet, not the face, so it is that God uses and honors what is apt to be despised; and so should we, if we have the mind of Christ; and this is thus ordered of God to guard against the tendency to division in the body. Had the Corinthians heeded this, how much sorrow and shame would have been spared! The disorder, however, grace has turned to our account, who have been awakened to see and judge, and to have done with that which is so dishonoring to the Lord, but a state which is ever ready to repeat itself, and not least where knowledge takes the place of love, and saints condescend to form cliques with a favorite leader, to help them on in the sorry work of jealousy and detraction. Is this the members having the same concern one for another? or is it not schism, against which God tempered the body together so that there should be none?

Notes on 1 Corinthians 12:26-31

We have seen, then, that God has so constituted the body of Christ, like the natural one, that there should be no division of interest, but the good of each in the good of all, and the care of each for every other member.

“And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with [it]: whether a [or one] member is glorified, all the members rejoice with [it].” (Ver. 26.) It is not said merely that they ought, but that they do. Whether it be good or ill, all that is according to God in one Christian goes out for blessing to all the rest; and there is not an ill or scandal in a saint at the antipodes which does not affect with its shade and suffering every other in these lands. We consciously suffer or rejoice, one may add, in the measure of our spiritual power. But the effect is real throughout the church. It is a body—the body of Christ—and as a whole it feels in joy or sorrow: else it were not a real organic unity. Undoubtedly also its present condition, with denominational barriers, which in all the saints sever into independent associations, as well as with the allowance of the world in most, reduces spiritual sensibility to the lowest: still, fax from desiring otherwise, one dares not deny that it subsists, surviving these deplorable hindrances by its own vitality, as flowing from the Holy Spirit of God who dwells in the church.

See how the blessed apostle brings home the truth from the abstract to the concrete, applying this precious truth to the case before him. It is true that the state of the Corinthians was such that he would not go there. If he had gone, he must have taken a rod with him, and this was far from his heart. He would rather write, and wait; and God blessed his written rebuke to their restoration in measure, and he could rejoice, as we see in the second epistle. But even here, before he was refreshed with the fruit of grace, while censuring severely their faults, he does not hesitate to say, “Now ye are Christ's body, and members in particular.” (Ver. 27.) Such is the privilege, and such no less the responsibility of the local assembly; not independently, of course, for this would deny the body of Christ, but representatively, for, if it were not so, the local assembly were not Christ's body; and as this they collectively were, and also, they were members severally.

It is very evident, too, that it is not an ideal or future picture. It is a living reality on earth, which every Christian is bound to walk in and manifest, abandoning at all mat whatever is inconsistent with, or destructive of, it. It is a state now on earth, not about to be by-and-by in heaven. There will be no such thing as the suffering of one and the sympathy of the rest on high. Unbelief shirks responsibility, and would like to conceive it another state, not yet practicable, because it does not like the trial. In heaven, no doubt, there will be perfect love, and all selfishness will be gone forever; but it is quite a different state of things, and not once contemplated in these verses.

"And God set some in the church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then powers, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all powers? Have all gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But desire earnestly the greater gifts, and yet I show you a way of exceeding excellence.” (Ver. 28.)

We see hence how completely the true thought is that God, not man, arranged the assembly, and the relative place of all in it. It is the same principle, from the highest to the lowest, from apostles to the least gift for the manifestation of the Spirit in it. And the Corinthians then, as others of late, had to hear, whether they heeded or not, that not those striking displays of power in which they found their childish surprise and delight, like the world without, but gifts they were really, though relatively first, and second, and third, the last-named being the very one they had been abusing to no small disorder and hindrance of edification in the assembly. The apostles had a place of governing for Christ which prophets had not, though both constitute the foundation on which this building of God is built. (Eph. 2) Teachers were subordinate, of course. “Helps” and “governments” are commonly supposed to be the gifts needed for the offices of deacon and elder respectively. This at least is certain, that there is no difficulty in understanding this of the presbyters or bishops, because these had to be διδακτικο■. For “apt to teach” is not the same thing as a “teacher.” The ruling elders of Presbyterianism are very distinct from scriptural elders; and so still more is the one teaching elder, or the minister. Other societies diverge, if possible, more from the principle laid down here and elsewhere.

But it is the Lord who calls, not the church. The church may be the sphere of the exercise of the gifts, never the source of the authority, any more than of the power, both of which come from Christ. It is He who gives mission: He sends laborers to sow or reap. Nor does scripture over assert it to be the church's office to examine the candidate for the ministry, as it is called, nor authoritatively to declare its judgment. There is no appointed way for the church in either case, because it is not the church's work or duty. The Lord qualifies the servant whom He calls for the work He appoints to be done; and He works by the Spirit, not only in this member, but in all the others, to have His call and work and workmen respected, though flesh and world be stirred up of the enemy to discredit all. Hence we find the church at Corinth, as well as those of Galatia, questioning, not declaring authoritatively (which God never asked any to do) the apostleship of Paul. Ministry, according to scripture and this very chapter in particular, is clearly the exercise of a gift from the Lord to a given end. So says the apostle Peter in his first epistle (chap. iv. 10): “As every man [each] hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” There is therefore no real ministry according to God without a gift in the word; and where such a gift is exercised, it is ministry. Only there were also lower gifts of power, and these the apostle puts in their true place, as the Corinthians had put them out of it.

It is to be noticed too how, in verses 29, 30, the apostle's questions suppose distribution of gifts among the members of Christ, and not their concentration either in one or in all. Neither have all the same functions, nor has any one all the functions which are expressly said to be distributed to each of many members, to this one, and to that another.

The Corinthians' folly was not greater in wishing all the gifts to be in each and all the saints, than the modern theory of arrogating all, as far as public ministration goes, to a single official. The one was ignorant vanity before the truth was fully revealed in a written form; the other is more guilty presumption in presence of the acknowledged word of God, which condemns every departure from His principles, and the great fact of the one body with its many members, wherein the Holy Spirit works to glorify the Lord Jesus.

At the same time the saints are encouraged to desire earnestly the greater gifts, but these were for edification, not for show. And yet he points out to them a way surpassingly excellent; not surely a mere way, however eminently good, to obtain these gifts, as some suppose, but a way for souls to feel and think, to walk and worship, beyond all gifts. It is the way of love, which he opens out in the next chapter.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 13

Love is the theme in hand, not “charity,” for which we are indebted to Wiclif's too close following of the Vulgate. Tyndale and Cranmer gave “love,” from which our Authorized translators often went back again to “charity.” The apostle discourses on it worthily of Him who displayed its perfection here below. Not law, but love, is in harmony with God's assembly. Doubtless it is handled with special reference to the need and dangers of the Corinthians, but the Holy Spirit gave it out with divine precision and fullness. Love was a new sound even to a Jew; how much more to the Gentiles, used to walk in the vanity of their mind, darkened in understanding, hardened in heart, who, after having cast off all feeling, gave themselves up to lasciviousness, though none the less hateful and hating one another! Selfishness reigned, whatever the sentiments and pretensions of men, and this because God Himself was unknown, sin was unjudged and unforgiven. For love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God; as, on the other hand, he that loveth not knoweth not God, for God is love, while he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. So our apostle tells the Thessalonians that they were taught of God to love one another, and the Colossians, that love is the bond of perfectness, reminding Timothy that the end of the charge laid on him, and on others through him, was love out of a pure heart and good conscience and faith unfeigned.

It is well, however, to remark its connection here with the assembly of God, and the working of the Holy Spirit in it. Everywhere precious, never out of season, it is above all the lifebreath of the church. Where love is not the regulating power in the Spirit, the very nearness of the saints to each other, and the action of the gifts, prove the greatest dangers; where love governs, all else works smoothly to the edification of the saints and to the Lord's glory. If the Corinthian saints, in their ministering of the gifts, had forgotten the supreme excellence of love, the apostle puts it forward with all prominence between his treatment of the Spirit's presence and action in the assembly, and the order laid down for the due exercise of gift there.

Love, he shows, has intrinsic and divine excellency, surpassing all gifts, even the gifts that edify. For such gifts may be where there is no love. “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, yet have not love, I am become sounding brass and a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophecy, and know all the mysteries, and all the knowledge, and if I have all the faith so as to remove mountains, yet have not love, I am nothing. And if I should dole out in food all my substance, and if I should deliver my body that I might be burned, and have not love, I am nothing profited.” (Vers. 1-3.) The apostle begins with the superiority of love to the gift of tongues in any conceivable degree. It is as evident from this verse as from Acts 2 how baseless is the effort of Meyer and others to deny that they were articulate and intelligible languages. “Of angels” completes the cycle for the apostle, who here, as elsewhere, personates the supposed case. (Cf. 1 Cor. 9:26, 27; Rom. 7:7-25, according to the principle stated in 1 Cor. 4; 6) To speak all possible tongues without love were to become sounding brass or a clattering cymbal, not even vox but sonitus and praeterea nilril. But he goes farther. The possession of the prophetic gift, with an inward consciousness, and not merely acquired knowledge, of all the mysteries and all the knowledge that is revealed, nay,

the possession of all the faith so as to remove mountains, if without love, leaves one nothing. It is plain that he is not treating of divinely given faith in Christ's person, which is inseparable from eternal life and love too. It is the gift, or χ■ρισμα, of faith. Power is not grace. (See Heb. 6; Matt. 7) If one should bestow all one's property in charitable doles, and give over one's body to the flames of martyrdom, without love, he is nothing profited, whatever others might reap.

We may notice that the reading, καυχ■σο-(or -w-)-μαι, "I may boast," is that of ■ A B, 17, the Roman Aethiopic, &c. But it is, as Matthaei said, whatever Jerome alleges, "prorsus absurda lectio," and a change by one letter from καυθ■σο—(or "I may be burned," whether inadvertently, or by the design of such as did not understand the scope of the passage; for the motive of boasting would exclude love so completely, as to render δ■ μ■ ■χω a needless addition. The fact however is instructive, in that it is one of not a few proofs how mistaken and perilous it is to accept absolutely the united verdict of the three most famous uncials.

Next we come, not to a definition of love, but to its qualities as in this world, specified for our instruction. It is what Christ was here, active as well as suffering in love above evil. "Love is long-suffering, is kind; love is not emulous, is not vainglorious, is not puffed up, doth not behave unseemly, seeketh not its own things, is not easily provoked, reckoneth not the evil, rejoiceth not over iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." (Vers. 4-7.) Patience in the midst of trial is the first-mentioned attribute of love, which even shows positive kindness instead of harboring a vindictive thought. Again, as it does not indulge in envy or jealousy of another, so there is no self-display (or, as some think, forwardness), nor the arrogance whence it springs. Hence indecorum, or rude behavior, is incompatible with love, as it is marked by disinterestedness and slowness to anger, and by readiness to forget the wrong that is done.

"Thinketh no evil" scarcely expresses the clause, but rather not having the evil in the mind and tongue. "No evil" would answer to the phrase if anarthrous. Here it is an actual evil done, which would rankle but for love, which is ever above evil, always free and always holy.

Hence love does not rejoice over unrighteousness, as malice does, too glad to cover its own evil by that of others; the joy, the sympathies, of love are with the truth, which is personified here as elsewhere. Thus love bears all vexations, believes all possible good (cf. Acts 9:27; 11:22-20), hopes all, in spite of evil manifest enough at present, endures all things, persecutions or afflictions, knowing that we are set for this. God being seen in Christ raises the heart above the depressing power of evil or even suspicion.

Strange to say, the Vatican manuscript (B) reads ο■ ζητε■ τ■ μ■ ■αυτ■ς that is, love only seeks her own advantage So do even the Gentiles, who know not God. It is the character of selfishness, not of love. Yet Clement of Alexandria cites this false reading, and reasons on it as if correct in Paed. iii. 1, sec. 3; though elsewhere he cites the clause as it should be. One sees the folly of making such men authoritative in the least degree.

The perpetuity of love, in contrast with means of present testimony or blessing by the way, is next urged. "Love never faileth; but whether prophecies, they shall be done away; whether tongues, they shall cease; whether knowledge, it shall be done away. For in part we know, and in part we prophesy; but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away." (Vers.

8-10.) Evidently this again proves the immense superiority of love. It will never he out of date. Prophecies, knowledge, shall be done away, and tongues cease; but love abides. They are suited to our time-state, they are but in part, and do not square with the perfection where no evil exists and love is in fullest exercise. Love is thoroughly in keeping with a condition of glory, while incidental and partial agencies as naturally terminate with its arrival.

There is a difference in the phraseology as to tongues as compared with prophecies and knowledge, and it has been inferred, perhaps justly, that the cessation of tongues intimates their dropping when God's aim was achieved, whilst the means of edifying fall in with continuance, till the perfection of glory brings them to a comparatively abrupt end. Those habituated to the accuracy of scripture expression will not doubt that a difference is intended by the change of words. Certainly, however this be, there is the utmost care to maintain the Lord's coming as our immediate hope. All expression of a long future for us on earth is avoided here and everywhere.

The apostle proceeds to illustrate the present and the future by the childhood and full growth of a man as follows. “When I was a child, I talked as a child, I thought as a child, I reckoned as a child; when I am become a man, I have done away with the things of the child. For we see now through a mirror in a dark form, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall fully know, even as I also was fully known. But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but [the] greater of these [is] love.” (Vers. 11-18.) Clearly the drift of the passage is not to east uncertainty on our present measure of knowledge, but to set forth its partial character, as compared with the fullness in glory. He confirms the difference by another similitude, the reflection of a mirror with no more than a dim shape seen thereby, and seeing face to face. The medium, or rather our seeing now, is necessarily imperfect, and the result more or less dark. By-and-by it will be immediate vision, and I shall know fully as I was also fully known. It is a difference not merely of measure but of manner too. Our very learning now, no matter how much we have learned, proves our ignorance. It will not be so then. The state which needs to grow, as well as the means which contribute to growth, will have passed away. Truth will be fully known as a whole in that day, not learned piecemeal as now.

“But now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greater of these is love.” The apostle speaks of the main moral principles characteristic of Christianity, not of power in testimony, and here too love has the greater place, though all are great and abiding. But there is no intimation of faith and hope abiding throughout eternity. They remain, but to say that these three shall remain forever is to interpolate rather than interpret. It is well known how some try to explain the continuance of faith and hope, where all is seen and enjoyed in glory: the one as anticipation certain to be fulfilled; the other as trust, entire and undoubting. But scripture cannot be broken; and faith is the evidence or conviction of things not seen, as hope seen is not hope. (Rom. 8; Heb. 11) Faith and hope therefore refer only to the present state, love alone to eternity as well as to the present. Fruition supersedes the faith that looks at God's word for the object presented, and the hope that desires and waits for it; but love never fails. So it was laid down in verse 8, in contradistinction from the instruments or signs there given of God. Then, after the setting out of the intervening verses which explain or confirm, the apostle resumes with νυν■ δ■ μν■νει, “now however remaineth” not love only, nor first, but “faith, hope, love, these three; but the greater of these is love,” which last is turned to grave account in the chapter following. They are the cardinal points of every Christian, as is attested right through the New Testament; and of the three love has the pre-eminent place, not because it contains in itself the root of the other two, but because they

point and lead through Christ our Lord to it, as their end which has no end, that nature and activity of divine goodness which we share now by grace in a world of evil, and which will last everlastingly where there is no evil but only good in source and fruit.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:1-12

Here we come to the application of love. Blessed as is always and everywhere this energy of the new nature, it is in the assembly of God that it finds its largest and deepest exercise, so far as we are concerned. Nowhere else is it demanded so continually, and in such varied forms. Without love souls therein make speedy and utter shipwreck; with it the sorest trials turn into, the happiest testimony to the grace of Christ.

But hitherto the saints in Corinth had failed to learn it. They were far from the simple freshness of the Thessalonians, to whom the apostle could say some years before that they needed not that he should write, for they themselves were taught of God to love one another. Nevertheless he besought even them that they should increase more and more, as indeed (we learn from his second epistle) they did. At Corinth the failure was great, and not in private only but in public, as even shown on the solemn occasions when the assembly came together to celebrate the Lord's supper and to exercise their spiritual gifts. Hence the exhortation that follows.

"Pursue love, but earnestly desire the spiritual things, yet rather that ye may prophesy. For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not to men but to God; for no one heareth; yet in spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth speaketh to men edification and encouragement and comfort." (Vers. 1-3.)

Love, then, should be the main and constant object; but there were spiritual manifestations which had a place only subordinate to love, for the Holy Spirit, in giving and working thus, was glorifying the Lord Jesus. Among these prophesying has the chief place, the superiority of which over such a sign-gift as speaking in a tongue, the apostle rules, is proved by this, that such a speaker speaks not to men but to God, for none hears or understands while in spirit he speaks mysteries; whereas he that prophesies speaks to men edification and encouragement and comfort.

Assuredly the apostolic test is not always appreciated, and there are those in our day as indifferent to edification as the Corinthians. But a greater than they did not regard as a defect in spiritual tone the desire that men should be refreshed or helped in whatever way they needed. No doubt those who spoke in a tongue argued that they stood for the rights of Christ, who was glorified in the gift, and that theirs was the divine side—they spoke to God. But the apostle boldly maintains that the lack of speaking to men demonstrates the inferiority of speaking in a tongue to prophesying. He that so speaks is not taxed with speaking unintelligibly, or unintelligible things; on the contrary he is presumed to speak the truth, and high truth— “in spirit he speaketh mysteries.” But, the language being unknown, “no one heareth;” he is—not understood. He that prophesies speaks to men edification, encouragement, and comfort. The testimony flows in blessing to souls. The apostle was not dazzled, as the Corinthians were then and many since, in their yearnings after it, with the display of power. But he unqualifiedly sets prophesying beyond such a display, for it brings in not power merely but God, and God in His building up souls, encouraging them, and consoling them. This does not cast such a halo around man, but it really brings in God in grace, and gives the consciousness of His presence.

We must remember, however, that verse 3 is not a definition of prophesying, but its contrast with speaking in a tongue. Prophesying, again, has no necessary connection with the future, as some suppose, nor is it preaching or teaching in general. It is forth telling rather than foretelling. It is so speaking to man as to put him in the light of God—of God's dealing with his heart and conscience. It gives His mind.

Hence the apostle proceeds to say (ver. 4) that he that speaketh in a tongue edifieth himself, but he that prophesieth edifieth the assembly. Here again the mistake of the Corinthians was exposed, and the grace and wisdom of the apostle evident.

Still more hoes the largeness of his heart come out in verse 5. “But I wish that ye all should speak with tongues, but rather that ye should prophesy. And greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, in order that the assembly may receive edification.” Such is his continual test. It was near the faithful servant's heart, as it was in his Master's. What astonishes is for the spiritual mind far less than what edifies. This he enters into a little more minutely in verse 6. “But now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I shall speak to you either in revelation, or in knowledge, or in prophecy, or [in] doctrine?” It was not therefore that the apostle slighted the gift of tongues. How could he, seeing it was a manifestation of the Spirit promised of the Lord Jesus—a mighty testimony to the grace of God from the day of Pentecost find onwards? Still the less showy gift of prophesying has a far higher character in and for the assembly. The error he corrects lay in the misapprehension and misuse of the Corinthians. Had their eye been single, they had been full of light; but it was not so, and hence their unspiritual judgment, as well as conduct, draws out the instruction of the Lord. It is important also to observe how it is insisted on that all done in the assembly should be done in the Spirit. For the idea is not that he who spoke in the tongue did not understand what he said, yet it is never supposed that he would communicate, unless he had the interpretation of tongues. But his own knowledge of what was spoken is not the same as this interpretation, and unless he could interpret, there is no thought of his communicating to the assembly what was said in a tongue. For the assembly is the sphere, not for man's ability, but for the Spirit of God. Interpretation must therefore be a gift, not a human power, to be available there.

It may be remarked also that revelation and knowledge seem to correspond in general with prophesying and teaching respectively. It is not meant that they are identical, but that they more or less correspond. They are the great means of edifying the assembly, not speaking in a tongue, unless the gift of interpretation accompanied it. To profit souls one must come thus. Indeed the apostle appeals to themselves whether it was not so.

Next he adduces the case of musical instruments to confirm the point. The sounds must be distinguished and understood in order to the wished for result. “Nevertheless lifeless things giving sound, whether pipe or harp, if they give not distinction to the notes, how shall be known what is piped or what is harped?” (Ver. 7.) Now we do not distinguish the sounds of a language we do not know. The truths conveyed may be ever so weighty, but an unknown language is but a confused jargon. Nor is this the only illustration given. “For also if a trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare for war?” (Ver. 8.) The trumpet-call must be understood in short. “So also ye through the tongue, unless ye give a distinct speech, how shall what is spoken be known, for ye will be speaking into air?” Distinctness, so as to be understood, is the point pressed; not exactly easy to

be understood, but distinct speech, so as to be intelligible: otherwise all is lost for the hearers.

“There are, it may be, so many kinds of voices in the world, and none insignificant. If therefore I do not know the power of the voice, I shall be to him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh a barbarian in my case. So also ye, since ye are zealous after spirits, seek that ye may abound for the edification of the assembly.” To be understood then is essential to edification. No matter how excellent the matter conveyed by the unknown language, it has no claim to be said to the assembly, unless it be duly interpreted. It is foreign there, even more out of place than a colloquy with a barbarian or foreigner. If they really were in earnest for the power of the Spirit in their midst, why did not they seek to abound for the building up one another? This were divine love, not vain display, but worthy of Christ and His saints. It is flesh that likes distinction for itself, not the service of the Lord for the good of others, where God deigns to deal with souls.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:13-25

Edification, then, is rule absolute for what is said in the assembly. No matter how astonishing may be the exhibition of divine power answering to the name of Jesus, if it edify not, it has no rightful place there. For love edifies, as knowledge puffs up, and power startles or stuns; and as God is love, so the assembly is the suited sphere for the exercise of this, the energy of His own nature. The children partake of His nature, for he who loves is born of God, and knows God. To keep up the exercise and testimony of this is of all moment; as it is to hinder what would give loose reins to the flesh, under cover of displaying the mighty effects of Christ's victory. Hence the regulation that follows “Wherefore let him that speaketh with a tongue pray that he may interpret.” (Ver. 13.) But the apostle proceeds to give reasons, and this, as his manner was, by application to his own case: “For if I pray with a tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, but I will pray also with the understanding; I will sing with the spirit, but I will sing also with the understanding. Since if thou bless in spirit, how shall he that filleth the place of the private person say Amen at thy thanksgiving, since he knoweth not what thou sayest? For thou givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank God, I speak in a tongue more than you all; but in an assembly I desire to speak five words with my understanding, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.” (Vers. 14-19.)

Thus the rule of love is still further enforced and maintained. Praying in a tongue is excluded on this principle as decidedly as any other kind of speaking in a tongue. And it is evidently the strongest case as being an address to God, who of course understood all, and conclusive against prayer in any unknown tongue. Communion is the joy of the assembly; at the least edification is indispensable. What cannot be understood by the assembly as such has no claim to be heard there, unless there were interpretation directly or indirectly.

But we see also that prayer, singing, blessing, thanksgiving, as well as prophesying, had their full place in the assembly. They are all to edification; and who could forbid any of them? Power is insufficient, however manifestly divine. What is with the understanding, and consequently addresses it, has the greatest weight with the apostle, as thus speaking authoritatively for the Lord; and this is as true of prayers and hymns as of teaching. The least in the assembly is presumed to go intelligently with the praise or thanksgiving that rises up to God.

Indeed fellowship is the aim of the Holy Spirit in all church action; and hence the all-importance of His guidance into the will of the Lord, which alone is entitled to govern all the saints, and into such worship as renewed hearts can feel and join in spontaneously. Influence and effort are alien and unseasonable, as they are human. The assembly is of God, with One there perfectly adequate to work in all hearts to the glory of the Lord Jesus; and the new man the apostle would have to do, say, and hear all intelligently. The day of vague emblems is past; ecstatic utterances, mighty effects, may have their scope elsewhere; but in the assembly there ought to be the exercise of the understanding. It is called to be “fruitful;” so that he who holds no public place (■ ■ναπληρ■ν τ■ν τ■πον το■ ■διωτο■) may be able to go along with what is said. To be intelligible, so as to edify, is

requisite in the assembly. It is evident, from Eph. 5 and Colossians that the Christians of that early day had psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, quite distinct from those God inspired by David and others for His ancient people. Not a word implies that what was sung in the assembly of God was either a Jewish psalm or of New Testament inspiration. They were therefore, I presume, substantially such as Christians in our day, and in all days, are wont to use. Only they sought the Lord's guidance, and the fellowship of all, on these solemn public occasions. Our chapter is of importance in proving that they sung in the assembly; as the other epistles referred to, as well as James, prove the use of hymns in private or alone. Of course the power of the Spirit was sought in both; as He indeed dwells in the individual Christian no less than in the assembly. The apostle is careful to intimate that there was not the least reason on his part for jealousy of others speaking in a tongue; for he himself was gifted in this way more than them all. But in the assembly to speak five words with the understanding was to him more desirable than ever so many in a tongue; and this, because his heart was set on instructing others also. It is love which should animate, not self-pleasing; and love works with a view to edification. Hence the grave and wise exhortation that follows, not without reproof.

“Brethren, be not children in mind, but in malice be infants; but in mind be of full age. In the law it is written, By men of other tongues, and by lips of others, will I speak to this people; and not even thus will they listen to me, saith Jehovah. Wherefore the tongues are for a sign, not to those that believe, but to the unfaithful, while prophecy [is] not to the unfaithful, but to those that believe. If therefore the whole church come together unto the same place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in simple or unfaithful [persons], will they not say that ye are mad? But if all prophesy, and some unfaithful or simple one, come in, he is convicted by all, he is judged by all; the secrets of his heart become manifest; and thus falling on [his] face he will do homage to God, reporting that indeed God is among you.” (Vers. 20-25.)

Thus the apostle as a father again admonishes his beloved children that they should eschew the trifling natural to the young, the disposition to be occupied with some new thing of slight moment in itself, but apt to tend to mischief, as their fondness for and misuse of tongues in the assembly hindered a due estimate of prophesying, the weightiest of all gifts for such an occasion. But he would have them to cherish with the artlessness of a babe the understanding of riper years. And he cites freely from Isa. 28:11, 12, so as to convey a wholesome inference for the Corinthian saints. For God is there warning the Jews, dull to hearken to His prophets, that He would speak to them with the stammering lips of foreigners. Such a tongue speaking to Israel was a sign of their humiliation, and of God's judgment. What perversity, then, for the saints in Corinth to turn from God, speaking in prophecy for their edification, to tongues which they could not understand! to find their pleasure as Christians in what was God's solemn threat to His ancient people because of their unheeding refractoriness! The apostle, neither here nor anywhere, despises a tongue in its own place and season, used as a sign for unbelievers as God intended it. The unintelligent and unloving mistake was introducing it among believers, who could not profit by it. Divine gift as it was, its possession constituted no license to exercise it apart from the end of the Lord, who gave it in His grace and for His glory, and with His will now expressed to control its use.

The common English version needlessly introduces “serveth” in the latter half of verse 22. I think, however, that it is justified in not understanding “sign” with prophesying, which essentially differs from those powers correctly falling under that designation, like a tongue or a miracle. It was this,

no doubt, which influenced them in changing the “to” of the former clause into the “for” of the latter, which reads more smoothly in English. But the change seems scarcely called for, and is not here adopted. We could equally well say tongues are as a sign for the unbelieving, prophesying for those that believe.

But the apostle is not content with this withering application of the Jewish prophet; he both exposes the folly of their conduct, and lays down the right aim in the assembly. On the one hand he puts the case of their all speaking with tongues in full assembly, and this in presence of simple persons or unbelievers. What must be the impression produced? That the saints were mad. On the other hand, if all were to prophesy, how would such an one feel if he came in and heard? In the discovery to himself of his heart's secrets, divinely dealt with by them all, the profoundest conviction that God is truly among the saints. So, when the woman of Samaria had her life set out in a few words by One who had never met her before, she confessed, “Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.” By His words she could not but feel and own that all was out, and God was speaking to her conscience.

This is the characteristic of prophesying, not the announcement of the good news as in evangelizing, nor the unfolding of doctrine as in teaching, but God by His word dealing with the soul consciously. Such, in this hypothetical case, would be the conviction irresistibly brought home by all prophesying, and such the report made, as well as the homage rendered at the moment. It is supposed to be the effect, not of one preaching in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, but of God's presence in His saints thus prophesying in the assembly. The apostle does not describe it as a fact that ever did take place, but—as the natural effect under the circumstances,

How solemn that there is no such “assembly” now found, or even essayed, in the so-called “churches"! How blessed that ever so few have faith in His word and Spirit, who alone can make it good in the measure of their dependence upon Him! It is in the Spirit that we wait on the Lord, the central object of faith to the assembly gathered to His name. That the two or three who thus meet have “little strength” is most true; that they have deep reason to humble themselves is no less true; but they have the deepest and unfailing reason to praise Him for His faithfulness as they keep His word and deny not His name. Those who forsake or despise such assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of most is now-a-days, are scarcely entitled to speak. Unbelief or unfaithfulness should at least be silent. What can be worse than to invent plausible appearances to cover sin and shame?

Chapter 17

Notes on 1 Corinthians 14:26-40

The apostle now comes to the practical deductions from the divine principles laid down for regulating the assembly. The Corinthians had assumed absolute openness or really license for human will from the fact of the powers distributed to one and another by the Spirit. To control a meeting where He wrought thus seemed unreasonable. But here they were wholly mistaken; for the blessed One who is now gent down from heaven is a Spirit of order, and works in love for the purpose of maintaining the Lordship of Christ. Hence no power at work in or by man exempts from the rule of the Lord, but on the contrary exalts it, if exercised according to the will of God.

“What is it then, brethren? Whenever ye come together, each of you hath a psalm, hath a teaching, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edification. If any one speak with a tongue, [let it be] two or at the most three, and in turn, and let one interpret; but if there be no interpreter, let him be silent in an assembly, and let him speak to himself and to God. And let two or three prophets speak, and let the others discern; but if there be a revelation to another while sitting, let the first be silent; for ye can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all be exhorted. And spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not [a God] of confusion but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints.” (Ver. 26-83.)

Such was the restless desire of contributing each his part, not of general edification by whomsoever the Lord might deign to employ. Indeed they were thinking of themselves, not of Him nor of each other in love. Still none can deny to the assembly the fullest liberty: else it could not have been thus abused. Modern arrangements exclude not the abuse only but that liberty which ought to be; and in fact, where the Spirit of the Lord is, liberty is characteristic of His presence individually or collectively, and in the assembly it is marked according to scripture. Not that such as Neander in the least understood this, who founded it on the priesthood of all Christians, which is a wholly different relation concerning the saints in their freedom of access to God. Here it is a question of His assembly wherein the Holy Spirit acts by the members as He will to glorify the Lord and edify the saints. Hence power is subordinated to the Lord's authority, the vessel of divine energy is made to feel responsibility in its use, and the vital principle of obedience is preserved intact. Thus is God in all things glorified through Jesus Christ, as says the great apostle of the circumcision, when exhorting that each should use the gift which he had received as a good steward of God's manifold grace.

The apostle then limits speaking in a tongue to two or at most three on the same occasion, in turn, and then only in case of one to interpret. So it was to be even with prophesying, where the others were to judge or discern, instead of one interpreting. Prophesying was of all gifts the most precious and suited to build up or otherwise act on the saints and even those outside for good; but there must not be an excess even of the best thing, for God is jealous for the blessing of His saints, and thinks of the weakest in the assembly who might be distracted, not edified, by more than three. Should a revelation be made to one sitting by, he could speak, the other being silent, for a revelation when thus given took precedence of all communication. There was room indeed for all

to prophesy for the instruction and stirring up of all, but one by one. Power must not set order aside: spirits of prophets are subject to prophets, instead of all being an uncontrollable impulse. It was not with the working of the Holy Spirit as with demon power; and this because God is not the source of confusion but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the saints, where order was peculiarly due to His character as present. Excitement and tumult, even in the exercise of divinely given energy, dishonor Him, the spring and giver of peace.

It is not quite certain whether we should connect the last clause with verse 33 as its close, or with verse 34 as its beginning. Many critics and commentators prefer the latter. There is no doubt that Lachmann was wrong in punctuating the Greek, so as to make “of the saints” the complement, not of the assemblies to which it unquestionably belongs, but to “the women,” ■μ■ν, being of course omitted on the authority of the three greatest uncials, six cursives, most of the ancient versions, and of early citations. But safer editors, like Tischendorf, who also omit ■μ■ν, separate α■ γυνα■κες, “the women” from τ■ν ■γ■ων, “of the saints.” To begin with such a phrase is unexampled. “Let the women be silent in the assemblies; for it is not permitted to them to speak, but let them be in subjection as also the law saith. But if they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in an assembly.” (Ver. 34, 85.)

This rule is of great moment. Women are forbidden to speak in the assemblies. It might have been supposed by those who love to reason that there if anywhere they might be allowed. The holy atmosphere, where man is as nothing, where God makes His presence and power known spiritually, might have seemed a fitting place for holy women to speak, who undoubtedly might have gifts, even that of prophesying like the four daughters of Philip the evangelist. (Acts 21:9.) But no; the apostle was inspired to forbid it in the assemblies, of course not absolutely, for every gift is meant to be exercised, but the manner must be in submission to the Lord's direction. Divine revelation in the Old Testament gave clear intimation of woman's place generally in subjection: the New Testament is no less peremptory as to the assemblies. The notion of their standing forth in proclamation of the gospel crossed no mind in those days. This was a violation of female propriety, which would have shocked even the heathen. It was reserved for the corruption of the best thing, for the innovating spirit and ways of modern Christendom. The apostle forbade their even asking a question on these public occasions. If they wish to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home, for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in an assembly.

The entire subject is wound up by the demand whether the word of God set out to them or reached to them only. The Corinthians were the first to depart from the apostolic order established everywhere. It was the beginning of ecclesiastical revolt. The church is to be subject. The word of God commands, and commands all assemblies alike.

“What, did the word of God go out from you, or reached it unto you alone? If any one seemeth to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge the things which I write to you, that they are [the] Lord's commandment. But if any one be ignorant, let him be ignorant.: Wherefore, my brethren, seek earnestly for prophesying, and forbid not the speaking in the tongues; but let all things be done becomingly and in order.” (Ver. 80-40.)

The assembly is bound to maintain the truth, and, whilst bearing with want of intelligence (for we all know but in part), to sanction no error. The assembly is bound to walk in holiness to the Lord,

as becomes those called from darkness into His marvelous light. But the assembly is taught; it cannot and ought not to teach, but to accept those whom the Lord sends to teach. The assembly is called to act in receiving and putting away, in both subject to the Lord and His word; but rule properly is in the hands of those so gifted of God, just as preaching, teaching, or any other service. It is the Lord who gives; it is the Lord who commands, as we see here, in the authoritative injunction of His apostle. The word of God comes to the saints, and it comes to them all. Differing views may be found, alas! like every other failure; but the assemblies are surely to seek to walk in the fellowship of His mind and will. Different circumstances may modify in matters of detail, yet more in appearance than reality; while, in matters which concern not only vital truth but godly order as here, scripture leaves no justifiable ground for dissent again, to be gifted with special insight into God's mind, or to reap the fruit of this in spirituality, if real, would only deepen the sense of the Lord's authority and the imperativeness of obedience. We see the perfection of this in Christ Himself here below. Let power of the Spirit then be shown in the recognition of His commandment Does any one refuse subjection on the score of ignorance? Then let him keep the place of ignorance and not pretend to teach. Those who wish to guide others should know what is, and what is not, of the Lord. It is really a question of will in those who do not see; for His injunction fails not in power to reach the conscience. To reason further would be to indulge will and strengthen, beside possible harm to one's own soul. The refractory are best left in His hands whose words they cavil at: if His own, He knows how to break them down and make them thankful for the light, the refusal of which keeps them in ignorance.

The conclusion the apostle then shuts up the brethren to is, zeal for prophesying, and no prohibition of speaking with tongues, regulated as we have seen in the assemblies. For all things, not these merely, are to be done becomingly and in order. But the Spirit alone can give us to discern always what is comely, and the order is not left to human discretion, but revealed by the Lord. Thus man's will, as it is condemned in every detail of individual life (for we are sanctified to obedience, yea, to the same kind of obedience as our Lord Jesus Christ), is no less excluded from the assembly of God which He has formed for the glory of Christ, and in which He acts by the Holy Ghost according to the written word.

Chapter 18

Notes on 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

But there was another question of the deepest moment, and still more fundamental, which the apostle reserved for the last place. The resurrection of the dead was doubted and denied by some at Corinth. This was grave indeed; but it is incomparably more so now, after the ample testimony to the truth rendered here, and throughout the New Testament. It was inexcusable ignorance then; it is far guiltier and more rebellious if we doubt in presence of the disproof we are about to study, and of much more to the same effect elsewhere.

"And I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I announced to you, which also ye received, in which also ye stand, by which also ye are being saved, if ye hold fast with what discourse I announced [it] to you, unless ye believed in vain. For I delivered to you in the first place that which I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried; and that he was raised the third day according to the scriptures; and that he appeared to Cephas, after that to the twelve. After that he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the most remain till now, but some also have fallen asleep. After that he appeared to James, after that to all the apostles; and last of all, as to the abortion, he appeared to me also. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God; but by God's grace I am what I am, and his grace that [was] towards me became not vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that [was] with me. Whether then I or they, thus we preach, and thus ye believed." (Vers. 1-11.)

Nothing was farther from the intention of the Corinthian speculators than to compromise the gospel or the resurrection of Christ. But to this exactly does the apostle reduce their question. They forgot that there is an enemy behind who can take advantage of the mind no less than of the body, and whose artifice it is to array falsehood with a fairer garb than the truth, and so not only to gain admission for what is false, but thereby also to expel or undermine what is true, holiness suffering in the same proportion.

It was humbling therefore, but wholesome, to have the gospel made known afresh to saints, who ought rather to be in the fellowship of its activities—to have the apostle insisting on it, (1) as what he had declared to them originally, (2) as what they had received, (3) as that in which they had their standing, and (4) as the means of their salvation. The copulative conjunction, κα■ defines each consideration recalled to them; the hypothetical particle, ε■, supposes the fact of their holding fast the glad tidings; otherwise their faith was worthless. Salvation in this epistle, as in many others, is viewed as going on. (Vers. 1, 2.) It is a σ■ζεσθε, the present, and neither the perfect, ■στε σεσωσμ■νοι, as in Eph. 2:5, 8, nor the aorist, as in 2 Tim. 1:9, and Titus 3:5.

If Paul was an apostle, and delivered to thesis especially the glad tidings, it was what he too received, he pretended to no more than a faithful discharge of the trust the Lord had reposed in him as a witness concerning Himself. He received it, as we are told elsewhere, immediately from Christ. There was no intermediate channel, but a direct revelation and a personal charge. And what is the foundation laid? “That Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.” (Ver. 3.) Not

for ourselves merely, not at all for our good ways, but for our bad, “for our sins.” Who could have said or thought it but God? And He has said it, not only now in the gospel, but from of old in the scriptures. From Genesis to Malachi all was a preparing the way for Christ to die for our sins. The law witnessed to it in the sacrifices; the Psalms declared that the sacrifices were but temporary, and that the Messiah must, and would, do the will of God; and the prophets showed that He would do it by suffering and death when Jehovah should lay on Him the iniquities of His people. Without the death of Christ for our sins, not only has the gospel no foundation, but the Old Testament has no adequate meaning or worthy end.

But God would give the amplest evidence. So it is added to Christ's death (ver. 4), “and that he was buried.” Only here is made no mention of the scriptures. This is reserved for the immense fact of the resurrection: “and that he was raised the third day according to the scriptures,” which is followed by the repeated appearances, of course without any such attestation. It is not merely an accessory fact or corroboration of Christ's death. His resurrection is the grand pivot of the chapter, the display of God's glory as regards man, the fullest answer to all unbelief, and the knell of Satan's power. This was the truth which the enemy sought to undermine among some at Corinth; but the result, under the grace of God, is the complete demonstration of its certainty, and of its all-importance.

But this is not all that the apostle points out. Christ was not raised only; He “was raised the third day according to the scriptures.” The first book of the law gave its early preparation for it. For from the beginning, even in Eden, though not till after sin entered, God announced that the bruised Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Still more distinctly do we see the Father ready to give His beloved and only Son, and that Son under the sentence of death till “the third day” (Gen. 22:4), when a ram in the type was substituted, and Isaac was received as from the dead in a figure. (Heb. 11:17-19.) The Psalms give their intermediate but glowing witness, Psa. 8 showing us the Son of man who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, but crowned with glory and honor, with all things put under His feet; Psa. 16, the dependent One, trusting in God through life and death, and beyond. What possibly more distinct “My flesh also shall rest in hope; for Thou wilt not leave my soul in sheol, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life,” &c., words which, as a whole, apply as clearly to the dead and risen Messiah, as they cannot to David or any other. There is no mention of “the third day” here of course, which would be a foreign element, and destructive of the calm confidence of the psalm; but it is plain that for the soul not to rest in sheol, and the body not to see corruption, there must be not only a raising from the deco, but this without delay. His flesh therefore should rest in hope, and not merely the spirit. But the prophets carry on and complete the testimony, for if Hos. 6 be only the principle applicable to Israel by-and-by, Jonah 1:17 is the striking type of the Son of man three days and three nights (so it was counted Jewishly) in the heart of the earth: what a sign to the faithless Jew!

The apostle confirms the resurrection of Christ by certain of His appearances afterward, as He had the death by burial. “And that he appeared to Cephas, after that to the twelve.” (Ver. 5.) He omits Mary of Magdala and the other women, important as both might be for the objects which the evangelists had in view. There is no heaping up of proofs in either Gospels or Epistles, but a selection suitable to the design of God by each writer. The apostle gives only men who for weight, number, or other circumstances, furnished evidence unanswerable for every fair mind. The risen

Lord appeared to Cephas, or Simon Peter, before He stood in the midst of “the twelve.” (Compare Luke 24:34.) Nor could any individual be of greater importance than Simon, especially at a moment when his soul needed reassurance so deeply. But no individual could have the weight of the entire company which knew him best; and the twelve are therefore next named, without noticing either the two disciples who had enjoyed His company to Emmaus on the resurrection-day, or that the apostolic body wanted somewhat to complete it on the same evening.

But there is another occasion, testimony to which the apostle points, unsurpassed for magnitude: “after that he appeared to above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the most remain till now, but some also have fallen asleep.” (Ver. 6.) Never was a truth better attested. The greater part of these five hundred united witnesses still survived if any one doubted; even if a person were prejudiced enough to accuse the twelve of a plot, what unreasonable folly to allow such a thought of so large a body of simple disciples, above all suspicion of object or office? The Holy Spirit left Luke to record the Lord's partaking of food when risen, and John the incredulity of the apostle Thomas, only the more to strengthen the truth; but Paul gives us this great body of witnesses, most then alive, if any chose to examine or cross-examine them. Surely had it not been the simple truth, some of that crowd of eye-witnesses must have disclosed the wickedness of thus conspiring in a lie against God.

“After that he appeared to James, after that to all the apostles.” (Ver. 7.) James had a place of singular honor, both in the church at Jerusalem, and as an inspired writer; and as he was the object alone of an appearance of Christ, this is mentioned, no less than His appearing subsequently to all the apostles. All was in place, and each had its separate importance; and this extending over forty days, with such a variety of occasions and circumstances, marks the care with which divine wisdom and grace made the resurrection known. The quiet statement of the fact is in remarkable contrast with what Jerome quotes from the spurious Gospel of the Nazarenes (Catal. Script. Eccl.), how James made a vow neither to eat nor drink till he saw the Lord risen again. Man spoils all he touches in divine things; be cannot even fill up a gap with a trustworthy tradition. James had no such superiority of faith over the rest; nor, if he had possessed it, would he have shown it by any such vow.

One more remained, the most extraordinary of all, and long after date; “and last of all, as to the abortion, he appeared to me also.” (Ver. 8.) It was from heaven, in broad daylight, as he drew near to Damascus, not only an unbeliever, but the hottest of adversaries, in the midst of a like-minded band of companions: all smitten down, all seeing the light, and hearing the sound, but he alone seeing Jesus, he alone hearing the words of His mouth. Unspeakable grace he felt it was, with unaffected lowliness of heart; “for I am the least of the apostles, who am not fit to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.” (Vers. 8, 9.) If Thomas illustrated the difficulties even of believers, Saul of Tarsus is the best sample of opposition on the part of earthly religion. But he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision; and the sight of a risen, ascended, Lord becomes the end of his old life (closed in grace by God's judgment in the cross), the beginning of what was new and everlasting. No wonder that, as the others preached by Jesus the resurrection from among the dead, to the horror of the skeptical Sadducees, Paul was no less urgent to both world and church. It was the turning-point of his own conversion, and his penetrating, comprehensive, mind soon saw under God's teaching that the death and the resurrection of Christ were none other things than what Moses and the prophets had said should happen, and light

through this be announced both to the Jews and to the Gentiles.

Of this ministry the converted persecutor was to be the most honored instrument. And this he himself could not but add; “but by God's grace I am what I am; and his grace that [was] toward me became not vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that [was] with me.” (Yen 10.) The simple truth carried its own weight. His apostleship, which had been assailed by those who were not less hostile to his full preaching of grace, received no small confirmation; the pride of human nature, in its merits or its wisdom, was put down; God was in every way exalted; and the special point in debate had a crowning testimony from Paul himself, which also accounted for a revolution never surpassed, if equaled, in any man's history since the world began; a revolution which was unintelligible otherwise in one trained, as he had been, in the strictest traditions and ways of Pharisaism, and now the boldest minister of the gospel, the most devoted minister of the church, yet withal a mind eminently sober and conscientious, logical and profound. The appearing of the risen Jesus from heaven explained all perfectly, not his conversion only, but his work beyond all laborious and blessed of God. Truly it was the grace of God that was with him, who loved to own it, while he abased himself.

But of those labors, so abundant and fruitful, what was the foundation truth, and what the animating spring? The resurrection of Christ with Paul, as with the apostles whom some pitted against him. “Whether then I or they, thus we preach, and thus ye believed.” (Ver. 11.) There was no change in the preaching: how then such a departure in some of the Corinthians? It was not so when they believed.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 15:12-19

Having thus shown the immense care with which God had provided witnesses to the resurrection of Christ, as it was preached by the apostles, and believed by all Christians, he now proceeds to reason from it to the resurrection of the dead, and also from their denial of the resurrection to its effect on Christ and the gospel.

"But if Christ is preached that he hath been raised from [the] dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of [the] dead? But if there is no resurrection of [the] dead, neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ hath not been raised, then also empty [is] our preaching, and empty also your faith; and we are also found false witnesses of God, because we witnessed concerning God that he raised the Christ, whom he raised not, if indeed no dead are raised. For if no dead are raised, neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ hath not been raised, vain [is] your faith; ye are yet in your sins; then also those that fell asleep in Christ perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are most to be pitied of all men." (Vers. 12-19)

Philosophy may issue in dualism, pantheism, or materialism; it may make reason or experience the sole criterion of truth; it may glory in the creative imagination of a Plato, or the pure reason of an Aristotle; but Stoics and Epicureans mock and evade the resurrection, which displays the power of God in the scene of man's total nothingness and corruption. Of the soul they may boast. It is man's soul; and its capacity, its intellect, may be as great in the wicked as in the righteous. But God alone can raise the dead. Man has not even the idea. Even the well-read Pliny (Nat. H.) denies the possibility: Revocare defunctos ne Deus quidem potest. Then Oriental thought, which ever thinks of matter as essentially evil, and therefore makes liberation from the body the highest blessing, would help in the same direction those who attach weight to such speculation. Christ, Christ risen from the dead, is not only the death-blow to all these workings of human intellect, but establishes, as the great fact presented by God to faith, victory over evil in Him who bore its consequences, in the righteous judgment of God, that He might deal in sovereign grace with man, give the believer power morally by the Holy Ghost meanwhile, and associate him openly and triumphantly with Christ in the same risen condition ere long, and forever.

We can understand, then, the effort of Satan to bring in among the Christians doubt and denial of the resurrection of the dead. As the seal of Christ's grace and glory, of the miracles He wrought, and the truth He taught, His resurrection is all-important; no less is it the proof of Satan vanquished, of redemption accepted, of God glorified, even as to sin, and sins borne in Christ's body on the tree. It is the power of the new and inner life, and it is the object and spring of the most glorious hope, in which the Christian and the church look to be blessed with Christ in heavenly places, and this in fact, as now in title, Christ having already borne God's judgment for the believer, who has passed from death into life.

In vain, then, did reason object to a state of incomparable superiority to the present, or even to the past, before sin entered, and spoiled the work of God on earth. In vain did it scorn the reunion of soul and body, as if it must be a hopeless imprisonment, a going back, and not forward, and

everlasting degradation for the spirit after its emancipation. Christ risen is the completest possible answer, wherein God gives us already to behold by faith man according to His counsels of glory, flowing from His love, and founded on His righteousness: not an idea, but a fact, attested as none ever was since the world began, for precision, and competency, and fullness, as well as certainty, those witnesses alone being excluded which were incompatible with its nature, and which constituted therefore a moral impossibility.

It is impossible to read the Acts of the Apostles without seeing that the resurrection of Christ was the all but unvarying testimony presented to souls, Jews or Gentiles: not merely that He died for our sins, but that God has raised Him from the dead. To say that there is no resurrection of dead men is evidently to set that aside. (Ver. 12.) It is the introduction of Christ which brings every reasoning of man in divine things to the test. The universal message, the gospel to every creature, is that the Savior is raised from the dead after suffering for sin. The denial of the resurrection denies not merely the future hope of the saints, but the standing fact of Christ, the mainspring of God's good news. For it is plain that, if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been raised; and if Christ has not been raised, what becomes of the apostolic preaching? what of the faith of saints in Corinth, and everywhere else? (Vers. 18, 14) He had told them before that there is salvation by the gospel for such as held fast the truth preached, unless they believed heedlessly, or at random (ε■κη, ver. 2), in which case they would be as ready to give up as to receive. Now he goes farther, and, instead of speaking of their subjective state as a light reception of the truth, he points out that, if Christ has not been raised, as the gospel declares, the preaching of the apostles was objectively as empty (κεν■ν) as the faith of the saints. But there is something more precise still: “and we are also found false witnesses of God, because we witnessed concerning God that he raised the Christ, whom he raised not, if indeed no dead art raised.” (Ver. 16)

The resurrection of Christ is thus vital and fundamental. It is no accessory privilege, nor proof ex abundanti, which can be lopped off, leaving the stock of divine grace unimpaired. If it is not true, the foundations are gone, the gospel is worthless, God Himself misrepresented, and the witnesses impostors. The immense fact of resurrection was one which Christ not only predicted over and over again, but on it staked the truth of His mission and Sonship. It is the manifestation of that power of deliverance from death and judgment which is the present joy of the Christian, as it is the brightest witness to the efficacy of atonement, and the pledge of glory with Christ at His coming again. Hence too, if it be not true, the chosen witnesses are convicted of falsehood, because their testimony belies God in attributing to Him the raising up the Christ, whom he did not raise, if in fact no dead are raised.

It will be seen how persistently the apostle binds together the resurrection of Christ and of the dead. This is no accident, but the fruit of God's grace and wisdom, who would associate every hope and ground of confidence for His own with Christ; as indeed the Christian is truly united to Him, and knows it. “For if no dead are raised, neither hath Christ been raised; and if Christ hath not been raised, vain [is] your faith; ye are yet in your sins; then those also that fell asleep in Christ perished.” (Vers. 16-18) Again, he argues that, if no dead are raised, neither has Christ been raised, and if He has not, vain (ματα■α) is their faith, in the sense of being without purpose, and without effect; or, as the next clause teaches, “ye are yet in your sins.” The consequence is, of course, no less serious for the believers already passed away: “then also those that fell asleep in Christ perished.” Inferences so shocking as to saints that are gone, as well as for their own souls,

yet flowing legitimately from any principle; are no slight evidence of its falsity. But if the conclusions are so inadmissible, who could accept the premises which make them not only just but inevitable?

Thus the future, according to God, is lost, and we are reduced to a hope in Christ for this life only. But if this be all, the Christian, instead of the happiest, is of all men most to be pitied; for he certainly falls under special trials because of his faith in Christ, which is nevertheless fruitless, and leaves him in his sins, if no dead rise; for in this case Christ has not been raised, and perdition must be the portion of all that sleep in Him; they suffer in the present, and they have lost their hope for the future. None can be more pitiable. (Ver. 19)

Notes on 1 Corinthians 15:20-28

The apostle, having thus brought to a climax of absurdity the consequences that flow from the assumption that no dead rise, turns next to the facts of revelation, and triumphantly displays their blessedness in Christ, as contrasted with the first head of the race.

“But now hath Christ been raised from [the] dead, firstfruits of those fallen asleep. For since by man [is] death, by man also resurrection of dead. For as in the Adam all die, so also in the Christ shall all be made alive; but each in his own rank; [the] firstfruits Christ; then those that are the Christ's at his coming; then the end, when he giveth up the kingdom to him [who is] God and Father, when he shall have annulled all rule, and all authority, and power. For he must reign until he put all the enemies under his feet. Death, last enemy, is annulled. For he subjected all things under his feet. But when he saith that all things have been subjected, [it is] manifest that [it is] except him who subjected all things to him. But when all things shall have been subjected to him, then also the Son himself will be subjected to him that subjected all things to him, that God may be all in all.” (Vers. 20-28)

Thus the fact is that Christ is raised from the dead, not merely first, but “first-fruits of those fallen asleep.” It is uncalled for, therefore, to reason more on the disastrous results of non-resurrection. For not only is a dead man risen, but that dead Christ, the conqueror of Satan, not only for this life in the wilderness, but from the grave for eternity. He is risen, so that death has no more dominion over Him; He is risen, the pledge that those fallen asleep shall consequently rise. It is the proof that all men shall live, unjust no less than just; but here He is viewed, not in His power to raise His enemies for judgment, but as the blessed spring of the resurrection of His own, firstfruits of those fallen asleep. Consequently He is said to be, as He was, raised from out of (■κ) dead men, as His saints will be at His coming or presence. In either case it is not only ■ν■στασις νεκρ■ν, but ■κ νεκρ■ν (that is, resurrection of, but from among dead men,), because in both cases other dead remain in their graves; whereas the resurrection of the unjust will be only ■ν■στασις νεκρ■ν, and not ■κ νεκρ■ν.

Such is the simple statement of the truth as to this, which is sometimes missed through ignorance, if not prejudice. It is in vain to argue that the resurrection of the saints is called a resurrection of the dead. Of course it is, as the resurrection of the unjust might be also. But the decisive point of difference is, that only the resurrection of Christ or of His own, who are raised without disturbing the wicked as yet from their graves, could be designated a resurrection from, or from out of, the dead, because the rest of the dead await His voice to wake them up to stand before the great white throne, and be judged according to their works. There are two distinct ants, or rather characters, of resurrection, according to our Lord, in John 5 (and so in Rev. 20); never, therefore, such a notion as one universal or indiscriminate rising of all, good and bad, at the same moment, as tradition supposes, with an effort at proof from Dan. 12 (which predicts the revival of Israel on earth), and Matt. 25 (which treats of all the Gentiles, or the nations which the Son of man will judge when He sits on the throne of His glory here below), neither scripture speaking of resurrection in

the true and literal sense.

But more: we are shown the connection of resurrection, as of death, with man. If the weak and fallen Adam brought in the one, the glorious last Adam will bring in the other, Himself already the firstfruits. “For since by man [is] death, by man also the resurrection of dead. For as in the Adam all die; even so in the Christ shall all be made alive.” (Vers. 21, 22.) There are two families, characterized by their respective heads. The Adam family consists of all mankind, and they all die; the Christ family consists of all that are Christ's, and they shall all be made alive, that is, in resurrection. For the question is exclusively of the body, and not of the soul, important as this last may be in its place. What the apostle here demonstrates is, that the bodies of the dead rise, and this in virtue of Christ for all His people, as death is the portion of all Adam's posterity as such. It is impossible to sever “all” in either case from their representative head: only “all” in Adam's case embraces the entire race, whereas “all” in the case of Christ as necessarily attaches to His family alone. And this, as it is certain to the thoughtful believer, so is it made plain to the simplest in verse 23,” But each in his own rank; [the] firstfruits Christ; then those that are the Christ's at his coming.” Then all that are made alive in virtue of the Christ are shown here distinctly to be those that are His, and none else. Are not the wicked, then, to be raised? Unquestionably; but so special, is the resurrection here that they are not even named. It is the resurrection of life, and belongs only to those that have practiced good. They are His. For them He has won the victory. To them even now He has given eternal life; and they, if fallen asleep, shall rise at His coming.

"Then the end, when he giveth up the kingdom to him who is God and Father, when he shall have annulled all rule, and all authority, and power.” (Ver. 24.) Here it will be noted that the apostle introduces, not the rising of the wicked dead, but “the end,” when Christ delivers up the kingdom in which He is to come and appear., (Compare Luke 19:12; 23:42 Tim. 4:1) “The end,” being the epoch of the delivery of the kingdom in which He is to judge, must be after all judgment is over, and still more after the rest of the dead were raised in order to be judged. It is in this way, then, that the resurrection of the wicked is not expressed but involved; not in the blessed life-giving resurrection which is for His own, but in that exertion of His power which characterizes His kingdom, when all the enemies are to be put under His feet, the last of those to be annulled being death. The unjust are no longer, even seemingly, under that power of death or Satan, for they must be raised, Satan punished, and death annulled. He must reign and judge the enemies; and theirs is expressly a resurrection of judgment, according to the Lord's express declaration. The believers do not come into judgment, but have life in Him, and will reign with Him then. The risen saints are associated with Him when He takes the kingdom; the wicked are judged before He gives it up. “The end” here is absolute. It is the close, not merely of the age, as in Matt. 13; 24, and 28, which inaugurates the Son of man's coming to reign, but of that kingdom. It is strictly “the end,” when eternity, in the fullest sense, begins, the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

It will have been seen that the grand point is God's exaltation of the risen Man, the Lord Jesus, in contrast with fallen Adam. And we must carefully distinguish between the words of the two psalms applied to Him: in verse 25 of Psa. 110, and in verse 27 of Psa. 8 God, according to the latter, subjected all things to the Son of man, once humbled, now risen; and this so absolutely takes in the universe as put under Christ, that God alone is excepted. But according to the former the glorified Messiah sits on the throne on high till Jehovah makes Messiah's enemies His footstool.

He is waiting until that moment. Then is the rod of Messiah's strength to be sent by Jehovah out of Zion, and He will rule in the midst of his enemies.

Thus the subjection of all things to Him risen is already true to faith, according to the use made of Psalm 8, while at His coming from the right hand of God, His enemies will be made His footstool, and He will rule in their midst. To this last answers the necessity of His reigning till He put all the enemies under His feet, death's annulling included at the last. It is what scripture calls the kingdom, during which the Lord is to reduce all rule, and all authority, and power, and then render it up to Him who is God and Father. (Ver. 24.) This will be at the end of the thousand years' reign, which reign is characterized in verse 25, verse 26 adding what will be at its close. Verse 27 states the universality of His present title, as bound up with His resurrection; as verse 28 the eternal condition, when the universe has been subjected in fact, and the Son Himself shall be also to Him who subjected it all to Him, in order that, not the Father exclusively, but God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) should be all in all, instead of the kingdom of man in Christ exalted and reigning. Thus is the lie of Satan met by the truth, grace, righteousness, and glorious counsels of God: man in Christ governing all first, and finally God all in all, where righteousness needs not to rule, but can dwell in endless blessing and peace.

Chapter 21

Notes on 1 Corinthians 15:29-34

The apostle now resumes the reasoning interrupted by the great parenthesis of divine revelation in verses 20-28. Therein he had traced out the consequences of Christ's resurrection, and its connection with the kingdom to the end, when God shall be all in all. And the simple apprehension of the unquestionable fact that he does take up again the thread laid down at verse 19 is of all moment in helping us to understand the true bearing of verse 29, which has been singularly misapplied by all who fail to see this reference. It had been shown that the denial of the resurrection affects alike the dead and the living saints. If Christ be not raised, not merely did those that fell asleep in Him perish, but if in this life only we have had hope in Christ, we are more to be pitied than all men. This directly in sense connects itself with the disputed clause.

"Else what shall they do that are baptized for the dead? If no dead rise at all, why also are they baptized for them?. Why are we also in danger every hour?" (Vers. 29, 30.) There is no need of departing from the ordinary meaning of "baptized," "for," or "dead." Still less is it admissible that the Corinthians or others, in that early day, had devised a new and superstitious application of baptism, either for catechumens about to die, or for relatives already departed, who had not been baptized. It is incredible that the apostle should have contented himself with so passing a notice of such a nefarious imposture, though Dean Stanley assumes its truth, and characteristically draws from it a testimony to the apostle's charitable dealing with a practice for which he could have had no real sympathy. Calvin justly explodes the notion of any such allusion here. It is probable, however, that though with Estius, &c., he is wrong in thinking "the dead" mean those about to die, such a misinterpretation of the language may have suggested the rite later to the excitable and perverted minds of the Syrian Marcionites, or other heretics, of whose practice we hear in the writings of Tertullian, Epiphanius, &c.

Neander's mind revolts from the idea, of such a baptism, yet he so far yields to the reasoning of Ruckert as to allow that it seems the most natural interpretation. (Hist, of the Pl. and Tr. of the Christian Church, i. 164, ii. 117, ed. Bohn.) He suggests the raging of an epidemic about that time in Corinth, which may have swept away believers before baptism, whose relatives were baptized in their stead; but he pleads that, if Paul might for the occasion have borrowed an argument from the conviction lying at the basis of such a custom, he would probably have taken care to explain himself at another opportunity against this custom itself, as he did in reference to females speaking in their public assemblies.

There is not the smallest foundation for any hypothesis of the sort. The context suggests the true substitutionary idea. That ■π■ρ allows of some such shade of thought is certain, not only from its usage in all correct Greek, but especially from the New Testament, where the physical sense of "over," so common elsewhere, does not occur. Thus we find the apostle in Philemon 13, which is distinct. (Compare John 11:50-52; 18:14; Rom. 5:6, 7, 8; 2 Cor. 5:14, 15, 20; 1 Thess. 5:10; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Peter 2:21; 3:18, &c.) Nor is this found in the inspired writers only. Vigor has cited a decisive passage from Dion. Hal. (Ant. Rom. viii. 87, ed. Reiske, p. 1723): ο■τοι τ■ν ■ρχ■ν

παραλαβ■ντες, ■π■ρ τ■ν ■παθαν■ντων τ■ προς ■ντι■τας πολ■μω στρατιωτ■ν, ■ξ■ουν ■τ■ρους καταγρ■θειν.

The apostle then refers to those who had already slept in Christ, as well as the living trials of such as himself. What will become of those baptized for the dead? Why then be enlisted into such ranks, if no dead at all are raised? Why do we too incur danger every hour? It was a forlorn hope indeed, if the light of resurrection did not shine. There is no strange practice supposed, but a forcible association of and now baptized with those who had gone before; still less is there a reprehension, express or tacit, which it is only possible to conceive by indulging in the imagination. Had it been ο■ βαπτισθ■ντες, there might have been some trifling show of argument for an exceptional fact or class, but οι βαπτιζ■μενοι much more naturally suits the baptized in general, the objects of that action. To infer that the present participle, rather than the aorist, implies a practice not generally prevalent, is as illegitimate grammatically, as it is exegetically to conceive a practice not otherwise known to us. There is not the least ground to gather from the text that it existed then, or was here alluded to. There is no reason, therefore, for translating the phrase, “on behalf of the dead.” Indeed it seems to me that, were there a reference to friends, believing or not, who had died without baptism, a much more definite and restricted formula would be imperatively called for than ■π■ρ τ■ν νεκρ■ν, which very naturally refers to those in verse 18, as present danger does to verse 19. This also accounts for the change from the third to the first person; so strict is the analogy, without the strange fancy that by the third person, and by the article before βαπτ., the apostle indirectly separates himself and those to whom he is writing from participation, in, or approval of, the practice.

I do not contend for, nor agree with, the views of the Greek fathers; but it is to be noticed that not one of them, as far as I am aware, saw any such reference, as Ambrose, Anselm, Erasmus, Grotius, &c., followed by Ruckert, Meyer, De Wette, Alford, &c.; still less states it as “the only legitimate reference,” which is indeed not only unfounded but presumptuous, if not to the last degree puerile. Nor do I understand what Mr. T. S. Green means by “baptized concerning the dead,” as he translates in his “Twofold New Testament.” In his “New Testament Grammar” of 1842, page 251, he cites Rom. 1:4, and 1 Cor. 15:29, as Bur posed instances where by νεκρ■ν only one person, namely, Christ, is really signified; but this is in both a mistake. C. F. Matthaei falls into the opposite error of supposing that, baptism being typical of resurrection, ■π■ρ τ■ν ν.=■αυτ■ν, comparing Matt. 8:22 and similar passages. This resembles Chrysostom, Theodoret, Tertullian, &c., who taught that “for the dead” meant for our bodies. None of them saw the train of thought.

But G. B. Winer seems at least as uncertain as any in his Grammar of New Testament Greek (Moulton's edition). First, he tells us (page 219) that ■π[ερτ■ν νεκρ■ν can hardly refer to (the dead) Christ—in that case we should have had ε■ς το■ς νεκρο■ς—but must be understood of (unbaptized) dead men. There is no such necessity, as we have seen. But, letting this pass, in page 849 we are told that the text is probably to be rendered, “who allow themselves to be baptized over the dead,” whereas, when formally treating of the prepositions, he admits that the meaning of ■π■ρ in the New Testament is always figurative, the nearest approach to its local signification being 1 Cor. 4:6, unless we so render our text. In the same page (478) he gives “for the benefit of, for,” as probably meant in 1 Cor. 15:29. But he does not close the paragraph without admitting that, as in most cases he who acts in behalf of another appears for him, ■π■ρ,

sometimes borders on ■ντ■, “instead of,” and cites, besides Eurip. Alc. 700 and Philem. 1:18, Thuc. i. 141 and Polyb. iii. 67. 7. This last evidently sustains the real unforced sense of our text, which is as consonant with the context and argument, as it avoids the need of doing harshness to exegesis, grammar, early doctrine, or history.

It is the resurrection (and all is based on that of Christ) which, as it is the basis of Christianity, so also animates with a calm and constant courage more than human. Here the apostle turns to his own experience, the more vividly and solemnly to impress the saints addressed: “Daily I die, by the boasting of you, brethren, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord. If after man I fought with beasts in Ephesus, what [is] the profit to me? If no dead rise, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Wake up righteously, and sin not; for some are ignorant of God: I speak unto your shame.” (Vers. 31-34.)

The Corinthian saints were his boast and joy, whatever their faults, which no one had such reason to feel as the apostle; but he had it in Christ Jesus, which gave it force and permanence. Thus does he protest his dying day by day. It is not a doctrinal standing; there he could say, I died. Death with Christ is a fact, for faith never a mere and slow process going on, as mystics dream. Here it is a constant exposure to physical death. So he served the Lord, and boasted in His saints: how absurd if there be no resurrection! But it was not only joy in the saints spite of daily dying; what a spring for endurance in the world outside! “If after man I fought with beasts in Ephesus, what [is] the profit to me?” Faith is not fanatical; it reasons as soundly as it feels loyally and works by love.

Here again it was resurrection which cheered him in the fierce conflict, which, speaking as men do, he calls a fight with beasts. It is no uncommon figure. Compare Titus 1:12 Tim. 4:17; and so, it seems, Heraclitus designated the Ephesians see also Appian, Bell. C. ii. 763, and Ignat. ad Rom. 5. To me also with some ancients and moderns, κατ■ ■νθρωπον seems meant to qualify the phrase, so that it should not be taken literally.

To abandon resurrection then is to yield ourselves up to ease, pleasure, and indulgence. It is not the immortality of the soul, but the faith of resurrection, which keeps man from sinking to and below a brute. Men may cry up the soul, without a thought of God, and only to self-exaltation; but the resurrection brings in the reality of God's intervention with men, either in salvation or in judgment. And these human thoughts, which looked plausible and even spiritual, had deceived some of the saints in Corinth. Is it not more purifying to think of the soul apart from the body, and in heavenly glory? Not so; it is the hope of the body rising which encourages us to deny self, and mortify our members here below. See the place given to the body in Rom. 6; 12, as well as in the Epistles to the Corinthians, and elsewhere. Now is the time, here the place, to walk as dead with Christ, and alive in Him to God. In glory we shall dwell at ease, our bodies changed into the likeness of His glorious body.

The word of God maintains this life of unselfish faith and readiness to suffer, not the communications of men, as themselves confess. These puff up and corrupt: so say Euripides, Menander, and common proverbs. Hence the call to wake up righteously, or to righteousness, and not to be sinning. To deny the resurrection is to display ignorance of God. (See Matt. 22:29.) This was not wonderful in a heathen; but what a disgrace to the saints that some among them should be thus ignorant! So ends boastful knowledge. The Corinthians must begin again, and, starting

from a dead and risen Christ, use the truth of God to judge the thoughts of men. He loves to be known as the God that raises the dead; while it is also true that all live unto Him.

Chapter 22

Notes on 1 Corinthians 15:35-49

The apostle next turns from warning to meet objections in the shape of questions physical, as our Lord met the social difficulty raised by the Sadducees. These he quickly exposes in their true character. They are folly; or he rather is a fool who employs his avowed ignorance to reject the testimony of God, who alone knows. Our wisdom is to know the scriptures, and so His mind, without a question of His power to give them effect.

"But some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what body do they come? Fool, what thou sowest is not quickened unless it die; and what thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but a bare grain, it may be of wheat, or of some one of the rest; and God giveth to it a body as he pleased, and to each of the seeds its own body." (Vers. 35-38.) Thus severely is the inquisitive mind of man rebuked, and especially so in this instance, where the clear revelation of God is doubted or denied, because the process, the how, of the resurrection may not be understood, or the character of the risen body. It will be found, however, that God does not withhold the weightiest information; but the apostle here administers a reproof which would be deeply felt by those who piqued themselves on their wisdom, yet were foolish enough to overlook the analogies of nature before their eyes, which refute the assumed likeness between the body as it is, and as it shall be. “Fool, what thou” (not God merely, but the feeble objector) “sowest is not quickened unless it die.” Death, therefore, was no barrier to the resurrection, of course not its cause, but its antecedent. There may be change, as shown afterward, but no resurrection unless death be first. There is dissolution in death, but not annihilation. There is disorganization in death previous to another mode of being. But the seed dies as such in order to pass into a plant; and so he adds, “and what thou sowest, thou sowest not the body that shall be, but bare grain it may be of wheat or of some of the rest, and God giveth it a body as he pleased, and to each of the seeds its own body."

What springs up differs widely from what was sown, yet each seed issues in its own plant. There is such a thing as species, and this fixed from the first, as God pleased. “Natural selection” is not only contrary to fact but senseless, yet none the less the idol of modern materialists, as Ashtoreth was of the Sidonians and Molech of the Amorites. No doubt there is a germ or principle of life; but what does the objector know of it? If he is utterly unacquainted with this even in the seed, is he in a position to cavil as to the body? One may reason fairly from known truth, not from ignorance. If one rejects whatever is not understood, where is such unconscionable doubt to end? Not only is all spiritual being swept away, but one must begin with denying the existence of oneself and every other being. Nothing is less rational than to make reason the only inlet of thought, feeling, knowledge, conscience, or consciousness.

"Every flesh [is] not the same flesh, but one [is] of men, and another flesh of beasts, and another flesh of birds, and another of fishes. [There are] both bodies heavenly and bodies earthly; but different is the glory of the heavenly, and different that of the earthly: one [the] sun's glory, and another [the] moon's glory, and another [the] stars' glory; for star differs from star in glory. So also

[is] the resurrection of the dead." (Vers. 39-42.) The apostle shows how vain is the assumption of a condition for the body in resurrection similar to the present state, from the diversity even of flesh in the animal world that now is. There is no monotony in God's creation. The flesh is palpably different in men, cattle or quadrupeds, birds, fishes: how unreasonable then, if that ground be sought, to take for granted that the body must be at all like what it is now in a condition so distinct as resurrection! Far more sensibly might one conceive the most striking difference. It is no question, however, either of reason or of imagination, but of faith as far as God has revealed. But there is a farther illustration, which the apostle draws even from sight, to set aside empiricism, petty and groveling, as it always is.

"There are both bodies heavenly and bodies earthly," and the glory of the one differs from that of the other; and not only this, but the heavenly ones, sun, moon, stars, vary from each other, as do those below. There is no need to suppose angels are meant, like Alford, de Wette, and Meyer; and to introduce saints here as do Chrysostom and his followers, is to confound the things compared. The objection to understanding "heavenly bodies" of the sun, &c., as if too modern a term, is simply want of knowledge; it is mere captiousness to boot that, if we apply these words thus, we must suppose the apostle to have imagined the stars to be endowed with bodies in the literal sense; for similar language occurs in the Hellenistic Greek of Galen (iv. 358,359, ed. Kuhn), who lived not long after the apostle, as was pointed out by Wetstein, ii. 171, more than a hundred years ago. Yet the object is not to prove different degrees of glory in heaven, as thought by many ancients and moderns, but rather to contrast the risen with the natural state. "So also is the resurrection of the dead." This is made plain from what follows. They are quite wrong who make the glory to be exclusively heavenly or earthly. Both will be found in the kingdom of God. (See John 3:12.)

"It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body: if there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual." (Vers. 42-44)

This is one among the scriptures where the present is used, not as an actual or continuous thing, but abstractly: a sense constantly forgotten by grammarians as well as expositors. Yet is it inexcusable ignorance, for the same principle applies to almost, if not all, languages, and seems to flow from the nature of language, the present being most suitable for an abstract, as distinguished from its historical, usage. Here it is impossible rightly to take it otherwise. Resurrection, and even burial, or sowing, as it is here figuratively called (and not the origin of our natural being, as Archbishop Whately understood), excludes a merely actual or a continuing fact. It is the statement of a truth.

The body of the believer is sown in dishonor, corruption, and weakness; so all see; what do we believe? It is raised in incorruption, glory, and power—not a mere ethereal or airy body, as Chrysostom and Origen respectively said, but a body instinct with spirit life, as once with animal life from the soul, yet not a spirit, but a spiritual body, not limited by earthly conditions, but capable either of passing through a closed door, or of being felt, able to take food, though needing none, if we may judge from Him who, risen as the great Head, and pattern and power, declared that a spirit has not flesh and bones, as they saw He had.

The suitability of this for heaven is apparent. “If there is a natural or soulish body, there is also a spiritual.” As surely as there is the body which we have now, suited to the earth and the life that now is, there is also a spiritual body, which we shall have when the Lord Christ comes to raise those that are His. (See Vers. 20-23.) God, who constituted the one for the sphere of responsibility and trial, will certainly adapt the other to the conditions of glory, where the eternal life which is now exercised in scenes of sorrow, itself in faith, hope, and love, will then enjoy the unclouded rest of God on high. The ε■, omitted by most of the later uncials and cursives, and even the Syrr. vv. as well as the Greek fathers, is attested by the most ancient and beat manuscripts, uncial or cursive, the rest of the old versions, and the Latin fathers: only some, by ■μοιοτ■λευτον, have left out the entire latter half of verse 44.

Now the apostle comes to the decisive proof of scripture, and the personal test of Christ. “So also it is written, The first man Adam became a living soul; the last Adam a quickening Spirit: yet not first [is] the spiritual, but the natural, afterward the spiritual; the first man out of earth made of dust, the second man out of heaven: such as he made of dust, such also those made of dust; and such as the heavenly [one], such also the heavenly [ones]; and even as we bore the image of the [one] made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly [ones].” (Vers. 45-49.) It is the way of the apostle, and indeed of the inspired in general, to trace up all to the sources; and so it is here at the end, as at the earlier part, of this discussion. Adam and Christ are before us, the first man Adam made only a living soul, the last Adam a life-giving spirit. Thus, as usual, first is seen man failing in his responsibility, then the obedient, suffering, victorious Man.

It is to be noticed too that the great occasion when scripture shows us the Lord become a quickening Spirit was when He rose from the dead. Then, not before, did He breathe on the disciples, and say, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. It was not the new birth merely, but life more abundantly, because in the power of resurrection; and this quite falls in with the doctrine of the chapter, which looks neither at incarnation nor at ascension, however important, nor here at His death, though this be sacrificially and in moral power the foundation of all for us as well as for God's glory.

Such was the order, and this the triumph, not yet in our resurrection, but on His who will raise the sleeping saints at His coming. It is not that Adam had not an immortal soul, or that Christ could not lay His life down; but the one at the beginning became a living soul, the other, after having been manifested in the end of the ages for putting away of sin by His sacrifice, a life-giving Spirit as risen. “Out of heaven” is no more inconsistent with this, than “out of earth” with Adam's being made a living soul, but each, on the contrary, most suitable.

And now we can go a step farther in each case. Such as was the dusty one (Adam), such also the dusty ones (the race); and such as the heavenly One, such also the heavenly ones (Christians); and just as we bore the image of the dusty one, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly One. We were, and are, naturally the family of the first man, and bore his image (cf. Gen. 5:8); we, as now in Christ, shall also bear the image of Christ in the day that is coming. God has predestined us to be conformed to the imago of His Son, that He should be first-born among many brethren. It is not a question of any transforming us meanwhile according to the same image by the Spirit, which is true and momentous day by day; it is that full and final conformity which cannot be till Christ consummates salvation, and transforms our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of

glory, according to the working of His ability even to subdue all things to Himself.

If we go alone by manuscripts, &c., we should have here φορ■σωμεν, “let us bear,” seeing that the great majority of the best authorities is in its favor, not (it is true) the Vatican, and a few cursives with some versions and fathers, while others lay the express emphasis on the hortative form. The context is decisively in favor of the fut. ind. How then is the erratum to be accounted for? By two considerations: first, the proneness, even of the best copies, to confound ο and ω, secondly, the readiness of pious men, who feebly know grace, to turn a promise into an exhortation. The rationalist naturally prefers a reading which puts forward man, so as to hide the glorious power of God in raising the dead into the likeness of the risen Christ.

Notes on 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

Thus the dying man and the Man of resurrection power stand in full contrast, as do those who are respectively theirs, with the glorious issue for such as once, the first man's, like others, became by grace of the Second, the last Adam. Adam became a sinner, and was sentenced to death before he became head of the family. Christ bore sin, and died to it, before He became Head of those who believed. Till He died He abode alone; after it He had much fruit. And as there never was a hope for man in another, so none other can rival Him. He is the last Adam, no less than the second Man. He who will finally pretend to it, ere the age ends, will secure the worship of what was once Christendom, as well as (strange to say) of the Jew, is only the man of sin, though sitting down in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. He is emphatically from beneath, as the Lord is from heaven, and they that follow him perish everlastingly, while the believer has life eternal in Christ, and shall be glorified with Him.

But we have more. “Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom, neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in [the] twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for it shall sound, and the dead shall live incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the word that is written, Death was swallowed up in victory. Where, death, [is] thy victory? where, death, thy sting? Now the sting of death [is] sin, and the power of sin the law; but thanks to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, my brethren beloved, be firm, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your toil is not vain in [the] Lord.” (Vers. 50-58.)

It will be observed that God's kingdom is here viewed exclusively on the other side of death, in accordance with the great theme in hand. “Earthly things” have, their place very definitely elsewhere; here, for the reason given, they are not found. Flesh and blood, man, as he is here below, cannot inherit God's kingdom. It is not merely that corruption does not inherit incorruption, being incompatible, but man in his best estate is altogether vanity. Short of resurrection, which is the intervention of another Man, who is also God, he cannot inherit whore God reigns. But in Christ we see the power which withdraws the believer completely from death, impossible without His death, not because He could not intrinsically quicken for evermore, but because the believer had been a sinner like others, and could not otherwise be saved consistently with God's righteousness, holiness, truth, and glory.

His victory extends even to the living saints, not merely to keep them alive in the world, but to change them at His coming, without undergoing the humiliation of death in any shape. This is no doubt a truth unknown to Old Testament times, and the revelation there given; it is a secret made known now. “Behold, I tell you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for it shall sound, and the dead shall be

raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." The earlier communication was not a mystery; this is. Old Testament saints (witness Job) knew certainly the resurrection, not only of man in general (chap. 14), but of the saint in particular (chap. xix.). But who could tell or think of saints being changed without going through death in virtue of the perfect victory of grace in Christ? It was reserved for the days of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, when the infinite work was done whereby souls, once guilty, could be brought into the efficacy and the knowledge of redemption. And what a proof of its efficacy, when the saints that remain alive are changed without dying, or still less any purgatorial process after death, and this, not in some specially known for practical holiness, but in all the saints then waiting for Christ here below!

Here man breaks down utterly. He revolts from what makes nothing of his power or his merits, yea, what exposes his total inability, and demonstrates his ruin through sin, while it reveals the free and full and triumphant grace which saves—saves the body as well as soul of the Christian, through Christ, to God's glory. Even saints, themselves owing all to it, find it often so beyond their thoughts, that they are apt to curtail its extent, to obscure its clearness, and to fritter away its power.

A notable evidence of this appears in the singular vacillation here found in the ancient copies and versions. There is no need, perhaps no ground, for accusing any of the lack of good faith; but if not, it is hard to account for the departure from the words and truth given by the Spirit, save by the strangeness of it for those who copied or translated.

Thus the Latins followed the reading extant in the first hand of the Clermont manuscript, but corrected there later, ■νεστησ■μεθα, ο■ π■ντες δ■ ■λλαγησ■μεθα, omnes quidem resurgemus, sed non omnes immutabimur, "we shall indeed all rise again, but we shall not all be changed," a double error, directly opposed in each part to positive scripture. Indeed the dead saints shall rise, but all saints are not to die, nay, none found alive and remaining unto the coming of the Lord, when the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living that remain, shall be caught up together with them in clouds to meet the Lord in the air. It is appointed unto men, doubtless, once to die; but saints stand on another ground—of the second Man, not of the first; and such as live till He come look to be not unclothed but clothed upon, that mortality be swallowed up of life, instead of dying and rising again like the rest. Thus those who teach that we shall all rise imply the universal dying of the saints, and in effect deny the power of life in Christ, which it is the great aim of the Spirit to press in 2 Cor. 5. But they teach still more erroneously that "we shall not all be changed" in no less open contrariety to the invariable declaration of scripture, and the necessary exigencies of that glory of God in hope of which we rejoice.

For we look for the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven as Savior, who shall change our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory. In this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. The earthly house of the tabernacle we have now is wholly unmeet for the glory of God: we need therefore a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, which we shall have at Christ's coming. Consequently we must, and shall, be changed then and there. Hence the second clause of the Latin is as false as the first. They together ignore grace and glory in their full character and final issues. Accordingly, without a particle of prejudice against the Vulgate, one may say that it would be difficult to match such a departure from the true text and the truth in general in the worst

version that ever was made. Yet human tradition dooms its votaries to the sanction, as authentic scripture, of these gross and grievous errors throughout half Christendom.

But the text of Lachmann the critic, founded on A C F G, and other authorities, is as bad, if not worse, π. [μ.] κοιμηθησ■μεθα, ο■ π. δ■ ■λλαγ. For here we are taught in no sense the power of life, but of death, in the very chapter which develops resurrection of and in Christ, and in the part of it, above all others, which discloses the secret of victory by and with Christ when He comes for His own then alive on earth. A singular mystery indeed that “we shall all die or sleep;” seeing that this is the common lot of the race, and in no way the disclosure of the exemption which grace will confer when the Lord Jesus will come and gather us to Himself. We need say no more of the further error which denies the change, after the pattern of Christ's glorification, to any that are His. Rationalism shares this latter with Romanism; and though they differ as to the former point, the one affirming that “we shall all sleep,” the other that “we shall all rise,” they agree in adopting mistaken readings, which deny the special grace of Christ to His own who are to be found awaiting His descent from heaven, and the special mystery here added to complete the general truth of the chapter.

This is entirely confirmed by the context (ver. 52), which besides furnishes somewhat more to the believer. We shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. The glorification of the saints will be effected, immense as it is in itself, and from every spot of the globe, sooner than the mind can reckon, or the eye discern, when the final summons is given to the heavenly host to quit its halting-place. The allusion is to the signal last given on the breaking up of a camp, at that time too familiar a figure to escape the nations of Europe, and far beyond it, which had been welded into the empire of Rome. “For it shall sound,” however little man may expect it, “and the dead shall rise incorruptible, and we shall he changed;” not, remark, we shall rise then, nor they only, but “we” too shall be changed, in exact accordance with the true and common text of verse 51, and in opposition to the changes of both rationalists and Romanists.

But we have more explanation, and a scripture rich in its connection of truth, cited from the Old Testament. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.” (Ver. 53.) The apostle expresses the truth with perfect precision. He does not speak of those corrupting in the grave, nor even of the dead or dying, but of what is “corruptible” and “mortal,” so as to take in the body even whilst we are alive, and thus be an object for the change, if not for resurrection. “But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the word that is written, Death was swallowed up in victory.” (Ver. 54.) The epoch of the change is the coming of the Lord from heaven. When the dead in Christ shall rise, and we who are alive be changed and caught up, then shall Isa. 25:8 come to pass. But it is evident from the prophet that this must be at the end of the age, not of the world; that then the earth's blessing begins, instead of passing away, and that then Jehovah will destroy in this mountain [Zion] the face of the covering cast over all peoples, and the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord Jehovah will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of His people shall He take away from off all the earth; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it..... In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah, We have a strong city, &c. It is the kingdom come in power and glory, instead of the end of it for eternity; and the risen or changed saints will share it, as well as eternity, with Christ. “Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?” It is to be feared that many Christians know it less now

than the carnal Corinthians of old. Yet it is less excusable for those who have the apostolic correction to profit by.

No wonder that the apostle refers to the challenge of another prophet. “Death, where [is] thy victory? Death, where [is] thy sting?” (Hos. 13:14) with the comment, “Now the sting of death [is] sin, and the strength of sin the law; but thanks to God that giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Vers. 55-57.) What a triumphant answer is the resurrection and the change of the saints at the coming of the Lord! It is sin which gives not only occasion, but its sting, to death; and the law, however righteous, could work no deliverance for the guilty, but proves in effect the strength of sin, by provoking its rebellious will so much the more against the commands of God. His grace, not the law, is the strength of holiness, as we learn from Rom. 6:14; and therefore does the apostle here break forth into thanksgiving as he sees God giving us the victory so completely and forever, through our Lord Jesus Christ. “Wherefore, my brethren beloved, be ye steadfast, immovable, abounding in the work of the Lord always, knowing that your toil is not vain in [the] Lord.” (Ver. 58.) Christ's resurrection is the pledge of ours, the witness of salvation, the pattern of deliverance, and the spring of hope in the midst of labor as well as suffering for Christ.

Chapter 24

Notes on 1 Corinthians 16:1-12

Another and a very different topic claimed the service of the apostle, because it fell under the Lord's care for the church. It might seem wholly a matter for the saints; but experience itself proves how much they need in it the guidance of the Spirit through the written word. Hence pretension to superior spirituality here, as elsewhere, sinks below the dictates of love, and the dictates of every sound mind. How blessed to have the regulating wisdom of God, who deigns to give us His mind even for the smallest things of this life!

“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I directed the assemblies of Galatia, so do ye also. Every first of a week let each of you put by him, storing up whatever he may be prospered in, that there. be no collections when I come. And when I am arrived, whomsoever ye shall approve, them I will send with letters, to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem; and if it be suitable that I go, they shall go with me.” (Vers. 1-4.)

It is untrue that the assemblies were left without apostolic regulation, or that they were regulated differently. The snares and the circumstances of Galatia were as unlike those of Corinth as could be conceived; the directions given by the apostle were the same, and this, not merely on matters of the most momentous significance, as sound doctrine, and holy discipline, and the attesting institutions of Christ, so that the worship and public ways of the saints might present the same testimony everywhere, but here, as we see, even in the exercise of their liberality.

One cannot overlook the frequent remembrance of the poor saints at Jerusalem; and no doubt there were circumstances which gave them a special claim. Doubtless external distress prevailed, and persecution had left some widows and orphans. Not only were the believers very numerous there, but there only, so far as we read, had they sold their possessions and substance, so as to distribute to all, as any one had need there; only not one said that anything of what he possessed was his own, but all things were common to them, so that none was in want. But there, partly through this surprising testimony of unselfish love, poverty prevailed later; and none among the Gentile assemblies was so urgent as our apostle that relief should be sent for the brethren in Judea, not merely during the great famine under Claudius Caesar, but thenceforward, as we may gather from 1 and 2 Corinthians, as well as Romans. (Cf. Gal. 2:10; Acts 24:17)

Still, a general principle and practice we find laid down of the highest value for any time. The collection for the saints was bound up with the solemn and gracious associations of the first, or resurrection, day. It was to proceed regularly, not occasionally; it was to be done with conscience, according as we might be prospered, not under influence, or pressure, or haste, still less with indifference, or on mere human grounds. Thus faith and love would be called out, and healthfully applied, while waiting for the coming of the Lord. It seems that each was to lay aside at home what he judged according to the means given; but the mention of the first of the week, or Lord's day, points to their joining their contribution, when they came together, as every disciple did, to break bread. This is truly to lay up treasure in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupteth, and where thieves do not dig through or steal.

Again, the apostle was careful to leave no room for evil surmise or appearance; and so he here indicates a fresh application of the apostolic wisdom which we see in Acts 6 The multitude chose their own administrators. They contributed the funds, and they, not the apostles, chose men in whom they had confidence to dispense them. (See also 2 Cor. 8) As the church cannot impart a spiritual power, so the Lord alone gave gifts for the ministry or service of souls. (Rom. 10; 12:1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4) The apostles, personally or by delegate (as Titus), chose elders, being the chiefs of that authority of which the presbyters were the ordinary representatives locally. (Acts 14; Titus 2) Everything in the church rests on its own proper ground. Here, then, the apostle promises on his arrival to send with letters whomsoever they should approve to bring their bounty unto Jerusalem.

But the letters were to be his, not theirs as the Authorized Version says, following the mistake of the Vulgate, Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, and the Text. Rec., which punctuates wrongly in consequence. For what would be the sense of their approving by their letters when the apostle came? The Corinthians really were to select whom they approved, and Paul, on arriving, would send them on, furnished with letters from himself. So too the Greek commentators understood.

It is common to make the genitive dependent on μηιον, “meet,” and to deduce the meaning, “if the occasion, or magnitude of the collection, warrant an apostolic mission in order to carry it.” But such a sense, though grammatically possible, seems to me unworthy, not only of the apostle, but even of the delegates, and only tolerable because men have been lowered by the mendicant habits of Christendom. The truth is that the genitive of design, purpose, or the conclusion to be formed, as here, is a common Hellenistic usage, not infrequent in classical authors. The Authorized Version is therefore nearer the mark, and much more in unison with the dignity of all concerned, as well as with God's word and Spirit, which, while cherishing the largest self-denial and generosity, are wont to slight the resources of unbelief, and to brand covetousness as idolatry. If it were suitable, then, that Paul also should go, the delegates should go with him. He would guard his services from all ground for reproach, providing for things honest, not only before the Lord, but also before men.

"But I will come unto you when I shall have gone through Macedonia, for I go through Macedonia. But perhaps I shall stay, or even winter, with you, that ye may send me forward wherever I may go. For I do not wish to see you now in passing; for I hope to remain some time with you, if the Lord permit. But I will remain at Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effectual door is open to me, and [there are] many adversaries. But if Timotheus come, see that he be with you without fear, for he worketh the Lord's work, even as I. Let none then despise him, but send him forward in peace, that he may come unto me, for I am awaiting him with the brethren. But concerning the brother Apollos, I besought him much to come unto you with the brethren; but it was not at all [his] will to come now, but he will come when he shall have good opportunity.” (Vers. 5-12.)

It is evident from verse 8 that the apostle was in Ephesus when he wrote to Corinth this first epistle. The spurious postscript in the common text, followed in the Authorized Version, says “from Philippi,” but it was really from Ephesus, as in the Vatican and some other copies; and therefore salutations are given from “the assemblies of Asia.” (Ver. 19.) His purpose was to pass through Macedonia: this is the force of M. γ■ρ δι■ρχομαι, a journey then before him as a settled thing, but not actually in progress. He might, perhaps, then stay, or even winter, with them, adding an expression of loving confidence that they might send him on wherever he might go. For he declined seeing them then, for reasons explained in 2 Cor. 1, hoping to remain some time with

them, under the Lord's permission, instead of merely passing through. He should remain at Ephesus, where he then was, till Pentecost. That the Lord was there working was a sufficient reason, and none the less because there were adversaries many. He trusted to carry on the work, and help souls against Satan.

But his heart could not rest without commending Timothy, and the more as he was timid. He would have him be without fear in their midst, and deigns to put him as a workman of the Lord so far on common ground with himself. He is anxious that none should despise him—a danger among the saints, who are as open to be deceived by self-seeking men, as to slight true servants of Christ.

The case of Apollos is also instructive in more ways than one. Paul besought him to go to Corinth, rising above all feeling that not a few set him above himself; Apollos would not then go, it would seem, out of similar delicacy, unwilling to give occasion to such folly and wrong among the saints as they then were. We see how the Lord maintains freedom, as well as calls out grace, among His laborers, even when apostles wore there, recording it for our guidance when there are none. Nothing, in its way, can be happier than this picture of unjealous love and respect, but free as before the Lord, among servants so varied as an apostle, his young companion, and a comparatively independent laborer like Apollos.

Chapter 25

Notes on 1 Corinthians 16:13-24

After these details the apostle gives a few pithy words of exhortation “Watch, stand in the faith, play the man, be strong. Let all your doings be in love.” (Vers. 18, 14.) They are words eminently suited to the state of things at Corinth, besides being wholesome for all saints in all times and places. Carelessness had marked them as a company, and therefore were they now called to vigilance. They had allowed speculations to work even on foundation truths of revelation; and so they needed to cleave firmly to the deposit of faith. They had been walking after the manner of man (κατ■ ■νθρωπον), and had shrank from reproach and suffering, feebly dreading the world's opinions; they are urged, therefore, to quit themselves in a manly way (■νδρ■ζεσθε), and to be strong. They had need also, and above all, that whatever they did might be done lovingly. It is the final application of that which chapter 13 had opened out—the blessed energy of the divine nature, which lives and delights in the good of others; and it is the fitting preface to his next topic.

“Now I beseech you, brethren—ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is a first-fruit of Achaia, and that they appointed themselves to the saints for service—that ye also be subject to such, and to every one that cooperateth and laboreth.” (Vers. 15, 18.)

This entreaty of the apostle was, and is, of the highest, for the house of Stephanas represents a considerable class of laborers, if we reckon them up in every place where God has His assembly. They stand on a distinct footing from such servants of the Lord as Timothy, on the one hand, or Apollos on the other. They do not answer to one designated by prophecy, specially gifted to serve with an apostle; neither were they men eloquent and mighty in the scriptures, who from small beginning learned the truth more exactly, and could, in a freer action of the Spirit, either boldly speak before adversaries, or contribute much to those who believed through grace.

The house of Stephanas had no such prominent, wide, or energetic sphere; but they devoted themselves in an orderly way to the saints for service. It was their regular work, not a thing taken up perfunctorily now and then; and this, which some dare to deride as self-appointment, is as thoroughly maintained and commended by the apostle in the name of the Lord, as the call of a patron or of a congregation to the ministry of the word is absolutely unscriptural, and opposed to all sound and holy principle. The apostle establishes their attitude and activity as of God, whose love gave them a heart toward the saints in service. They were not elders. Indeed it would seem that as yet none had been chosen at Corinth to the work of oversight by the apostle. But none the less does he call on the saints also to range themselves under such, and every one sharing the work, and toiling. We see the same thing in Rom. 12 and 1 Thess. 5, where no trace, of presbyters appear, and where, in fact, we can hardly conceive of their existence. But there were those who ruled, or took the lead, those who toiled among the saints, and presided over them in the Lord, entirely apart from exterior appointment. As this was of moment to sanction in those early days, so is it of at least equal importance in our own time, when we have no apostle, or apostolic delegate like Titus, to visit the assemblies, and to establish elders, as of old. The same holy liberty, the same solemn responsibility, and the same apostolic warrant, abide for our day of weakness and

need. How evident the gracious wisdom of the Lord, while thus naming but incidentally, as it might have seemed, the house of Stephanas, really providing for all that call on His name, in every place, and at any time of the church's career here below! How blessed in His eyes is the subjection of the saints, not only to such devoted servants, but to every one joined in the work, and laboring.

Another feature of interest is the delicacy with which the apostle notices some from Corinth who had not forgotten his temporal necessities. “But I rejoice at the coming of Stephanas, and Fortunatus, and Achaicus, because what was lacking on your part these filled up; for they refreshed my spirit and yours: own then those that are such.” (Vers. 17, 18.) It would appear from both epistles that the help did not come from the assembly as such, but from these three individuals, whose love the apostle does not fail to record. In his allusion there is certainly the grace which counted on the mention refreshing the Corinthian assembly as it had refreshed himself, but not without a hint that they had lost an opportunity which the three discerned and used before the Lord.

"The assemblies of Asia salute you. Aquila and Prisca salute you much in the Lord, with the assembly in their house. All the brethren salute you. Salute one another with a holy kiss. The salutation of Paul with mine own hand. If any one loveth not the Lord [Jesus Christ,]. let him be anathema maranatha (a curse: the Lord cometh.) The grace of the Lord Jesus [Christ] [be] with you. My love [be] with you all in Christ Jesus. [Amen].” (Vers. 19-24)

The salutation from “the assemblies of Asia” falls in with the fact that the apostle was writing from the capital of that pro-consular province. But it seems to me a mistake to conceive that the name of the church or assembly is applied to a single family in the next clause. The truth really is that this godly pair appear to have opened their house habitually for the saints to assemble there wherever they might reside, whether in Ephesus or in Rome. Thus it was in those early days, when true unity prevailed and vast buildings for accommodating multitudes did not yet exist among Christians. So in Jerusalem, from the first they used to break bread κατ οκον. That Aquila and his wife should greet the Corinthian saints “much in the Lord,” as distinguished from the more general salutation, “all the brethren,” or of the Asiatic assemblies, is easily understood from their personal acquaintance with the Achaian capital. But the mode of salutation enjoined here, as on the Romans, and by the apostle Peter on the Christian Jews scattered throughout Asia Minor, points to the ardent, but holy, affection which then knit together the saints as such: so should it ever, be in a world where sin brings in distance or corruption.

The apostle, then, appends his salutation with his own hand; for here, as usually, the body of the epistle was not in his autograph. But he also adds the sternest denunciation of any one who loved not the Lord, under a seemingly familiar Syrian formula. Calvin ridicules the idea of writing so to Greeks in that tongue; but, explain it as you may, such is the fact, which, does not seem mitigated by his own suggestion that it was a customary form of expressing excommunication among the Hebrews. To me it appears to go farther still: yet did it not in the least clash with the love which animated and filled his heart, as one sees from verse 28, and especially 24. It is to be doubted indeed whether love can be unfeigned without abhorring evil; and what evil can compare with bearing the name of the Lord without real attachment to Him?

Thus the first epistle to the Corinthians ends with a denunciation similar in solemnity to that with which the epistle to the Galatians opens. There the apostle in his seal for the truth of the gospel imprecates a curse on himself, or an angel from heaven, or any one preaching aught besides what he had preached and they received; here he burns with no less vehemence against any one loving not the Lord, and in the light of His coming too, which goes beyond excommunication. But this in no way interferes with his prayer, that not His judgment but His grace might be with you, as he assures them all of his own love in Christ Jesus. Thus confidence and affection mark this autograph conclusion as well as the gravest warning, the wise and worthy personal message to his beloved children in the faith.

Chapter 26

Notes on 2 Chronicles 18-20

We have seen in 1 Kings 17; 18 that Ahab and Jezebel worshipped the idol Baal, and now we read the judgments of God on Ahab and apostate Israel.

It is necessary for us to know the circumstances mentioned in this chapter, as they are of grave importance. Let us consider in it especially the characters of Jehoshaphat and Micaiah. This last was separated from Ahab and apostate Israel; he entered into God's thoughts and was declaring to Ahab and Israel the judgments which were ready to come upon them. Read verses 16-23. In verse 26 we see the consequences of his fidelity: Ahab and Israel are his enemies, and he is put into the place of affliction. Jehoshaphat's circumstances were very different; he was a Child of God as well as Micaiah, but he was rich and great, and had made alliance with one of God's enemies—with Ahab. Ahab knew him to be a child of God, and, in order to tranquilize his conscience, caused sheep and oxen to be killed for him in abundance. It mattered not to Ahab what he did if he succeeded in persuading Jehoshaphat to go with him to Ramoth Gilead. But Jehoshaphat's conscience was not satisfied by the sacrifice of all these sheep and oxen; and he said to the king of Israel, “Inquire, I pray thee at the word of the Lord to-day.” Ahab then assembled the four hundred and fifty prophets who cried; “peace, peace,” although God's judgment was ready to break over him and apostate Israel; but the words of these false prophets did not satisfy Jehoshaphat's conscience any more than the sacrifices. Thus it is ever so when the child of God is found in the midst of evil of any kind: although four hundred and fifty prophets and the whole world would seek to satisfy his conscience, they could not attain this end. See what is said of false prophets in Ezek. 13:1-17.

But the king of Israel was satisfied with what the lying prophets said; and, as God punished Pharaoh by giving him up to a delusion, He did the same to Ahab. And the same thing happen to many others at the end of this dispensation; men will preach “peace, peace,” and judgment will break forth upon them. (Rev. 16:14; 2 Thess. 2:7-13.) Here is a solemn truth. This is why we ought first to be very grateful because the Lord has revealed Himself to us; then we ought to take care not to become like Jehoshaphat who “joined affinity with Ahab.” How good the Lord was to put it into the king of Judah's heart to seek counsel of a prophet of the Lord! It was a means by which he might have been instructed about the judgments which were going to happen, and have been able to warn his people. But alliance with evil blinds to such a degree, that Jehoshaphat did not discern that Micaiah was a true prophet of the Lord; and he did not believe his word, but went in spite of it up to the battle in which Ahab was to meet with the judgment of God. Oh may we be separated from evil in order to be capable of judging all things and to hold fast that which is truth

We have also to remark Micaiah's faithfulness: although he was engaged by the messenger to speak the same words as the false prophets, he replied, “What my God saith, that will I speak.” (Ver. 12, 18.) Micaiah told Ahab that he should be killed in the battle; but the latter, thinking to escape by his own prudence, disguised himself, and told Jehoshaphat to wear his robes. (Vers. 27-30.) Oh what a magnificent proof we have of the love of God in these verses Jehoshaphat is

surrounded by the Syrians on all sides, but he was a child of God; and although he had joined with Ahab, nothing could separate him from the Lord whose faithfulness to His own endures notwithstanding their unfaithfulness. Jehoshaphat cried to the Lord who became his protector; and although, humanly speaking, it seemed all over with him, nevertheless his enemies were not allowed to touch him.

But as surely as the child of God will be preserved by the love of his Father, so sure is it that the judgments of God will fall on those who reject His mercy. We see this in a remarkable manner in this chapter. Ahab, notwithstanding his precautions, could not escape; he might have disguised himself from the Syrians, but he was not able to hide himself from God. (Ver. 28.) Thus it is with poor sinners: even if they should succeed in not being seen by man, the eye of God will find them. May the Lord make this example of use to us!

It is well to consider how much more advantageous Micaiah's position was than that of Jehoshaphat. It is true he was afflicted and persecuted by Ahab and the false prophets, but he was not like Jehoshaphat to be found in the midst of God's judgments. The latter was as ignorant as Ahab of what was going to take place; be it that even Micaiah had announced it to them, and that these judgments were, as it were, suspended over their heads, yet Jehoshaphat did not expect them. And why? For he was a child of God as well as Micaiah. Had he not the Lord's thought and a clear view of His intention? It was because he had joined himself to God's enemies and that his affections were with the things of the world, whilst Micaiah had separated himself to the service of God.

Oh, how ashamed Jehoshaphat ought to have been, to be thus found amongst the Lord's enemies! and how grateful he ought to have been for the gracious help which he so little merited!

We see in chapter xix. 2, that, although Jehoshaphat had been delivered by the compassion and love of God, he was spoken to in words of reproach, after which the Lord encouraged him by adding, “Nevertheless there are good things found in thee;” which shows us that if God disapprove that which is evil He owns the good which He has put into His own people.

In Jude's epistle, which speaks of the apostasy of the present dispensation we see at verse 23 something similar to that which happened to Jehoshaphat. Like Lot he was saved so as by fire.

All these circumstances in Jehoshaphat's life were calculated to humble him deeply and teach him the incomprehensible fullness of God's mercy. He ought to have drawn from these experiences deep instruction both about God and himself. Let us read in 2 Chron. 20:2-13 what were the fruits of these instructions. Jehoshaphat is here very different; he is not now in affinity with Ahab, he is depending on God alone in whom is his strength and his joy. “Our eyes are on Thee,” he says to the Lord. Will Micaiah be now separated from him as he was in the preceding chapter? Let us read from verse 15 to 18 of chapter xx. In the preceding chapter Jehoshaphat is found in the ranks of God's enemies, and he is only saved by the intervention of the Lord; but here we see him dependent upon God and blessed, not afraid, and knowing that the Lord is with him. He goes to the battle, and God orders it all in such a way that he has no anxiety. (Ver. 17.) What a precious lesson he had received in all this! And should we not be disposed to think that from this time forth he would keep near to God and in separation from His enemies? He had learned by experience the grief there is in sin, and it seems impossible that he should fall again into the same fault which

had brought him into such trouble; but we see in verses 35-38 that it was not so.

The lesson which we may take from the second fall of Jehoshaphat is that, although we may have been punished, we fall again into the very same sins if we do not keep in communion with the Lord.

Abraham: Genesis 22

The last chapter closed that series of divine dealings with our patriarch which opened with Gen. 15. We can readily see that it forms a natural conclusion. The long promised heir is come; the legal covenant and the child of flesh are cast out; the prince of the Gentiles is reproved instead of reproving, and seeks the friendship of the father of the faithful, who plants a grove and calls there on the name of the everlasting God. Thus, as in chapter 14, we are brought again to a picture of millennial peace and power and blessing.

In Gen. 22 we begin another series of yet deeper character and moment—final too, as far as Abraham and Sarah are concerned.

“And it came to pass after these things that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham'; and he said, Behold, here I am. And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.” It was the greatest trial to which God had ever put the heart of a saint. It was not tempting with evils any more than God is tempted with them. It was, on the contrary, His own good that was before God, who would make His friend the witness of it, while testing his confidence in Himself and His word to the uttermost. Isaac was loved as only a child so promised, born and reserved for a wondrous destiny, could be—to say nothing of personal qualities that must endear him to his parents. How the father's heart must have pondered on God's covenant with “thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant,” and the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; especially after Hagar and Ishmael were expelled, and the word of promise came, “In Isaac shall thy seed be called!” The father was assured, therefore, that this son, and no other, was that of the promises. God could not lie; but He might, and does, try, and those most whom He loves best. So with Abraham now. God demands that the father shall offer up his only son for a burnt-offering on Mount Moriah. It was the shadow of His own incomparable and infinite gift, but only the shadow; for Christ really did suffer and die, and God the Father sent Him, in divine love, to be thus a propitiation for our sins.

Abraham was only “tried;” still he was tried most severely, and by grace endured the trial, and was blessed accordingly. There was no delay in giving up his son to God, any more than he had doubted of God's word that he should have a son of Sarah when both were as good as dead.

“And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto his young men, Abide ye here with the ass; and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.” (Vers. 85)

The moment was come when Abraham must challenge his heart for the last time, counting on God to make good His promise, and give him back that very Isaac to be the heir of all assured to himself, and the channel of blessing to all families of the earth. God must raise Isaac assuredly, as

his own mind was made up to sacrifice him at God's bidding. “And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took the fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto Abraham his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.” (Vers. 68.) “God will provide himself a lamb!” Unconscious prophet of a truth too well, too little, known, he anticipates exactly what God has done, in the gospel, of which this very scene stands out, in some respects, the most eminent type. Guilty man, in his heart of hearts, thinks all depends on some atonement he is to make, even if he also, in ever so orthodox a manner, confesses our Lord Jesus, as a Savior. But this he confesses for all the world: for himself to get the benefit, he really trusts to a sort of compounding for his sins. He hopes to give up his sins, most or all, and that God will be merciful. Such is the gospel of the largest part of Christendom, where it is not even an avowed confidence in life giving ordinances, and saving rites and works of goodness. What a contrast with “God will provide himself a lamb!” What grace on God's part! What a call for faith on man's! “Therefore it is of faith, that it might be of grace."

Nor could any other way suit either. Sins are thus borne and judged, and forgiven to the believer but yet to God's glory, while His grace reigns to eternal life. Anything else would depreciate God, as it would exalt the sinner, for which certainly Christ did not die, but suffered once, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God; and this He has done for every believer cleansed from every sin by His blood.

"So they went both of them together; and they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood. And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son. And the angel of Jehovah called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham, Abraham: and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not: thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And Abraham lifted up his eyes, and looked, and, behold, behind him a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and Abraham went and took the ram, and offered him up for a burnt-offering in the stead of his son. And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovahjireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be provided.” (Vers. 9-14.) Thus was Abraham fully tried, and God magnified and honored by his simple hearted trust in Himself. Yet not a drop of Jacob's blood was shed. God remains God. He spared not His own Son, but gave Him up freely for us all. In all things Christ has the preeminence.

Still Abraham shines brightly in the scene, and God marks His appreciation of it. “And the angel of Jehovah called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith Jehovah, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.” (Vers. 15-18.)

Galatians 3:16 casts fresh light on the blessing here pronounced. The blessing is twofold. In verse 17 it is Jewish, and consists in a countless progeny, which possess the gate of their enemies. In

verse 18 no number is attached to “thy seed.” This, accordingly, is what the Holy Spirit contrasts as “the seed” of Abraham to which the promises were made. “He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Thus the seed with no number or multiplicity annexed to it is shown to be Christ, typified by Isaac, risen again from the dead in figure, who blesses all the Gentiles, as now in the gospel, contradistinguished from the numerous Jewish seed, who are to subject the nations and rule over them, in the age to come. The Seed risen from the dead has evidently broken the link with life or relationship on earth, and is in a wholly new condition wherein He is able to bless the Gentile as freely as the Jew. This Christ is doing now, as the epistle shows, wholly apart from law or circumcision which suppose the flesh and the Jew still under the probation of God, and so in effect deny the cross.

The rest of the chapter (vers. 20-24) calls for no particular notice now. It was meant to prepare the way for Rebekah, by showing her relationship with Abraham's lineage, in view of a still closer tie.

Chapter 28

Abraham: Genesis 23

The death of Sarah follows, and God takes special notice of it, not only for Abraham's sake, but, as it would seem, for its typical bearing, since it comes after the sacrifice and resurrection of the son, and before the call of the bride. In this point of view we must remember that, as Hagar represents the legal covenant of Sinai, Sarah is the shadow of the covenant of promise. (Gal. 4) One cannot wonder that her death as a figure is unintelligible to those who regard her as symbolic of our best and characteristic church blessings. But it is not so: scripture is right, theology as usual wrong. Sarah sets forth the covenant of promise presented to the Jew after the cross, (but on his unbelieving refusal) passing away to make room for the call of the church to heavenly glory and union with Christ on high. Of all this the reader may find the key in studying the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. Compare especially chapter 3, which answers to Sarah, with chapter ix., on the total rejection of this in the death of Stephen, when God begins to send the gospel outside Jerusalem, raising up Paul as minister of the church in its full character.

Certain it is that Abraham's wife is the only woman whose years are carefully noted. To her death and the account of the purchase of a buryingplace the whole chapter is devoted. “And Sarah was an hundred and seven and twenty years old: these were the years of the life of Sarah. And Sarah died in Kirjatharba; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan: and Abraham came to mourn for Sarah, and to weep for her.” (Vers. 1, 2.) Faith does not enfeeble affection; it heightens our sense of the havoc sin has wrought. But we sorrow not as others who have no hope, looking for His coming who is the Resurrection and the life.

Again, we are expressly told in Heb. 11 that these all (Sarah included) died, not in possession, but in faith. Of this the scripture before us is the most striking witness. Till the burial of Sarah Abraham possessed not so much as to set his foot on. He abides the pilgrim and stranger to the last. He has to buy even for a buryingplace. He would have Canaan only under the glory of the Lord, and in the day of resurrection. He is content to wait till then. The time of faith is the time of Christ. While He is hidden, believers are hidden also; when He appears, then shall they also appear along with Him in glory.

There can be no greater mistake than that faith destroys lowliness, or promotes a want of considering others. It really brings God in, and thus is self judged, and love can flow. See the admirable bearing of Abraham with the children of Heth.

"And Abraham stood up from before his, dead, and spake unto the sons of Heth, saying, I am a stranger and a sojourner with you: give me a possession of a buryingplace with you, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. And the children of Heth answered Abraham, saying unto him, Hear us, my lord: thou art a mighty prince among us: in the choice of our sepulchers bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulcher, but that thou mayest bury thy dead. And Abraham stood up, and bowed himself to the people of the land, even to the children of Heth. And he communed with them, saying, If it be your mind that I should bury my dead out of my sight; hear me, and intreat for me to Ephron the son of Zohar, that he may give me the cave of Machpelah,

which he hath, which is in the end of his field; for as much money as it is worth he shall give it me for a possession of a buryingplace amongst you. And Ephron dwelt among the children of Heth: and Ephron the Hittite answered Abraham in the audience of the children of Heth, even of all that went in at the gate of his city, saying, Nay, my lord, hear me: the field give I thee, and the cave that is therein, I give it thee; in the presence of the sons of my people give I it thee: bury thy dead. And Abraham bowed down himself before the people of the land." (Vers. 812.) God had given him the moral respect of his neighbors; but he neither presumes on his favor in their eyes, nor will he take advantage of their feelings. As he rises above the sorrow that pressed on his heart, so he does not accept what cost him nothing for the burial of his dead. If he exceeded the sons of Heth in courtesy, he was nonetheless careful that, the fullest value should be paid in due form, and with adequate witness.

"And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee, hear me: I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there. And Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me: the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead. And Abraham hearkened unto Ephron; and Abraham weighed to Ephron the silver, which he had named in the audience of the sons of Heth, four hundred shekels of silver, current money with the merchant. And the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field, and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of his city." (Vers. 13-18.) Faith never was meant to encourage a careless spirit, as Abraham's conduct in this business exemplifies, at a moment when any one else would have rather availed himself of another's help. Whatever the circumstances, faith makes the believer superior to them all.

"And after this, Abraham buried Sarah his wife in the cave of the field of Machpelah before Mamre; the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan. And the field, and the cave that is therein, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession of a buryingplace by the sons of Heth." (Vers. 19, 20.) God works, doubtless; but the believer himself is exercised before Him and is delivered from his own will, or from the influence of objects such as the enemy uses to divert from God. So it was here. God gave Abraham such a place in the esteem of his neighbors that there was no difficulty whatever; but Abraham bore himself as one who sought not his own things but the will and pleasure of Him who had called him out by and to His promises—promises as yet unfulfilled.

Burial in the land began with Sarah. It was no mere feeling or fancy, sentiment or superstition, but a fruit of faith in Abraham. He looked to have from God's hand the land wherein he laid her body. The gift of Canaan was far surer than any possession of a buryingplace meanwhile. I deny not that he desired a better country, that is, a heavenly, that he looked for the city which hath foundations whose maker and builder is God. But he rejoiced to see the day of Christ and expected in it the wresting of the earth from the hands of the enemy, and knew that all the land of Canaan would be his for an everlasting possession. Hence the importance to the patriarchs, while preserving their pilgrim character, of burial in Canaan. So, when Abraham was gathered to his people, his sons Isaac and Ishmael buried him in the same spot, "in the cave of Machpelah in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre, the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife." (Gen. 25:9, 10.) There too was

Isaac laid by his sons Esau and Jacob. (Gen. 35:27-29.) And so it was with Jacob, though he died in Egypt, for Joseph had him embalmed; “and his sons did unto him according as he commanded them, for his sons carried him into the land of Canaan and buried him in the caves of Machpelah, which Abraham bought with the field for a possession of a burying-place of Ephron the Hittite before Mamre.” (Gen. 1:12, 18.) Joseph again (chap. 1. 25, 26) “took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.” Hence he too was embalmed and put in a coffin in Egypt; but when deliverance came, Moses took the bones of Joseph with him (Ex. 13:19), which the children of Israel in due time buried, not in the cave of Machpelah but in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor the father of Shechem for a hundred pieces of silver; and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph.” Josh. 24:32.

Chapter 29

Abraham: Genesis 24

It is not my purpose to dwell at length on the call of Bethuel's daughter to be the bride of Isaac, however attractive the subject may be, but would only point out in passing the striking propriety that here, after the death of Sarah, we should have the introduction of Rebekah. He who is at all instructed in the ways of God recognizes in the latter the bride for the risen Son and Heir of all things, and this after the figure of the covenant of promise in Sarah has passed away. Till the Jews had refused the fresh summons of God to own their Messiah, now risen and glorified, there could be fittingly no bringing in of the Gentiles—no formation of a heavenly bride, the body of a heavenly Christ. Not that the tale of Rebekah opens out the mystery which was reserved hidden in God for the Apostle Paul to reveal to us, itself revealed not to the Old Testament writers, but to His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit. This however does not hinder, but rather help, us, now that the secret is revealed, to understand the type of Rebekah as far as it goes; but it may be noticed that it does not set out either of the two great parts of the mystery—first, Christ, the Head of all things, heavenly and earthly; secondly, the church, in which Jewish and Gentile distinctions disappear, united to Him as His body in that universal supremacy, conscious of the relationship even while here on earth by the Holy Ghost sent down from on high. The type fits in with all, but cannot be said to reveal it.

My task now is to say a little of Abraham's part in what is here recorded. “And Abraham was old, and well stricken in age: and Jehovah had blessed Abraham in all things. And Abraham said unto his eldest servant of his house, that ruled over all that he had, Put, I pray thee, thy hand under my thigh: and I will make thee swear by Jehovah, the God of heaven, and the God of the earth, that thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell: but thou shalt go unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac. And the servant said unto him, Peradventure the woman will not be willing to follow me unto this land: must I needs bring thy son again unto the land from whence thou earnest? And Abraham said unto him, Beware thou that thou bring not my son thither again. The Jehovah God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence. And if the woman will not be willing to follow thee, then thou shalt be clear from this my oath: only bring not my son thither again. And the servant put his hand under the thigh of Abraham his master, and sware to him concerning that matter.” (Vers. 19.)

In all this the Father's purpose seems clearly foreshown; a new thing was in progress—a bride to be fetched for His Son. None but the most careless can forbear to see the great and unusual solemnity of the transaction. Thus his trusty Eliezer is employed “that ruled over all he had,” who aptly prefigures the place, of service which the Holy Spirit is pleased now to take in executing the purpose of God as to the church in this world. In no other case, not of Genesis only but of all the Old Testament, do we find an oath introduced, the purport of which is so urged again and again. The subject of it too is no less to be observed. A wife must on no account be taken for Isaac from

the daughters of Canaan. She must be sought from the country and kin out of which the father of the faithful had himself been called. Angels are not called, fallen or unfallen: sovereign grace chooses from the world. But there is another provision no less insisted on—the risen son must on no account be brought again to the world for calling his bride. It is the Holy Ghost who accomplishes this work, not the Bridegroom. The Spirit is sent down from heaven to preach the gospel, and so to effect the formation of the church. The risen Bridegroom abides exclusively in heaven, while the call proceeds. Most impressively does Abraham admonish us in type of what moment it is to see that Christ has nothing but a heavenly relation to the church, and in absolute separation from the world.

How true this is in Christ for the Christian! “We all with open face beholding [or reflecting] the glory of the Lord, with unveiled face, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit.” “Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.” So our Lord Himself said (John 16), the Comforter, on coming, should “convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they do not believe on me; of righteousness, because I go away to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.” The righteous One was cast out by the unjust and lawless world, but God the Father has accepted and exalted Him at His right hand. This is the righteousness of God in its heavenly aspect; and there we know Him, not as the Messiah reigning on earth, but as the rejected One exalted in heaven. He is in no sense of the world; and Christians are not even as He is not. Nay, more, “As is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly; and as we have borne the image of the earthy, so shall we also bear the image of the heavenly.” (1 Cor. 15) The practice depends on the principle: the position of Christ determines the walk, as well as the spirit, of the Christian. Rebekah was to have Isaac in Canaan before her; there only was to think of him. On no account—not even to win his bride—must the bridegroom leave his place, save only to receive her to himself at the end. Isaac stays in Canaan and there only is known, while she is being led from her father's house, across the desert, by trusty Eliezer.

We may notice next the place which prayer receives in the servant, and this, not through pressure of trial as in Jacob, but in giving (as here) character to the walk of faith. “And the servant took ten camels of the camels of his master, and departed; for all the goods of his master were in his hand: and he arose, and went to Mesopotamia, unto the city of Nahor. And he made his camels to kneel down without the city by a well of water, at the time of the evening, even the time that women go out to draw water. And he said, O Jehovah God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: and let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master.” (Vers. 10-14.)

So is it with the Christian in the world. “We walk by faith, not by sight.” “Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” “In everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.” Intercourse is established between the believer and God. He knows whom he has believed. “And

this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we seek anything according to his will, he heareth us; and if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." "And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel was very fair to, look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hasted, and let down her pitcher upon her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw water for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw water, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her, held his peace, to wit whether Jehovah had made his journey prosperous or not." (Vers. 15-21.)

Thus faith is kept in constant happy exercise. It is the work of the Spirit in man, especially now that redemption is known. Conscience is at rest, and the affections are free.

But there is more than prayer which distinguishes the Christian and the church. The power of the Spirit finds ground of thanksgiving, as well as of prayer and supplication. It is indeed the hour when the true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him, and the figure of this we find here. "And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten shekels weight of gold; and said, Whose daughter art thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room in thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel, the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped Jehovah. And he said, Blessed be Jehovah God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, Jehovah led me to the house of my master's brethren." (Vers. 22-27.)

That which came forth from God in guidance goes forth to Him in praise, a still more evident characteristic of the Christian. If we live in the Spirit we should walk as well as worship in the Spirit.

Along with this difficulties disappear. As the Lord directs, so He opens the door and blesses. There is the comfort of this—the comfort of knowing that it is His own hand that does all. Whatever may be the hindrances, the mission of the Spirit is accomplished. It stands not in persuadable words of man's wisdom, but in the power of God. No doubt there are gifts which accompany from the first the message of the witness, and array the bride, but the work is eminently one of faith and not of human influence. And hence it looks for, and has, the blessing of the Lord.

"And the damsel ran, and told them of her mother's house these things. And Rebekah had a brother, and his name was Laban; and Laban ran out unto the man, unto the well. And it came to pass, when he saw the earrings and bracelets upon his sister's hands, and When he heard the words of Rebekah his sister, saying, Thus spake the man unto me; that he came unto the man: and, behold, he stood by the camels at the well. And he said, Come in, thou blessed of Jehovah; wherefore standest thou without? for I have prepared the house, and room for the camels. And the man came into the house: and he ungirded his camels, and gave straw and provender for the camels, and water to wash his feet, and the men's feet that were with him. And there was set meat

before him to eat: but he said, I will not eat until I have told mine errand. And he said, Speak on. And he said, I am Abraham's servant. And Jehovah hath blessed my master greatly; and he is become great; and he hath given him flocks, and herds, and silver, and gold, and menservants, and maidservants, and camels, and asses. And Sarah my master's wife bare a son to my master when she was old: and unto him hath he given all that he hath. And my master made me swear, raying, Thou shalt not take a wife to my son of the daughters of the Canaanites, in whose land I dwell; but thou shalt go unto my father's house, and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son. And I said unto my master, Peradventure the woman will not follow me. And he said unto me, Jehovah, before whom I walk, will send his angel with thee, and prosper thy way; and thou shalt take a wife for my son of my kindred, and of my father's house: then shalt thou be clear from this my oath, when thou comest to my kindred; and if they give not thee one, thou shalt be clear from my oath. And I came this day unto the well, and said, O Jehovah God of my master Abraham, if now thou do prosper my way which I go: behold, I stand by the well of water; and it shall come to pass, that when the virgin cometh forth to draw water, and I say to her, Give me, I pray thee, a little of thy pitcher to drink; and she say to me, Both drink thou, and I will also draw for thy camels: let the same be the woman whom Jehovah hath appointed out for my master's son. And before I had done speaking in mine heart, behold, Rebekah came forth with her pitcher on her shoulder; and she went down unto the well, and drew water: and I said unto her, Let me drink, I pray thee. And she made haste, and let down her pitcher from her shoulder, and said, Drink, and: I will give thy camels drink also: so I drank, and she made the camels, drink also. And I asked her, and said, Whose daughter art thou? And she said, The daughter of Bethuel, Nahor's son, whom Milcah bare unto him: and I put the earring upon her face, and the bracelets upon her hands. And I bowed down my head, and worshipped Jehovah, and blessed Jehovah God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son. And now if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me: that I may turn to the right hand, or to the left. Then Laban and Bethuel answered and said, The thing proceedeth from Jehovah: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee, take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as Jehovah hath spoken. And it came to pass that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped Jehovah, bowing himself to the earth. And the servant brought forth jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment, and gave them to Rebekah: he gave also to her brother and to her mother precious things." (Vers. 28-53)

Lastly it is the work of the Spirit to give, and keep up, and strengthen the desire of being with Christ—of His coming—whatever communion of saints may be enjoyed here. "And they did eat and drink, he and the men that were with him, and tarried all night; and they rose up in the morning, and he said, Send me away unto my master. And her brother and her mother said, Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go. And he said unto them, Hinder me not, seeing Jehovah hath prospered my way; send me away that I may go to my master. And they said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." (Vers. 54-58.)

So, in the Revelation, the Spirit and the bride say, Come, when Christ presents Himself as the bright, the morning, star. It is the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him," which awakens the slumbering virgins at midnight. It is this which recalls the saints now, as they were called at the first, to go out to meet the Bridegroom. "And they sent away Rebekah their

sister, and her. nurse, and Abraham's servant, and his men. And they blessed Rebekah, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them. And Rebekah arose, and her damsels, and they rode upon the camels, and followed the man: and the servant took Rebekah, and went his way. And Isaac came from the way of the well Lahairoi: for he dwelt in the south country. And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the eventide: And he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and, behold, the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac she lighted off the camel. For she had said unto the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us? And the servant had said, It is my master: therefore she took a vail, and covered herself. And the servant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her: and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death." (Vers. 59-67.)

So will it be with the heavenly bride. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, With the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up, together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." The Father's purpose shall not fail of accomplishment, and all heaven shall rejoice and give honor to Him, "for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

Chapter 30

Abraham: Genesis 25:1-10

The first part of the chapter, comprehended in these verses, gives us the closing scenes of Abraham's eventful and instructive history. The Jewish tradition which identifies Keturah with Hagar is not only without proof but set aside by verse 6, which speaks of “the sons of the concubines which Abraham had;” and as Hagar was one, so Keturah was the other, not (as I think) to imply that she filled this relation during any part of Sarah's life, but rather to affirm her inferiority of place. Keturah is expressly called Abraham's “concubine” in 1 Chron. 1:32; as Hagar, on the other hand, is styled his “wife” in Gen. 16:3. Nor need we revert to the Gentile difficulty, that sons were begotten of Abraham after Sarah's death, which has induced not a few of old as now to believe that Abraham took Keturah during Sarah's lifetime, and that the whole paragraph, if not chapter, is placed out of its chronological sequence in order not to break the main narrative. Proof of this is wanting, as the whole paragraph flows naturally, after Rebekah's marriage with Isaac, up to the several portions of the sons, as distinguished from the heir, and the death of the patriarch which was severed from Sarah's by at least thirty-seven years.

“Then again Abraham took a wife, and her name was Keturah. And she bare him Zimran, and Jokshan, and Medan, and Midian, and Ishbak, and Shuah. And Jokshan begat Sheba, and Dedan. And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim, and Letushim, and Leummim. And the sons of Midian; Ephah, and Epher, and Hanoch, and Abidah, and Eldaah. All these were the children of Keturah. And Abraham gave all that he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, which Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east country.” (Vers. 16.)

Here then we see, after the call of the bride, the blessing of nations associated with Abraham. It is a very distinct thing from that which faith receives now; for they which are of faith, the same are the children [sons of Abraham. It is now a blessing open to all or any of the nations; and they are blessed with faithful Abraham. Through the cross the blessing comes to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith; and as Christ is dead and risen, and thus the accomplisher as well as object and crown of the promises, so there is no Jew nor Greek. Fleshly distinctions disappear. All are one in Christ Jesus. In that which is typified by the concubines' sons to Abraham we see the strongest possible contrast with Isaac. Midian may be there, and Jokshan, with the rest; perhaps Sheba and Dedan, Ephah, the sons' sons. All these were Keturah's children.

Still it is written that “Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac.” The risen son is the heir of all things; and if we are of Christ, then are we Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise. But unto the sons of the concubines which Abraham, had, Abraham gave gifts, and sent them away. They receive gifts, not the inheritance of the promises; and they are sent away, instead of abiding in the house forever, as does the son.

So it will be in the age to come on earth, when, the church being completed, the marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife has made herself ready. Blessing will flow, and the land of the

morning will be no longer “the immovable east.” I do not speak of Israel, the head of the nations under Christ's reign here below; still less of the glorified saints on high; nor do I mean only those that may then be born of God in every nation or people or tribe under the sun. But all the Gentiles are to rejoice with His people—a principle more deeply true, doubtless, in the present election for heaven from among Jews and Gentiles, but to be far more openly and widely seen in that bright day; and this, too, even in that quarter of the globe where dark superstitions of Christendom grow up rank, and side by side, with the Mahometan imposture and heathenism of every type.

"And these are the days of the years of Abraham's life which he lived, an hundred threescore and fifteen years. Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years; and was gathered to his people. And his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth: there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.” (Vers. 710.)

Thus peacefully passed away the man who, of all in Old Testament story, most strikingly combines the title of “friend of God” with “stranger and sojourner on the earth.” Not that others—his son, grandson, and other descendants—did not carry on the blessed line of pilgrims who also walked with God. As a whole, however, what saint of old equaled him in these respects? Still less could any be said to surpass “the father of all them that believe."

Let us not at the same time forget that we have to do, not so much with the promises as he had, but with accomplishment in Christ (Rom. 4); and that, whatever promises of God there be, in Christ is the yea, and in Christ the amen, for glory to God by us. We are more than Abraham's seed, being blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. (Eph. 1:8.) Sovereign grace alone accounts for a purpose so rich and above the thoughts of men or even the ancient oracles of God. Do we believe it for our own souls and for all that are Christ's? Do we walk and worship accordingly as we wait for Him from heaven?

Chapter 31

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Chapter 34

The Advocate or the Accuser: Whose Side Do You Take?

THIS is a practical question for Christians in these days. It is not a question of whether we are Christians or not, though it may often test the fact. Happily, simple faith in the Person of the Son of God and His work settles that question. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” (Acts 16:31) “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” (John 3:36) “We are justified by his blood” (Rom. 5:9), as well as numberless other passages. But the question is, as professedly saved ones, Do we take sides with the Advocate, or with the accuser of the brethren?

The advocacy of Christ is founded on His righteous person, and His perfect work. (See 1 John 2:1, 2) His blessed work clears us from all the guilt of our sins, and in His blessed person we have entire deliverance from our Adam state, He Himself the dead, risen, and ascended One—being one righteousness before God. It is on this ground that He intercedes, and does the work of an Advocate. If we sin (after our relationship with the Father, as children to Himself according to the good pleasure of His will, has been settled), then the advocacy of Christ applies. “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we [children] have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.” (1 John 2:1, 2)

The office of the Advocate, then, is not to get righteousness for us, nor to put away our sins, nor to make us God's children, This is all settled, in virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by faith in Him. “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool; for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. 10:12-14) He is Advocate to maintain us as children before the Father without sin, in face of the accuser of the brethren. (See Rev. 12:10) When a child of God sins, communion is interrupted; the relationship remains, but the Father has no fellowship with the sin of His child. The Advocate pleads against Satan who accuses. The Father hears the pleadings of the Advocate, who thereon applies the word to our walk (John 13:4, 5), brings us to the confession of the sin, upon which the Father is faithful to the righteous Advocate, and just to the Advocate who made propitiation, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9) Thus communion is restored, and the child of God walks in the joy and light of his Father's countenance. Thus the Advocate is literally the Manager of our affairs in our Father's court, and has reference to His government of His children in this world. It reconciles the fact of a naughty child and of a holy Father.

The Advocate does two things. He pleads with the Father for us; He applies the word to us. The one maintains our cause, if we sin before the Father, against the accuser; the other brings up our practical state to our standing, which is always maintained without sin by the righteous Advocate who has made propitiation. The failure in our practical state is from the fact of our having the flesh still in us. Our actual state is that of having two natures in one person. “With the mind I myself serve the law of God, with the flesh the law of sin.” (Rom. 7:25.) By faith, and in Spirit, we are no longer in the flesh, yet actually flesh is in us (though by faith we reckon ourselves dead); hence failure when we are careless, and let flesh act. There is no excuse, but the fact is that we do fail

through unwatchfulness. Our standing as children ever remains the same (even though we may have sinned), owing to the righteous Advocate who has made propitiation. “If any man sin, we have an Advocate.” But we have failed in our practical state we are defiled. That our bodies are washed with pure water remains true (Heb. 10:22); we have had once the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5), we are born again (John 3:3), we need not then to be put into the bath over again. But we have sinned, we have got our feet defiled in passing through this sin-defiling world. This will not do for the Father's presence. What does the Advocate then? He applies the word to us, washing our feet; the world judges us, leading us to confession and self-judgment. The remembrance of our Advocate who made propitiation brings us back on our knees to our Father who forgives us, and cleanses us from all unrighteousness. Thus the blessed work of the Advocate is, on the one hand, to plead for the children before the Father, if they sin; on the other hand, to wash their feet with the word, bringing their practical walk and state up to their standing before Him.

Satan, on the other hand, is the accuser of the brethren. He accuses them before God day and night. (Rev. 12:10.) He is the author of divisions between the children of God, by accusing them one to the other. (Rom. 16:17-20.) He would hire Balaam to curse the people of God, and, failing in that, he would use The same prophet to teach Balak to mix them up with the nations around, and partake of their sinful practices. He would excite Jehovah to try Job, speaking bad things of him before Jehovah's face. (Job 1; 2) He would tempt David to sin in numbering the people of Israel (1 Chron. 21:1), and move Jehovah against Israel to destroy them. (2 Sam. 24:1.) He would resist Joshua the high priest, and seek to prevent his filthy rags being taken from him, and his being clothed in new raiment. (Zech. 3:1.) This is the accuser's wretched work. Those that follow him are called false accusers, slanderers [literally devils, because doing the devil's work]. He whispers in the ear of a minister's wife (1 Tim. 3:11) a false story about some brother or sister in Christ. She spreads it about, and so the evil spreads, which perhaps may end in an assembly being broken up. Some aged sister sits leisurely at home (Titus 2:3), and, not having much to do, is ready to hear stories perhaps from some worldly person about some child of God. She spreads them about to others who come to see her. It is a slander, a lie, and so the devil does his work; and perhaps some child of God gets a wound, or is hindered in the work of the Lord for years.

I would solemnly ask every child of God who reads this paper, On whose side are you working? When some slander is uttered about a child of God, do you plead for him, go home and pray for him? If you know he has failed, do you go in love and humility, and take the word to him, and wash his feet? (John 13:14.) This is the blessed work of the Advocate. Or do you listen to the story, go and spread it lightly to some one else, without knowing whether it is a fact or not? And if you are hurt by some brother, do you go in a pet to God, or pray in anger at him at prayer-meetings (1 Tim. 2:8), and so accuse him. This is to do the devil's work.

But how happy is it for us to be associated with the blessed Advocate; on the one hand pleading for our brethren if they sin, and on the other, carrying the word to them, and washing their feet! May the Lord grant His people increasingly this grace, so that the saints may see their blessed privilege of love to cover sins (Prov. 10:12), plead for their brethren if they sin, and act in faithfulness to thorn, in carrying the word to them, washing their feet, so that they might be cleansed from the defilement; these last, overcoming the accuser by the blood of the Lamb, on the one hand, if they sin, and, on the other hand, openly resisting him by the word of their testimony, like the blessed Lord Jesus Himself; He answered the devil, when tempting Him to sin, by “It is

written;” and so should we. If we sin, thank God we can always answer Him by the blood of the Lamb, which is the balm for every wound. Thus the blood of the Lamb and the word, the sword of the Spirit, are our instruments against the devil down here; whilst the Advocate maintains our cause before the Father up in heaven. Here in every case we are maintained, and are overcomers, nay, “more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

A. P. C.

Is not the everlasting covenant of Heb. 13 the everlasting covenant of Ezek. 27:26, and that great Shepherd of the sheep the shepherd of verse 24, David their king who rules over them?

Chapter 35

Ascension of the Lord Private or Public

Q. John 20:17; Matt. 28:9. Is it true that there was a private ascension on the day the Lord rose, fulfilling Lev. 16:17, besides the public one forty days after? So say some, to avoid the difficulty; and this they try to sustain by the reception of the Holy Ghost on the first occasion, as distinguished from His descent on the day of Pentecost. H. T.

A. There is not the slightest ground to suppose an ascension previous to that which is described in Acts 1. A little intelligence as to John 20:17 removes the difficulty, without having recourse to a supposed private ascension. ■ναβα■νω is the abstract present, a common enough usage, not only in Greek, but in our own and other languages, often of the greatest value to remember in exposition. It is really ignorance to infer from the present that the action must be either actually going on, or so imminent as to follow immediately. The present may be used in the New Testament to convey certainty or permanence, but still more frequently perhaps an action eminently and emphatically characteristic as here. Take πορε■ομαι ■τοιμ■σαι τ■πον ■μ■ν in John 14:2; take ■ρχομαι and ε■μ■ a in the next verse, or ■π■γαι in verse 4. Here, too, mysticising commentators tell us that this ■ρχομαι is began in Christ's resurrection, carried on in the spiritual life, further advanced when each by death is fetched to be away with Him, fully completed at His coming in glory, when they shall forever be with Him in the perfected resurrection state. All this style of drawing ever so many applications out of a word, which here means but one, the last of these alleged comings, enfeebles scripture, and injures the saint. So in verse 17 there is no need to change μ■νει (abideth) into μενε■ (shall abide), with some of the old versions, or to understand it, with Euthymius Zigabenus, as the Spirit's then abiding in Jesus, who was among them. It really expresses permanence from the time He comes to abide, not an abiding going on then. In 1 John 1:7 we have examples of much moment doctrinally, and for the blessing and even peace of souls, where, from the structure of the sentence, as well as the truth declared elsewhere, we know that καθαρ■ζει means the cleansing efficacy of Christ's blood, without question either of repetition or of a continuous process. So again, in Acts 2:47 το■ς σωζ., and in Heb. 2:11, ο■ ■γιαζ., is not the historical present or fact, but the character or class. This is made certain in the last case by comparing Heb. 10:10 with 14, where we have the perfect and present used of the same persons—the one the fact and date, the other the abstract character.

The Lord then in John 20:17 meant, not that He was at that moment, or that day, ascending, but that this was the character of what was before Him; not staying to reign over Israel and the world, but going up to heaven, the model Man there, according to whom the children of His Father and God, now owned as His brethren, were to be formed in and according to the truth. (Compare John 17:19.) It was to be a new order of sanctification, which the believer, even if a Jew, once separated to Jehovah from the Gentiles, needed no less than the Gentile; a heavenly separateness, not fleshly, or monastic, nor mystic, but sanctification in truth. So we all, says the apostle, looking on the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, are transformed according to the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit. And this seems to be the significant reason why Mary Magdalene was not permitted to touch the Lord. It was not in bodily presence He was to be known

by the Christian, but ascended to heaven; and she who had known Him according to flesh must now know Him so no longer. She thus stands in contrast with the women in Matthew, who were permitted soon after to hold Him by the feet and pay Him homage, the type of those out of that nation who shall have Him to their joy reigning over them here below, and hence as seasonable a pledge in the first Gospel, as the Jew taken out of the earthly hope to know Him above suits this part of the fourth. Indeed a similar truth is taught in Thomas, who, absent on the resurrection-day and unbelieving, was caused in the most sensible way eight days after to learn and own the Lord risen from the dead. So will the Jew yet see and confess Jesus to be the Lord and God in a day still future. But “blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.” So the Christian knows Christ.

With this falls in Leviticus 16:17, which sets forth our Lord's presence on high ever since He ascended, and not some imaginary appearing there on the day of resurrection. When He comes out, it will be for the reconciliation of all things, as well as the forgiveness of Israel. We enter in spirit where He is meanwhile, identified with Christ, the great High Priest, instead of waiting, like God's ancient people, till He come forth. While He is there, the Spirit is come out to dwell in us Christians and baptize us into one body, giving us liberty to enter in boldly through the rent veil. The people meanwhile wait, but will have the blessing when the Lord comes out.

Thus the right view of these scriptures very simply illustrates and confirms the truth of the gospel and the prophetic word; so that we need not take up anything strained or fanciful to vindicate their harmony. On the day the Lord rose He breathed the spirit of life into the disciples, and the Holy Spirit acted in this as in new birth. The gift of the Spirit at Pentecost was power from on high.

Chapter 36

On Atonement

Beloved Brother,

In John 14:9 the Son presents Himself as the display of the Father. Fundamental truth I which every believer receives and rejoices in. Without doubt he who rejects it denies the glory of Him who came to effect atonement, and undermines the atonement itself. It is the dignity of the person which gave divine capacity for the work, and infinite efficacy to the work when accomplished.

But atonement demanded far more than either the divine rights of the Lord, or the sinner's appropriation of Him and His work by faith apart from works. Hence reasoning from the words of the Lord, which do not touch the question, can only mislead. What does scripture say of the atonement? Does it not make it depend on the cross of Christ? on His blood shed for the remission of our sins? on His suffering once for sins, Just for unjust, that He might bring us to God? Here is an ample array of clear New Testament testimonies: Rom. 3:25; 4:25; 5:9, 10 Cor. 15:3 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 1:4; 3:16; Eph. 1:7; 2:13; 4:32; 5:2; Col. 1:14, 20 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14; Heb. 1:3; 2:9, 14; 9:12, 14, 15, 24-28; 10:5-10, 12-19; 12:24; 13:12, 20 Peter 1:2, 18-21; 2:24; 3:18 John 1:7; 2:2; 4:10; Rev. 1:5; 5:9; 7:14, &c. Need one add the anticipatory words in the Gospels, Matt. 20:28; 26:28; John 1:29, or other such scriptures?

Yet it may be well to notice briefly a few indisputable types in the Old Testament. The blood of the slain lamb on the paschal night was sprinkled without, not within; on the lintel and door-posts, not for Israel to see, but for God. “Where I see the blood, I will pass over.” So in the sacrifices the blood was put on the horns of God's altar, presented to God, never to man. In certain cases men (lepers, priests, &c.) were sprinkled with blood that they might be cleansed, that is, judicially clean before God. Thus on the greatest of all occasions it was carried in, and put before the mercy-seat, on atonement-day; but it only the more establishes the principle, that it was for man before God, and not a, mere token of God's love to man. In the New Testament application Christ is declared to have entered in by His own blood. To have come down and died in love to man is equally true, but quite distinct.

There is no doubt then of love in God more than in Christ; scripture is explicit. The Father sent the Son; God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten. But it is equally true that the Son of man must be lifted up; and that necessity was not merely man's evil, but God's word and righteous character and holy nature and majesty which must be vindicated in order to a righteous forgiveness. The cross of Christ meets all this, and much more. He was forsaken of God because of sin. (Psa. 22) It was no question here of the Jews or Gentiles, of Herod or Pontius Pilate, save as guilty persecutors. God too was at the cross, and made Christ sin for us, that we might become His righteousness in Christ. He had suffered for righteousness and holiness and grace before. He suffered for sins then. This is atonement, the sole ground of expiating the guilt of the believer. Nor was this a novel expectation, though a new fact. He was wounded for our transgressions, said the prince of prophets; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. Jehovah hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. “For the

transgression of my people was he stricken." "It pleased Jehovah to bruise him: he hath put him to grief; when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed," &c. He shall bear their iniquities. He bare the sin of many.

Thus law, psalms, and prophets agree; Old and New Testaments alike proclaim Christ's suffering from God, and before God, because of our sins. The Lord announced it; the apostles—Paul especially—are full of it; and not least the beloved disciple, who most presses God's love which is really enhanced by it, of which the depth and strength are only there known where Christ's drinking this cup from the Father is owned. Divine love is not all the truth, nor man's hatred, nor Satan's power; but deeper than all is Christ's offering Himself to God as a sacrifice for sins. Love indeed is enfeebled incalculably by not seeing the truth that Christ bore the judgment of our sins at God's hand. Rather is love degraded into indifference to man's sins, and disregard of God's holiness and majesty, and of such warnings as are in Deut. 27:26, Rom. 2:9, Heb. 10:31. The scriptures cited prove, on the contrary, that expiation was essential for God's honor if He would save guilty man, even though he believed. Judgment was borne by Christ that grace might flow out to the sinner. It is therefore now God's righteousness as well as His grace.

When it is argued then, that all theology is false which makes the image of the Son different from that of the Father, is it denied that God bruised Christ, and that Christ was forsaken by God? that Christ died in expiation of our guilt before God, who raised Him from the dead? if so, this is abusing one truth to contradict another no less momentous. Justification is by faith, not works; but did Christ accomplish the work typified by the sacrifices for sin on atonement-day? Isa. 53 predicts, and Matthew and Mark record, our Lord's suffering, as He says, by God's abandonment of Him, the bitterest of all punishment for our sins. Is God's punishing, and Christ's enduring, the same image? I should have thought them the greatest contrast; yet the counsel of peace was between Them both. What has been used, therefore, is only a misuse of John 14:9, which in truth regards Christ's person and not His work. To apply it to the cross, so as to get rid of the Lord's suffering from God for our sins, is really to explain away the scripture truth and Christian foundation of atonement. If this be not the meaning of the argument, what is?

Further, it is assumed that righteousness in God must be the same thing as in Jesus, and that the assertion of a good quality in the Father, which the Son lacks, in effect denies that the latter is God, or like Him. But this is quite a mistake. Righteousness is, as always, consistency with the relationship in which each stands. Evidently, therefore as among men it is modified in the servant as compared with the master, in the child with the parent, in the wife with the husband, in the subject with the sovereign, so it is with Him who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking a bondsman's form, become in the likeness of men, and found in figure as a man, humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even death of the cross: wherefore also God exalted Him exceedingly. As man therefore the Son, far from lacking what is the Father's morally, has what the Father has not and could not have, as He never became incarnate. The righteousness which directs or commands is one thing, that which obeys is another. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." It was His act; yet was it obedience of His Father. (John 10:17, 18.) The mystery of His person finds its answer in His death. To reason from one aspect of it exclusively, whether divine or human, is to divide the person, to neutralize the work, and to lose the truth. "No one knoweth the Son but the Father." We must be subject to His word,

but to it all, and not to a part only. Jesus is the Son, who is not like God merely (scripture never saying so), for He really is God, and as fully God as are the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Moreover all the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him does dwell in Him bodily: yet, while the persons in the Godhead have not only, unity of nature but one mind and counsel and purpose, so they act distinctly in manifesting it, as we see, e.g., in Matt. 3:16, 17, for they are three as well as one. And though Jesus were Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. There could not but be therefore qualities, perfect in their kind, in Him which were not in the Father, nor in Him (the Son) till He took the place of servant as man on earth. Still more is this true of Him on the cross, where He entered on a new work, unique in its character, and infinite in its consequences of grace and glory everlasting, as the sufferings in which it was wrought. This in no way compromises the Godhead of Christ, any more than it impeaches His manifestation of the Father or expression of God. And the refusal to see distinctness of action in the Father and the Son throughout His course on earth, and, above all, in the cross, tends not indeed to Romanism, but to what is yet worse—Sabellianism, and thus far more at issue with holy scripture than with the doctrine of Anselm, which is to me of little or no account.

We must not with the theologians confound purchase with redemption. All the world, all mankind, even the wicked, are bought by Christ's blood; but none, save believers, have redemption (■πολ■τρωσιν) through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, though the a ■ντ■λυτρον be περ■ π■ντων. Purchase makes all to be His property or slaves; by redemption we are freed from Satan, Christ's freedmen, to serve God in liberty. Is it seriously questioned by the figure of the king dying in, victory for His army, that the blood of Christ shed as a sacrifice for sin was not presented to God as well as for man? It is in vain to reason on God's loving the world, and so loving it as to send His Son to give the believer eternal life; but this is distinct from the other truth, that He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Now sacrifice in scripture is to God, and never to the creature, which is heathenism, as the negation of sacrifice is infidelity. And assuredly the work of redemption, the forgiveness of sins, is by blood, by suffering atoningly on the cross, not by all authority in heaven and earth conferred on the Risen Man by God. And it is important to see that when all is made subject by Christ, and He hands back the kingdom, it is that not the Father but God (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) should be all in all.

Yours ever in Christ,

Chapter 37

Breaking Bread and Preaching in the Same Room

Q. 1. Is it traversing the truth of the Holy Ghost's presence in the church and His distributing to or by whomsoever He will, for a brother to have the room, used to break bread in, for preaching the gospel, either doing it himself or asking another?

I quite understand the saints saying, “We wish our room used only for open meetings;” but are they free by the word of the Lord to allow it for meetings that rest on individual responsibility? Does this encroach on the truth that saints gathered to the Lord's name own the guidance of the Spirit who dwells in the church—the house of God?

S.

A. It is evident from scripture that the difficulty could not have even occurred to the early saints. For the original breakings of bread were in private houses, the owners of which simply gave the use of a room for that purpose. The gospel may have been preached, as it was certainly freely elsewhere, within doors or without, to a few or to multitudes. The simpler are our thoughts as to both, the better. The same principles lead to the same practice under such circumstances still. It is never wrong to meet or to preach in a private house. And if brethren hire a larger and more central room to meet in more conveniently, they are perfectly free to give the use of it when not wanted for assembly purposes to one or more brothers in whom they confide to preach or lecture in. It is happy when one of known gift and good report accepts the responsibility, preaching in the room or finding one to do so, and thus closing what might otherwise be a source of question and difficulty for the meeting. The church of course neither preaches nor teaches, but owns and honors those who have the seals of such gifts from the Lord. So we see Paul choosing Silas and declining to have Mark at one time, however he might commend him later. This shows the action of a principle wholly distinct from the assembly and the working of the Spirit by one or another in it. It is mischievous to set one against the other; and there is no reason why the same building or room should not be used at one time for the assembly, at another for individual ministry. If there was no brother of such gift or moral weight as to command confidence, they might decline lending their room; if there was, to refuse would be their shame. But the Lord would soon find another room for His workman and work. Only the assembly might and must suffer for their lack of grace and wisdom. It is evident that anything which tends to sever the assembly from interest in the gospel, is to be deprecated. It promotes the divisive feeling of those who have no heart, save for their own work, be it ecclesiastic or evangelic. Wisdom and grace will hold to both firmly, and resist the narrowness which, if allowed, can only end in cliques with their leaders, schisms, or even worse.

Q. 2. It is alleged that in 1 Tim. 5:17 the word “pay” should stand instead of “honor,” and that those who were charged with the care of a local &lurch received stipends. Is this correct? S. B.

A. The word τιμ■ in the text does not mean “pay,” but “honor” as its radical and primary signification, that is, the due expression or payment of esteem or worship as the case might be; hence the dignity, or prerogative, of one so honored; and even the office, authority, or rank; and

the present, or offering, commonly given in such cases. It was also used for the worth or price of a thing; for an assessment or even penalty, compensation or satisfaction. But “pay” in the sense of stipend or wages as expressed in general by μισθ■ς, which, in strict application, would have been scouted by every Christian heart, is used in a free or simple way by the Lord in Luke 10, and by the apostle in 1 Tim. 5, not as a standing fee. (Cf. John 10) Later Greek, such as in the LXX or the Greek Testament, gives ■φ■νιον, military pay or rations, as may be seen in Luke 3, Rom. 6 Cor. 9 and 2 Cor. 11, to which the curious can add Esdras iv. 56, 1 Mace. iii. 28, and xiv. 82. As to the phrase, see what Josephus (Antiq. IV., iv. 114) says of Balak, ■ποπ■μπει τ■ν B■λαμον μνδεμι■ς τιμ■ς ■ξι■σας and in classic Greek we read in Dem. περ■ στεφ., ed. Reiske, 297, 16, ■παντας ■μο■ως ■ π■λις τ■ς α■τ■ς ■ξε■σασα τιμ■ς. It cannot then be fairly doubted that the English version is justified, and that salary or pay is not the prominent or even true idea, but “honor.” Still that there is included every loving consideration of the elders taking the lead or presiding well seems plain from what follows, but this rather as honorarium than as stipendium. On the one hand it is degrading to the service of Christ when it is made a question of the earnings of a trade or profession; but on the other it is a dishonor to the saints who reap the fruit of unremitting and unselfish care in spiritual things if they do not mark their sense of it, not merely where the servants are needy, but in the reciprocity of loving regard where no such want exists. The payment of “honor,” nay, “double honor,” might be questioned where there was not the apparent desire to prove it. The apostle had enjoined on Timothy, in the preceding verses, to “honor widows;” here he claims honor doubly for elders that take the lead well. That “double” was used for indefinitely great in good or evil, one sees in Matt. 23, Rev. 18:6, as in Isa. 40:2. The “especially” (μ■λιστα) that follows is incompatible with a fixed salary, as indeed is all scripture. The general principle is equally true of those who teach (Gal. 6:6), and of those who preach. (1 Cor. 9) Acts 28:10 seems to distinguish the attentions paid during the stay at Melita from the provision of requisites on departing.

Q. 3. In Rev. 15:5, we have the expression, “Temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven:” what is the meaning of it? T. B. M.

A. It was not merely “the tabernacle,” but of the “testimony” which was opened in judgment; nor yet the vads, house or “temple” only, but this “in heaven,” the fullest possible expression of the highest source from which the wrath of God was coming forth on the apostate earth before the Lord Himself appeared.

Q. 4. What is “the great city” spoken of in Rev. 16:19? It is not “Babylon,” as we see from the same verse, nor can we connect it, I think, with chapter xi. 8. T. B. M.

A. “The great city” I should connect with chapter xi. 8, which distinguishes it from the city which has rule or kinship over the kings of the earth, “great Babylon.” The one may be more the expression of worldliness in its Jewish form, the other in its Gentile confusion, unless we take the former for the proud center of the world's civilization in general, as we may understand, “the cities of the nations” in a subordinate degree.

Chapter 38

Christ a Sweet Savour to God for Us

Leviticus 1, 2

The first sacrifice offered was one of sweet savor. For this there had to be taken of the cattle, from the herds, or the flocks, a male without blemish representing Christ without sin. On its head the offerer laid his hand when brought before the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, that it might be favorably received for him before Jehovah: not taking from the offerer his iniquities but transferring to him its · sweet savor when wholly burnt on the altar, yet making an atonement for him. If of fowls, the offering was to be of turtledoves or of young pigeons.

In chapter 2 we have a meat or rather a cake offering of fine flour with oil poured on it and frankincense, which like the burnt sacrifice was consumed on the altar, though not wholly, for the priest took from it his handful of the flour and of the oil with all the frankincense. Christ alone is unleavened. He was conceived of the Holy Ghost as well as Son of Mary. (Matt. 1; Luke 1)

God has accepted the offering that Christ presented to Him, not only the sacrifice for sin, which comes afterward in chapter iv., &c, but also the sweet savor of His life which was perfect.

Christ accepted the will of His Father in all its extent, going down, so to speak, from humiliation to humiliation, going on from obedience to obedience, always perfect but perfect as He grew up a man. He advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men (Luke 2); not that His obedience was ever less than perfection, but that it became ever more painful and difficult, till it went even up to death—death of the cross. The world rejected Him always more and more. There was only found in the world a sepulcher for Him.

Christ perfectly glorified His Father. He rendered testimony to the holiness of His will by accepting it altogether. We on the contrary seek but too often to exalt ourselves even among our brethren; we want their esteem and their respect. Christ sought but “one thing,” the glory of His Father and not His own. For it, and so for us, He always went lower and lower down in this world. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him. He is accepted fully and on high; and if God is satisfied with Christ, we also ought surely to be satisfied with Him. We can find all repose for our hearts in Christ. Are you tired with the world, weary of the desert of sin, of strife? Well then look to Christ, where only is rest, perfect rest for conscience and heart. He is the sacrifice and the offering of good savor.

Christ was perfectly holy, though He took part in blood and flesh, as the children had their common lot in the same, and was tempted in all things in like manner with us, sin excepted. He fulfilled all righteousness. (Matt. 3) He had been Himself baptized, when the penitents flocked to John confessing their sins. If He thus put Himself on a level with the Baptist (“thus it becometh us,” &c), He puts Himself also on a level with Peter (Matt. 17) when the temple tribute was demanded, whilst displaying His divine wisdom and power in making the most unruly and inaccessible of creatures serve His good pleasure.

But it was not allowed to burn cakes which contained leaven or honey. (Lev. 2:11.) Oil was there, the Spirit of God, and also the salt of His covenant; but leaven represented the sin we have in us which gives its character to our bodies as they are; and God could not accept it as being corrupt. Neither could honey thus be offered, representing the sweetness of nature which God gives to us by the way, in which our hearts can find some refreshment. So literally did it happen to Jonathan when faint. (1 Sam. 14) All that man has at his disposal is spoiled and cannot be offered to God; nothing but the life of Christ as the meat offering, and His death as the burnt sacrifice, to say nothing here of His suffering for our sins and trespasses. In His perfection throughout God the Father finds His pleasure. Christ is all, and in all.

As a new creation in Christ we are called to manifest what God is, not in miraculous power, but in doing and suffering all the will of the Father, owning and proclaiming it as alone good in obedience. It is only Christ who has thus absolutely glorified the Father. Even when He poured forth His deepest expressions of grief such as He alone knew, not a murmur escaped Him. Yea, when forsaken of His God and acknowledging it, He adds," But thou continuest holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." (Psa. 22) Job, on the other hand, though he had not his equal on the earth, could only say, "Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived.... Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in soul, which long for death, and it cometh not," &c. Such was a perfect and an upright man: how different was Christ?

Chapter 39

Christianity Viewed in Its Object

Christianity gives us a positive object; and this object is nothing less than God Himself. Human nature may discover the nature of that which is false. We scorn false gods and graven images; but we cannot get beyond ourselves, we cannot reveal anything to ourselves. One of the most renowned names of antiquity is pleased to tell us, that all would go well if men followed nature (it is manifest that they could not rise above it); and, in fact, he would be in the right if man were not fallen. But to require man to follow nature is a proof that he is fallen, that he has degraded himself below the normal state of that nature. He does not follow it in the walk that suits its constitution. All is in disorder. Self-will carries him away, and acts in his passions. Man has forsaken God, and has lost the power and attraction that kept him in his place and everything in his nature in its place. Man cannot recover himself, he cannot direct himself; for, apart from God, there is nothing but self-will that guides man. There are many objects that furnish occasion for the acting of the passions and the will; but there is no object, which, as a Center, gives him a regular, constant, and durable moral position in relationship with that object, so that his character should bear its stamp and value. Man must either have a moral center, capable of forming him as a moral being, by attracting him to itself and filling his affections, so that he shall be the reflex of that object; or he must act in self-will, and then he is the sport of his passions; or, which is the necessary consequence, he is the slave of any object that takes, possession of his will. A creature, who is a moral being, cannot subsist without an object. To be self-sufficing is the characteristic of God.

The equilibrium which subsisted in the unconsciousness of good and evil is lost. Man no longer walks as man, having nothing in his mind outside his normal condition, outside that which he possessed; not having a will, or, which comes to the same thing, having a will that desired nothing more than it possessed, but that gratefully enjoyed all that was appropriated to its nature, and especially the companionship of a being like himself, a help who had his own nature, and who answered to his heart—blessing God for everything.

Now man wills. While he has lost that which formed the sphere of his enjoyment, there is in him an activity which seeks, which is become unable to rest without aiming at something farther; which has already, as will, thrown itself into a sphere that it does not fill, in which it lacks intelligence to apprehend all that is there and power to realize even that which it desires. Man, and all that has been his, no longer suffices man as enjoyment. He needs an object. This object will either be above or below the man. If it be below, he degrades himself below himself; and it is this indeed that has taken place. He no longer lives according to nature (as he to whom I have alluded says), a state which the apostle described in the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans with all the horrors of the plain truth. If this object be above himself and below God, there is still nothing to govern his nature, nothing that puts him morally in his place. A good being could not take this place to exclude God from it. If a bad object gains it, he becomes to the man a god, who shuts out the true God, and degrades man in his highest relationship—the worst of all degradations. This too has taken place. And since these beings are but creatures, they can only govern man by that which exists, and by that which acts upon him. This is to say, they are the gods of his passions.

They degrade the idea of the Divinity; they degrade the practical life of humanity into slavery to the passions (which are never satisfied, and which invent evil when they are surfeited with excess in that which is natural to them) and are thus left without resource. Such in fact was the condition of man under Paganism.

Man, and, above all, man having knowledge of good and evil, should have God for his object; and as an object that his heart can entertain with pleasure, and on which his affection can be exercised; otherwise he is lost. The gospel—Christianity—has given him this. God, who fills all things, who is the source of, in whom is centered, all blessing, all good—God, who is all love, who has all power, who embraces everything in His knowledge, because everything (except the forsaking of Himself) is but the fruit of His mind and will—God has revealed Himself in Christ to man, in order that his heart, occupied with Him, with perfect confidence in His goodness, may, knowing Him, enjoy His presence, and reflect His character.

The sin and misery of man have but lent occasion to an infinitely more complete development of what this Gad is, and of the perfections of His nature, in love, in wisdom, and in power. But we are here considering only the fact that He has given Himself to man for an object. Nevertheless, although the misery of man has but given room for a much more admirable revelation of God, yet God Himself must have an object worthy of Himself to be the subject of His purposes, and in order to unfold all His affections. This object is the glory of His Son—His Son Himself. A being of an inferior nature could not have been this to, Him, although God can glorify Himself in His grace towards such an one. The object of the affections, and the affections that are exercised with regard to it, are necessarily correlative. Thus God has displayed His sovereign and immense grace with regard to that which was the most wretched, the most unworthy, the most necessitous; and He has displayed all the majesty of His being, all the excellence of His nature, in connection with an object in whom He could find all His delight, and exhibit all that He is in the glory of His nature. But it is as man—marvelous truth in the eternal counsels of God! —that this object of God the Father's delight has taken His place in this glorious revelation by which God makes Himself known to His creatures. God has ordained and prepared man for this. Thus the heart that is taught by the Spirit knows God as revealed in this immense grace, in the love that comes down from the throne of God to the ruin and misery of the sinner; he finds himself, in Christ, in the knowledge and in the enjoyment of the love which God has for the object of His eternal delight, who also is worthy of being so; of the communications by which He testifies that love (John 17:7, 8); and, finally, of the glory which is its public demonstration before the universe. This latter part of our ineffable blessedness is the subject of Christ's communications at the end of John's Gospel. (Chaps. 14, 16, and, in particular, 17)

From the moment that the sinner is converted and believes the gospel, and (to complete his state I must add) is sealed with the Holy Ghost, now that the blessed Lord has wrought redemption, he is introduced—as to the principle of his life—into this position, into these relationships with God. He is perhaps but a child; but the Father whom he knows, the love into which he has entered, the Savior on whom his eyes are opened, are the same whom he will enjoy when he shall know as he is known. He is a Christian.

Here it is the character of the life in its manifestation. Now this depends on its objects. Life is exercised and unfolded in connection with its objects, and thus characterizes itself. The source

from which it flows makes it capable of enjoying it; but an intrinsic life which has no object on which it depends is not the life of a creature. Such life as that is the prerogative of God. This shows the folly of those who would have a subjective life, as they say, without its having a positively objective character; for its subjective state depends on the object with which it is occupied. It is the characteristic of God to be the source of His own thoughts without an object—to be, and to be self-sufficing (because He is perfection, and the center and the source of everything), and to create objects unto Himself, if He would have any without Himself. In a word, although receiving a life from God which is capable of enjoying Him, the moral character of man cannot be found in him without an object that imparts it to him.

Now God has given Himself to us for an object, and has revealed Himself in Christ. If we occupy ourselves with God in Himself (supposing always that He had thus revealed Himself), the subject is too vast. It is an infinite joy; but in that which is simply infinite there is something wanting to a creature, although it is his highest prerogative to enjoy it. It is necessary to him on the one hand, in order that he may be in place, and that God may have His place in regard to him, and on the other hand that which exalts him so admirably. It must be so; and it is the privilege given unto us, and given unto us in a priceless intimacy, for we are children, and we dwell in God, and God in us; but with this in itself there is a certain weight upon the heart in the sense of God alone. We read “of a far more exceeding and abundant weight of glory.” It must be so: His majesty must be maintained when we think of Him as God, His authority over the conscience. The heart—God has so formed it—needs something which will not lower its affections, but which may have the character of companion and friend, at least to which it has access in that character.

It is this which we have in Christ, our precious Savior. He is an object near to us. He is not ashamed to call us brethren. He has called us friends; all that He has heard from His Father He has made known to us. Is He then a means of our eyes being turned away from God? On the contrary, it is in Him that God is manifested, in Him that even the angels see God. It is He who, being in the bosom of the Father, reveals to us His God and Father in this sweet relationship, and as He knows Him Himself. And not only this, but He is in the Father, and the Father in Him, so that he who has seen Him has seen the Father. He reveals God to us, instead of turning us away from Him. In grace He has already revealed Him, and we wait for the revelation of glory in Him. Already also on the earth; from the moment He was born, the angels celebrated the good pleasure of God in man, for the object of His eternal delight had become a man. And now He has accomplished the work which makes possible the introduction of others, of sinners, into the enjoyment with Himself of this favor of God. Once enemies, “we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son."

Chapter 40

Brief Thoughts on the Church, As the Body and the House

As in science, so in scripture, one truth leads to another; and the more we learn, the simpler we become: for it is in human things the mastery of a subject that enables us to be simple.

Thus, to take a familiar example, the most profound research into the science of optics results both in the improvement and cheapening of the common telescope. So clearer conceptions of the truth of God, in whatever department we study it, and although pursued in the way of what might be called minute differences, result in a simpler and yet a more substantial gospel. Experience abundantly witnesses to this.

Some may remember when, in the current theology of the day, the Holy Ghost's presence was not even named. It was at best justification by faith; and the Holy Ghost was spoken of as “an influence,” but not going so far as a power and a person, both of which He truly is. Nothing was known of His indwelling in the Christian, nor did they speak of His descent from an ascended Head, because of Christ's—that Head's—exaltation in heaven. It was at most God the Father, Christ the Savior, and the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier. All true, but all for the individual, and even for him imperfectly.

But now that further research into scripture instructs us that, as a dispensational truth, the Holy Ghost is a person sent down here (see John 14; 15:16), inquiry into His action and into the relationships into which that action molds us is of moment. He indwells us individually. (John 4:14; 7:38; Rom. 8:9-11; 1 Cor. 6:19; 1 John 4:15.) But just as pointedly does scripture assert that He indwells us collectively as God's house or temple. (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16; Eph. 2:22.) And it is on the latter, that is, our collective or united condition, that a few hints are offered with a view to induce the reader to search for himself.

We find several relationships formed, which suppose the presence of God the Holy Ghost in the church, such as the body, and the house or temple. There is another aspect in the kingdom, but this we do not touch on. These just mentioned are the principal terms by which such expression is given to the relationship which the saints corporately hold to Christ through the Holy Ghost. Thus, “the church which is his body.” (Eph. 1:23; Col. 1:24.) Again, “God hath set some in the church” (1 Cor. 12:28), in close connection with “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.” (Ver. 27.) Thus we have the church and the body in a manner identical, before any failure comes in. In like manner church and house are interchangeable. “If I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God.” (1 Tim. 3:15.)

We have no absolute identification of the body and the house, though the church, a middle term, being identified with both, seems to connect the three together. And this is indeed the truth; for the church looked at as on earth, and under the responsibility of man, may be viewed as the house—nay, even as the “great house” of 2 Tim. 2:20—which, entrusted to man, fails, as everything else does which he undertakes; whilst, as connected with God and His Christ, it maybe

viewed as the body of Christ, which never fails. In strictness it is not the body that is said to be indwelt by the Holy Ghost, but the house “in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.” (Eph. 2:22.) And of course the figure of a house and a body are distinct, and neither are used without a meaning; nor is the body liable to failure, as both the church, or rather churches or assemblies, and the house are; and as in fact they do fail. (1 Cor. 3:10-16; Rev. 2; 3:1 Tim. 3:15; compared with 2 Tim. 2:20.) The house of the first Epistle becomes as the great house of the Second, with vessels to dishonor as well as honor.

The body is that into which we are formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost from the Head in glory. The gifts for its edification are looked at in their full result, that is, “till we all come to a perfect man.” Failure therefore is not supposed; whilst the church (or churches) and the house fail from the fact of man having to do with them.

Not that God will ever be disappointed. Whilst man fails in what is entrusted to him, building bad materials upon a good foundation (1 Cor. 3:11-18), God knows how to take care of His own work. (Eph. 2:20, 21; 5:25, 27; 1 Peter 2:4, 5.) In the church, as body or building, His own purposes cannot fail, and they will be realized in the glory.

Doubtless it is of great value to know that the Holy Ghost is here at all; it is something too to be aware that bad men may be found where He dwells. (1 Cor. 3:17.) “If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.” It is thus that we account for the present condition of Christendom. Perhaps, as to terms, speaking corporately, we should not go wrong in saying that the Holy Ghost forms and energizes the body of Christ (Eph. 4:16), and dwells in the house or temple (1 Cor. 3), over which Christ is as a Son. (Heb. 3:6.) He is Son over His own house, and Head of the body.'

But it is not necessary to over-refine on such a subject. As a practical matter it would seem that, as sovereign grace formed, nourishes, and cherishes the body (Eph. 1; Col. 2), responsibility attaches to the church looked at as the house. (1 Cor. 3; 5:11:29-32.) It is important then, if we learn our place and relationship as thus viewed, to remember it is Christ's house and God's church or assembly, not ours; and things are to be regulated, not by our will, but according to His will as revealed in His word.

In looking into these relationships, established by God Himself, we are at once delivered from the presumption and delusions, no less than the superstitions, of popery and its kindred systems.

The Lord give us to realize all His claims upon us, and to feel them in divine power!

High Littleton, September, 1875. W. W.

[The above paper was the last written by our beloved and departed brother, who desired, even when bodily weakness and suffering left him little respite, to help the least of God's saints. A few expressions have been corrected, which he might have done more fully himself, had he seen the essay in print.—Ed.]

Chapter 41

When Did the Church Begin and What Are Its Privileges?

My Dear M—,

Things, truths, not words, are my objects. I had supposed that kuriake (κυριακ■) was the source of kirche in German, kirk and church. “Kyroike” I never heard of; it may be all right. Some philologists now say that this is all wrong, and that kirk, or church, comes from the Saxon. I can only say I really do not know, nor have at this moment the means of ascertaining, if indeed it be ascertainable with any certainty. But the truth is, I have a pious horror of the word “church,” because no one knows what it means.

What does it mean? Mr. G.'s congregation might build him a new church; then it means a building. Or Mr. S. may be a member of Mr. G.'s church; then it means an assembly under the presidency of Mr. G. In England, he is going into the church means he is going to become a clergyman; he is gone to church, is the public service or worship; gone to the church is the building again.

The Roman Catholic church and the Greek church are large bodies of persons professing Christianity, associated under these designations. So of Presbyterians, and Covenanters, Lutherans, &c. If you press the matter, the church is the teaching, authoritative, part of it. This is so even among Protestants. The thirty-nine Articles of England tell us the church can decree rites and ceremonies, and has authority in matters of faith. So that we have to know what a person means by “the church” before we can reply to a question as to it.

But I will just mention a little bit of history which refers to this, and why it is so current a word. When James 1 (or, as we should say with Scottish Covenanters, James VI.) had the Bible translated, the translation in popular use was the Geneva one, made by the refugees always Queen Mary's time. This always used the word “congregation.” Now James had a long experience, or knowledge at least, of his mother's conflicts with John Knox, and was not very fond of Scottish principles, embodied afterward in the covenant, and used to say, “No bishop, no king.” He gave strict orders to have the word “church” everywhere, and not “congregation.” Hence the prevalence of a word which has really no meaning.

Say “assembly,” which is the meaning of ■κκλησ■α (ecclesia), and all ambiguity disappears. “Ecclesia” was the assembly of those who in the small Grecian states were citizens, and so had right to vote, &a., and then was applied to analogous bodies or meetings. We all know what an assembly means. Only now we have to do with God's assembly. For example, “Take with thee one or two more, &c., if not, tell it to the church.” To whom is it to be told? Well, the minister, or perhaps the presbytery. With the Roman Catholic, “if he will not hear the church” wins awful proportions. Now say (as it really is) “the assembly,” how simple all is If wronged, go yourself first alone; if in vain, take one or two others; if still in vain, matters being ascertained, then tell it to the assembly. For the present mixed state of things this may seem very inconvenient, but the sense of the words is plain enough.

Now apply this to Acts 7 “This is he that was with the assembly in the wilderness.” Can anything be simpler? Israel was a vast assembly in the wilderness, and assembled themselves at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. For though a different word in Hebrew, the tabernacle got its name from its being the place of meeting. But then all possible reference to the church in the Christian sense disappears. Who denies that the six hundred thousand men who came constantly to the entrance of the court were an assembly? There were three words used for it, Kahal, as is stated by Mr. G., from Kahal, the verb to call together; Moeed, and Heeda, or Gneedah, the two last from Yaad, to appoint a place or time of meeting. Hence the tabernacle was called Ohel Moeed, the tent or tabernacle of the congregation.

Israel was a great assembly or congregation, as none can dispute, but which proves simply nothing as to its being what God's assembly is, according to the word, now. It is “Ecclesia,” an assembly, in Acts 7, and the word, being simply an assembled multitude, says just no more than that. The identical word is used when it is said (Acts 19), “Having so said, be (the town clerk) dismissed the assembly.” Put “the church” there, and what nice sense you will have!

I quite understand it will be said, “Yes, but they were God's assembly in the wilderness.” Admitted, but the whole question remains; that is, were God's assembly then, and God's assembly now, constituted on the same principles, on the same basis? There was no question then of conversion, or faith, or anything of the kind, or even profession. They were, as scripture expresses it, of the fountain of Jacob, descendants of Israel, according to the flesh, and under condition of being circumcised the eighth day, which, by the bye, none of those born in the wilderness were at that time. That assembly was a nation; God's assembly now is not. The fact of being an assembly, or the word, proves nothing; the whole question remains—Are the Israelitish nation, and God's assembly called by grace, the same thing, or assembled on the same principles?

Mr. G. makes some enormous statements: First, “The church of Pentecost was Israel.” Why, the Jews had openly rejected the Lord, and Peter in his sermon says to those who had ears to hear, “Save yourselves from this untoward generation,” and the Lord Himself, “Henceforth your house is left unto you desolate, for I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth until ye say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.” They were a judicially rejected people, though not forever, and are so to this day. They were men of Israel; but the assertion, inconceivable as it is, only shows how far a false principle can carry any one. God did not say in Joel, “He would give the great outpouring of His Spirit to Israel.” He said He would pour out His Spirit on all flesh. In patience with Israel; He dealt with them, and began at Jerusalem; but it was the Holy Ghost being given to Cornelius that opened fully Peter's and the Jewish Christians' eyes.

But let us enter a little more into the heart of the matter. Mr. G. says, “To them were committed the oracles of God; to them pertained the adoption, glory, covenant, giving of the law, service, and the promises. (Rom. 9:4) Nothing more can be said of the church now.” Now here is the nucleus, the heart, of the question. Not the introduction of Old Testament saints into church privileges, unscriptural as that is, but reducing God's assembly now to the measure of Jewish privileges. The former might alone be treated as a mistake, the latter deprives God's assembly of its true divine standing, and that is what makes it of moment. The law was given by Moses, grace and truth came (■γ■νετο) by Jesus Christ.

Let us see what scripture says on the matter. In the tabernacle there was a veil, behind which God sat between the cherubim; the Holy Ghost thus signifying that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest, while as yet the first tabernacle had its standing. Now by Christ's death the veil is rent from top to bottom, and we have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. We can, and are, to walk in the light as God is in the light. Is this “nothing more” to Mr. G.?

I will not insist on God's “righteousness being declared now, the righteousness of God being revealed, not prophesied of, because I desire to take what is most positive and on the very surface of scripture. See Gal. 4, “Now I say the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a slave, though he be lord of all; but is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father; even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the rudiments of the world. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons; and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father; wherefore thou art no more a slave, but a son.” Is it “nothing more” to be brought to be sons of God by known and accomplished redemption, and know it, to live in the relationship, instead even of an heir differing nothing from a slave?

Will Mr. G. allow me to ask him, were the Jews under the first covenant, or the second, in their relationship with God? Are we under that first covenant? But more, we have the difference clearly brought out in Heb. 10:9; “He taketh away the first that he may establish the second.” It will be said that these were ceremonies; but what ceremonies? The priesthood is changed; is that merely a ceremony, a better hope by which we draw nigh to God? And see the difference: the sacrifices could not make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience; there was a remembrance of sins every year. Now we are perfected forever who are sanctified; so that Christ, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. He is seated there, because all is done, till His enemies are made His footstool; and our sins and iniquities are remembered no more. The worshippers once purged are so in such sort that they should have no more conscience of sins, instead of a remembrance of them every year. We have eternal redemption, a purged conscience, because the sins are purged once and for all, and boldness to enter into the holiest, “giving thanks to the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light” (Col: i. 12), having the knowledge of salvation given to His people by the remission of their sins. Is all this “nothing more?"

Take what is said by the Lord; and this will lead us to the question of the Holy Ghost. Than John Baptist no greater prophet had ever arisen, and of those born of woman none greater; but the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. Many kings, prophets, righteous men, had desired to see the things which the disciples saw, and had not seen them; but “blessed,” said the Lord, “are your eyes, for they see.” They were more blessed than their kings and prophets—they had Messiah with them. Yet so great was the privilege and advantage of having the Holy Ghost, that it was expedient that Christ should leave them; for if He did not, the Comforter would not come; but if He went away, He would send Him. What a thing to lose, Christ's personal presence in grace! Yet so great was to be the effect of the coming of the Holy Spirit, that it was better He should go. Yet they would persuade us that He had, been there all the time of the Old Testament. (See 1 Peter 1) They searched their own prophecies, and found they did not minister to themselves, but to us, the

things now reported by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Was the promise to pour out the Spirit “nothing?” Clearly it was not anything if He was there all the time as when poured out.

And now mark the foundation of this immense truth. God never dwelt with Adam innocent, nor with Abraham, or others; but as soon as a redemption, external even, was accomplished, we read, “They shall know (Ex. 29) that I, Jehovah their God, have brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them;” and the Shechinah of glory came down and sat between the cherubim, and led them in the wilderness. So it was, when an eternal and full redemption had been accomplished, and man (though much more than a man) sat down in virtue of it at the right hand of God, that the Holy Ghost came down to dwell in God's people individually and collectively.

We must not confound between the divine action of the Holy Ghost and His coming. I think it will be found in scripture that all direct action of God from creation is by the Holy Ghost. Even Christ could say, “If I by the Holy Ghost cast out demons.” At any rate He moved on the face of the waters; by His Spirit God garnished the heavens; He inspired the prophets, and wrought all through the divine history; but this was not His personal coming. So the Son created all things, but He did not come until the incarnation. “I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again, I leave the world and go to the Father.” (John 16:28.) So speaks Christ of the Holy Ghost: “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him unto you, and when he is come,” &c. (John 16:7, 8.) And this was so distinct a thing, that it is called “the Holy Ghost,” without saying came, or given, or anything else. Thus, John 7:39, “For the Holy Ghost was not yet” —given is added— “for Jesus was not yet glorified.” So the disciples, baptized by John in Acts 19:2, said, “We have not so much as heard whether the Holy Ghost is."

All Jews knew the being of the Holy Ghost; but this was His promised presence, and this is easily understood as to John's disciples, because he had spoken of Christ's work as twofold:—He was “the Lamb of God,” and “he it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost;” which was the second great part of His work—baptizing with the Holy Ghost—and could not be done till He was glorified. So He tells His disciples after His resurrection, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” He Himself was anointed and sealed with the Holy Ghost when He stood, the first man fully, perfectly, acceptable to God, who had ever existed since evil entered, perfect in Himself. God “anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power."

And what is the effect of the Holy Ghost's dwelling in us? The love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given to us. (Rom. 5) We know that we are in Christ, and Christ is in us. (John 14) We know that we are sons, and cry, Abba Father, the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit. He takes the things of Christ, the glorified man on high, and shows them to us. Our bodies are temples of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God. So that God dwells in us, and we in Him, and we know it by the Holy Ghost given to us. What eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath entered into the heart of man to conceive, God hath revealed unto us by His Spirit. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and, Christ living thus in us, the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit life because of righteousness. Man at the right hand of God in righteousness, and the Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer as the consequence of it, characterize Christianity.

All this is lost by this system. What made it expedient for Christ to leave His disciples, we are told, is all the same as what they had before He came! The anointing of the Holy Ghost is “nothing!” Besides, he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit, and this leads to the corporate difference.

Till Christ ascended up on high there was no man at the right hand of God, no one to whom the believer could, as a present fact, be united, and consequently, as we have seen, no Holy Ghost either to unite him to Him. But Christ ascended up on high, a man, in righteousness, and the Holy Ghost consequently came down, not to the world, but to believers. Let us hold fast this great truth—the essence of Christianity, as the cross and God's love are the foundation of it. The Head being on high, we are quickened together with Him, according to the power with which God wrought in raising Him from the dead, and setting Him there, and raised us up Jews or Gentiles together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ, not with Him yet. (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:1-7.) Neither part of this was true before Christ was glorified. There was no such glorified man, no Holy Ghost come down from heaven. On this scripture is clear as possibly can be. There was a Son of God who could quicken; no raised glorified man, whose going to the Father was the testimony of God's righteousness, nor Holy Ghost come down, the divine witness of it. We are members of His body; He has given Him, as so exalted, to be Head over all things to the church which is His body. Thus by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, Jews or Greeks. Israel had lost his place as such. There was no difference now. By the cross the middle wall of partition was broken down, and of twain one new man to he made, and both reconciled to God in one body by the cross.

Now the duty and essence of Judaism was the keeping of the wall up; Christianity as a system on earth is founded on its being broken down. Were the Gentiles in the church brought into the Jewish state as is alleged? No; He makes of twain one new man, and reconciles both, and came and preached peace to those afar off, and those nigh, for neither had it. The apostles and prophets (the prophets are the prophets of the New Testament, see Eph. 3:5) were the foundation of a new edifice, a habitation of God through the Spirit. This had never been promised, never revealed at all, and could not have been. To say there was no difference between Jew and Gentile would have destroyed Judaism at one stroke. It was not revealed at all. (Eph. 3:4-11; Col. 1:26; Rom. 16:25, 26. In verse 26 it is not “the scriptures of the prophets,” but now by prophetic scriptures, γραφ■ προφητικ■ν.

But the grand point is the coming of the Holy Ghost consequent on the exaltation of a man in righteousness to the right hand of God. So when Christ says, “I will build my church” on the revelation made by the Father to Peter, what was the meaning of that, if He had been building it all the time? The church then, the body of Christ, is formed by the baptism of the Holy Ghost consequent on the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God; the Holy Ghost, as so come, was not yet, when Christ was not glorified; and this baptism, as is declared in Acts 1, took place a few days after, that is, on the day of Pentecost.

Rom. 11 has nothing to do with the church, the body of Christ. It is the olive-tree of promise (and the church was never promised even), and it is accompanied with a revelation that, when the Jews are grafted in again, the Gentile branches would be broken off. There were promises and prophecies, at any rate, which apply to Gentiles, as, “Rejoice, ye Gentiles, with his people;” but if Israel be God's people, the church cannot exist with it; for there is no difference of Jew and Gentile, and blindness in part is happened unto Israel, till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. They are enemies as touching the gospel. It is “the casting them away” in “the reconciling of the world.” The church is the body of Christ formed by the Holy Ghost on earth, while Christ sits on the right hand of God.

I should have many things to note if I merely took up the article “House of the Lord,” or any application of it to the place where the people meet, is wholly without foundation in scripture. “The church of the wilderness” is also unscriptural. “The kingdom of heaven” is not the church at all. It is really too bad to say, “the apostles do not say a word about a new organization.” There is a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof. Did not Paul organize the church? Were the priests and Levites priests and Levites of the Christian church?

There would be another difficulty which Mr. G. has not noticed at all; that before the Exodus there was no assembly of any kind at all; individual saints, Enochs, and Noahs, and Abrahams, but no assembly; but

I do not go beyond what is on the surface of the article.

What I press is this, that the Holy Ghost is come, and that, when He came, the baptism, by which the saints were made one body, took place. The assembly is the body of Christ, the dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost on earth, and never existed before that baptism, and could not, for the Head did not exist, nor was the Holy Ghost in consequence descended to unite men to Him so as to form that body. He gave Himself not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.

J. N. D.

Chapter 42

Short Papers on Church History

WE have long desired to bring this work before our readers; and the recent publication of a second volume, which brings the history from A.D. 814 down to 1529, gives the fitting opportunity. In a third volume, the hope is, if the Lord will, that it may be continued till our own day.

The author has spared no pains to present a thoroughly fair account of the main facts of Christendom, and of the men who have taken a prominent part in it for good or ill. Unpretending in form it is no mere compendium of Dupin, Milner, or Mosheim. All that the more recent researches and discussions of Greenwood, Milman, Neander, J. C. Robertson, Waddington, and many other laborers in the ecclesiastical field have been able to glean, is here laid under contribution: so that no single work contains such a full and reliable view of all that is important to be known by the intelligent Christian reader. But there are other features which distinguish these two compact volumes from others, however able or elaborate. It is the first ecclesiastical history from the pen of one who, with ardent love for souls and marked blessing from the Lord in the practical work of evangelizing, combines an adequate knowledge of what the church really is, as the body of Christ and, the house of God; the first, consequently, with the right sense of what is due to the Lord's glory in both respects.

Chapter 43

Colossians 1:15-18

On the whole I should judge that πρ■ π■ντων is not merely before all things in point of time, nor the head of them when taken up in power. Christ is πρωτ■τοκος π■σης κτ■σεως, He has this headship in place, because He had created them all. He must therefore have existed before them; and to say merely that He was before creatures as they are does not say a great deal. I apprehend that it is His natural superiority, not taken place, to all things, as having a being independent of, superior, and prior to, them all; more than πρωτ■τοκος, which is a consequence of His being their Creator, more than priority in time; but distinctness of being superior to all in nature, independent of any place He took, and existing without them, hence in a nature which was superior to them all, referred to them all, but naturally as wholly above them; a divine place, because it was of nature in Himself, not given, ■στιν, what He is, not ■γ■νετο. A■ι■ς ■στιν πρ■ π. And what follows confirms this; for all things subsist and consist as a whole, and each of the parts have their sustaining and ordering energy in Him. He was first alone, independent of them, and then, when they existed, the constant sustainer of them in the co-ordination in which they subsist, as of their subsistence itself. Still He is viewed as the Christ, but it is what the Christ is. We have no ■ν in Heb. 1, but ■λ■λησεν ■ν. All the rest is mediatorial in character, though the Mediator is fully recognized as being God—indeed it is the object of the chapter, but it is the Christ who is recognized as being so.

So in Col. 1 you have His place, only founded on what He is, and His creative and sustaining power, the creation having been ■ν α■τ■, the πρ■ π■ντων as said not being the place He takes in virtue of creation in the resulting order of God, but what He is in His personal place and glory, always in respect of the π■ντων naturally, in divine place, power, and priority.

As to the church, ■στιν ■ρχ■, πρωτ■τοκος ■κ τ■ν νεκρ■ν ■να γ■νηται ■ν π. α■τ■ς πρ. It is only by resurrection; and here we have result, what He becomes, γ■νηται. And then we get the resulting effect, and how far it is fulfilled.

Thus we have of the Christ what He did, verse 16; what He is, verse 17 and half 18; then what He becomes, or will be. Verse 15 is His general place and title as manifested, but fully accomplished at the end, His relationship in His place toward God and toward the creature, His mediatorial glory according to counsels. Verse 19 is part of the ■γ■νετο, though here only the ε■δοκ■α as to it. The fact is in chapter ii. 9, only it is not here His personality as one. Then in verse 20 et seqq. comes the effect.

John is simpler, speaking but of His Person. He was God, and all was created by Him. The rest is ■γ■νετο, as particularly verse 14. Colossians is more complicated, because, while saying what involves it, it does not state His divinity, but gives the place rather than the nature, though that place be naturally, or rather supernaturally, above or before all and the Creator's, while John and Hebrews state that He is God.

■ν has the force of what characterizes by the power which operates in that governed by it, δι■ used in similar connection is, of course, instrumental. Thus ■ν α■τ■ ■κτ■σθη τ■ π■ντα. This past act of creation was wrought in the power which was personally in Him. For this reason He is πρωτ■τοκος when He personally takes His place in creation. So continuously all things consist, ■ν α■τ■. It is the same power which continuously holds all together in the unity of the κ■σμος. When he speaks of the instrumental action by which all have been and are created, it is δι■ and ε■ς α■τ■. In verse 19 ■ν has the ordinary sense of "in," or place, π■ν τ■ πλ■ρωμα being the nominative (compare chap. 2:9), and this will reconcile δ■ α■το■: so verse 22, ■ν τ■ σ■ματι, and δι■ το■ θαν■του. So ■ν in a lesser case, verse 29, ■ν δυν■μει, and chapter 2:2, ■ν ■γ■πη: cf. 23; as often ■ν σαρκ■, ■ν πνε■ματι, ye are ■ν πν. (Rom. 8) Thus the creation of all things was characterized and wrought by the inherent power which was in the Lord Jesus Christ, and all things subsist together as are ordered and law, governed whole by the same constant and inherent power. When the πλ■ρωμα is spoken of, then His person is distinguished as the One by whom and for whom, He being to take it personally as the πρωτ■τοκος. All the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him, and by Him to reconcile; πρωτ■τοκος in what He is in creation, the reason ■τι ■ν α■τ■ ■κτ■σθη. It is what He is, not His divine nor His human nature. Cf. ii. 9, 10, where we have the πλ■ρωμα τ■ς θε■τητος in Him on one side, and we are πεπληρωμ■νοι in Him on the other. This is consequently the place He has taken before God, head of all principality and power. The πλ■ρωμα of Godhead dwells in Him, but then He takes a place as man before God, a man, but personally, and above all principalities as man. The way in which the Godhead and person of Christ are connected, or both, before the mind of the Spirit is striking in what follows. Verse 13 is clearly God; verse 14 passes on to Christ. He has taken it out of the way, beginning a new sentence grammatically distinct really.

The πρωτ■τοκος clearly holds a special place in the revelation of God's counsels. He takes it as man; He takes it as Son; but He takes it as having created all, all things having been created ■ν α■τ■. As a fact it is His creation, but also δι■, looked at as the actual instrument of God's counsels; the object also, all is ε■ς α■τ■ν. But then in sovereign grace He is also πρωτ■τοκος amongst many brethren. So the πρωτ■τοκος is introduced into the world, and the angels worship Him. But then all the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Him, and we are complete, πεπληρωμ■νοι, in Him. And now continually all things subsist in Him. Heb. 1, though the same general truth, presents more a personal Messiah, and so manifestation. God has spoken ■ν υ■■ He is the express image of His substance. Indeed in Colossians we have the ε■κ■ν of the invisible God in the πρωτ■τοκος, and all this is in a man! It is a wonderful thing, and the place among men holds the first place, as in Prov. 8. The church, as His body, is another line of thought, though closely connected. In John it is more the Son in and with the Father, and we in Him, more personal and relationship though it is in. With the Father it is ■ξ, 1 Cor. 8:6, so Rom. 11:36, ■ξ, δι■, ε■ς. In Heb. 1, δ■ ■ν and δ■ ο■. But this is another thought.

Chapter 44

Conflict in Heavenly Places

The very blessings of the church (as in Eph. 1:3) set us into a sort of conflict, which, without such blessings, we should not have. So the church is subject to more failure than either Jews or Gentiles were, because they were not called to the same blessing. A Jew might do many things that would be monstrous in a Christian, and yet find no defilement in his conscience. The veil that was over the knowledge of God being rent, the light shines out; and the consequence is that this light which has come out of the holy place cannot tolerate evil. Christians are in a more dangerous position if not walking in the light than Jews. Satan may draw and entice me with many things, which would have no power against me if I were not so favored “Be strong in the Lord” here is the place of strength. There is no strength but in Christ—I have none at any time, except as my soul is in secret communion with Him, and through Him with God the Father. The direct power of Satan is toward this point, to keep our souls from living on Christ. Put on the whole armor of God; there is no standing against Satan without this. Strength is always the effect of having to do with God in the spirit of dependence.

We see in 1 Sam. 14 the contrast between Saul and Jonathan, between confidence in God overcoming all obstacles, and self failing with all the resources of royalty. Jonathan clambered up on his hands and feet, confident in God, and the enemies were overcome. Saul, when he saw the work going on, not knowing the Lord's mind, calls for the priest. He had a right intention, but not a simplicity of dependence on God, when inquiring what he should do, and spoils all by his foolish oath. It was said of Jonathan that “he wrought with God.” God was with him, and he had strength and liberty, not a humiliation we have often felt, because he wrought with God. When we are walking in dependence on God, there will always be liberty before God. Jonathan knew what he should do, and took some honey, because he went on in liberty, for God was with him, whilst Saul in legality had put himself and the people into bondage.

The word then, after grace in Christ has been fully shown throughout the Epistle, is, “Be strong in the Lord” (ver. 10). We have the privilege here of individual dependence on God. Everything may be dark, but the Lord tells us to be strong, This is always accompanied with lowliness of heart: come what will, when the Lord is rested on we are strong.

We are called to put on the panoply of God, to take it to us (ver. 11-13). And no wonder: the conflict is not with men but with evil spirits (ver. 12). Who but an unbeliever can overlook or despise them? They are principalities and authorities; they are the universal lords of this darkness; they are spiritual wickednesses in the heavenly places. Truly to withstand such we need the whole armor of God; which, remember, is not a question of standing but of practical power, and this in entire dependence.

If we pray, be it observed, without searching the word, or read the word without prayer, we may get no guidance, for Jesus said, “If my words abide in you, ask what ye will,” &c.; without this I may be asking some foolish thing that would not be given. We are to stand against the wiles of the devil, not his power. It is not knowing Satan that enables us to discover his wiles, but the keeping

in God's presence. It was always so with Christ, because He was always dependent on God. Stand, having your loins girt about with truth. Truth is never really ours but as the affections are ordered by it. If the soul of the hearer be not in communion with God in the truth he hears, his loins are not girt with it. The breastplate of righteousness supposes not merely this, but that we have nothing on the conscience (ver. 14). Christ's blood made it good; and walking in the Spirit keeps it so.

Verse 15. The gospel of peace is ours in Christ; but I must have the spirit of peace in my heart, and be sanctified by the God of peace, the soul in communion with God, with Him in the spirit of peace; and without this how can the saint walk as always having peace? He is thus prepared to walk by the gospel.

Verse 16. Whether I look at the sin that made grace necessary, or at the power which caused me to enjoy it, I may walk in perfect peace against every source of sorrow. Every fiery dart is quenched by confidence in God—the shield of faith. It is as essential for the conflict as for saving the soul. We need to cherish confidence in the grace of God all through.

Verse 17. I hold up my head because I know I am safe; salvation is mine. I must first get that which is internal—that which is wrought in me is power. Before I use the sword of the Spirit, I must first have the loins girded about with truth—the heart covered with righteousness—the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, and then (the shield of faith being up and the helmet of salvation on) I can take the sword of the Spirit. Nothing is more dangerous than to use the word if it has not touched my conscience. I put myself in Satan's hands if I go beyond what I have from God, or what is in possession of my soul. To talk with saints on the things of God, beyond what I hold in communion, is most pernicious; to fight without it is fatal.

Verse 18. The word always must deal with ourselves before others, but prayer is the expression and exercise of dependence. If a person asks me a question, and I answer without speaking to God about it—going direct, it will be more likely to lead him from God than to God. When a question or difficulty comes, do we turn to God? We may have turned to God before, and the thing is answered, and we ought to have such power of prayer, that there would be no difficulty when any circumstance arises. If supplication be thus continual, there would be no occasion to ask Him about particular things when they come before us.

“Supplication in the Spirit.” All acceptable prayer is not, I think, prayer in the Spirit. A wish or desire ex pressed to God, in all the confidence of a child to his Father, is heard, but this is not necessarily “prayer in the Spirit.” It is the power of the Spirit in us looking for blessing as walking in the Spirit of God—that is such prayer; not even a difficulty here when living really in the power of communion. We have that energy of supplication which looks for answers—for all answers, and for myself too—watching thereunto with all perseverance. Suppose you begin the day with a sweet spirit of prayer and confidence in God; in the course of the day, in this wretched world, you find a thousand cares and agitations; but if you are spiritually exercised, alive to see the things of God, everything will be a matter of prayer and intercession, according to the mind of God. Thus humbleness and dependence should mark all a saint's actions.

Instead of being full of regret at what we may meet with, if we are walking with Christ we shall see His interests in a brother—in the church. What a blessed thing to carry everything to God! The

word in verse 18 refers to a man walking in the whole armor.

The apostle took the love of the saints for granted. We also, if walking in the Spirit, can always count on others being interested in our affairs.

Chapter 45

Discipline in the House of God

The real object in every act in the long run will transpire, however concealed or disguised it may be at first. Hence the more important the act, the more conspicuously will the object come out as the course of the act proceeds. The object of Balaam is more and more evident, and Jehu's is disclosed at last, while the object of every faithful servant must eventually be owned.

The object of discipline is to free the church from leaven. “Not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you."

To clear of leaven is the end and object of discipline. This can be effected in one of two ways; either by pastoral service, or when this is unavailing, by putting away from among ourselves the wicked person.

In the latter case, as has been said, the assembly must feel that it is guilty of the sin; and hence to clear themselves they put away from among themselves that wicked person. If they do not feel that they are guilty of the evil for which they excommunicate, they are merely a criminal jury, giving a verdict against the guilty person, and there is really no clearing at all.

Hence conviction of the guilt of any one is not produced by any overstrained interpretation and strong statement of probabilities, but by the irresistible persuasiveness of clear positive testimony—simply manifestation of the evil, as with Judas; and as light which works conviction by expelling darkness.

I must not go beyond what I see and know, nor can I charge myself with more than is manifested, for if I cannot charge myself and all the assembly with it, I ought not to excommunicate.

It is also essential as ensuring the Lord's support that the elder or bishop, who is prominent in his care of the church of God in the place, be “not a novice,” lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the snare of the devil; and again, that his own house and all believers be so well ordered and ruled that he has given proof of his ability to care for the church of God, for if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God? Again, he should feel to the assembly as the father of a large family, and after making every effort to restore the erring one, he leads the rest of the family, in deep sorrow of heart and feeling the family slur, to refuse to eat with the wicked one; but if he have any ill-feeling or vindictiveness towards any, he actually produces in the assembly a worse state of things than that which he attempts to correct, for where there is a root of bitterness springing up many are defiled, and where envy and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work. A father would take care how he would corrupt his family.

If I see an evil, and feel I am not the one to act prominently in it, I can at least pray to God to raise up an instrument according to His own mind, lest in my unholy zeal like Uzzah I perpetrate a great grievance.

Finally, the church of God is a nursery and not an inquisition, and if I am a true leader I warn the unruly, I do not subject them because of their unruliness to church or family censure; I comfort the feebleminded and I support the weak: otherwise I should deserve the censure in Ezekiel. “The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up the broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost, but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them."

J. B. S.

Chapter 46

Divine Love in the Gospel and the Believer

The apostle in this part of the chapter returns to the great doctrine of the whole Epistle. It is not here so much the great work that sets the soul before God, but the truth we have when we are before God. We were before seeing the difference between Paul and John. While Paul sets the church as in Christ before God, opening out the counsels of grace, John brings out the nature of God in the saints. It is not so much the ground of that which brought the soul to God—righteousness (although he does speak of this too), but the character of the life that is communicated, the life which is in God the Father derived through the Son. It is first given in Christ and then to be manifested in the saints. The traits of God are brought out wholly in Christ but through the Christian, and this is what is particularly shown in John.

There is also another thing:—not only a nature and capacity to enjoy God, but the Holy Ghost dwelling in us gives us the power of enjoyment, that there may be no vacillation or uncertainty. He grounds the testimony on the public manifestation of the Lord Jesus Christ; and the capacity of enjoying the source of the life is by the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. God is love, and this is first openly seen at the cross of Christ; then in the new nature we have a capacity to enjoy that love. But the fear must be taken away, because fear has torment, and torment is not enjoyment; and thus he shows what removes the fear. “Perfect love casteth out fear.” If it be asked, How do you know God loves you? Oh! I reply, I have a certain and constant proof of this in the gift of His Son, and then besides that, I have the daily and hourly enjoyment of God as my Father, and I know it because I am enjoying it.

I may prove to another the love of God by certain acts, such as the gift of His Son, which is an open manifestation of God's love; but this does not take away from the daily enjoyment of God, the capacity for which I get in the new nature and by the power of the Spirit. It is remarkable to see how the apostle guards from mysticism by bringing the mind back to the plain statement of the gospel: “We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” In the seventh verse he begins by saying, “Beloved, let us love one another.” Here we have the love of God in exercise in the new nature; and the characteristic of this nature is to recognize it in another. If I have got this divine nature, I cannot but love it in another. I may have many prejudices to overcome, but there is the attractive power in the thing itself. I do not speak of it as a mere duty; it is there in the nature, and being divine it is much above angels, although they are higher as to creation. Nevertheless we need something more than the new nature, because it is a dependent nature, and therefore wants something else. Christ when down here lived a dependent life in one sense. (“I live by, or on account of, the Father.") The old man sets himself up and pretends to be independent, but all the while he is under the power of Satan.

But the new nature is a dependent nature, and says, “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” Life in Christ leans on God's power, and delights to do so. The Holy Ghost is the power: “strengthened with all might by the Spirit in the inner man,” and there is the full blessing, both in the individual and in the church of God. Although we have the new nature, we want also the power of the Holy Ghost

to remove the obstacles to its display. Labor will not do. You may labor on the cold snow, but the sun must shine before it melts. So the Holy Ghost is needed to dissolve the thick ice of our hearts and melt away that which is in us to obstruct and hinder its fuller manifestation. “God is love, and every one that loveth is born of God and knoweth God.” When I have got this nature, I am born of God, I am brought into a position to refer everything up to God, for the nature we get from God has God for the object of that new nature to act upon; when I see the traits of this new nature, I say, He is born of God. I see love in natural affection, but here it is in a divine sense. In natural affection selfishness is the ground of it all, but in the saint he that loves is born of God. I see love in natural affection, but here it is in a divine sense. While selfishness is the spring of everything out of God, we find in a soul that is born of God another principle which takes a man clean out of himself. A man makes himself a fortune by some new invention that makes the world more comfortable, and what is this but selfishness? And all that gives an impulse to the progress of the world is selfishness. But here is the difference, because we are in a world where we all have to follow our various occupations and callings. In a Christian it is not selfishness, it is love; he is born of God, and love is the principle of God's nature. It may be very feeble in me, but am I to be satisfied that it should remain so? No; whatever is born of God came down from God, and returns to God again; therefore “Be ye imitators of God as dear children."

This perfect love came down from God that it might return to God again, for whom did Christ come to glorify in this but His Father? So all that Christ did returned to God a sweet-smelling savor, or else it would have been lost. There are many beautiful qualities in a creature of God, but do they return back to God again? No. Then it becomes sin. I get a good thing, I enjoy it and leave God out, and this is man's sin. There may be a great deal of selfishness under that which outwardly appears like liberality. And you will see a Christian help his brother and look up to God as doing it to God because He loves God; but if he helps him and says to himself, I have done well, it is not love, it is self-righteousness. The new nature has God for its source and God as its object; the new nature acts in us like God, so that others can see it, but then it knows God. “Every one that is born of God knoweth God,” and it is a great comfort to say in everything, I have found God knew.

Then mark, there is something else in verse 8: “He that loveth not; knoweth not God.” There is a knowledge of God. But, without the possession of the nature of God, there is no power to apprehend His love. You may see His works and say there must be a God, but is that knowing Him? I must have God's nature to know Him, because none can know love but by loving, and he who thus knows Him will apprehend Him. “In this was manifested the love of God towards us” This is no abstract notion about love; it is not said merely, “in this was manifested the love of God;” but, “In this was manifested the love of God towards us.” Man's mind cannot measure God. Mind can measure mind or thoughts, but mind cannot measure love, for love is only known by being loved. If man's mind was a competent judge of what God should be, God would not be God; and how must this love be found? In a most humbling way (and so much the better). The soul must come in as wanting this love; for if it can come in in any other way, it does not want God. The moment any soul finds its need of God, there and then God is waiting to meet its need. It was so in the case of the Syrophenician woman; and it brought forth that word of the Lord,” O woman, great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” The great faith is knowing my great need and counting on God's power to meet it. It may be vague; it was so in the woman who came into the house; but still there was faith. When I find that manifested in God which meets my need and receive it as a poor needy

one, that is faith. I never get into the place of God's meeting my need, till I know God is God and I am a sinner. When we are in our place, we shall find God acting towards us in His. When I am brought down to the sense that the only thing I have is sin, then God can act. “When we were without strength in due time, &c.” God acted in due time. God being the doer, He does it in the perfectness of His own love and time.

I can stand before God, and talk to sinners, and say, I know God in a way that angels do not know Him, “which things angels desire to look into” —God's love towards us. I do not say me, but us, taking all in who believe the love. That little word us, how it rings on our ears by the power of the Holy Ghost, putting me in the full consciousness of the favor of God towards us, that we might live through Him! It was manifested when we were dead. Not only was God's love manifested where it was needed, but at the time it was needed, when we were dead. Nothing of man was needed to add to the perfectness of this love and of its manifestation. If I examine my own heart I cannot find it out. I know more of God's heart than of my own, for mine is “deceitful above all things,” &c, and the best man upon earth will be the first to own this. But God has manifested His love. Not only is it there, but it is manifested. I do not get the full character of God to my soul till I see it in the cross, for what was in man was nothing but sin, and when that sin was met, there was none between God and His Son, and if He was alone in His work, this is a proof of what God has done in my circumstances of death. He sent His Son that I might live through Him, but, my sins being all put away, I see there is eternal life for me, and, He being the propitiation for sins, I find all mine are gone, and life is come in Christ for the believer.

After such manifestation of God's love, let us not be thinking of our love to God. Who am I that I should be coupling His love with mine? The moment I begin to think of my love to God, that moment it ceases, it is gone, like the manna that had worms and stank. Heaven will be when I have entirely forgotten myself and am filled with God. That very same love which will fill heaven was manifested in the cross. God's love is not exhausted, though my need may be and is great, and my failures many.

Verse 11. The apostle, having given us a proof of God's love, goes on to the exercise of it in us while down here. “If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another;” and this principle we find in other parts of the word. (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:13.) I cannot know God by seeing Him, but (John 1:18) “The only begotten Son,” &c, the one who knew what God's love was, has told it out. The Son, who dwelt in the Father's bosom, who knew Him in the intimacy of a son, who enjoyed His love without alloy, He tells it to me as He knew and enjoyed it in Himself.

But in the Epistle of John he goes a step farther: it is communicated livingly to us, “true in him and in you.” “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us."

This is the source of it, the enjoyment is by the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not my love perfected in God, but His in me; and I know (being in Him that is infinite) that I can never get out of it. It is not that I am infinite, but that I am in Him who is so. “Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” Here it is communion, not merely power; the qualities of His nature are, as it were, wrought in me. Angels know not this joy! Why is this? Because they have not the Holy Ghost dwelling in them. But God has given us of His Spirit, because we are members of Christ, the fruit of the travail of His soul.

Verse 14. Observe how the apostle gets back to the person of the Son, but it is in a more advanced state of soul, as knowing Him who sent the Son. “We have seen and do testify.” It was a known and enjoyed love. While Paul gives us the church and the purposes and counsels of God, John speaks of the nature in which God dwells. And what is the effect of this? Worship! Because the highest thing we can enjoy is the knowledge of God, as the little hymn says, “What joy, twill be with Christ to reign.” Look at the scene in Revelation. God is on His throne and the elders are on thrones around. Can anything be higher than this? Yes! They fall down and worship before Him that sits upon the throne, and cast their crowns, &c.

So in the present life we see that, when the apostle realized the privilege of getting up to the Giver of all good and perfect gift, he returns to the very simplest truth, “the Father sent the Son, to be the Savior of the world.” Thus we see the saint who knows most of the heart of God the best evangelist. The fathers in Christ will be the most careful to take account of the weakest babe in Christ.

Oh, our littleness I our narrow hearts! Why have we difficulty in believing what He is? Just because it is so simple. May our hearts be like wax to receive the impress of Him every time He speaks to us, if we cannot learn all about Him at once.

Chapter 47

A Few Words on Elijah

1 Kings 17-20

These chapters set before us several important principles; and we see there pointed out several very different characters; we learn in them also the ways of God.

Ahab and Jezebel appear on the scene; Elijah prophesies; Obadiah is seen and the seven thousand men of God mentioned in chapter 19:18.

The character of Ahab is presented to us in chapter 16:29-83. Ahab, Jezebel, and the four hundred and fifty prophets were at the head of the apostates of Israel who at that time worshipped Baal. And Obadiah and the seven thousand were mixed up with the people (chap, 18); not that they served the idol, but they were friends of Ahab. As for Elijah, he was the friend of God, and, separated entirely from the apostasy, he was the only witness of the truth in the midst of all the evil.

Let us distinguish then these three different classes of persons: Ahab and Israel, apostates on one side; Elijah, on the other, the faithful servant of God; and again, somewhat different, Obadiah and the seven thousand connected always with the evil. Now let us examine the different characters of these persons.

What were the circumstances of Elijah? This feeble and poor man had no force and strength save what he found in the Lord, his only support. (Chap. 17:19) He was a man of faith and prayer; and, keeping before the Lord, he could boldly testify against the apostasy of Israel and denounce the judgments of God.

It is said to him (chap. 17:3), “Get thee hence and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith that is before Jordan;” then in verse 5 we read that he obeyed this command. We see already then that Elijah had no power, but had faith in God and knew that all blessing is in obedience. Also from the moment that the word was addressed to him, he submitted to it and went to the brook Cherith where he learned to depend on God.

Ahab and all Israel were the enemies of Elijah (chap 18:10); but God was his friend, and in each step that he took in fidelity to the Lord he learned the fidelity of the Lord to him. By this means he was more and more strengthened for the mission on which he was about to be employed. (Chap, 18:1) God sent him to be with a poor widow who entertained him during the famine, after he was fed by the ravens at Cherith. During all the time that he was cared for by the ravens at the brook, and by the widow at Sarepta, he learned to know the riches of the love and grace of God. It is there precisely that we learn to know ourselves also in all the circumstances in which we are placed by the Lord.

We see then in chapter 17 the simple and entire obedience of Elijah. Whether the Lord sent him to a brook to be fed by ravens; whether he was sent to a widow during the famine; whether he was sent before his real enemy Ahab (chap, 18), he made no objection, but counting on the Lord he did

that which he was ordered. He was nevertheless a man subject to the same passions and to the same infirmities as ourselves (James 5:17, 18); but he had much of that faith the power of which is infinite. By it he could say that there should be no rain, and there was none; by it he could raise the son of the widow, and overcome Ahab the king, and the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal. These circumstances show us clearly that Elijah was in the place where one is blessed, namely, in that of obedience. Men were his enemies; Ahab had sent everywhere persons to find him out; but the Lord was his refuge, and he had learned to trust in Him.

Let us examine now what concerns Obadiah. (Chap, 18:8, &c.) He feared the Lord greatly, but, spite of that, he was in the service of Ahab's house and did not bear testimony against its evil. He did not suffer the reproach of Christ. He was not like Elijah, pursued and chased from country to country. He did not know what it was to be fed by the ravens or the widow; that is to say, he lived little by faith and knew little of the ways of God. He lived at his ease in the midst of the world. Ahab was his lord. But who was Elijah's? Jehovah. (Compare chap, 18:10 and 15.) Oh, what a difference! Obadiah knew the good things of the earth; Elijah, the good things of heaven.

Let us read now verses 7-11. All the thoughts of Obadiah were about his master, whom he dreaded; but all the thoughts of Elijah were centered on the Lord, his only Master. The superiority of his position to that of Obadiah is further indicated by this circumstance, that the latter fell on his face before Elijah when he met him. (Ver. 7.) And when Elijah tells him to go and announce to Ahab, Obadiah is all frightened. Yet Obadiah was a child of God; he had even hid the prophets; but he had no strength whatever to bear testimony to the Lord, because he was associated with evil. As to Elijah, he could say fearlessly to Ahab and to all the people, “If the Lord be God, follow him.” (Ver. 21.) Whence did, therefore, this boldness and power come, as seen in Elijah, a poor and weak man, who had been straitened to this point, that he depended upon ravens and upon a widow for his food? From the fact that he stood aloof from the apostasy, that he lived by faith and had a single eye fixed upon his God. Oh! how far better his position was than that of Obadiah.

There is in these things an application for us to make to ourselves. Let us gather from them this lesson, that since the Lord is God, it is He whom we must serve, and that in order to be faithful to Him, we have to separate ourselves from all the principles of the apostasy by which we are surrounded.

We know how Elijah triumphed over his enemies; there is therefore no need of repeating the issue of the scene on Carmel; but let us observe that when Elijah prayed the Lord that He might give him the victory, what he asked was, that it might be known that the Lord was God. (Ver. 37.) All the desire of his heart consisted in these two things, that the Lord might be glorified, and that His people might know Him. There was not in him the least desire to lift himself up, to exalt himself; it mattered not to him if he was nothing, provided that God might be glorified and His people brought to know Him. Oh! that the same desire might be in us and that all thought of vainglory may be cast far, far away.

Let us now read chapter xix. Poor Elijah! he had a lesson to learn, which we ourselves, weak and poor as he was, need to learn also. When Elijah stood before the Lord, he could by the Lord's power stop or send rain to the earth, raise up the widow's son, &c. But when he stood, not now before the Lord, but before Jezebel, he was then without strength, and this ungodly woman was able to cause him to fear. Downcast, Elijah therefore goes into the wilderness, sits down under a

juniper tree and asks the Lord to take away his life. (Ver. 4.) How different he is here from what he was in the chapter before! How little did he remember what the Lord had done for him; how little did he have the mind of God, and did he expect that chariot of fire which would shortly take him up to heaven! (2 Kings 2:11.)

So is it with us. We are downcast, discouraged and weak in ourselves as soon as we fail to live in faith and prayer, and that we cannot say, as Elijah in chapter 18, “The Lord before whom I stand."

In chapter 17 Elijah by faith could make the widow's oil and meal last; but here he is weak and needs that an angel come to strengthen him and give him some food. (Read chap. 19:5-8) He eats, drinks, and like a man without strength lies down. But the Lord sends the angel back again, for He is plentiful in grace and mercy; He watches over all our ways and feeds our souls according to all our wants and according to all our circumstances. The Lord therefore bore with Elijah and succored him, and it is also what He is with respect to us. As He was afflicted in all the affliction of His people, so is He with us in ours now. (Isa. 63:9.)

In chapter 17 God was leading Elijah and telling him where to go, and Elijah obeyed. But in chapter 19 Elijah, fearing Jezebel, flees away and does not wait for the Lord's commandment to go into the wilderness. Se therefore what a sad message is sent to him, as recorded in verse 18, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” In verses 11 and 12 we read that a wind, an earthquake, and a fire are sent; but Elijah did not find the Lord in these things, and they could not bring comfort nor strength to his soul. God was appearing in His grandeur and power; but what Elijah needed was the still small voice, what he wanted was the manifestation of grace, and communion with his God. When, therefore, Elijah had heard the still small voice, he wrapped his face in his mantle and stood ready to obey the Lord. By the power and strength that he had found in this voice he was once again enabled to obey the commandment of the Lord.

What we have said on these chapters is very incomplete; but we believe that the chief thing is to bring out of them the principles calculated to give the intelligence of what the chapters contain. Let us therefore be mindful of avoiding the position of Obadiah and the seven thousand, who were taking their ease in the midst of apostasy, but who were without strength to bear testimony against evil. Let us also remember that, though Elijah was despised and rejected of men, he was nevertheless in the place of blessing. And if like himself we are brought to realize our weakness, let us remember that communion with the Lord can alone give us afresh both zeal and devotedness and joy.

Errata

On page 99, ten lines from bottom, in text, read relegated for delegated.

On page 101, six lines from bottom, read, “And Peter surely, by what he wrote (2 Peter 1:15), had not viewed the Lord's answer to him in the same light as Mr. Govett regards it. (Page 52,1 Apostolic teaching, then, lends no countenance to the supposition of the rise of new apostles, by whom the gift of the Spirit, or His gifts, would be conferred on believers.

Nor is there so much as a hint in the Lord's addresses to the seven churches, delivered when most, if not all, the apostles, &c."

Errata

In page 300, line 26 from bottom, read smiting for “uniting."

In page 312, column 2, read designs for “deigns."

In page 313, column 1, read substitutional for “substantial."

In page 314, column 1, read Besides then, not “these,” and add lower down was after “Jews,” and in Col. 2, pure not “bare” prophecy.

In page 315, column 1, last line read power for “favor."

Chapter 49

Fragments: Two Classes in Psalms

I think we shall find all through the Psalms too classes: one, the faith which looks to God and trusts Him, and pleads for an answer in righteousness; and the other, the cry out of distress and in distress of heart under it, though the principle of faith be in the cry. I remember attributing the former more to Christ, the latter to the remnant. Now in the spirit and character of them this is true; but the exclusive distribution to one or the other is wrong. They are all the remnant, only in two different aspects, and one more fully and directly the Spirit of Christ, though in Gethsemane He did cry in distress to God.

Baptizing with the Holy Ghost is never, that I am aware, used of an individual; nor is Christ so baptized. He is anointed of God, and sealed by God the Father. Now the company of disciples were baptized in Pentecost, and all by one Spirit baptized into one body. It was power embracing in one all. But the individual is anointed and sealed of God, as established by Him in Christ, sealed for the day of redemption, marked out surely by God, has the anointing of the Holy One. Note here that the general reception of the Holy Ghost by the converts in Samaria is before the manifestation of the wickedness of Simon's heart. Here the above remark becomes important.

Chapter 50

God's Dealings With His Children

I should like, beloved in the Lord, to endeavor, as God may enable me, to bring a little before your minds the outline which is given to us in scripture of God's dealings—the revelation of His own glory, and the name of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

With that thought I read the portion out of Colossians, and read it intentionally before reading the portion out of Ephesians. Ephesian truth is much higher than Colossian truth. The truth presented by the apostle was truth that had reached his own soul in a very peculiar way. Man in glory, God-man, called him Saul by name, and revealed Himself to him as One that wanted him—Saul, the persecutor—to become a vessel to carry mercy to earth. The way He was presented to him brought out the union that existed between Him and those Saul was persecuting. “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?"

The Colossians appear to have heard the truth that Christ was Head of the family of God, of the saints now put together as, His bride. They appear to have heard it, but to have let slip the main part—the Headship.

There is no irritability found in the mode he takes up the subject which gives him occasion to bring out the personal glory of the Lord, as he had not done in Ephesians, as connected with creation and providence, as well as with redemption. Very important, whatever part we take. We who know as individuals the love of the Lord Jesus, ought to have distinctly before our minds the unsearchableness of His person, and that His glories are of the highest character possible. He Himself states it, and says, “No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son, will reveal him.” Any attempt to analyze, and any feeling of our having comprehended, the Son, is all wrong. The Son has presented the Father and the Father's plans, and it is not ours to comprehend Him by whom they have been presented.

In Colossians we find some amazing glories. He speaks of the Image of the invisible God, the First-born of every creature, pre-eminent there, for by Him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by Him, and for Him. John states it also. Not one thing was brought into existence but by Him, the Lord Jesus Christ. That shows the pre-eminence. He that brings anything into existence must be above that thing, and indeed also above all things. He adds that they were created not only by Him, but for Him. All were connected with Him. Creation was by the Son acting. All was connected with the manifestation of His divine glory. Again (ver. 17), “He is before all things.” He was before all, as He was the only cause of all, and the cause must have priority and superiority to every effect; and he adds, “by him all things consist,” or stand together. He holds everything by the hand of His power. The pillars of the earth rest on that Man who was despised, spit upon, and crucified. The One that with such gentle compassion pleaded with Saul of Tarsus, and knocked long at the hearts of many of us, before any hearing was produced in us, before we opened to Him, a stranger as He then was to us, He

was the One who upheld everything. He goes beyond the heavens and the earth, and the fruitful seasons. This preeminence was His. Then he goes on to speak of redemption, the peculiar place He would hold to one part of the redeemed, “Head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased [the Father] that in him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace by the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

He is looking forward to that amazing time when there will be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness: all brought by Himself under the power of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and in heaven above Himself having the church, the bride; on earth having Israel, the nation under government, and then under blessing; and everything that would not be subject, that preferred the thralldom of Satan to God as the God of government and author of salvation, all sent down to the lake of fire, where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched.

Who, from first to last, is the doer of it all? The Son of God, the Man who loved me, and gave Himself for me—the Man who hung between two malefactors on Calvary. Divine power was His: the name of everyone who should be with Him in glory was given to Him by the Father. What sort of person was that? Oh, beloved friends, the light active in the kingdom of creation was displayed in those six thousand years. What a display of power, of tenderness, to those on earth! What an Almighty power that will bring forth out of the dust all those to whom death has been through Him but sleep, and raise them to heavenly glory, and fill the earth with a new race, equal to Him in the glory above, filling all, and forever, in the new heavens, and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. What sort of righteousness? Just that which becomes the presence of God.

These poor Colossians had let slip the Headship; they had thoughts of the kingdom, but could not blend kingdom thoughts with Him aright. They had got no landmarks about their standing there. He throws them on the revelation of the Son in heaven, that they might be brought back to think of Him coming from heaven.

There is a remarkable connection between creation, providence, and government, and salvation and redemption. If the glories are quite incommunicable, creation brought in the platform on which all was to be acted, providence upheld it, and kept all in check. Ay, but if there was a plan about Him described there—things in heaven and things in earth to be reconciled—what a different principle comes out when we get to redemption! Creation brings into existence things which are not; in providence the seasons still go on; sin has come in, man is so wicked; in government God is keeping evil in check. Where in creation, in providence, or in government, where is there one word for the ruined soul—one single thing to give a thought of being in the place of reconciliation? There is no word. Where is it found? In the grand purpose of God about the Man on His right hand. This One was to become the Redeemer, and bring man back to God. To be a Savior and a Deliverer from the power of Satan, from a world of corruption, and deadly principles working in the heart and mind.

When men heard of salvation and redemption, and had the opportunity, they turned their backs on the Redeemer, heaped contumely on the Savior, and mocked at the thought of One to redeem. One, the only One, in the new heavens and new earth, of whom we can say that He met God's mind all through His course, and never did anything but meet that mind. Not another will have that

glory of God; all will be brought there as saved, redeemed, to that new heavens and new earth, as proofs—proofs of what? That He was the One who could reveal the divine glory, that He, having been in the bosom of the Father, knew the divine character, and could bring it to light, and show how the divine glory was displayed—that it was God all alone, whose motive was drawn from His own bosom, and acted according to His own character.

Adam could not say he had given God anything; God gave to him, and he was to give back to God. We do not pay God for His care over us. Why is there the mighty hand of God Over the nations? They do not believe it, fools that they are. When Shem came out of the ark, it was said God shall shechinah from the tents of Shem. All the earth is regulated in connection with Israel, and people cannot see it! When Israel failed, God put the sword into the hands of the Gentiles. All was with reference to the Son of His love, the Lord Jesus Christ, as we have in Ephesians the place brought out in detail. He is Head of the body, the church, and the, place and the people who get so connected with Him are shown to us in connection with Christ. Not so only, but in connection with His plans as to the inheritance; and, more than that, we find the point of peculiar interest to the child of God where the counsel stops. Not merely can he look back before the world was, but if I look forward to the new heavens and the new earth, the Lord shows me what the counsel was. There was one Man God delighted to honor, and then God. The plan stops at the present time in this portion in Ephesians.

I should like to look at a thought—it may only be a human thought. If you reject it, I am not offended; if it helps you to see the chain from the time light dawned, I am satisfied. If I take my stand as a man, I think I can trace, from creation down, gradual steps from man set in the garden of Eden, down to the lowest order of creation. But from the highest expression of human perfection to the infinite God there is a chasm between the two. The smallest grain of sand carried by the wind had a nearer relation to myself than I have as a creature to the Almighty, infinite God. When I look to the end of what God is doing, I am astounded. There is the fullness of divine glory in a Man, and in all the height of that glory the perfect Man, and a people in heaven. Heaven was not made for man; the earth hath He given to the sons of men. But a people are quickened by the Holy Ghost, not only so but adopted as children, clothed upon with glorious bodies; and from that down the whole is blended together up to God. I began with the end. All the Father is presented in the Son, God in divine glory, the God-man on that throne, and a company prepared as the bride in the glory; and right down from that, step by step, it gives unity in what is before the divine mind.

Oh, what a place the Man that died on Calvary, that was taken down and laid in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea—what a place He had in the mind of God the Father Just look at these verses, where Paul's heart was bursting: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.” No wonder his heart felt warm, and his head full. “All spiritual blessings” —ours through Him, in Him who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He chose us in Christ before the world was. The mind goes back to the place He had in the bosom of the Father.

Just one little word in passing. What do you understand by all spiritual blessings? Have you clear thoughts as to them? Could you sit down and write a list of them, just as of your property in this life you could sit down and give a list? Blessings to Israel—what are they in comparison?

In divine things Scripture alone will not do; it is a matter of communion. If I were to say, Do you know what fellowship with the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ is? Well, people who do know would be likely to express in their faces that they do know fellowship. Do you know what this means—what a blessed thing it is for the Father to have such a Son, and for that Son to have such a Father? To say, lying on your bed at night, There they are up there; how blessed God is with such a Son! what a happy person Christ is to have been the Son of such a Father—the Son who has brought forth all the riches of grace, so that even I, poor stupid I, can read them! The heart looks from one to the other, knowing the relationship, and what the relationship involves, and delighting in it. It is a little taste of the new nature.

It is important to have clear notions, not to put in what is not in scripture; but we want to have the heart brought by the Holy Ghost into that fellowship with the Father and the Son. Look at one passage, and see how the Father does delight in Him (John 17:26): “And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it; that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them.” How that should be enjoyed by the heart! We ought to have clear thoughts as to these blessings. Turn it over before the Lord prayerfully. There is an amazing thing traced out here—love entirely irrespective of good, of merits—the love of the Father choosing people to be in the Son when they were not in existence. They went into sin, and He had to bring them back again. They were to be blameless in love and are so at this present time. He has predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ, the One in whom He sets forth the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the Beloved. Go through it all quietly, and see the long list of spiritual blessings traced in this epistle: “He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and intelligence; having made known unto us the mystery of his will.” He would have us to know what is coming, to walk as in the light, not in darkness, the understanding not unfruitful, the heart rejoicing in that word— “accepted in the, Beloved.” He does not rest much in type and shadow on the humiliation side, but gets to where He is sitting as the rock, once smitten on Calvary, whence the water of life is flowing in blessing.

In verse 19 there is a subdivision. The working of His mighty power toward us is according to the power which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. The Lord had gone under death for our sakes, and the mighty power of God came out this way. He took life again. He had power to take it again. He is the Resurrection and the Life. Ah I there is no resurrection like His. Not only has He power to search the dust of the earth, and to raise all that sleep in Him, but He took life Himself. The whole plan comes out. He passed through the toil of redemption, and said, “It is finished,” that at His name every knee should bow. He is made head over all to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. It is of vital importance to you, if you are Christians, His being there, and to know the glory that is put upon Him, and your connection with Him. Oh, what a truth it is! The very Man that looked to Israel to be thirty-four or thirty-five years of age, that very Man that Peter bandied words with and gainsaid, that Man is sitting on the throne of God at this present time. Well, you may say, I do not believe it, never heard of it; but when you did not believe it, He was there. Well, how blessed! I know He is there. Perhaps this was my last thought of Him at night. When I am asleep, it is just as true. If I should follow Him through death and give up my spirit tonight, He is there, a living Person, watching the progress of death, and enabling me to make death an act, and give up my life. He is there! He is on the throne

Then there is the exceeding greatness of His mighty power to us-ward who believe. Has He brought you in any way by that power? Brought you where? Into a circle in which you never were in nature, where all things of nature are spread about, and you have living connection with the Person that is there, to whom all belongs. How came you to have those thoughts you have about God? How came you to know that a Man has been there for eighteen hundred years and more? How came you to know it, and to say, No wonder? Surely He is in His right place there now. He came forth out of the divine glory, and has returned there. How came you to know it, and to know that He has union of life with you down here, through the mighty power that raised Him, and brought you into fellowship with Him?

There are two things in connection with this, the two great questions of the day: first, as to the church; second, as to the testimony of God going forth. One of the questions of the day is the church, where infidelity does not rule to the humiliation of those that do. When God has written a book which is the greatest wonder, the man who does not believe it is blind and besotted and a fool. He cannot see anything in it! Yet compare the internal evidence with any other book in the world.

You think it strange that I look on that as the word of God. When, where, was such a God ever pictured as when man turned his back on Him? He sent His Son to take the penalty due to the sinner. It puts me down, as it exalts God, and you want to persuade me that the volumes of false religions are on a par with it!.... He has brought us out of the pit, and given us life and capacity to understand the things of God.

Is it that the roll of the chart has got the cord fastened that you cannot unroll it farther? We have to wait in patience with. Him, not only for Him. He is waiting. For what? He has a church here. What church? One which is created by God in Christ Jesus. Had it no works? None whatever. If it is the church, it is created unto good works, and these, mark, God has before ordained that we should walk in them. Are there no works to which you are created? Is there no Abba's love to be waited on—no Christ to mind? The One that is watching you, you watch. The One who died for you, who lives for you—have you not got to live for Him? In great things? No, in little details. To eat to Him, to drink to Him, to sleep and wake, to Him. How that ennobles the whole course of a Christian! When I go to rest, will the eye of Christ be on me? In the morning, when I start up, is it with Christ—to live to Christ? How can I? You are one spirit with Him.

I hear a good deal about testimony. I am uncommonly thankful when the gospel sounds out; God knows how I pray that it may sound out in a way it has not sounded yet; but what I desire is testimony of life. We want living to Christ—this will make the heart yearn for the sinner that does not know Christ. As time goes on, we shall find that what strikes the consciences and minds of men most is life, divine life, led by a man consistently. Let me put that into form. One might have said to Timothy or Titus, or any companion of Paul, I heard a letter read from Paul; he said, To me to live is Christ. Does he really mean it? Ali, they might say, we wish you knew him: the life always goes beyond the description of it: He looked like it, acted it, did not need to say it; he was living to Christ, having all his springs in Him, in all circumstances; and Timothy would say, If you only knew him, you would not ask if he meant it: his conduct goes beyond it.

I am not prepared to say that all my life is Christ. People often say thus. In Paul, what was practically true went beyond the expression. There is a man who is one spirit with the Lord—a life

that takes advantage of circumstances, yet above them. G. V. W.

Chapter 51

The Gospel and the Church According to Scripture: 1

Being A Review Of “Church Doctrine, Bible Truth,” By The Revelation M. S. Sadler

There are many things I accept in this book, truths that the evangelical world have, from circumstances, lost, or which have been thrown by them into the background. I shall refer to some of the chief ones here.

First, I believe the person of the Lord has lost the place—at least in revival preaching—it ought to have, and it makes that preaching, though I doubt not often blessed, seriously defective. Salvation by the love of God to sinners—surely a blessed truth—is preached rather than Christ. This I have long felt and remarked. Still, Mr. Sadler is all wrong about it, as I shall show. He leaves out the salvation—rather a serious defect, and certainly unscriptural.

Secondly, I have no doubt that worship, with the Lord's supper as the great and characterizing center of it, and not preaching, is the great object of Christians assembling themselves together. Preaching and teaching is the work of individuals, and goes on pari passu. But it is not the assembly's (and church simply means assembly) part to teach or set forth the gospel, but the apostles', evangelists', or whoever is able. The assembly is taught, and confesses the truth.

Thirdly, going to heaven—an unscriptural expression—has displaced in the evangelical mind the coming of the Lord and resurrection. But, for all that, Mr. Sadler has wholly missed the mark here too. He has read the scriptures enough to see the defects of the evangelical school, but has not the faith of God's elect so as to know the truth either as to the gospel or the church. Moreover, as to church history, his representation of it—I do not mean intentionally—is far away from the truth. He must have read it with a very prejudiced eye.

I must first take notice of his statements as to the Gospels in a few words. Here, as to what is evidently vital, his statements are quite unfounded. Gospel is not applied, as he states, exclusively to the announcement of certain events occurring at a particular time in the history of the world. Gospel means simply glad tidings, whatsoever they are. The verb is applied to the good news Timothy brought of the Thessalonians to Paul. (1 Thess. 3:6.) As to Mark, the incarnation and birth of Christ form no part of what he calls the gospels. Further, the gospel of the kingdom being at hand, which above all is called the gospel in the four Gospels, is not included in Mr. Sadler's list, and could not subsist, as chiefly there spoken of, till all the events which are were past. All that is peculiarly Paul's gospel (though surely recognizing all) is outside all the events contained in Mr. Sadler's list. It did not begin, in fact and in doctrine, till Jesus was glorified.

Paul calls it the gospel of the glory, and this is vital to his mission, and that which connected it with the assembly or church, which he alone speaks of in his teaching as formed on earth, and speaks of as a distinct and separate ministry; and he is specially the apostle of the Gentiles. Nor even does what is said by Mr. Sadler as to the beginning of Romans give any true idea of Paul's statement as a whole there, nor even of that part of it which Mr. Sadler does refer to. I think it of great moment to note, as I have often done, in public and in private, how the apostle puts Christ

personally forward here as the great subject of the gospel, but Mr. Sadler's use of this fact is partial and false. As “made of the seed of David according to the flesh,” we have nothing to do with Christ. He was “a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers;” the Gentiles stand on other ground. They “glorify God for his mercy,” having no promises, though prophecies spoke of them. As Son of David Christ was not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and could not take the children's bread and cast it to dogs. He declares, “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone."

As God manifest in the flesh, He is the object of infinite delight to the believing soul—its food, as the bread come down from heaven; and when we have found peace through the divine commentaries of the apostle on the value of His work, the soul returns to the Gospels to feed on the bread come down from heaven. But even as to this, though souls may be drawn by the adorable grace manifested in His life, yet, till they eat His flesh and drink His blood, they have no life in them to feed on Him as bread come down from heaven. But, to show how little foundation there is for this statement of Mr. Sadler, the meaning he ascribes to 'gospel' is not the meaning of it in Mark. In the same chapter as that to which Mr. Sadler refers, the evangelist says, “Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel [the glad tidings] of the kingdom, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.” The preaching is the same, Matt. 4:12, 23. Such was the constant tenor of Christ's preaching.

The twelve, consequently, were sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. So, in Luke 4:18-21, He preached the fulfillment of promise, not His death for our sins, or resurrection; and so, verse 43, He preaches the kingdom of God. In chap. 9:2 He sends them to preach the kingdom of God. As regards His death and resurrection, we read that, from the time immediately preceding the transfiguration, He forbade them strongly to say any more that He was the Christ; and so far from preaching His death, or that being the gospel then set forth, we find that, when He told them of it prophetically, they could not bear to hear of it. Yet His death and resurrection, now they are accomplished, are become the great subject of testimony (1 Cor. 15:8, 4), and that for our sins. Christ according to the flesh (that is, as presented to the Jews as their Messiah, come according to promise) Paul knew no more. (2 Cor. 5:1G.) See Matt. 16:20, 21; Mark 9:31; Luke 9:21, 22.

I turn to what is said of it in Romans. We have seen that Paul begins with the double character of Christ, known as Son of David according to the flesh, and Son of God by resurrection. But Mr. Sadler leaves out that Paul was not ashamed of the gospel, or that it was the power of God to salvation, because the righteousness of God was revealed in it (Rom. 1:16, 17); and that he largely sets forth (chap. 3:19-20) how Christ was set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood—how, further (chap. 4:25), He was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. I believe the gospel will have power in the measure in which it is stated as facts, and I bless God that it comes in the shape of facts, because the poorest can understand it. But what it is for us is spoken of. God commends His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. The Shepherd seeks the sheep, the woman the piece of money, the father has his joy in recovering the prodigal.

It is not merely objective facts concerning Christ, but God's disposition towards us as displayed in them, not merely that Christ was raised but raised for our justification; not merely that God's Son

came, but that God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish but have eternal life. It is not exclusively applied to the announcement of certain events; it is God's dealing with us revealed in them, and our conscience and heart directly dealt with by it. God was in Christ. Yet that is not the way the ministry of the gospel is put, but, “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” This was Paul's estimate of the gospel history, and then of his own gospel when Christ had died, that, as though God did beseech by us, we beseech in Christ's stead, be reconciled to God. In the passage quoted by Mr. Sadler from 1 Cor. 15, it is not that Christ died, “a certain event occurring,” but Christ died for our sins; the purpose and grace of God to us as sinners is stated.

Mr. Sadler's account, then, of the gospel in the New Testament is a totally false one as to every part of the New Testament, and falsifies the whole bearing of it, and the way God deals with man in it. And this is connected with his whole system. His gospel is a system of facts, contemplated by persons ecclesiastically born of God in baptism. The gospel in scripture is the expression in facts, and the public declaration by the Holy Ghost (sent down when the facts were accomplished, and Christ, having by Himself made the purgation of our sins, had sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens), of what God is in His love to sinners, and of how they might be righteous before Him through faith in the work accomplished by the Savior. The gospel is addressed to sinners in the attractive power of grace. “I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” Mr. Sadler's gospel, whether during the lifetime of Christ or after His death, is not what scripture makes it. With him it is a history for saints: the scriptures make it glad tidings for sinners. The facts may be the same, and these facts we have to announce; but he announces them to those whom he deceives as to their state (calling them saints when they know they are not) as objects of contemplation, while the scripture gospel presents them to sinners as what they need, and the expression of God's love to them.

“The gospel,” says Mr. Sadler, “does not appear in scripture under the aspect of certain dealings of God with the individual soul apart from its fellow souls. It does appear as certain events, or outward facts,” &c. We have seen how the gospel is stated in scripture. Glad tidings are hardly actual operations in individual souls, but such dealings are as much presented in scripture as pertaining to the gospel, as the blessed facts concerning the Lord. “Except a man be born again” is not exactly glad tidings, but it is with this truth the Lord meets Nicodemus. “In the day,” says Paul, “when God shall judge the secrets of men by Christ Jesus, according to my gospel.” The whole Epistle to the Ephesians is occupied with what Mr. Sadler says is not the gospel, but in a large part is dealing with individual souls; and he is wholly mistaken in saying, as he does, that it is only of the church. The church relationship with Christ only comes in at the end of the first chapter; the previous part of the chapter is occupied with individuals and their relationship with the Father, and if it be not gospel, I know not what it is. The whole of the doctrinal part of the Romans—and I suppose there is some gospel there—is occupied exclusively with individual souls, and the church does not come in at all. The church is not found in the Romans, save in the hortatory part (chap. 12), and for the plain reason that responsibility is individual, conscience individual, justification individual, judgment individual; 1 Cor. 1, where Paul says he was sent to preach the gospel, is individual.

To whom did Paul preach the gospel? to sinners standing on individual responsibility, or to the church? The answer to this will at once show, not only the falseness, but the absurdity, of Mr. Sadler's statement. See 2 Cor. 2:12-16, this was preaching the gospel, and nothing could be more peremptorily individual, and dealing with individual souls. We have only to go to scripture times to learn the absurdity of the whole system. The gospel is for responsible sinners, not for the church, however needed for what Mr. Sadler calls the church now, as it surely is, because they are largely unconverted sinners, though far more responsible sinners than the heathen, but of the church anon. Read 2 Cor. 4:14: we have there “the glorious gospel,” or rather the gospel of the glory. Paul fancied he was by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. He had not had churchmen to instruct him, it is true. Quite true, he spoke of the death, resurrection, and glory of the Lord Jesus in his gospel. This assuredly is not what I am opposing; but that he spoke of them only as events and outward facts, apart from dealing with the individual soul: that is, what Mr. Sadler says about it is wholly and entirely false; and I repeat, this is connected with and involves the whole system. Scripture tells us God of His own will begat us by the word of truth; churchmen tell us it is baptism. Which am I to believe? This is the question.

I might multiply proofs of what the gospel is as presented in scripture; what I have given must suffice. Mr. Sadler seeks to prove his statements by the Gospels, forgetting that these are records of Christ's life and death, and most precious ones for those who believed already (though surely the Holy Ghost may use them to give faith), not the preaching the gospel at all. They are memoirs, as called in old times, richly setting forth the Lord Jesus in the different characters in which He came among men, according to the wisdom of the Holy Ghost. He is Son of David, Emmanuel, in Matthew; the Prophet Servant in Mark; the Son of man, in grace, amongst men in Luke; and His whole person, with the mission of the Holy Ghost, in John.

What little we have of the preaching of the gospel in Acts is altogether the contrary of what Mr. Sadler states. Peter, who never preaches that He is the Son of God, after explaining what Pentecost was, at once charges their individual sin home upon their conscience: You have crucified and slain, God has raised up, Jesus. What was their condition? And they were pricked to the heart, and he tells them, on their urgent demand, what they were to do, It is not a mere outward event, but their act of sin, and God's having owned Him whom they had slain, so as to act by grace upon their consciences. It was for as many as the Lord their God should call. It was individual, and those that received the word profited by it. It is the same story in Acts 3:18-15, though with a different object.

In Paul's discourse at Antioch (Acts 13), it is the same thing; verses 38-41 dealing with individual souls. The same principle governs them, verses 46-48. We have no preaching to Gentiles, only we learn that its effect was individual faith. God opened the heart of Lydia, they so spake that they believed, and Paul at Athens preached Jesus and the resurrection. When the jailor asked what he should do to be saved, Paul in his answer knows nothing of Mr. Sadler's system, but says, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. No thought of Mr. Sadler's system here, though there can be no doubt he was added to the assembly. As he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, salvation is always individual, never what Mr. Sadler makes it to be. The discourse in Acts 17 is Paul's apology, not his preaching. Of course the apostles preached Christ, not His incarnation (perhaps, as Acts 10:37, 38, His service as “anointed"), but man's rejection of Him, and God's testimony to Him in resurrection, and then whosoever believes shall receive remission of

sins; that is, they did not only give many, doubtless all-important, facts, but they did always deal individually with souls. That in reasoning they sought to prove with the Jews that Jesus was the Christ is of course true, but it proves nothing. The commission given in Luke is the one that runs all through the Acts; and this was, that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name, which is strictly dealing with the individual soul.

One other point remains to be noticed under this head. The church, we are told, after speaking of these “outward events,” makes provision that this gospel of the kingdom should be set before her children; “she provides for the setting forth of the gospel, under this one scripture aspect, by the arrangement of her yearly round of fast and festival.” We have seen how little true this statement as to the one aspect of the gospel is; but here, assuming the facts of the gospel, a second point arises, the means of communicating it. The church gives a yearly round of fasts and festivals, so that mere outward events may be before the mind without any dealing of God with the individual soul. Such is Mr. Sadler's approved method, adding a small complement of saints and saints' days—whether to complete the gospel, or for what other purpose, he does not tell us. He seems to bring it in charily (p. 12). Scripture says, “it pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe;” but this foolishness of God dealing with the individual soul does not please the wisdom of the church. It has its own way of doing it. It keeps days, and months, and years. They turn again to the weak and beggarly elements, to which they desire again to be in bondage.

"I am afraid of you,” says the apostle. It was, he tells us, going back to heathenism. And Mr. Sadler, with his knowledge of ecclesiastical history, must know that, except Easter, which was the Jewish Passover, and Pentecost, and perhaps some more recently added saints' days, the church festivals were deliberately and formally adopted from heathenism. Christians, so-called, would have festivals, and they tacked on Christian names to heathen ones, The great Augustine informs us that “the church” did it, that if they would get drunk (which they did even in the churches), they should do so in honor of saints, not of demons. One of the Gregorys was famous for this, and left only seventeen heathen in his diocese by means of it. And another Gregory, sending another Augustine to England, directed him not to destroy the idol temples, but turn them into churches, and as the heathens were accustomed to have an anniversary festival to their god, to replace it by one to a saint. It was thus Europe, Africa, and Asia Minor at least were Christianized. Sicily, which in spite of all efforts had remained heathen, as soon as it was decided that Mary was the mother of God at what I must call the disgraceful and infamous general council of Ephesus, gave up all her temples to be churches.

It was as easy to worship the mother of God as the mother of the gods. But everywhere drunkenness in honour of the saints, and even in the churches, took the place of drunkenness in honor of demigods, the great Augustine and other fathers being witnesses. Such were festal anniversaries; Christmas having been (and it is still celebrated in heathen countries) the worst of heathen festivals, to celebrate the return of the sun from the winter solstice, without a pretense that Christ was born that day, but, as they could not stop the revelry, they put Christ's birth there. Such, in real fact, is the church's celebration of anniversaries and saints' days. This is certain, that the apostle declares that it was a return to heathenism, so that he was afraid his labor was in vain—avowedly turning the great and mighty parts of Christianity, by which God acted on souls, to bring them into blessed and divinely wrought relationship with Himself, individually and collectively, into certain outward events, or outward facts, and exclusively to their announcement as occurring

at particular times. “I am afraid of you."

Chapter 52

The Gospel and the Church According to Scripture: 2

In result the gospel is founded on a series of mighty and divine facts, by which, through the foolishness of preaching, God, in the power of the Holy Ghost, does act on individual souls for salvation, and gather them into one. The church system makes of them a set of outward events, historically remembered by anniversaries, Mr. Sadler rejecting the dealing of God in souls by them. According to him these are born, not by the word as scripture declares, but by a sacrament without any personal faith or operation of the word on their hearts whatever. Of this system I will now speak. The author's statements are as follows:—

“It may be called the great ‘church' truth of God's word; and may be stated somewhat as follows:—

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“This body has always been an outward and visible body known by certain outward and visible marks. Men have always been admitted into this church by a rite or ordinance which betokened God's special goodwill towards each one of them. This church, or body, has always been governed and instructed by a visible ministry. This church, or body, or family, always has been, and, till the second advent, always will be, a mixed body; that is, it has always consisted of two sets of persons, good and bad, penitent and impenitent, those who realize God's love, and those who do not."

Every one of these statements is unfounded. That in Israel and the church there was an assembly, or gathering of individuals, is quite true. Of these we will speak in due time. But it was never God's plan to save people by joining them together in a body or family, kingdom or church; specially it was not so from Abraham's time, and men were called of God before. It is false to say they were always admitted by a rite—false to call them all a church—false to say this church or body has always been governed and instructed by a visible ministry—false to say it has always been a mixed body. The statements following are all equally false, some openly absurd.

People are saved, and always were, individually, by grace, through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, and life received from Him, begotten by the word of truth, justified by faith. I admit an outward visible body in Israel and in the church, though in different forms, and on different principles. That God has set His manifested blessings in a known place, as Israel or the church, since He raised them up, is true; but in neither is personal salvation by coming into it as a system set up on the earth, though figuratively and formally administered there in Christian times, and, if connected with the personal confession of Christ, then formally received and enjoyed. The church, or assembly of God, has more than one application or aspect, is never the kingdom, has, in its truest sense, privileges other than salvation, and in this sense is distinct from the outward and visible body as it exists at present, though it may be found in it if viewed in a certain aspect. But we must examine the statements.

Abraham is the beginning of the religious institutions of God in the new world, and is the root of the olive tree of promise. When the world had turned to idolatry (Josh. 24), God called Abram out, and

established the promises in his seed. He was the first head of God's family, as Adam of the sinful one. There was no root of a family of God, as Adam was the root of an evil family, till Abram, though there had been saints. This, then, I recognize. But this did not begin salvation. About one third of the world's history had passed away ere Abram was called of God. Abels and Enochs, and surely many others, had been saved before Abram's time. They were saved, according to Mr. Sadler's own statement, for he begins with Abram, without family, or church, or nation. Was the salvation different in its nature and its ground then? Were they saved in a different way? If not, the whole Statement is without foundation. That, as a rule, manifested saved ones are found, where God has publicly and outwardly called a people amongst that people, is quite true. But that is a very different thing from saving men by joining them together as a body, family, kingdom, or church. Either Mr. Sadler must have two kinds and ways of salvation, or his principle is upon the face of it false. For during a third of the earth's existence, taking his own date and commencement of this process of saving men by joining them to a body, family, church, or kingdom, there was nothing of the sort to join them to. Mr. Sadler's system falsifies the nature of salvation. In the next place the scripture states the contrary of what Mr. Sadler says. It is expressly said of Abraham (Isa. 2:2), “I called him alone, and blessed him.” “It is next, with Mr. Sadler, a body, and then a church, as if it was all the same. But the blessing of Abraham was neither in a body nor a church. It was in him, and in his seed, really Christ, The true heavenly promises were made to one Seed only, “and that seed is Christ.” The apostle carefully tells us it was to one. “Now to Abraham were the promises made, and to his seed. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ.” “If we are Christ's, we are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise.” Now, that these were in the church, and baptized too, the passage itself shows. I will speak of both, but the promise is exclusively to Christ. (Gal. 3:16-29.) “All the promises of God are in him, yea; and in him, amen.” (2 Cor. 1:20.)

As to Abraham himself, our immediate subject, men have always, we are told, been admitted into this church by a rite. A church means an assembly, and nothing else. Into the church as formed on earth, an external body, or Christian profession, men were admitted by a rite, and that rite baptism; into the body of Christ, decidedly not. But as to Abraham and his seed according to the flesh, this is wholly a mistake. Righteousness—and I suppose that is the way of being saved—was reckoned to him in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised. (Rom. 4:10, 11.) That is, scripture insists on exactly the contrary of what Mr. Sadler teaches. Circumcision was the seal in Abraham of the righteousness of faith, and the formal token of the covenant, according to the title possessed by his family. The title was the being of Abraham's house. Uncircumcision was a condition of forfeiture: one who was of the seed of Abraham, and who was not circumcised, had broken God's covenant. Just as if the old man be not put off we have no part in grace, though baptized twenty times.

But though this was the formal covenant token in carrying out the covenant, God was sovereign. Every one actually born in Abraham's house, or indeed bought with money, was bound to be circumcised. Circumcision was the seal of the promise made to Abraham, and if one of the promised seed was not circumcised, he lost his title, but it was a seal to which he had a title by birth. But, further, the real blessing was by promise, circumcision did not bring into it at all. Abraham's seed was called in Isaac, and the covenant promises to that seed, not with Ishmael;

but Ishmael was circumcised as much as Isaac. (Vers. 19-21.) Nor was, indeed, circumcision, as Mr. Sadler speaks, an ordinance which betokened God's special goodwill towards the men of the family: the promise did that. It was an imposed condition subsequent, giving a required state, and, if it was neglected, the person was cut off.

Further, this body, or church, we are told, has always been governed and instructed by a visible ministry. Here, note, family is dropped. It would not do. No one instructed Abraham but God immediately, which He did very often. A large part of Genesis, and a very important part, consists of these revelations. When there was a people gathered, there was a priesthood besides Levitical assistants. When the Christian assembly was gathered, there were gifts bestowed in principle on all, though in distinctive efficacy on some, as apostles, prophets, pastors and teachers, and evangelists, and others called miraculous, or which were subsidiary. There were besides this, local overseers and servants.

The family is now introduced again. This church, or body, or family," has always been a mixed body." The family was never a body, nor was the church always a mixed body; for at the beginning the Lord added such as should be saved; afterward, as manifested on earth, it became such; but first by false brethren creeping in unawares. (Jude 4.) Israel never was a mixed body. In Israel moreover it was never a question of salvation, but of the place and inheritance of the promises according to the flesh, and none but those who were of the fountain of Israel, or joined by being circumcised, could enjoy them. There was a strict middle wall of partition. Each part of the statement is false.

To pursue the statements of the book: "The covenant of God has always been with this visible church." God's covenant was with Abraham, but he was no assembly, which is all that church means, and the promise was confined to his seed—Christ; but God's church of the New Testament was not revealed then (Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:3-11; Col. 1:26); the circumcised alone had part in the blessings. If they were in the covenant of promise and were not circumcised, they were cut off. Israel subsisted by keeping the middle wall of partition up, this made the church, or the revelation of it, impossible; the church exists consequent on its being thrown down. (Eph. 2:11-22.) With Israel there was the covenant of the law, or the old covenant, and later, in Jeremiah, the promise of a new one to the same people. Of this covenant we reap the benefit of having it, in the spirit, namely, forgiveness of sins, and to be all taught of God, and know Him. But with the assembly there is no covenant made. The Mediator is come, the blood of the new covenant shed. Israel refused to enter into it; and we, while enjoying the spiritual benefit of it, have, if indeed believers, what is far better—an accomplished salvation, and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, (the witness, present power, and seal of it, and the earnest of the glory that belongs to it) being heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, and this individually.

Our body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God. Of this "the church" knows, perhaps, nothing; but they cannot deny that it is in scripture, even if they call it fanaticism. They seek to reduce us to the condition of Judaism, but this is not Christianity nor God's church. He has set Judaism aside to establish it. Even in the lowest aspect of it, He has taken away the first to establish the second. The application of church to Israel in the Christian sense (for the word merely means assembly), that is, as the body of Christ or the habitation of God through the Spirit, is without the slightest foundation in scripture. Nay, more, it contradicts its clearest and most

important principles in reference to this subject. Every principle of the one system is in direct contrast with those of the other, save that both belong to God. What the church is I shall consider presently.

“The word of God,” we are next told, “has always been addressed to this outward visible body.” The Epistles, where addressed to churches, were so no doubt, but all composing churches were held to be really saints. But to say “the word of God has,” &c. shows only what a mist of their own raising these people are living in. Paul's gospel, he specially declares, was to every creature under heaven. I suppose that was the word of God. In Mark we read, “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” And Paul, in the passage quoted (Col. 1), carefully distinguishes his being a minister of the gospel, and a minister of the church to fulfill or complete the word of God; and here was one contrast between Israel and the church. Israel had no such commission. It was a nation; and those of the fountain of Jacob had the word and the promises, and there was no word of God to others, but a law and prophets to them. God has raised up a ministry in Christianity because it is grace to sinners, wherever they are.

Before I proceed further to examine Mr. Sadler's views of the church, I will, because of its importance to souls, examine definitely and more at length whether salvation is individual. The church to which I attach the greatest possible importance I will examine fully; but salvation is individual. If there was but one saved person in the world, he would be saved as men are now, but he could not be an assembly. When the Lord says, “Ye must be born again,” he speaks necessarily and clearly of individuals. Whether it be by baptism we will inquire just now, but it is individual. “So is every one that is born of the Spirit,” is individual. “The wind bloweth where it listeth.” At the end of chapter 3, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.” The promise of living water in John 4 is individual. “The Son quickeneth whom he will” in John 5 is individual. The promise in John 6:40 is individual, and whatever the eating means (and most certainly it is not the Lord's supper), it is individual, as verses 85, 44 plainly show. Verse 47 is conclusive as to individual salvation. John 7 is individual, as verses 87, 88. So are chapters 9, 10, ver. 27,28, is as clear as words can make it; and this even if the sheep are all scattered by Satan. “Catcheth,” in verse 12, and “plucketh,” in verse 28, are the same word. Chapter xi. 25, 26 is individual.

I might quote other passages, but the truth is that all John's writings are strictly individual. The church is never introduced as a truth in them at all; not even in chapter 17, which seems most like it. It does not speak of the assembly or church, but of the unitedness of the individuals in grace. There is indeed a threefold unity, of the eleven disciples, of those believing through their word, and of all Christians in glory. It may perhaps surprise some, that in the Epistles the church is never spoken of as a body formed on earth by any besides Paul.

In the Acts, Peter's words apply to individuals. “Repent and be baptized every one of you for [to] the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.” It was to as many as the Lord their God should call. They are addressed as individuals, and there is no hint of a body or assembly. Men repent individually, and are forgiven sins individually. I do not doubt they came into the assembly, but nothing is said by him about it. The first intimation of union with Christ in one body is at Paul's conversion. (Acts 9:5.) In Peter's sermon to Cornelius it is the universal testimony,” Whosoever believeth in him.” (Acts 10:48.) So Paul: “By him all that believe are justified from all things.” (Acts 13)

The same story with the jailor at Philippi, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” —no word of joining a body to be saved. I do not doubt a moment that they became part of the assembly of God, but not a word is said of it connected with salvation. So Paul preached “Jesus and the resurrection” at Athens, “kept back nothing that was profitable” at Ephesus, preaching “repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,” individual dealing with souls, and nothing of the assembly or church, and that in the very place where he afterward unfolded it.

In Paul's account of his preaching before Agrippa, there is no word of the church in his commission to sinners. He was sent to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in me;” consequently he showed everywhere that men “should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance.” It was individuals; he pressed a work wrought in them; but not a word of the assembly, or joining it, in his testimony to the world.

Now this is the more remarkable, because Paul was the one who specially, and indeed Paul only, built up in church truth those who did believe. But, as we have seen, it was a distinct part of his ministry, as unfolded in Col. 1 I believe what we may call church truth is more important than ever; and in going to the Gentile as he did, Paul laid the foundation of it, for their free admission was externally the basis of that truth, which God is now mercifully bringing out again; but for salvation he preached “repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ."

I have already spoken of the Romans, where all in the doctrinal part is individual, as responsibility, repentance, justification, and being dead to sin, must be in their very nature with sinners. Hence, having spoken of what Christians knew as such of the spirituality of the law, he changes from “we” to “I” — “We know,” “I am carnal.” But all is without exception and carefully individual.

In Corinthians he speaks of the assembly; but so far is the church, as God's building, from being the way of saving, that he speaks of wood, and hay, and stubble, which was to be burnt; and presses upon them in chapter x., that they might be partakers of the sacraments, so-called—be in the external or sacramental church, and fall in the wilderness all the same. From that on he speaks more of the body than of the house. But of these points anon. But when, as in 2 Cor. 5, he turns to the gospel and salvation, Individuality takes its full place again.

In the end of Gal. 2 again, we see individual state. The promise by faith of Jesus Christ is given to them that believe. The putting on Christ is not salvation, but the giving up being Jew or Gentile, bond, free, male, or female, and being Christians and nothing else. It was, begging pardon of the Thirty-nine Articles, a badge of their profession. But we are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and heirs crying, Abba, Father; but all this is individual (Gal. 3; 4,), and they are then carefully warned against keeping days and months and years. Faith that worketh by love was the availing thing. All is carefully individual. They were all in the assembly already.

In Eph. 2:8 salvation is individual, though it be the Epistle in which the doctrine of the church is most fully unfolded; but it is a second order of truth, not salvation. It is when speaking of the individual, that he speaks of the gospel of their salvation, and then they were sealed, by which they were members of the body. (Chap. 1:13) The first truth is children or sons by faith, as in Galatians.

Philippians is all individual, though the assembly be fully recognized.

It is in Colossians the apostle distinguishes his ministry of the gospel and of the church. Holy days were but a shadow of things to come, now passed away; Christ being the body, they were now mere heathenish Judaism, against which he was warning them. Take chapter 3, from chapter 2:20, indeed, and see how all is individual.

In Thessalonians men obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, not by the assembly, as in chapter 1:9, where it is clearly individual. In 2 Thess. 2:13, 14 we have a formal statement that it is by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto they were called by Paul's gospel to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of Timothy I will speak. Titus tells us that the grace of God brings salvation, but adds no word of the church. Of chapter 3:6 I will speak.

Of Hebrews and the rest I need not speak at large. The assembly or church forms no part of doctrine there.

That Christ leads our praises in it (chap. 2:12) we learn, and (chap. 12:28) that there is an assembly of firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. Conscience, which is always individual, is perfected, and this gives us boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. Faith is that of an individual coming to God, and by that he obtains witness that he is righteous through the more excellent sacrifice. That salvation is through joining an assembly is alike unknown, and opposed to scripture. Men are justified by faith, then sealed by receiving the Holy Ghost, through which they are of the one body. Baptism is their formal admission into the external company on earth. Of this we must now speak, and show all Mr. Sadler's theory utterly false.

I believe, let me now say, that the truth of God as to the assembly is, in these days, of the last importance; that God's order was to gather souls as well as to convert and save them, and that many of our highest privileges are connected with it. But the assembly or church has two very distinct aspects in scripture, consequent upon its being formed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost—that of the body of Christ, and that of the dwelling place of the Holy Ghost. Besides this, in the latter aspect, that is, as God's house, it has a double character—what Christ builds, and what man builds responsibly.

All this, which is declared in scripture, is missed by Mr. Sadler. All his thoughts are vague and in confusion; all his statements as to the Ephesians unfounded. He says (p. 45), “a kingdom or fellowship which He deigns to call His body.” He never calls His kingdom His body. “He instituted means of grace, by which they were to be brought into this fellowship” (p. 45), and (p. 46) “all baptized into His name are to be accounted as belonging to it.... In this case the baptized are the church (p. 46), and responsible for the grace of having been made members of Christ.” All this is false.

In 1 Cor. 12:18 we read, “By one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.” That this is the Holy Ghost, and not baptism by water, is as clear as words can make it. The apostle is speaking of spiritual manifestations—gifts given by the Holy Ghost: “All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will. For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For

by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." One has only to read the chapter to see, with unquestionable evidence, that the apostle is speaking of the Holy Spirit Himself.

But, to leave this beyond all controversy, we have a positive declaration by the Lord Himself of what the baptism of the Spirit is: "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." (Acts 1:5.) Accordingly, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues. That coming of the Holy Spirit was the baptism of the Holy Ghost spoken of, and of these and other gifts, which were the fruit of it, the apostle is speaking in 1 Corinthians.

That the apostles even ever received Christian baptism there is not a trace in scripture, nor indeed the hundred and twenty who were together. They were to wait for the promise of the Father, receiving power by the Holy Ghost coming upon them, which took place accordingly, and "Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2:38.) This was the baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which they were baptized into one body. That water baptism introduced into the body, or made men members of the body, is a notion wholly unknown to scripture. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The gift of the Spirit is always distinguished from it moreover. They were to repent and be baptized for (to) the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38.)

(To be continued)

Chapter 53

The Gospel and the Church According to Scripture: 3

In the case of Cornelius, he received the Holy Ghost, God's proof that He would have him in His assembly, as formed down here, into which consequently Peter orders him to be admitted by baptism. Whether before or after, they are always distinct. So in Samaria they believed what Philip preached and were baptized. After that two of the apostles go down and pray that they may receive the Holy Ghost, for as yet He was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. So in Acts 19 twelve men, on Paul's instruction, were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Ghost came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. Baptism and the reception of the Holy Ghost are distinct; and it is by the latter that believers are baptized into one body, which is a real union with Christ. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,” by which we are members of His body, He being the Head.

I turn now to being born of God in baptism. This is equally unwarranted by scripture—nay, formally contradicted. “Of his own will,” says James, “begat he us, by the word of truth;” and Peter, “Being born again, not of corruptible seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth forever.” (1 Peter 1:23.) Paul tells us, “In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel” (1 Cor. 4:15), and he was not sent to baptize—strange if men were born of God by it. He tells the Thessalonians God had chosen them to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, whereunto He called them by his gospel; and the Lord declares, “Ye are clean through the word which I have spoken to you.” I have quoted positive passages. He who keeps to the word will find it confirmed in every page.

But we will examine the passage which speaks of being born, as they allege, in baptism: John 3:5. It is only an effort to squeeze it out of the passage, for of baptism directly it does not speak. Further, it is well to remark that it is not said, born of the Spirit by, or with, water, but born of water and the Spirit. I have already said the apostles were never baptized (they were clean through the word spoken) nor is there the idea of communication of a nature by water. “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit.” The water is necessarily dropped here. (John 3:6.)

As a testimony of the extreme ignorance of Mr. Sadler as to scriptural truth, I would cite from page 54 the declaration that we find no allusion to such a use of water in the books of the Old Testament. This is a singular preoccupation of spirit. The Lord demands how Nicodemus, being a teacher of Israel, did not know this: the Old Testament, that is, furnished him fully with this truth. Let us turn to Ezek. 36:25: “Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be cleansed from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh: and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them, and ye shall dwell in the land.....And I will call for the corn,” &c, dwelling on temporal promises to Israel in the last day, which last promises lead the Lord to say, “If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of

heavenly things?" and He goes on to the fuller doctrine of the cross, which involved the rejection of Messiah, and the impossibility of the present fulfillment of earthly promises.

This leads us at once to see what being born of water means; it is purifying from evil, sanctifying through the truth; and the Father's word is truth, that by which we are positively told by James we are begotten, born again, according to Peter, who distinctly says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit." "Ye are clean," says the Lord Himself, "through the word which I have spoken unto you;" so Paul, "that he might sanctify and cleanse it, by the washing of water by the word." There are two things, and, to set Mr. Sadler quite at ease, at the same time communication of a new life or nature. "That which is born of the Spirit is spirit," and the purifying the soul by obeying the truth, for this birth is by the word, the incorruptible seed of God. The whole tenor of the Lord's statement contradicts the "church" doctrine. "The wind bloweth where it listeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." Whereas it is tied in that system to a formal rite, which all are bound by the system to carry out universally. Besides, it is the way of seeing the kingdom, as well as entering it, with the solemn statement of "Verily, verily." Does baptism make people see it? Not now, for the child at any rate, to whom that system habitually applies it, does not see it at all; not the kingdom of glory, for they admit that many baptized never see that at all.

To a Jew, a rabbi, who looked for the kingdom of God, and had read Ezekiel, and looked for the kingdom according to that and other passages, the being born of water and the Spirit had the clearest and fullest signification. But nothing blinds like the church system. Speaking of the insignificance of water does not concern me, as I do not apply it to baptism by water at all. But this is a mistake, because baptisms by water were the universal figure for cleansing among the Jews, even with proselytes, at least women. All the rest of Mr. Sadler's statements have nothing to do with the matter; save that when he rejects believing as the way of being born, the scripture replies, "We are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus." The word nowhere joins the Holy Ghost and water as baptism, as if the Holy Ghost acted in it and by it. It is always a distinct thing.

But further: baptism is not even a sign of the new birth, but of death. We are baptized to Christ's death. It is a figure of death and burial, as Rom. 6 and Col. 2 clearly testify, and hence is connected with remission of sins because (in coming up out of death—death with Christ, which is figured by it, and risen with Him) we come up forgiven all trespasses, as is said in Col. 2, and having, as to our profession, left the old man behind us, put off the old man, crucified with Him, reckoning ourselves dead.

And note, our resurrection with Christ is not the same as quickening. In resurrection Christ is viewed as a raised man. God raised Him from the dead, and us, for faith, with Him. But we are baptized to His death. I go down there into His death, and am raised with Him, "through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." It is not the Son quickening whom He will, nor pimply our being born, but Christ a dead man raised, which implies the remission of sins for those who have part in His death, buried with Him, and consequently to walk in newness of life, reckoning oneself dead to sin, and alive to God in Him.

What Mr. Sadler says as to Ephesians is a mistake. Church union with Christ is not the only or great subject of the epistle, doctrinal or hortatory. You do not come to it till the very end of the first chapter. All the previous part, our calling and inheritance, is based on our relationship with the

Father, and being in the same place as Christ, as to this, as sons. In the hortatory part we are to be followers (μιμηται) of God as dear children, and walk like Christ. In our relationship with Christ, it is with Him as man, whom God has raised. Then the body, and our quickening with Him, is spoken of. There is no reference to this relationship in the hortatory part, except in speaking of husband and wife.

Now as to other passages connected with baptism, the “church principle” gives remission of sins by it regularly, when the person has committed none. So that the application of all this is singular enough in this system. A heathen or a Jew, baptized to Christ, does, I doubt not, receive administratively forgiveness of all past sins—I believe a great deal more in connection with Christ's death (a believer, as to his conscience, is perfected forever), but I believe that he comes in as one who has died with Christ, and left all the old things behind him—is indeed as a risen man.

But we must consider the passages, which are of great importance in their place. We are all baptized to (never into) something, as “to Moses,” “to John's baptism,” where it is the same word; and where it is said, “baptized to,” or “for, the remission of sins,” it is that which is the portion given in Christ, and we come to partake of it, just as we do to have death to sin; where a person has been a sinner, he receives it, as to all he had done, in it. Baptism is that by which we are introduced into the enclosure in which God has set His blessings administratively on earth, though He be sovereign. There is forgiveness there, the Holy Ghost there, the administration of all God's blessings down here. On entering, I enter into the condition and place where these blessings are enjoyed. Hence we find, washing away sins, the consequent receiving of the Holy Ghost, indeed every blessing, in Christ, as far as they exist down here, connected with it. But no one, save those blinded by “church principles,” could, as having read the scriptures, ascribe operatively and effectually to baptism the possession of these privileges. The blood of Christ, and nothing else, washes away our sins before God; but I come professedly to Christ in baptism, in whom and where this blessing is. It is the admission into the open confession of His name and death, and, in a certain measure, resurrection. Hence, guarding it where he says it saves, Peter says, “not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer (request, ■περ■τημα) of a good conscience towards God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

As to being born in it, such a thought is never found. Regeneration is connected with it in Titus, and modern language has connected that word with being born again. It is only found in one other place in scripture. “In the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory” —the millennial earth, a new state or order of things. Thus Peter, when he speaks of saving us, is referring expressly to Noah, who came through the flood, which was death to the old world, into a new one, and was buoyed up by that which was death to them, into that new one—was saved by or through water; so we, seeking a good conscience, find it in Christ's death, brought safe with Him into the new place of resurrection. I believe regeneration in Titus refers to baptism as a sign of this. But we are washed by passing out of the old condition of heathenism, or Judaism, or fleshly life in any sense, into the new state of things, which is, where real, a new creation altogether, of which we are thus—professedly at any rate—partakers. But then Paul carefully distinguishes this from the renewing of the Holy Ghost. I have no doubt he is thinking of the regeneration as a real thing, but not as the renewing of the Holy Ghost as an actual inward work. It is a change of state and position, the renewing an actual internal work. This is never connected with baptism.

I have spoken of Acts 2:38, and of Acts 22:16. Eph. 5:26 has, on the face of it, nothing to do with the matter; the washing is by the word. Mark 16:16 brings in faith on preaching. Now, if a heathen believed Jesus was Son of God, and refused to be baptized, he refused to be a Christian when he knew he ought; for him it was refusing to confess unto salvation. It has nothing to do with any efficacy in baptism. (Titus 3:5 Peter 3:2.) I have spoken of Rom. 6:14 and of Col. 2:12. To say that being baptized to Christ's death is being born of God is as absurd as to the meaning of the rite, as it is groundless. That death is the force and meaning of the rite is quite true, and it is so used by the apostle; but it has nothing to do with any inward work, or being born again.

On Gal. 3 (p. 58) also I have spoken. Rom. 6 and Col. 2 are both used as public profession; Romans, as showing that living on in sin denied it: Colossians, that this profession of being dead subverted the religion of ordinances, which Mr. Sadler is insisting on. We are no longer alive in the world in Colossians, we are dead to sin in Romans. The conclusion Mr. Sadler draws from the passage in Romans, in page 56, is exactly the contrary of that drawn by the apostle. The difficulty was, if one man's obedience made us righteous, we might continue to live in sin. How shall we that have died to sin live in it any longer? And that is what you did professedly, he goes on to say, in baptism; you were baptized to Christ's death. You are denying your profession of Christ by such an argument.

As to Col. 3:1-10, it is not “yet” (p. 67), but “because,” and the passage proves the contrary of what it is cited for. If I am risen with Christ, I have power, and am to mortify these evil members—for he will not recognize the Christian as having his life in this world; he is professedly dead and risen with Christ.

What Paul is showing in 1 Cor. 10 is that, belonging sacramentally to the church, taking in both sacraments, did not secure salvation, which I wholly accept. It was a professed deliverance out of the world, but not the new birth. In Jude he shows the same thing, they had an outward deliverance, like Israel, but, he adds, not having believed, and we are children of God by faith, He afterward destroyed them. This is a poor argument for the value of baptism, and note, saving out of Egypt has nothing to do with personal or eternal salvation. It was the deliverance of a people, a change of situation; which is just what baptism effects, not involving any real change or internal salvation at all. And so both the passages declare: a very necessary warning when such a book as Mr. Sadler's is written.

It is perfectly true that in his epistles to the various churches the apostle treats those to whom he writes as saints; not indeed on the ground that Mr. Sadler puts it, but on the solid ground of God's work—on that of real faith—as I shall show. In the Galatians alone he speaks doubtfully in one passage, but recovers his confidence in the next chapter. And observing days, and months, and years, was one great cause of his doubts—the Judaism Mr. Sadler recommends. (Gal. 4:10, 11-20.) He recovers his confidence, looking to the Lord. (Chap. 5:10) He anxiously warns the Corinthians, but is not in doubt of their real Christianity. Brought out of heathenism by the word and Spirit of God, and passing by baptism formally, as Mr. Sadler says, into God's established place of blessing, the apostle treats them as real Christians, but on the ground of their real faith, never on the ground of a fancied work in baptism. He does show in two instances what baptism implied in the Christian (Rom. 6; Col. 1), but never as the ground of addressing them as saints. When he does in this way refer to it, it is to warn them not to deceive themselves by such a

thought. (1 Cor. 10) Let us see this.

In Rom. 1:7 they are saints by God's calling, and (ver. 8) he thanks God for them all that their faith was spoken of throughout the whole world. He Sought to be comforted by their mutual faith.

The church of God at Corinth were saints by God's calling, sanctified in Christ Jesus. The formal profession id even distinguished as those who everywhere called on the name of the Lord, though treating them as true, unless proved otherwise; and, so far from not esteeming them as real saints, he declares that God would confirm them to the end, so that they should be blame, less in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ. God had called them into the fellowship of His Son, and He was faithful. The worst among them turned out in fact, sad as his conduct was, a real Christian, and was restored. Accustomed to heathen habits, they had everything to learn morally. Indeed, as we read in the Acts, God had a great people in this notably corrupt city. In those days dissipation in sin was called Corinthianizing. In the second epistle, they, being restored in state by his first, he speaks of them with full confidence, “having confidence in you all.” (Chap. 2:3) Titus's spirit had been refreshed by them all. His boasting of them was found to be a truth. The whole epistle shows his confidence in the reality of their Christianity. In chapter 12 he is afraid he may have to use sharpness as to some who might have sinned, but of their true Christianity no doubt.

Of the Gal. 1 have spoken. There for a moment he stood in doubt. But this proves what I am saying, and that Mr. Sadler is all wrong. For they had been all baptized like all the rest. It was their actual state which raised the question, though they had been, and when that was turning from the truth, their baptism availed nothing as to their being treated as saints. “Ye did run well: who did hinder you, that ye should not obey the truth?” Nor does he therefore boldly call them saints at the beginning, though in looking to Christ he regained his confidence. Their baptism did not suffice for this.

In Ephesians there is no doubt. They were not only saints, but faithful in Christ Jesus; but here the apostle distinguishes between one Spirit, one body, and one hope of our calling; and one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. The latter as public profession. But of the Ephesians he affirms that they were quickened of God, when dead in trespasses and sins. They had been sealed after believing. His address is not founded on their baptism, but on their faith. Every verse of the Epistle bears testimony to it. The church is one which Christ has loved, sanctified by the word, and will present glorious to Himself: one was as true as the other, His loving, sanctifying, and presenting glorious to Himself.

The Philippians gives the same testimony—that he looked to a real work. He was thankful for their fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He that had begun a good work would perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ. He writes to them on the ground of true faith and grace, not on that of baptism, assured moreover that the work would go on to the day of Jesus Christ.

In Colossians “faithful brethren” is again added. And what was the ground of his writing? He had heard of their faith in Christ Jesus, and their love to all the saints. It was reality, not baptism. They too had been dead in their sins, and God had quickened them with Christ and forgiven them all their trespasses. Would Mr. Sadler say tins to all his congregation, and, as Paul to the Corinthians, that God would confirm them unto the end? and to the Philippians, that He who had begun a good

work in them would perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ—that they were all complete in Christ? or with Ephesians, that the same power had wrought in them which had raised Christ from the dead and set Him at God's right hand? He knows he would not; his whole theory is false and delusive. Preach to them as baptized, and not as heathen—all well and right. But the Epistles go on the ground of real Christianity in the soul.

With the Thessalonians, he knew not their baptism but their election of God, because his gospel had come to them, not in word only but in power and in the Holy Ghost; so that they were ensamples, and so spoken of that he needed not say anything. The word worked effectually in them; they were his hope and joy and crown, when Christ came. In the Second, their faith grew exceedingly, and the love of every one of them all towards each other abounded.

Of Timothy, Titus, and Philem. 1:1, 1 have no need to speak; they were individually known and chosen brethren.

The whole thing is an awful delusion, which the reading of the Epistles exposes at once, in its bare nakedness and soul-deceiving character. But we have an Epistle which speaks of the converse of this, and, if possible, proves more strongly, because negatively, what I say. The church was soon corrupted.

Jude tells us that false brethren had crept in unawares. Who could creep in unawares to Mr. Sadler's system? Baptized, no doubt, but crept in, and unawares, but showing distinctly that, where they were not real saints, they were not recognized as saints on the ground of baptism indiscriminately, but detected as having no business there. They had crept in unawares, spots in their love feasts, feeing themselves without fear. If Mr. Sadler's theory were right, why not address them as saints, like all the rest, by baptism?

Peter equally takes the ground of true saints, elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, and declares they were kept by the power of God, through faith, to the salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. They had purified their souls in obeying the truth. Christ was precious to them. In the Second Epistle he stirs up their pure minds by way of remembrance. The other Epistles are more treatises, not addressed formally to Christians.

Only that in John some had gone out that it might be manifested they were not all of them. They had slipped in undetected, but were manifested as “not of us.” God did not allow them to remain: if of them, they would have continued, showing clearly what “of us” means. But baptism is never laid as the ground of addressing saints as such, but faith and being obedient to the truth: in a word, being Christians in truth, though some false brethren began to creep in unawares.

I conclude then that (while baptism was the public and outward admission into the Christian assembly, as formed on earth, and so to its privileges here, and so formally to the remission of sins, which was found there, and hence, when sins were already committed, their remission received administratively, and men passed into a new place and position, being accounted to have wholly left in Christ's death, to which men were baptized, their old standing) it is not being born again at all according to John 3, it has nothing good or had to do with being a member of Christ's body, nor was it any way receiving the Holy Ghost, which is always carefully distinguished from it. It is not receiving life, not being made a member of Christ's body, not receiving the Holy Ghost.

The whole theory is anti-scriptural as to the meaning and import of baptism, as well as to any fancied actual efficacy.

I now turn to the scriptural view of the church or assembly of God. It is formed, we have seen, by the descent of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Spirit is given to believers as a seal on God's part of their faith, by reason of their being cleansed by the blood of Christ. They are sealed to the day of redemption. The effect of this in the individual, though full of blessing, and as important as the others of which we shall speak, is not our subject now. But the result, as stated in scripture, as to the assembly, is that it is the body of Christ, each individual who is thus sealed being united to Christ the Head, and a member individually of His body; all thus sealed constituting His body. This, though it will be perfected as a whole in glory, is constituted on earth; for the Holy Ghost has come down here consequent on the Head being a Man exalted to the right hand of God. This may be seen in Eph. 1:19-23, as it is in the counsels of God; and in 1 Cor. 12 as in fact down here.

But there is another aspect of the assembly, the house of God: only we must remark that the body of Christ exists by true union with Christ by the Holy Ghost. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit,” and “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.” If he be thus united to Christ, it is a real thing. “If Christ be in you,” says the apostle. People have taken the Spirit of Christ here to be a temper or state; but the words cited which follow show at once the fallacy of this. “If Christ be in you” is the sense the Holy Ghost puts upon it. Eph. 5 clearly shows what this body is—the bride of Christ. It is what Christ loved, and which He will present to Himself, as God presented Eve to Adam. It is no doubt established on earth, because the Holy Ghost is come down to earth, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost took place then; but it is real—if one member suffers, all suffer with it; if one rejoice, all rejoice with it. We are members one of another. Of this the Lord's supper is the symbol and the outward bond. (1 Cor. 10:17.) Baptism with water is not what makes us members.

But I now turn to the house. God's dwelling amongst men is a great truth, and the consequence of redemption. He did not dwell with Adam innocent; He did not dwell with Abraham. But as soon as Israel was redeemed out of Egypt, though by an external redemption, He came to dwell among them in the Shechinah of glory. We read in Ex. 29, “They shall know that I Jehovah their God have brought them up out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them.” Consequent on a true eternal redemption, Christ as man being at the right hand of God, the Holy Ghost comes down, making the assembly His dwelling place. But here we have to look at the house, as scripture presents it to us, in two distinct ways; according to the purpose of God, and indeed as founded by Him on earth; and as administered by man responsibly.

According to the purpose of God, it is not yet complete. The Lord says, “On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” This is not yet complete. At least, we trust that souls will be yet converted. God is not slack concerning His promise, but longsuffering. So Peter: “To whom coming as unto a living stone... ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house.” (1 Peter 2:4, 5.) So in Eph. 2:21: “In whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” Here, in the first case, the Lord Himself builds, in the others no instrumentality is spoken of; the living stones come, the building grows, to a holy temple. This is the Lord's work and it cannot fail, and the stones are living stones, built on Christ the living Stone. It may be visible, as it was at the beginning; or invisible, as it has become through man's sin. But

the Lord builds His temple, and that cannot fail, and His work cannot be frustrated.

But the external body, as a house and temple down here, in which we are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit, has been entrusted to the responsibility of men, as everything has to begin with. “As a wise master builder,” says Paul, “I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.” Here is man's responsibility. Wood and hay and stubble may be built into the house. Till God judges it, it is the temple of God, as the Lord calls the temple His Father's house, though it was made a den of thieves. We have instruction how to conduct ourselves in a state of things which, in its hidden germ, began in the apostles' day. Where there is the form of godliness, denying the power of it, we are to turn away; to purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonor. In the beginning it could be said, The Lord added daily such as should be saved, and that visibly. Now we say, “The Lord knoweth them that are His;” and “every one that nameth the name of Lord” must “depart from iniquity.” The wolf may catch and scatter the sheep, but cannot pluck them out of the Savior's hand.

The mystery of iniquity wrought in the apostles' days. All, at the end of his career, sought “their own, not the things of Jesus Christ;” and he knew that after his decease, the barrier gone, grievous wolves would enter in, and from within men arise speaking perverse things to draw the disciples after them. Jude tells us that false brethren had already crept in unawares, and these, we learn from him, were the class who would be judged by Christ at His coming. And John tells us that the last times were already there, manifested by apostates. The church then, as God's house, might be largely composed of what would be burned up—wood, and hay, and stubble. But when this was so, when there was a form of godliness and the power denied, from such true Christians were to turn away, and walk with those who called on the name of the Lord out of a pure heart. True saints would be hidden, or might be, so that we could only say, the Lord knows them that are His. But there are explicit directions what to do when this is the case—turn away from them. The church could have no authority, for Christians were called upon to listen to Christ's judgment of it. See the seven churches. Jezebel would be its teacher, the mother of its children; and from its lukewarmness it would be spewed out of Christ's mouth. And the apostle in 2 Tim. 3, when the perilous times of the last days should be come, refers to the scriptures as able to make us wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. When the church would be a false and insecure guide (having the form of godliness, denying the power of it), the believer is referred to the scriptures as a secure one, and called on authoritatively to listen to and hear the Spirit's judgment of the church.

(To be continued)

Chapter 54

The Gospel and the Church According to Scripture: 4

The body of Christ, though set up manifestly and visibly on the earth, cannot have false members, because it is such by real union—by the Holy Ghost—with Christ its glorified Head. The baptism of the Holy Ghost formed it, not the baptism of water. It is the church which Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself to sanctify and cleanse with the word, and which He will present to Himself a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. He nourishes and cherishes it, as a man does his own body, for we are members of His body. But as this is by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, the assembly takes another character. It is the habitation of God through the Spirit—His house; in its origin identical in its extent with the body—the Lord adding daily those whom He was saving. This also will be an everlasting character of the assembly of God. Glory in the church, to all the generations of the age of ages, is the desire of the apostle, and in the new heavens and the new earth the tabernacle of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, will be with men. This Christ builds; it is formed of living stones, and grows into a holy temple; the workman is the Lord Himself in Uis grace. Nor can Satan prevail against it.

But, as man himself, the world under Noah, the law and priesthood in Israel, the kingdom in Solomon, and Gentile power in Nebuchadnezzar, it has, as to present administration and manifestation, been committed to man's responsibility, and man, as in each of the cases named, has signally failed, and failed the first thing. So it was with man, with Noah, with the law, with the priesthood, with the royalty, with the Gentile power. So it has been with the professing church. As to general decay, all sought their own, the last days had come, nor was there to be recovery. As a dispensation on earth, they did not continue in God's goodness! and would be cut off. Evil men and seducers would wax worse and worse; there would be a form of godliness, denying the power; and the evil that had come in by false brethren would grow to be the subject of judgment when the Lord came. History only confirms it.

Things were read in the churches forty years after John's death which would scarcely be received by an infidel now as doctrine, and contained practices as superior piety which would be scouted in decent society. I challenge anybody to deny it who has read the Shepherd of Hennas; it issued in the abominations of the middle ages and of Romanism, which truly made, as an infidel has said, the annals of the church the annals of hell. No heathenism was so systematically bad. Baptism does not make any one a member of Christ. The church was set up visibly, both as the body and the house. The body nothing can touch, because it exists by real union with Christ, the head. The house, according to the counsels of God, is built by Christ, and is not yet complete; but, as every system ordained of God, as formed down here, it has been committed to the responsibility of man, and man has failed. And not only will it be set aside, but it is there judgment begins. Corruption and apostasy mark its result, and it will be set aside, as Israel was. This, indeed, is a general truth, that everything has been first committed to man's responsibility when it was established, and man responsible has failed, and all is to be set up in power and perfectness in the Second man. 2 Timothy directs us how to act when the church has failed, as 1 Timothy gives us the order in which it was established. The attributing the blessings and promises given to the body and the house as

built by Christ, to the house as carried out by responsible man and built of wood and hay and stubble, is the origin of popery and what is called Puseyism, leading men to trust in, and cling to, that which God is going to judge and cut off, instead of to the word of God, to which He has referred us in the perilous time of the last days. It is just this, with many false details, which the Church Services do, and Mr. Sadler seeks to justify.

I notice a few details. Regeneration is a falsely used word. But being horn again is not by union with Christ, but by His quickening power by the word; nor is baptism being born again. It is wholly false that the Galatians were children of God by faith, because, as Mr. Sadler says, as many of them as had been baptized to Christ had put on Christ. Indeed Mr. Sadler contradicts himself, for he says it is a needful supplement to faith, and if a supplement, it could not be because of baptism they were children by faith. The Galatians states they were children by faith, and faith only. That in baptism they had professedly put on Christ, in contrast with being Jews or Greeks or anything else, is true. But the epistle expressly speaks of the Spirit as that by which those who are sons by faith cry, Abba, Father. The doctrine that a child who has not committed sins receives remission of sins in baptism is a cruel mockery; that he is baptized to that which thus belongs to Christianity, as its leading privilege, may be true, & it be done intelligently.

Speaking of being baptized into anything is a mistake. It is to, as to Moses, to John's baptism. There is no Christian covenant. The kingdom of God is not the church, nor the body of Christ. That men enter into the kingdom by baptism may be all well, though entrance into the house seems to be more accurate. It is into the public company of God's professing people, but even so “house” is only a figurative word; but they do enter where God dwells in the person of the Holy Ghost.

I do not discuss the question of Calvinism. Mr. Sadler's statements as to the falling from grace are not sustained at all by the passages he quotes. That they may fall away after being baptized scripture plainly states. He cannot have a better human statement as to it than his Article XVII. Baptism is not the seal of any covenant. It is expressly declared that the Spirit is the seal of faith in the believer. The whole of this part of Mr. Sadler's book assumes as admitted truth what there is not the smallest warrant for in scripture (as p. 95). There is no admission into a Christian covenant. Regeneration is not grafting into Christ. Circumcision was not entering into the covenant, nor did it effect that infants should be children of God under the old dispensation. The whole statement is fancy. “Children of God” was not a title even of believers in the old dispensation. (See Gal. 4) This and the following pages are a congeries of unfounded assertions, but the general discussion of the subject in the previous pages suffices.

I will now take up Mr. Sadler's teaching on the Lord's supper, the precious and blessed memorial of the Lord Himself, who deigns to care that we should remember Him. If ever there was anything calculated to touch the heart of a Christian it is this, nor do I doubt that, as with all means of grace, so, especially with this, positive and direct blessing ensues to the believer. For my own part I know of nothing, of what I may call the institutions of Christianity, connected with so much joy and fruitful influence to my soul. No, Christian will despise preaching, teaching, exhortation, reading the word, or common praise and prayer, if he knows his need or his privileges, nor indeed other things less properly institutions; but in none are the affections, as formed by the Spirit of God, so fully and solemnly moved as in the Lord's supper. But I reject, and reject as indeed destructive of this, the view Mr. Sadler takes of it. Solemnity, seriousness, and self-judgment in going to it is every way to

be cultivated. But superstition always cultivates mystery and fear in our nearest approaches to God; Christianity the contrary everywhere. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. We have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Fear hath torment, and he that feareth is not made perfect in love. God's perfect love—for it is God's love that is spoken of—casts out fear. (1 John 4)

He would not have us always in torment. And with striking beauty, when it speaks of our love to Him, it does not say we ought to love Him, but, in the sense of love fully displayed in what proceeds, we love Him because He first loved us. For in the case of a superior, even of a mother, or any one we look up to—and in this case it is infinitely so—the deep sense of their love to us is true love to them. In what precedes, God's love towards us as sinners, dead in sins and guilty, is shown (1 John 4:9, 10), in the Christian enjoyed in a new nature by the Holy Ghost (ver. 12), and then perfect with us—for there is no excuse for the translation, “our love” —giving us boldness for the day of judgment, because as Christ is, so are we in this world. The thought of God's love has reached from the condition of guilty dead sinners to the day of judgment; and this takes away fear, for we know Him, He has revealed Himself to us as the Father sending the Son, and bringing us, while once guilty sinners, far from Him, as sons into His presence, in Christ Himself; He fully revealed in Him, and we complete in Him, before Him; and hence, while redoubling our praise and adoration, taking away fear, save the blessed and most wholesome reverence which fears to offend. In this sense “blessed is he that feareth always;” it is the beginning of wisdom, and a beginning that is never lost, but increased in our fullest blessedness: indeed then we feel our own nothingness and forget ourselves, but never Him, when sensibly in His presence, as His fear makes us.

The whole spirit then of Mr. Sadler's system, though engaging to the natural man, the effort at mystery and fear, is contrary to the very character, and object, and nature of Christianity, as made known to us in the word. In it the veil is rent from top to bottom, free entrance into the holiest given, and that with boldness. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has declared God, and made Him known as He knew Him in His bosom. That the person of Christ is mysterious is most true, but this would go quite too far, for no one knows the Son but the Father; so it is absolutely because of the union of Godhead and manhood in one person. But in intercourse with men the Lord was openness and affability itself among them, as one that served, and just as free with His poor ignorant disciples as with Moses and Elias in glory, and speaking on the same subject. See the kind of intercourse of Ananias in Damascus (Acts 10:10-16), and of Paul (chap. 22:17-21), and how the Lord met them.

The truth is, it is just bringing us, as the whole system does, to Judaism. There the Holy Ghost signified by the veil that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest. (Heb. 9) To us the word is boldness to enter in by the new and living way through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. And it is this Mr. Sadler wants to make a mystery and a veil of again; and the Christian may be assured that it is not God's presence known in the holiest that will give him levity or carelessness in his conscience; he wil1 be, as Paul expresses it, “manifested to God,” and he is speaking of manifestation as it will be in the day of judgment (2 Cor. 5), for God's holiness and judgment of evil never vary. But it is not fear, because we are before Him in Christ as sons, accepted in the Beloved—blessed, if I am to believe scripture, as men to whom the Lord imputes no sin. And of that state only the scripture says, “and in whose spirit there is no guile.” Why should there be, if we

are as white as snow? and if we fail, have confidence in God to confess it, with a full and open though a broken heart, the Holy Ghost who dwells in us leading us, through the advocacy of Christ, to do so?

I have said thus much because of the importance of the truth of Christianity in itself, its true nature, and because it changes the whole aspect of the subject we are upon. But I will enter directly on the subject. And, first, it is difficult to acquit Mr. Sadler of a want of honesty. It is hardly conceivable that a person who seems to have studied the text of scripture on his subject should not know that eating “damnation” to themselves is exactly the opposite of what we mean now by damnation. Either the word was not used then as it is now, or the translators were not honest; for the damnation here spoken of is a chastisement sent that they might not be condemned. They eat and drink judgment to themselves; for if we judged ourselves we should not be judged, but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world. And the judgments are spoken of; sickness, which went on even to death, called sleep because it was that of Christians. Thus the speaking of damnation is in open contradiction of the passage, and subverts its whole purpose and object.

No true Christian doubts the divinity of the blessed Lord, but, solemn as was the institution of the Lord's supper, every word He spoke, and every act He did, was the expression of the same divine Person, so that the attempt to make anything especially mysterious on this account, in the Lord's supper, is utterly groundless; and, indeed, when He says, “in remembrance of me,” it is much more of Him viewed as man, conversant with them on earth, than as to His divine nature. “Remember me” suits His presence and love down here; and if we add His death, it is certain that, though the whole value of His divinity is attached to His death, and only as a divine person could He have done it, yet He died as man, not as to His divine nature. He was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death. And whilst holding fast the full Deity of the blessed Lord as a very foundation of Christianity, we must not forget there is one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. His person was no more mysterious in the Lord's supper, though the occasion was more solemn, than at any other time. If we speak of circumstances as especially mysterious, it was when a babe lying in the manger. But in truth it was always the same.

What we have to examine is what He said. But it may be well, in order to simplify this, to reply first to what is alleged of John 6 The Gospel of John has a peculiar character; it does not present Christ to be received, but, in chapter i., speaks of Christ as unknown by the world, and rejected by the Jews, save such as were born of God. Electing love is insisted on throughout, and the Jews treated as reprobates. Hence, in every chapter in this part, Christ is brought out in contrast with that people. Here the Passover is referred to, and what Christ was as Jehovah, manifested in feeding the multitude, according to Psa. 132 He is owned as prophet, will not be king in a carnal way, and then sends the disciples away to find their way alone on the sea, and having dismissed the Jewish multitude, He goes up on high to pray. He is Jehovah, Prophet, Priest on high, rejecting the royalty in a carnal way, then. He is on high, and the disciples alone. He then shows their true food while He was on high, and externally separated from Him. Is it Christ Himself, or the Lord's supper? I might say really, or exclusively the Lord's supper? For the Lord speaks of the eating of Him, whatever that is, as one thing, though in two aspects, but of that which is one, and which is in itself absolutely efficacious. Indeed, down to the end of verse 68, it is in Greek the aorist, an act which has happened; from verses 54 to 58 it is the present, characteristic of the person spoken of,

the eater of my flesh.

Remark further, you have the incarnation, death, and re-ascension of the Lord Jesus closely connected one with another; in a word, His whole history, so to speak, as become man. But the middle and most important part is not Himself, but a rite! so they would tell us. Then the first part of which the eating is equally spoken, and closely connected with the second (ver. 51), is not in the Lord's supper at all; so that the doctrine does not fit at all as a whole. When we come to the substance of the chapter, the impossibility of its application, to the Eucharist stares you in the face. “This is the bread which came down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.” And it is well to begin before this. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

I am that bread of life.....I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat [have eaten] of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.....Verily, I say unto you, except ye eat [have eaten] the flesh of the Son of man, and drink [have drunk] his blood, ye have no life in you [yourselves]. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.....He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

I ask if the Lord would say to a parcel of Jews surrounding Him that they had no hope of life but in the Eucharist, which they had never heard of, and knew nothing about; or did He speak of Himself, whom they were to receive, living and dying? Why, if they had not life by faith in Him, had not come to Him by faith, they had no place at His table at all. But I quote a few words more: “As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me. This is that bread that came down from heaven.... he that eateth of this bread shall live forever” Now mark, first, if a man has not eaten His flesh, and drunk His blood, he has no life in Him. The man begins all real living Christianity by receiving the Eucharist before he is one! Their own doctrine of receiving life by baptism is all a fable; or, if he has, he must make sure and die spiritually, or he is not in the case to participate in the Eucharist.

They talk of sustaining life by the Eucharist, as men by eating, but these men have life, and daily eat as living men, sustaining life by it, as God has ordered. But here they have no life in them at all unless they eat. If it be by receiving Christ into the heart, incarnate and dying, by the power of the Holy Ghost, that is intelligible enough, especially addressed to unbelievers; but to say, it of the Eucharist is alike false, absurd, and contradictory of its nature, for it is for Christians. According to Mr. Sadler's system, it is “received by the faithful;” they are to receive it with a true penitent heart and lively faith. Mr. Sadler has to admit that the Lord confers eternal life on the whole man by it; but then he also admits, no carnal wicked man can get any benefit by it; but if not outwardly wicked, it is a man who has not had eternal life conferred on him.

The language of the Lord, as to a person who has not eaten His flesh, nor drunk His blood, not having life, makes it perfectly impossible to apply it to the Eucharist, for the eating and drinking the Lord speaks of is the first receiving of life: till they ate and drank, they had no life in them. None but dead souls can partake of it, and so receive life. To talk of preserving or sustaining is in the teeth of the express terms of the passage.

But further he who did so eat was to live forever, and that, not hypothetically or conditionally, but live forever. The Lord repeats and insists on this, and carries it expressly on to final blessedness in the eternal state. “I will raise him up in the last day.” It applies, says Mr. Sadler of the Eucharist according to his system, to body as well as soul. That is easily slipping over what is said. The Lord, repeatedly and with emphasis, insists on eating being eternal life, living forever, never dying; and not content with this, goes on to make him who eats sure of final blessedness in resurrection.

Does that apply to the Eucharist? And let not any one come here and say it puts him in that state, and if he continue well. This is not what the Lord says. He declares that he who eats, according to this passage, “shall live forever;” and starting from the assertion, “He that believeth on me hath everlasting life."

The point of difference between the manna and this bread was, that they did die: with this kind of eating, “never die” is the very point of the passage. Whoso eats His flesh and drinks His blood has eternal life, and Christ will raise him up in the last day. It cannot be the Eucharist, for no believer can partake of it in that case; for the believer has everlasting life, as declared in this passage, but he who eats of this has no life in him till he has eaten of it. On the other side, he who partakes of the Eucharist has obtained (though there be, as being dead, “no life in him") eternal life, will live forever, and be raised by the Lord at the last day. They know, as well as I do, that this is in no way or aspect applicable to the Eucharist. The Eucharist refers symbolically to one of the three great events referred to in the chapter, as the chapter does in one part to the realities of which the Eucharist is a symbol. But the chapter in no part, and in no way, refers to the Eucharist. Not one word of it can be honestly applied to that rite, while every word fully and blessedly applies to that to which the rite itself refers.

This disposed of, I turn to the only real inquiry: What do the words of institution mean? I have already spoken of the value I attach to the right use of the Eucharist, and, so to speak, meeting Christ there; but we are now speaking of a particular view of it. Mr. Sadler tells us that taking it as a memorial is a rationalistic view of it. My answer is, Christ said, “Do this in remembrance of me.” He tells us it is not “doing” on our part, but Christ's giving and we receiving. (Page 122.) But Christ says, “Do this.” As to figure, Mr. Sadler recognizes that the bread and wine are still and ever bread and wine, and nothing else in themselves. They have therefore, if any value beyond bread and wine be in them, that value as figures.

And now note that there was not then any such Christ as is symbolized in the bread and wine, nor is there now. What is unquestionably symbolized is His body (given) for us, and His blood shed: that is, a Christ in death, and no way else. There is no such Christ now. And this the apostle expressly states: “We do show forth his death, until he come.” Whatever means of grace it may be, it is not an existing Christ as He is or was then. So He speaks of His shed blood. It is, in a word, a Christ on the cross, and His death, that is in view, though it be done in remembrance of Himself. To turn it away from this is to turn it away from Christ's institution, and the express declaration of scripture.

John 6 represents to us Christ as the Word made flesh in the incarnation, and then suffering on the cross, at the end hinting at His ascension as man to glory. But the subject of the chapter is a humbled and dying Christ, made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, and actually dying (though to take thereupon a glorious place as man, where He was with the Father

before the worlds), in contrast with a reigning Messiah.

We have the same path of grace in Phil. 2, contrasted there with the first Adam. He made Himself of no reputation (■αυτ■ν ■κ■νωσε), and took a servant's form; then, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself unto death, the death of the cross; then exalted of God. But He is fed upon as humbled and dead, His blood shed. Once exalted, both these things are passed and closed. He is the subject of eating only as bread come down, and dying, and shedding His blood.

In John 6 this is presented solely as the beginning of life to us. He gave His flesh for the life of the world. Till I eat it, I have no life in me. Feeding is more than simply believing, though inseparable from it. It is nourishing the soul with the object of faith. Though first φ■γω, an act past and done, yet τρ■γων, eating, characterizes the believer; but no such Christ as he feeds on is in existence now. It must be by remembrance. It is shed blood he drinks. If it be not shed and out of the body, there is no redemption, and so we must receive it peremptorily or not have life. Without shedding of blood there is no remission; and the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, or it abides alone.

In the institution of the Eucharist, it is the same subject, only not here bread come down from heaven, a position just closing in John 6, nor an exalted Christ, but blood shed and the body dead, and only so. There is no such Christ in existence, as the one represented in the Eucharist; but it is Christ in that way in which He wrought redemption, obtained remission, and laid the foundation of the new covenant. It is Himself we remember in the infinite love of this, but His death we show forth. It was done once for all in the end of the world.

Mr. Sadler tells us that the slaying of the lamb and the passover was not a remembrance, but that Jehovah did pass over them. This is a great mistake. That answers to Christ's actual dying and shedding His blood, so that God should pass over; but the passover was to be kept yearly as a remembrance when there was no passing over, when they were in the land, as we are in heavenly places in Christ, and celebrate a deliverance and redemption accomplished long ago. “And it shall come to pass when ye be come to the land which Jehovah shall give you, according as he has promised, that ye shall keep this service. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of Jehovah's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel, when he smote the Egyptians.” (Ex. 12:25.) It was (ver. 24) “an ordinance to thee and to thy sons forever.” And again, “Remember this day in which ye came out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.... there shall be no leavened bread be eaten.” (Ex. 13:8.) “And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which Jehovah did unto me when I came forth from Egypt. And it shall be unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes.... thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.” It was a perpetual remembrance. It was at a season when they killed the passover. (Matt. 26:17 and following; Mark 14:12; Luke 22:7, 8.) At this season of the passover the remembrance of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, Jehovah institutes the remembrance of a better sacrifice and a better deliverance.

Mr. Sadler would think a slain lamb a better memorial. Thank God, the Lord did not think so. I pity Mr. Sadler. Would he (I am ashamed to speak of it) have drunk the blood of it, a most weighty and momentous part of it to us? Further, death was death, and could not be touched but as death and the wages of sin. Now death is life and gain; for Christ has in all the depth of it paid those wages,

and we feed on it as life. And the memorial of what wrought this is sweet to our souls, as is His love who did it. The giving of the blessed Lord, celebrated in the Eucharist, is His giving Himself—His life on the cross for us in infinite love. We know Him as living now in glory, we feed on Him as once dead on the cross for us. He is in us as life now. We remember Him as once a sacrifice, whose value, and the sufferings and love in it, none can fathom. His love is divine and human and constant now; but He cares, though now in glory, that we should remember. Him as He was then, that time of love when He gave Himself for us. Mr. Sadler may think it rationalistic. We cherish the thought that He cares for our remembrance—did so when suffering, in our inmost soul. We feed on it. Hereby know we love, that He laid down His life for us. It is infinitely precious at all times; but the Lord's supper is a special occasion instituted by Himself, at the moment of His doing it, the same night in which He was betrayed, to recall and be a memorial of it. That He meets His gathered people there I do not doubt.

Chapter 55

The Gospel and the Church According to Scripture: 5

Being a review of “church doctrine, bible truth,” by the rev. M. S. Sadler.

Looked at merely doctrinally, it was the substitution of a sweet memorial of eternal redemption wrought, for one of an earthly deliverance, of a people who now rejected their Messiah; but only accomplished the higher purposes of God in doing so. That blessed work was also laying in blood the foundation of the new covenant. Of a covenant with the communicant, or with the church, no trace is found in the word. It is a mere doctrinal fable. We get the blessings of it spiritually, as I have said; but formally the new covenant, as the old to which it refers as new, is made with Israel, and with no one else. There was a covenant made with Abraham (besides promises relating to Israel), confirmed to the seed Christ; and those who have Christ's Spirit, being in Christ, and Christ's, have the blessing of this (though they have a great deal more), but as the new covenant, promised in Jer. 31, the Mediator of it having come, and the blood of it shed, we participate in spirit in its blessings, God having done all needed to set it up, and the Jews having refused to accept the Mediator, even in glory. (Acts 3; 7) It will be established, according to promise, but by grace in God's due time. This Christ also teaches. It is the new covenant in His blood, and, further, shed for many. It is thus shed blood alone which is before us in the Eucharist. It is an abiding witness that, as to God's part in it, the foundation of the new covenent is laid in the blood of the Mediator of it, and that that blood is shed for many. It is further a sign of the unity of the body, so that those who take part in it are there as one body in Christ, identified withal with all true saints.

The word “blessing.... we bless,” as is perfectly evident from scripture, is simply giving thanks. (See 1 Cor. 11:26; 10:16; Luke 22:17; compare Mark 14:22, 28; Matt. 26:26, 27; exactly the same word as John 6:23.) When the Lord therefore says, “this is my body,” He speaks, it is admitted, figuratively. It is still bread. It could not be His body then, nor, in spite of Augustine, did He hold His body in His own hand, nor was there thus any such body, that is, dead and the blood poured out, as it is said (■κχυω■μενον). Nor is there now. It is the figure of Christ as a victim, and only so. I do not insist on “broken,” for I suppose it is not the true reading. If “given” be genuine, it is the same thing; but I rest on the whole evident meaning, and it is expressly for its, not to us. It is the shed blood, shed for many. That we feed on Christ as then dead for us, and His blood shed, when eating the bread and drinking the wine specially, though at all times, is all well. But it is we eat, and we who “do” in remembrance of that which must be, and can only be, remembered as past, though the One I remember is now ascended to the right hand of God, the same loving Savior. The real act is our eating, and our drinking, our doing in remembrance, and even if “breaking” be spoken of, on which Mr. Sadler insists, it is we who break too. The wine is equally a figure, and a figure of blood shed, a shedding which took place on the cross, of which we perpetuate the memory. As regards its being a figure, as Mr. Sadler says, identified with its object in the use of it, I have no objection to the thought at all. The more it is realized the better. Were I to do, or capable of doing, so horrid and wicked a thing as spitting on my mother's picture, I should be putting disgraceful and most wicked contempt on my mother. If I eat unworthily (not be unworthy to eat), (and they were carousing and drinking their fill, and despising the poor) I am guilty of so slighting and counting a

common thing the Lord's body. I have no thought to weaken this a moment. There is also communion; but Mr. Sadler's translation and explanation, and his church's with it, is wholly false. The English translators, most unhappily and avowedly, fond of changing the word when it was the same in Greek, have translated the same word, communion, partaking, fellowship. Thus it is κοινων■α of the blood, of the body. But in verse 18 the priests who ate of the altar are κοινωνο■ of the altar, and in verse 20, κοινωνο■ of devils. Communicating or communicators of altars or devils does not give a very intelligible sense; but, the moment we use the word rightly, the sense in each case is evident. They are morally identified with that of which they partake. The priests among the Jews were (κοινωνο■) morally identified with the altar of Jehovah, the heathen with the demons or devils, to which the Gentiles offered. Were they going to identify themselves with devils and with the Lord, and provoke the Lord to jealousy? If they ate and drank with each—partook of them—they were κοινωνο■, morally partakers or identified with them. “Communication of” is a simply impossible sense if we read the passage.

The reasoning as to covenant (in p. 186) proves just the contrary what it is produced for. Covenants were ratified with brood, not with figures of blood. The covenant therefore was ratified on the cross, where blood itself was spilled, not in the Eucharist, where Mr. Sadler admits there is really no blood at all. It arises from his notion of ratifying a covenant with the communicant, a tradition perhaps of his church, but an idea of which no trace is found in scripture. “I am the true vine” refers to Israel, the vine brought out of Egypt. There was no church union then with disciples. This began at Pentecost. Ephesians show it to have been impossible till after the death and exaltation of Christ. They were already (■δη) clean by reason of the word He had spoken. I do not pursue this farther, because it has nothing to do with our subject. “Vine” and “door” remain figures in any case.

The statements of page 182 are wholly without foundation. Supposing He is the true door, “door” is a figure, nor is there any entrance into the innermost sanctuary. “True vine” —refers to a vine not, after all, the true one, that is, to Israel. All this is ranting. The image in Hebrews is a veil, not a door, and they went through it, and had not to eat it. All this is hardly worth so many words.

As regards a sacrifice, the scriptural answer is simple enough, “There is no more sacrifice for sin.” The insisting on the flesh of Christ is of all importance. His true incarnation and true death was a crucial point. So only was He a man, so only could He make atonement. It was an evil spirit which did not confess Him come in flesh. This was that spirit of Antichrist. All acquainted with church history know that the church was tormented with this at the beginning, teachers called Docetζ or Gnostics denying He came in flesh. Whence also Paul, “the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” The insisting on it by John, and his motive for it, are as plain as plain can be to any one reading his writings, knowing the value of the truth, or, as I have said, acquainted with church history. Christ was a real true man, in a body, in flesh, and really died as a man shedding His blood, though God over all, blessed forever. But all this has nothing to do with the Eucharist, save that it is in the most important way presented to us there in what is the external bond of the church's very subsistence. Nay, it is all frightfully weakened and subverted, by turning these vital truths into a false explanation of the Eucharist; for I recognize, as I have said, that the Lord's supper is the central point of union and worship, as to its forms, and according to Christ's institution.

Mr. Sadler admits that the Eucharist has scarcely one feature in common with the things which in scripture are called sacrifices. (Page 178.) He tells us (p. 174) that the real spiritual value lay, not in the costliness of the victim, nor in its death and the outpouring of its blood, nor in its consumption by fire, but in the implied reference to the atoning death of Christ. But it was in these things that the reference consisted; and they made them, and above all Him, a sacrifice together with the offering of Himself up to God, to be one; not one of which elements is found in the Eucharist. A “memorial” of Himself will not do, it must be Himself. Christ must offer Himself without spot to God. He must, as we are told in Heb. 9, suffer to be a sacrifice.

He gives the disciples the memorials or symbols of His body and blood to eat and drink, not to offer. They were to do it in remembrance of Him, not to sacrifice Him over again. That His sacrifice of Himself is in remembrance, no Christian will deny, or be disposed to deny. But if we are sacrificing Him, then it is not a remembrance of Him. Blood must be shed for a sacrifice; what is sacrifice must bear sin, or suffer, or at least suffer as made sin. But the Eucharist looks at the blood as already shed, the sacrifice as already complete, and is a witness in remembrance that it is so, and that nothing can be added, taken away or repeated. God has accepted it, and Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, because by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified. A commemoration of His having died cannot be a sacrifice. He did not offer a sacrifice in the upper room; and though the value of His sacrifice is ever in heaven, He is not doing it in heaven. He is, as Heb. 10 insists, in contrast with the standing Jewish priests, always at work because nothing was really done, sitting at the right hand of God because all is done, expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. To the Judaism of an unfinished work always doing, this “church system” would reduce us. A glorified Christ cannot be offered in sacrifice. He is, as man, glorified, because He has finished the work which His Father gave Him to do.

Let any one read Heb. 9 x. carefully, and see if this theory is not the subversion of Christianity in this respect. He does intercede, thank God, with God. He is an advocate with the Father, to obtain help not to sin, to restore our communion if we have sinned, but this is founded on a finished work, and a complete righteousness. Where in scripture is it said Christ was pleading His sacrifice in the upper chamber? where that the church is pleading in the holy Eucharist? (Page 175.) It is a pernicious fable, and that is all. I challenge Mr. Sadler for his authority to produce such a thought from the word of God. It is superstition, not piety; presumption, not lowliness; a pretension to be offerers of Christ as if He had not finished all.

Mr. Sadler pretends there are better means to recall Christ to our hearts than the Eucharist. The answer is simple; Christ did not think so. For my part I thank God He did not. Doing it in commemoration, doing it to show the Lord's death, is not offering a sacrifice in any sense. No doubt it is with Christ, not with our faith, we are occupied, but we are not offering Him. All that Mr. Sadler is obliged to add to make out his case (p. 177) is not in what Christ said. Doing a thing in remembrance of Him is not sacrificing Him, and does not mean it; nor was He then offering Himself at all, but giving the symbol of a finished sacrifice to eat. No comparison of the Eucharist and Jewish sacrifices is needed. In many respects it is more excellent. We drink what represents the blood of Christ. It is occupied with the sacrifice as already finished, not as being constantly done typically and never done really. But each was right in its place.

It is never said in scripture to show forth [the Lord's death] before God, and angels, and men. The church, as were God's servants individually, is a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men, and this act will come in with the rest. But a sacrifice is offered, presented, shown to God only; and this applied to the Eucharist is abominably false, and subversive of Christianity, which rests stamped with this seal and impress, “no more sacrifice for sin,” or else the full value of the finished one is denied. I repeat, it is that only one, once offered, as finished once and forever, that is remembered in the Eucharist. To refer it (p. 186) to the giving thanks, blessing (not two things in scripture), breaking, taking, eating, drinking, as the sacrificial character, shows the fallacy of the whole thing, for the drinking could not be till the sacrifice was over, nor indeed the eating. As to the others they are at best only consecrating to be a victim. Breaking referred to Christ is unscriptural; the bread is broken. It is not said of Christ.

I hardly know if it be worth while to answer the chapter on priesthood. The whole system is so foreign to Christian truth, and the subject of the ministry has been so fully discussed elsewhere, that it is a weariness to go over it again. Still I will say a few words. First, Mr. Sadler expatiates on the apostle having peculiar powers. He might save himself the trouble. Every Christian owns it, I suppose. In the next place, I absolutely deny any ordination to ministry, a principle now very generally admitted by Christians, even by those who submit to it for the sake of order. Scripture, at any rate, is clear as to it. Further, he confounds everlasting redemption and forgiveness, or justification by faith, never recalled (for whom He justified, them He also glorified; and being justified we shall be saved from wrath), with administrative forgiveness in God's dealings or government, where, if a person be sick through chastisement, he having committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. (Compare Job 36) In this sense the assembly forgives sins (2 Cor. 2:7, 10); nay, I forgive my brother his trespasses. Of an elder or priest's doing it with authority there is no trace in scripture. On the contrary, where the elders are introduced, the prayer of faith saves the sink; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him, not a trace of any act of the elder.

Mr. Sadler goes on the principle of administering the sacrament. Sects may profess it, as he says, but scripture knows nothing of it. They broke bread, κατ’ οἶκον, in their houses. The disciples came together to break bread. That the thanksgiving and breaking of broad should be, for comeliness and edification, done by some grave brother, is all well, but we have no administering it in scripture. The bread which we break, the cup which we bless, speaks of what Corinthians do as such. The apostle was not there, and there is no hint of elders at all, though we know there commonly were, but their existence is ignored at Corinth if there were. There is no hint of any administering it. It is probable at Troas that Paul did it, though the words are very general. It was natural.

As to baptism, as a rule the apostles did not baptize. In Mark, if it be genuine, they are not sent to baptize but to preach the gospel. “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;” but of who did it, not a word. From Galilee (not Bethany) the twelve were sent to baptize the Gentiles, making them disciples, and this, note, from a risen—not from an ascended—Christ. In the commission in Luke, always acted on in the Acts, there is nothing of baptism. The commission in Matt. 28 was to the Gentiles alone. This the apostles formally gave up to Paul and Barnabas (Gal. 2), the Lord having expressly called them to this service, and Paul tells us he was not sent to baptize—contrasts himself with the twelve who were. It is alleged this refers to his motive, not to have them counted his disciples; but this is not so: he gives it as a general reason for his conduct,

though for that reason he rejoiced in the result. I do not doubt they baptized all their converts, Jews or Gentiles; but they had no commandment for the former, and they gave up the latter to Paul, and he expressly says he was not sent to do it.

So much for the commission. Then as to practice; in Acts 2 no hint of the apostles, or any commissioned by them, doing it. They were to be baptized for the remission of sins, and they were baptized. In chapter viii. 12 they were baptized, men and women: not a word of who did it, only not the apostles, nor, as it appears, any commission by them. It was all news to the apostles. In Cornelius's case Peter commanded them to be baptized, and Paul boasts, save in a few cases, of not having done it. As an argument for Mr. Sadler, I may add that lay baptism is valid in the English Establishment, as it is, and very common too, with Romanists. As regards commission to administer the Lord's supper, I should have added, there is none such; they were to take, eat; they were to divide it among themselves. It is exactly the opposite of a commission to administer it to others. The whole statement from beginning to end as to administering sacraments, in principle and as to the facts, is wholly without foundation in scripture; that all things should be done decently and in order is not. Indeed this thought is generally received by Christians on the continent, and growing rapidly in England. But scarcely one of the assertions of Mr. Sadler (pp. 206, 207) is founded on fact.

Christ did send the apostles to preach, at least if the end of Mark be genuine: at any rate they were to be Christ's witnesses, and Paul was expressly. He did send the twelve to baptize the Gentiles, which commission they relinquished, and He did give authority to remit sins administratively; He did not to administer the Lord's supper to them, nor to any one. And note, if by baptism remission of sins was received, which to those thus brought in I do not deny, as a rule it was not the apostles who remitted them, but other people. without any commission at all. That the apostles had an extraordinary commission, authority to ordain things in the churches, power to confer the Holy Ghost, besides their gifts, is quite clear. But even as to preaching and teaching, let us see how this clerical commissioning stands. At the persecution of Stephen all were scattered, except the apostles, and went everywhere preaching the word, and after the special case of Cornelius, by these first the gospel was carried to the Gentiles.

The Gospel and the Church According to Scripture: 6

Here was a strange case: either all were ordained, and there were no laymen; or all laymen were preachers without any commission. And what makes it more striking is, that the hand of the Lord was with them, and many believed. Peter tells them, as every one had received the gift, so to minister the same. If one who had received a talent did not trade with it, without any other authority than having it, he was a wicked and slothful servant. If preachers came, women even were to judge of their doctrine, not of their commission: this never occurred as a safeguard to the apostle. Diotrephes would have found it convenient if only such had existed. And in the assembly they were only to speak two or three on one occasion, that all might speak and all might be edified. Everyone had a psalm, interpretation, doctrine; but all things wore to be done to edifying,. not to confusion. The whole tenor of the New Testament denies emphatically a clerical order of ministry. There are gifts given from on high, apostles, prophets, as foundation; pastors, teachers, evangelists, till we all come, &c.; and, besides these positive ministries, that which every joint supplieth, making increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love. And those who had this gift had it everywhere. Local elders there were, some ministering in the word, some not. That they should be διδακτικο■ was to be desired. Their overseership was evidently made more useful by it.

To all Mr. Sadler says about the effect of administering I have already spoken; the administering itself, we have seen, is an invention, as appointing others to administer it. Heb. 6:1-4 is in contrast with spiritual Christianity. Baptisms are washings; laying on of hands is not spoken of ordination, as far as appears. The things are Jewish knowledge of Christ, and ways, as contrasted with the Christianity brought by the Holy Ghost. Laying on of hands was used for everything, sacrifices, healing. The deacons had hands laid on them as apostolic sanction. I have little doubt the elders too, but scripture carefully avoids saying so. Acts 13:2 was commending to the Lord, and nothing else (chap. 14:26); and was repeated on a second journey (chap. 15:40); and, if anything else, was the ordination of an apostle by laymen, a singular proceeding, if giving a commission and authority be in question. The apostles, and the apostles only, could give the Holy Ghost by it. On the one hand the Holy Ghost distributed to every man severally as He would (1 Cor. 12); and on the other, as to permanent ministry, the Lord gave, as ascended up on high, and as every one received the gift, he was to minister the same, as coming directly from God. Not a word of ordination in any ease of ministry. Mr. Sadler does not indeed venture to say more than, “there is reason to believe.” I can only say that, if we read the New Testament, we have reason to be sure of exactly the contrary. And this to justify a man, established by God knows who, pretending to give the Holy Ghost to make a priest to forgive sins I a power which the apostles administratively had, and as to details was exercised by the assembly in its discipline, and even through individual prayer in chastisements, but the conferring of which on a priest, or the idea of a priest, is unknown to the New Testament, save as we are all kings and priests to God. The whole system is a false invention, denying the power and presence of the Holy Ghost. I challenge all the clergy to give me a case of ordination to ministry. I have quoted what gives thousands of cases of ministry without

ordination. That they commended to God, and bore witness of consent and approbation by the laying of hands of laymen, so-called, or the elderhood, we find; but conferring ministry there was not, save from on high, and by the Holy Ghost. Communicating the truth there was, to faithful men too, but never ordination to ministry. It is the substitution of man for God the Holy Ghost.

I have examined thus all the great principles of Mr. Sadler's book. They can in no respect stand the test of scripture. I do not feel it necessary to discuss Confirmation, or the Burial service. The chapter on Confirmation is so excessively weak (suppositions founded on suppositions, to defend a poor imitation of apostolic power not half owned in the service itself) that it is not necessary. The Burial service depends on the whole system, though in many cases a horribly unfeeling thing too. But with the details of the particular sect I have nothing to do.

Chapter 57

Remarks on the Hebrews

Two questions present themselves at the threshold of this epistle, Who was the writer? and to whom was it addressed? A great deal has been written in reply to these questions, and various conclusions have been arrived at, but most of them with little certainty or profit. That Paul, under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, was the inspired penman there seems little room to doubt, and the suppression of his name is not without profitable significance. The only apostle mentioned in the epistler is Christ Himself. The work of Paul's apostleship was, as we know, specially among the Gentiles, while Peter's line was particularly to the circumcision. The absence of Paul's name, therefore, in writing to Hebrews would show his tender consideration for them, lest he should hinder blessing by seeming to press his apostolic ministry upon those whose feelings and prejudices might check them from readily receiving his instruction, or give the appearance of trespassing upon another apostle's line of things. Moreover, the general scope and style of the epistle, the earnest way in which the doctrines of the personal glory of the Son of God, His accomplished redemption and everlasting priesthood are contended for, the well-known affectionate allusion to “our brother Timothy,” the touching way in which he solicits their prayers for his own restoration to them, strikingly give it throughout a Pauline character.

That it was addressed to Hebrews who had taken up the profession of Christianity seems plain enough; few of them, however, might have been competent to discern the vast contrast between the principles of Judaism and Christianity; and some of them were evidently disposed to relinquish the substance (Christ), and go back again to a ritual of typical things. Still, the allusion in the opening words to “the fathers” and “the prophets;” the way in which he mentions the many and oft-repeated sacrifices which could never take away sins; the copious references to an earthly order of priesthood, a worldly sanctuary, separating veil, and other details of tabernacle service, exclude the idea of the epistle having been written to those who were of Gentile origin, or that it could be immediately adapted to any but such as had been educated in “the Jews' religion” of carnal ordinances and distance from God.

There seems, therefore, to be strong reasons for supposing that Paul was the writer, and that the epistle was addressed to Hebrew professing Christians. We have also no difficulty in understanding why Paul's name does not appear in it, and why it has not been presented to us like other epistles, which plainly signify who the writers are, and to whom they are addressed. The value of this precious epistle to the souls of God's children can scarcely be over-estimated.

It is well to observe that this epistle begins at once with “God.” It is God who has spoken unto us in the Son. This characterizes divine ministry. It is—always from above downward—from God to man. All human religiousness, and legality of every kind, incline from earth to heaven—from man to God; as one of our own poets has said, “We look from nature up to nature's God;” but few expressions could be more opposed to the true character of divine teaching. It is “God,” then, who speaks to us, and that in His Son, who did by Himself, without any aid whatever, but excluding all else make purgation of sins, and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God. It is God who is

the source of all our blessings: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

We find also that the first epistle of John begins by at once bringing Christ before us, without any introduction whatever. The first words are, “That which was from the beginning,” &c. It is the person of Christ— “that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us” —the Son of God. This is God's way of meeting us, speaking to us, and blessing us. He calls our attention to the person and work of the Son.

Neither of these epistles is written to an assembly, as many others were, but we gather from both epistles that the souls addressed were in a critical condition, though the dangers to which they were exposed were not in both instances the same; and yet, be it observed, whatever be the failure or need of the soul, the person and worth and work of Christ are all-sufficient.'. It is the infinite glory and eternal Godhead of the Son which gave such eternal efficacy to His work. The smallest taint or imperfection ascribed to His person is like removing the key-stone of an arch, when the whole of what remains inevitably falls to pieces. No doubt this is why in so many scriptures the Holy Ghost so repeatedly sets before us the eternal excellencies and glory of Jesus the Son of God.

Those addressed in this epistle, as I have said, were manifestly in a low estate of soul. Some seem to have been ready to give up the truth of Christianity, and return to Judaism; and such are most solemnly warned. From the first the adversaries of the truth sought to undermine the glory of Christ, and the infinite value of His accomplished work, by a return to ordinances, and otherwise attempting to mix up two essentially different elements, Judaism and Christianity. The natural man always prefers ritualism to Christ, because the former appeals to the senses, intoxicates the mind, and gives importance to man in the flesh; while vital Christianity calls forth the exercise and life of faith upon the Son, gives glory to God, draws our hearts to the Father in dependence and spiritual worship, and has no confidence in the flesh.

Among other precious lessons we gather from this epistle, is, that the divine method of raising and restoring souls from a low condition is by setting Christ before them, which reminds us of the lines—

"'What think ye of Christ?' is the test

To try both your state and your scheme:

You cannot be right in the rest,

Unless you think rightly of Him."

We also learn from this epistle that souls need Christ, not in one or two aspects merely, but in every variety of aspect in which He is graciously revealed in scripture. And it is important to see this, because it keeps us always in the spirit of inquiry, and desire for further knowledge of Himself, and His work, offices, and ways; instead of setting down content with any feeble measure of His goodness and grace which we may have been taught.

In this letter to the Hebrews, we find that nearly every chapter gives us a different aspect of Christ for our heart's contemplation and blessing. If the Godhead of the Son shines forth with eternal brightness in the first chapter, His spotless manhood attracts us in the second; while in the third

we are taught to consider Him not only as the “Apostle,” the sent One who came down, and the “High Priest” who went up, but also as “Son over his own house.” The fourth chapter teaches us that He who has passed through the heavens is “Jesus the Son of God,” a sympathizing High Priest. In the fifth chapter, the Spirit conducts our minds back to contemplate His sufferings in the days of His flesh, crying to Him who was able to save Him out of death, the Son thus learning obedience from the things that He suffered; we are instructed also that His priesthood is perpetual— “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedec.” In the sixth chapter, He is set before us as having gone inside the veil as our “Forerunner.” No doubt He is called the Forerunner because other runners are following, and soon to be there with Him. In chapter vii., the priesthood of the Son of God is declared to be everlasting, unchangeable, made with an oath; that He is now an interceding priest, and though performing Aaronic functions, yet is He a blessing priest after the Melchizedec order, who, according to the scripture record, comes before us without beginning of days, or end of life. In the next chapter (8), we see Him a sitting priest, in the highest place of dignity and power. In the ninth chapter, He is contemplated as having gone into heaven itself by His own blood, appearing there for us before the face of God, and to them that look for Him coming the second time, without any question of sin, for salvation: We see in the tenth chapter the infinite value of His one offering giving us remission of sins, a purged conscience, sanctifying or separating us to God, perfecting us forever, with liberty to enter into the holiest of all by His blood, who is now inside the veil, sitting in perpetuity on God's right hand, and coming again in “a little while.” The eleventh chapter shows us the reality of the path of faith, and that it is connected with “the reproach of Christ.” In the twelfth chapter, we have Jesus who endured the cross, despised the shame, and is now set down on the right hand of the throne of God, as the object for our heart's sustainment and blessing while we are running the race set before us; and the last chapter presents to us, Him who suffered without the gate, and by whose blood we are sanctified, and who, as the Great Shepherd of the sheep, was brought again from among the dead in the power of the blood of the everlasting covenant by the God of peace.

Thus we find, in this hasty run through this epistle, how many and varied are the aspects in which the person, work, and offices of the Son of God are set before us; thus meeting the various questions that an exercised mind might suggest, as well as richly feeding the soul, meeting every requirement of the conscience, and attracting the heart from self, and worldly religiousness, and Jewish principles, to fix it steadfastly on Christ Himself. How blessed it is thus to find all our rest and peace in Him!, How gracious and tender is this sweet ministry of the Holy Ghost to raise drooping and declining souls, by presenting Christ as the perfect and all-sufficient One for our hearts! Do we not thus feel ourselves attracted to Christ? Does He not thus become increasingly precious to us?

But, further, there have always been two great hindrances to souls having a firm grasp and enjoyment of Christ: one through giving men, faithful and honored servants of God though they may be, an undue place of importance, so as to obscure our blessed Master from our view; and the other in allowing ordinances to come between our souls and the Lord. Both are evidently treated of in this epistle.

With regard to eminent servants of God, who could a Jew think of that so commanded his respect as Moses? Even in the days of our Lord, when the people were far sunk in apostasy, they prided themselves in being “Moses' disciples.” True, he was “faithful in all his house,” but when brought

beside the Son of God, the glory of the man is entirely eclipsed. We are told that “this One [Jesus] was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who builded the house has more honor than the house. For every house is builded by some one; but he that built all things is God.” (Observe here the testimony to the Godhead of Christ.) “And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; but Christ as a Son over his own house, whose house are we,” &c. (Chap. 3:8-6.) Thus the greatness of Moses vanishes before the infinite glory of the person of the Son of God.

The Jews also thought most highly of Joshua, who brought them into the land, and of David, their king, who was a man after God's own heart: but neither of them could bring them into rest; for if Joshua had given them rest, David would not afterward have spoken of rest as future. “There remaineth therefore a rest [or a sabbatism] to the people of God.” This their true Messiah will yet give them when He reigns before His ancients gloriously. Thus Joshua and David sink down before the majesty of the Son of God. (Chap. 4) Aaron, too, was greatly extolled by the people of Israel among their honored ancestry, but he was a man “compassed with infirmity,” had to offer a sacrifice for his own sins, and could not continue by reason of death; but of the Son of God it is said, “Thou art a priest forever.” (Chap. 5) Thus Aaron, with all his official glory and the magnificence of sacerdotal garments, crumbles into dust before the eternal brightness of Him whom the Jewish high priest so faintly shadowed forth.

But among all the list of worthies a Jew boasted of, none held so high a place of reputation and esteem among them as Abraham, who has been called “the friend of God.” To the last it was the boast of Jews that they were the seed of Abraham. They said so to the Lord. But while He allowed that they were “Abraham's seed,” they little apprehended His cutting rebuke, when He said unto them, “If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.” (John 8:37-39.) They greatly venerated the father of the faithful, and we can easily understand how the proud heart of man would naturally boast of such a lineal descent. But in chapter 7 of this epistle, the writer shows that in the fact of Abraham's paying tithes to Melchizedec, and receiving blessing from him, he thus owned one greater than himself, and that this king of Salem (and of righteousness) whom he thus honored was only a type of our ever-blessing Priest, Jesus, the Son of God. Thus the greatness of the patriarch Abraham passes away before the glory of the Son who is consecrated for evermore.

Again, after looking at the remarkable exercises of faith of patriarchs and other Old Testament saints in chapter 11., we are admonished to look away from this cloud of witnesses to Him who trod the path of faith perfectly, “Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith, who for the joy was set before him endured the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Chap. 12:1, 2.)

In the last chapter, the leaders who had watched over them and were gone before are to be remembered as men whose faith was to be followed, and its issue considered; but immediately they are directed from them to Him who is “the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.” All these instances serve to teach us over and over again, “line upon line, and precept upon precept,” that when the Lord has His rightful place in our souls, no servant, however honored, could displace Him, nor would any faithful servant but be esteemed for the Lord's sake according to the grace of God wrought in him and by him. But about this we need to watch and guard our hearts, for there

can be no sure progress, or true service rendered, when the Lord Jesus is not everything to us.

Now let us look at ordinances. No believing student of scripture can fail to discern much that is attractive and interesting in the ritual of a former dispensation, which, I need scarcely say, is the only ritual which scripture recognizes; though it no doubt yet points to a future time of blessing, when God's earthly people will be established by Him in their long-looked-for inheritance. The tabernacle boards covered with gold, and resting upon silver sockets, the altar of burnt-offering, the laver, golden altar, candlestick, and table; the ark, with its golden mercy-seat, and cherubim at either end; the variously wrought curtains, and veil of blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen of cunning work, with cherubim; the various coverings of the tent; the high priest's garments of glory and beauty, with their many jewels and golden chains, could not have failed to charm the natural man with their elegance, richness,. and symmetrical arrangement. And when, after this, centuries had passed, and wilderness wanderings had long ceased, to find the same gorgeous ritual set up again on a more elaborate and costly scale, under divine instruction, with its sacrifices and priest. hood, upon a more lasting basis, might easily account for the feelings of a Jew, untaught by the Spirit of God, giving to it a substantial, instead of shadowy, import, and regarding these things with superstitious awe, because they know not the precious and unfading realities which these typical lessons set forth. We now know that these things were shadows of Christ, though not the very image, and in varied ways, like finger-posts, pointed to His person, work, offices, and excellencies. So that as soon as He came into the world, “gold, myrrh, and frankincense” were laid by God's messengers at His blessed feet; and, when nearing Calvary to offer Himself without spot to God, as the antitype to which these magnificent types culminated, He declared that this costly temple built with hands would be so completely razed to the ground, that one stone should not be left upon another; but, though their house would be thus left unto them desolate, He lovingly pointed to another house made without hands—the Father's house—to which He was going to prepare a place for them, and come again to take them there.

Again, we find that when our adorable Lord bowed His head in death upon the shameful tree, and said, “It is finished,” the beautiful veil of separation in the temple was “rent in twain from the top to the bottom,” thus showing that in virtue of the One sacrifice for sins there was no longer any hindrance to man going straight into the very presence of God, through that new and living way, the rent veil, that is to say, His flesh. The shadowy veil and other types were thus done away in Christ.

This ancient ritual (and there is no modern ritual in scripture) was then a shadow of good things to come, having their fulfillment partly known now, especially as far as sacrifice and priesthood and entrance into the holiest are concerned, and partly to be known by Israel in millennial times, when as a nation they will have their promises and blessings made good to them on the ground of Christ's redemption-work, when, according to the prophecies of Ezekiel and other scriptures, feasts of “new moons,” “sabbaths,” “offerings and whole burnt-offerings,” will have their true accomplishment in Israel's land for the glory and praise of God.

Before closing this brief glance at some of the characteristics of this beautiful epistle; it may be well to notice that much blessed instruction is also brought before us in the way of contrast. Thus the divine glory of the Son is blessedly contrasted with angels—the highest class of created intelligences that were known to men. When He, the risen, glorified Man, sat down on the right

hand of God, He took a place by so much better than the angels, as He inherits a name more excellent than they; for though angels may be spoken of as “sons of God” by creation, yet they could never call God Father like the Son. Angels are made subject to the Son, and worship Him, and they are also ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation, but it has never been said to them, what could be said only of the ascended Son, “Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Again, the habitable world which is to come is not to be subjected to angels, but to Him of whom, as Son of man, it is said, “Thou hast put all things under his feet."

Law and grace are also remarkably contrasted in this epistle. We are told that the law made nothing perfect, and that God had no pleasure in those sacrifices which were offered by the law; but the grace of God, by the one offering of Christ, has sanctified and perfected us forever. Blessed contrast indeed! At the giving of the law the people came to the mount that might be touched and was on fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: for they could not endure that which was commanded, and if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, “I exceedingly fear and quake.” But how vastly different is the sweet voice of the gospel from all this! By the grace of God “we are come unto mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem; and to myriads of angels, the universal gathering; and to the assembly of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and to God, judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus, mediator of a new covenant; and to the blood of sprinkling, speaking better things than Abel.” (Chap. 12:18-24.) How wide the contrast here drawn! While law demands, terrifies, and repels; divine grace attracts, gives freely, blesses, and makes its unworthy objects happy in God's own presence.

How important, then, it is to hold fast grace! The law made nothing perfect, not even as pertaining to the conscience, but by the one offering of Christ we have no longer an annual remembrance of sins, but remission of sins, a purged conscience, and we are perfected forever. We have then, by divine grace, through Him who was the “Surety of a better testament,” “better promises,” “better hope,” “better resurrection,” and “in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” Thus the Eternal Son is the author of “eternal salvation,” hath “obtained for us eternal redemption,” and will introduce us into an “eternal inheritance."

The contrast in priesthood is also very striking. The Aaronic high priest was compassed with infirmity, needed a sacrifice for himself, was always a standing priest, could never sit down, because he could never present to God a finished work; whereas the holy, harmless, undefiled Son of God, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sat down, and that forever or in perpetuity, on the right hand of God, having nothing more to do for atonement for sins, but “from henceforth expecting, till His enemies he made his footstool."

What an object for our heart's contemplation and delight is presented to us in the Son on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens! And what rest too, seeing He is there as our Forerunner! What liberty also He has so mercifully brought us into! How it fills our hearts with joy and gladness, and bows us with adoring gratitude and worship before the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.

H. H. S.

Chapter 58

A Slight Sketch of the Holy Spirit's Ways: Part 1

The Spirit, τ■ πνε■μα, the Holy Spirit, τ■ πνε■μα τ■ ■γιον, seldom τ■ ■γιον πνε■μα, but very frequently, πνε■μα ■γιον, is the Person in the Godhead mentioned last in order wherever the three are named (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14).

Of His personality the word does not leave us in doubt. The New Testament is very plain about it. He acts, He directs, He controls, and that, not only in the character of the Spirit of God, but as a divine Person Himself (Acts 2:4; 5:3, 4; 13:24; 16:6 Cor. 12:11); and even in the Old Testament His personality is acknowledged (Num. 11:26; 1 Chron. 28:12; Isa. 48:16), though, for the most part, He is therein described as the Spirit of God, ■■■ ■■1■■■, the Spirit of Jehovah, His Spirit, His Holy Spirit, His good Spirit. Throughout scripture, then, we meet with the Holy Ghost. In the first chapter of the Bible we read of Him; in the last chapter of the sacred volume we hear of Him. In Gen. 1:2 He is described as moving, or brooding, over the face of the waters, when all was in a chaotic condition on earth. In Rev. 22 He speaks from earth, on which He now dwells, and in company and concert with the bride asks the Lord Jesus to come in His character of the morning star.

To prepare the earth for man's abode and use, the Spirit of God brooded over the face of the waters. He acted in power on creation. He acts in power still. The fact, however, of His activity, whether moving upon the face of the waters, or dealing with men's hearts, indicates the existence of a state of things which is not perfect in God's sight. “By his Spirit,” Job declares, God “garnished the heavens” (Job 26:13). Of the Spirit men are born again (John 3:5). Yet it is not in every age of the world's history that we read of the Spirit being at work. He did work, He does work constantly, on men upon earth, as the catalog of saints from Abel to our day bears witness; but His activity is not at all times a subject of divine teaching. Till the days of Moses we hear but little of the Spirit. Throughout the biographical notices of Abraham and Isaac, He is not so much as once named. In the book of Joshua He is never mentioned. And neither in the books of Jeremiah, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, nor Zephaniah is His existence even hinted at. Yet all these, were born of Him. He was in Joshua, and the prophets were one and all His penmen and mouthpieces, speaking as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:21). In the New Testament His presence and actings are more generally acknowledged and the Epistle to Philemon, and the Second and Third Epistles of John, are the only portions of the word in which He has not been pleased to make mention of Himself in one way or another. For His manner of working is manifest, and the terms in which it is described are various. To these the reader's attention is now sought to be directed. Of evil spirits there are many, characterized in the word by their manner of acting, as displayed in men. For we read of a lying spirit, an evil spirit, an unclean spirit, a dumb spirit, a spirit of a demon, a spirit of Python, and, in the case of the Gadarene demoniac, it was not one, but many, which were in him. The Holy Ghost, on the other hand, is but one (1 Cor. 12:11). Each unclean spirit can act in accordance with its character. The Holy Ghost can act in very different ways in different people and at different times. To a consideration of these let us now turn.

Before the flood He acted on men certainly in three distinct ways. He strove with man in his rampant wickedness, till God would strive with him no longer (Gen. 6:3). What a scene for God to be engaged in! In garnishing the heavens, and in brooding over the face of the waters, the Spirit of God had been once engaged; now He is described as striving with God's puny, fallen, and actively wicked creature man. But man would not yield, so the flood came upon the world of the ungodly, and took them all away, except Noah and those with him in the ark. Besides this, in two other ways He had acted, whilst striving with man. By the Spirit dead souls had been quickened: of this Abel and others are witnesses. And not only did He act in vivifying power on souls, but He fitted saints as well to be channels for divine communications to their fellows around them. God had spoken to Adam, and in the presence of the guilty pair announced to the old serpent, in the day of his apparent triumph, his final doom, which is to be accomplished by the Seed of the woman. God had also spoken to Cain, and acquainted the fratricide with His future governmental dealings with him. To Adam and to his son communications had been given. Now through Enoch, with whom we may perhaps class Lamech (Gen. 5:29), prophetic announcements were made, which concerned others beside themselves. And Noah was raised up, a preacher of righteousness, a witness for God in the midst of abounding and unrestrained wickedness.

The waters receded from off the face of the earth. Noah and his family came forth from the ark to people the world afresh, and the Spirit of God, who had acted on men, and by men, before the flood, acted in similar, but also in new, ways after it.

Men were born again. Of this Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and Job are examples; and a testimony for God was raised up in the midst of idolatry, which now began to corrupt and debase mankind. Prophecy, too, in the common acceptation of the term, again burst forth. Isaac, though his eyes were dim with age, blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. And Jacob, ere gathering up his feet into his bed, acquainted his family with that which should befall them in the last days.

But another feature of the Spirit's ways was manifested during the patriarchal age. Saints were made acquainted with God's purposes hitherto concealed, without becoming, as far as we know, channels of inspired communications. Thus God talked with Abraham as His friend, and began that unfolding of His counsels to man, which was not completed till the New Testament canon was closed. Communications had passed between the Lord and His saints before the flood. To Enoch a testimony was given that he pleased God. Noah received definite instructions as to the measures of the ark, and its inhabitants. In these communications the individuals so favored were personally concerned. In the case of Abraham it was different. God not only revealed things which concerned the patriarch, but, before the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, He distinctly declared that He would not hide from Abraham that which He would do. And Abraham is the first person to whom the appellation of prophet, ■■■■ is given in the Pentateuch (Gen. 20:7), an appellation evidently of significance in those days, and one, as we learn from the Psalms (Psa. 105:15), which was common to the patriarchs. A prophet then does not only mean one who can predict future events. The messenger of God who reproved Israel in the days of Gideon (Judg. 6:8) was a prophet, ■■■■. And Abraham, as we see, is so called, who would pray for Abimelech, the Philistine king. And God it was who so styled the patriarch, who had acquaintance with the divine mind, being in possession of God's thoughts, as far as the Lord had been pleased to impart them to God's friend. On me too, and through men, the Spirit continued to work. By dreams and

visions, as well as by prophetic inspiration, God's mind was revealed. Jacob, whether sojourning east or west of Jordan, received instruction from God by dreams (Gen. 28:12-15; 31:11-13). And Laban, the Syrian (Gen. 31:24); Abimelech, the Philistine (Gen. 20:3); Pharaoh, the Egyptian (Gen. 41); and Eliphaz, the Temanite (Job 4), alike attest the reality of such channels of intercourse between God and the soul.

"With Moses, however, there commenced a new era. Dealing with souls individually, and using men as instruments by which God's mind could be made known, still characterized the ways of the Holy Ghost. For Balaam, besides Moses, prophesied, and Saul too, as well as others who were really saints. In addition to this, miraculous powers were exhibited, wonders being accomplished by the finger of God (Ex. 8:19), as the magicians rightly confessed; that is through the energy of the Holy Ghost, as the New Testament teaches us (Matt. 12:28 compared with Luke 11:20). And now in several new ways the activity and the power of the Spirit were displayed. In Bezaleel we have an example of one filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and understanding, and knowledge, for the work that he was called upon to undertake in connection with the erection of the tabernacle (Ex. 31:8; 35:31). The Holy Ghost was in Joshua (Num. 27:18), who was thereby full of the spirit of wisdom (Deut. 34:9). On the elders He rested, to fit them for their official duties in the congregation (Num. 11:25, 26). Again, the Spirit was on Othniel, who judged Israel, and conquered Cushan Rishathaim (Judg. 3:10); on Jephthah, who warred against Ammon (Judg. 11:29) on Amaziah, the son of Oded, who encouraged Asa (2 Chron. 15:1); as well as on Jahaziel, the Levite, who directed Jehoshaphat in his campaign against the children of Ammon and Moab, and those of Mount Seir (2 Chron. 20:14). Further, we read that the Spirit of the Lord clothed, or enwrapped, Gideon ■■&■ (Judg. 6:34), and Amasai, chief of the captains, who answered so beautifully to David's challenge (1 Chron. 12:18), as well as Jechaniah, the son of Jehoiada the priest, who reproved the people and Joash, the king (2 Chron. 24:20). He pressed, too, or fell upon, ■■■■ Samson (Judg. 14:6, 19; 15:14); on Saul (1 Sam. 10:6, 10; 11:6); and on David (1 Sam. 16:13). He entered into Ezekiel (Ezek. 2:2; 3:24), and set him on his feet. He fell upon him (Ezek. 11:5), ■■■, and he prophesied. Moreover, the Spirit lifted him up, and transported him to any place that the Lord desired him to visit (Ezek. 3:12-14; 8:3; 11:1, 24; 43:5). Very marked, then, were the ways of the Spirit with certain men, who manifested by what they did, when energized by Him, how His power could be exercised on and through individuals. Besides this, the Spirit of the Lord, which had instructed Israel (Neh. 9:20), remained among the returned remnant, according to God's solemn engagement, in spite of all that they and their fathers had been (Hag. 2:5).

Greater blessings are yet, however, in store for that people. For, great as have been the displays of the Spirit's power among them, they can look forward to a blessing they have never yet enjoyed. God will put His Spirit within them individually (Ezek. 36:27), and pour it out on them collectively (Isa. 44:3), when their time of trial, and of the desolation of the land, consequent on their sins, shall cease (Isa. 32:15), never to return (Ezek. 39:29). Nor will this blessing be confined to Israel, for God will pour out His Spirit on all flesh, as Joel clearly predicts, who also tells us after what public event that will take place. God must first act in victorious power on Israel's behalf, and overthrow the northern army which will invade the land. The aggressive power overthrown, and the fertility of the land restored, the Holy Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, and prophecies will be uttered, dreams be dreamed, and visions be seen (Joel 2:28-30).

With the promises of the outpouring of the Holy Ghost on Israel, and on all flesh, we close the volume of Old Testament scripture, leaving Israel to wait for their fulfillment, which the New Testament teaches us are still to be desired by them. But what, in the meantime, is the Spirit of God doing? Is He working, or only awaiting the advent of those times of which Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Joel have foretold? This is an important question for all to understand. So, now turning to the New Testament volume of inspired writings, in what terms, let us ask, is the Holy Ghost mentioned, and in what ways do we therein learn He was, and is, manifested?

And, first, as to the terms in which He is pleased to speak of Himself. For be it remembered that the inspired writings are the words of the Holy Ghost. (1 Cor. 2:13.)

Besides those mentioned at the commencement of this paper, we read of Him as the Spirit of God, of the living God, of the Father, of His Son, of the Lord, of Jesus (Acts 16:7), of Christ, of Jesus Christ (Phil. 1:19), of truth, of grace (Heb. 10:29), of promise (Eph. 1:13). He is called the eternal Spirit (Heb. 9:14), and is said to be “the truth” (1 John 5:6). Furthermore He is the earnest of our inheritance, the seal wherewith God seals believers, and the unction by which believers know all things (Eph. 1:18, 14; 1 John 2:20, 27). Moreover He is the other Comforter, or Paraclete (John 14; 15:16)

Next, if we inquire about His ways of acting, we learn that what He did before the flood, that He did after the cross, and that in a way He does still. By Him men are born again. He acts on the heart, and deals in life-giving power with souls. And as saints were enabled to bear witness for God in the midst of the evil around them, so, by His power and instrumentality, a testimony for God is carried on still. The character of the testimony may vary according to the wants and condition of men, and the times in which the Spirit is working. Thus, before the flood we read of Noah, a preacher of righteousness. Since the cross we have been made familiar with preachers of grace. The character and object of the testimony has changed, but the energizing power is one and the same. Again, before the flood, and in patriarchal times, we meet with prophets. After the Lord had ascended we learn that there were fresh ones raised up, not only to foretell future events, like Agabus (Acts 11:28), but to communicate divine teaching by revelation, as well as to set forth God's truth in such a way as to make men feel that it is His word which is spoken to them. For on the foundation of apostles and prophets saints are built (Eph. 2:20; 4:11), and prophets are used of God to edify His people (1 Cor. 14:8, 24).

After the fall, and before the flood, the Spirit manifested Himself in ways of testimony amongst men. After God took up Israel as His people, the Holy Ghost, in addition, displayed Himself in works of power, as we have seen. In power, too, we learn from the pages of the New Testament, did He work when the Lord was upon earth, and whilst the apostles continued with the church. Hence terms, similar to those met with in the Old Testament, are used to describe His workings in the New. Of Bezaleel, it was said, that he was filled with the Spirit, and of Joshua that he was fall of it. Of both of these states have we examples in the New Testament. John the Baptist, Elizabeth, Zecharias (Luke 1:15, 41, 67), the hundred and twenty on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4), Peter (Acts 4:8), those assembled together (Acts 4:31), and Paul (Acts 9:17; 13:9), were filled (■πλ■σξησαν) with the Holy Ghost.

The six deacons, on the other hand, with Stephen and Barnabas (Acts 6:3, 5; 7:55; 11:24), are said to have been full (πλ■ρης) of the Spirit. Filled with the Spirit is used in both Old and New

Testaments of those fitted for special service, as Bezaleel, John the Baptist, and Paul (Acts 9:17), or taken up, and used for a passing purpose, as Elizabeth, Zacharias, the hundred and twenty, Peter, and Paul at Paphos (Acts 13:9). Full of the Spirit seems characteristic of the general tenor of the life.

And here another Person must be mentioned, very different from the rest—the man Christ Jesus. To Him, “filled with the Spirit” is a term never applied. Scripture writes of Him as “full of the Holy Ghost” (Luke 4:1). A reason for this it is surely not difficult to discover. And in confirmation of the difference to which attention is here directed, the reader is requested to note the description of believers at Antioch (Acts 13:52), and to mark the exhortation given to God's saints in the Epistle to the Ephesians (Eph. 5:18). For though in a translation the distinction may, perhaps, not be made, in the original it can readily be seen. Of believers we read, “they were being filled” (■πλ■ρουντο) with the Holy Ghost. To the saints it is said (πληρο■σξε), “be ye filled” with the Spirit. The general character of the former is told us. Of that which should characterize Christians the apostle reminds us. Πληρ■ω can be used when saints are exhorted, π■μπλημι is only employed when a special condition is described.

Again, as we read of the Spirit being on Othniel and others, so we find that He was on Simeon (Luke 2:25), and He came upon Mary the Virgin (Luke 1:35), on the twelve disciples at Ephesus (Acts 19:6), and, as the Lord promised, on the eleven after His ascension (Acts 1:8). Besides this, what Ezekiel describes, that the Spirit fell upon him (Ezek. 11:5), saints of New Testament times, believers in Samaria and at Caesarea, could speak of as experienced by them. He fell on them, and Peter adds, with reference to the company in the house of Cornelius, “as on us at the beginning” (Acts 8:16; 10:44; 11:15). The pouring out, too, of the Spirit we are made familiar with in thought through the writings of the prophets, before we meet with an illustration of it recorded in the Acts. “An illustration” we must say, for the outpourings of Acts 2 and x. were neither of them the fulfillment of the predictions of Joel, or Ezekiel, or Isaiah. These prophecies still await their accomplishment. Meanwhile we have to own that the outpouring of the Holy Ghost is not peculiar to Christianity) though as yet it has been confined to Christian times. And, further, we can add that the act was never repeated after that of which we read in Acts 10:45. On two occasions only did it take place, and in two chapters only of the Acts (2, 10) does the historian describe it; and Paul, the only other New Testament writer who mentions such an action (Titus 3:6), lends no support to the common idea that it may be looked for in our day. Poured out first on believers from amongst the Jews, poured out too on believers from amongst the Gentiles (thus putting the latter company on the fullest equality with the former, each receiving the gift direct from God) the Holy Ghost has never been poured again. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, or for the Spirit to fall on any one, is spoken of individuals; but the outpouring of the Spirit, is mentioned, in the New Testament, in connection only with a class, Jews or Gentiles (Acts 10:45), and hence is never repeated. And the former statements, it is clear, do not necessarily imply any descent of the Spirit from above, they only describe His reception by saints for the display of His power, through the individual in whom He was acting, as Bezaleel, Ezekiel, and others can bear witness.

Many, then, of the ways in which the Spirit acted before the first advent of the Lord Jesus Christ, can be illustrated from the manner of His working after. In what, it may be asked, have His ways of working since that event differed from His ways before it?

With the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ a new thing was manifested. A man was upon earth, the woman's Seed, conceived of the Holy Ghost. Believers throughout all ages had been, and are, born of the Spirit. The Lord Jesus, however, as man, was conceived of the Holy Ghost. (Matt. 1:20.) Born of the Spirit is true of every one who partakes of the new birth. But begotten of the Holy Ghost, as the virgin's child, is true only of the Lord Jesus Christ. At His baptism by John another action of the Spirit was manifested, differing from any which had been hitherto known, and described in language peculiar to itself. On Him the Spirit descended, καταβα■νων, as Matthew (3:16), Mark (1:10), Luke (3:22), and John (1:33), all carefully record. The Lord was full of the Spirit; so was Barnabas, so was Stephen, so were the rest of the deacons. The Spirit too was on Him. Of this, which Isaiah foretold (61:1), the Lord Himself announced the fulfillment. (Luke 4:18.) But the Spirit was also on Simeon. So far then the Lord Jesus might seem to be in the same category with these holy men; but in truth the difference between Him and them was immense, and He stands out alone in this, that on Him the Spirit descended. The Spirit which had clothed Gideon, and had worked in power on David and others, the Spirit which had moved upon the face of the waters, now descended on the Lord Jesus in a bodily form like a dove, and, as John the Evangelist adds, giving us the testimony of his namesake the Baptist, that it abode on Him, thus furnishing the son of Zacharias with the double token, by which he should discern the One who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. (John 1:32-34.) And now not only could it be said of Him that He was begotten of the Holy Ghost, and that on Him at His baptism the Spirit descended, for we are taught that, by the descent of the Spirit upon Him, He was both anointed with the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:38), and sealed by Him likewise (John 6:27). In all this whilst on earth He was alone, others however according to the counsels of God were to be both anointed and sealed, the fruit of His atoning work and the consequence of His ascension to heaven, Hitherto any action of the Spirit on men beyond that of the new birth has been, as far as we read of such things in the word, restricted to special objects of God's choice. All saints had been born of the Spirit, but all did not prophesy, nor were all energized for special service by Him. The Lord however announced a blessing which would be common to all God's people, and one which He could even impart whilst still on earth. And the time when this was announced, as well as the place, and the terms too in which the communication was conveyed, were in character with the blessing of which God was now pleased to speak. The time chosen was, when the Lord had appeared in humiliation, but in grace, amongst men; and had met with a poor sinner, who could not procure such a thing for herself. The place was a well side, to which all were free to resort. The figure used was that of water, which is met with in all parts of the earth. And the class which could benefit by it was so comprehensive, as to include within its limits every one who was willing to receive it. So free, so full, so general was to be the blessing, that a poor Samaritan could share in it, and whosoever should once drink of that living water could never thirst, for the water which the Lord would give would he in the recipient a well of water springing up into everlasting life. (John 4:10, 14.) This could be enjoyed before the cross, and the woman, if she knew the gift of God, and Who it was that accosted her, might have asked, and have received it—the Spirit of God within her for communion with the Father and with the Son.

But in other ways would the Spirit be manifested, only, however, after the cross. Of such the Lord spoke whilst on earth. (John 7:38; 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7 - 15.) The prophetic word told Israel that on them and on all flesh He was to be outpoured. John the Baptist had announced the baptism of the Holy Ghost. The Lord spake of both (Acts 1:5-8), and dwelt more at length on the

objects and results of the Spirit's coming to earth. “When he is come,” He said (John 15:26; 16:13), intimating most clearly that the Spirit is not a mere influence but a divine person, Who could not abide on earth whilst the Lord was here (John 16:7), and Who never had been dwelling on earth in any previous age of man's eventful history. (John 7:39.) The Holy Ghost, John the Evangelist in that passage of his Gospel declares,” was not yet, because that Jesus was not yet glorified.” Clearly it is not of the Spirit's existence, but of His dwelling on earth that the apostle writes. “He was not,” a phrase any one familiar with Old Testament phraseology would readily understand. Enoch “was not,” when he ceased to live on this earth. The Spirit was not, till He came to dwell upon it. (See also Psa. 37:10; 103:16; Jer. 49:10; Matt. 2:18.) And not as a passing guest, a wayfaring man that tarries just for a little time, was the Holy Ghost to be known, but as the divine Person who would abide “with you,” as the Lord said “forever” (John 14:16). As such then He is surely present in the assembly of God's saints which is His habitation. No need then was there for Him to write of His presence. God's saints were conscious of it as Peter lets us know. (Acts 5:32.) Are we wrong then in speaking of it? It is true, παρουσ■α a term never applied to the Holy Ghost, though it is used of the Lord. But it should he observed that even to the Lord it was never applied when on earth, and it is used only of Him in connection with the looking for His return. If we meet a person in his house, we do not expect him to be telling us of his presence. If he is absent for a time, he might well apprize us that he would by-and-by be present.

(To be continued)

Chapter 59

A Slight Sketch of the Holy Spirit's Ways: Part 2

With the Spirit's coming however was to commence the time when He would dwell with the Lord's people on earth, and also be in them, teaching them too all things, and reminding them likewise of all that the Lord had said unto them. (John 14) Moreover the Spirit would Himself bear witness of Christ (John 15), and that not merely through the Lord's people, for they were to bear witness in addition; and by His presence on earth He would demonstrate to the world its sin, and at the same time He would guide the disciples into all the truth. (John 16) Great indeed and marked were to be the results of His coming, and believers who received Him would become reservoirs or cisterns, out of which refreshing fertilizing vivifying water should flow to others. (John 7:31) A man on whom the Spirit could descend and abide, anointed with and sealed by Him also, energized too by Him, and begotten of Him in a manner peculiar to Himself, able to give the Holy Ghost, and about to baptize with the Spirit, led of Him, and full of Him—such was the Man Christ Jesus, the Son of God most high. Alone begotten of the Spirit, the only one too on whom He has ever descended, as well as the sole Baptizer with the Holy Ghost, there are, on the other hand, certain statements made about Him, which are applied to others as well. Men in earlier days had been energized, and fresh ones would be energized by the Spirit, who would also be written of as indwelt by the Spirit of God, anointed with Him, and sealed by Him. But for all this the Son must go to the Father. Yet ere He went to heaven, He breathed on His disciples, and gave them the Holy Ghost, communicating thus the Spirit from Himself the risen One, that, sent by Him, they might be authorized to act in discipline in His assembly upon earth. (John 20:21 - 23; Matt. 18:18.)

And now we meet with a term used more than once on future occasions— “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” Does this of necessity imply an outpouring of the Spirit each time He is received? The use of the term in John 20 clears up that point. The disciples received the Holy Ghost from the Lord before the outpouring took place; after that had taken place, believers received the Spirit, and each one does in whom He dwells; but to receive the Holy Ghost, an outpouring each time is clearly not requisite, and further the Spirit may be received without the imposition of hands, and apart from the miraculous powers with which at times believers were endowed. Of this too John 20 is a witness. And though the Galatian saints had received the Spirit, and those of Ephesus and Rome as well, with the exception the twelve at Ephesus, we have no hint of miraculous powers being shared in by these saints at all.

At length the day of Pentecost arrived, and the Lord Jesus having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, shed forth that which the astonished multitude both saw and heard. The Holy Spirit had come, the third person in the Godhead now took up for the first time His dwelling-place on earth, an event fraught with important issues for believers collectively, for the world, and for saints individually.

And first as to the bearing of the coming of the Holy Ghost on believers collectively. The Lord Jesus, as we have seen, had been marked out by the descent of the Spirit upon Him at His baptism by John as the One who should baptize with the Holy Ghost. This baptism, peculiar in its

character, and for a special purpose, now for the first time took place. Baptism with water was nothing new; John had administered such a rite. The disciples too were empowered to baptize with water. The Lord Jesus alone has baptized with the Holy Ghost. But on two occasions only have we any hint of such a baptism having taken place. On the day of Pentecost in the upper room in Jerusalem it was first administered. In the house of Cornelius (must we not say?) it again took place. (Acts 11:16.) John the Baptist had foretold it, the four Evangelists record his testimony about it, the church's historian, Luke, recounts the occasions and circumstances under which it took place (Acts 1:5; 2; 11:16), and Paul in writing to the Corinthians states doctrinally the results of it. (1 Cor. 12:13.) But as with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, so with the baptism of the Spirit, no hint have Christians to ask for repetition of it, nor is there ground to look for it. For its effect being the baptizing believers into one body, this, when once done, was not to be repeated. Believers from amongst Israel were baptized into one body on the day of Pentecost; believers from, amongst Gentiles were also baptized by the same Spirit into the body in the house of Cornelius. Had it been otherwise, converts from the Gentiles might have never been allowed a place of equality, or the recognition of oneness, with converts from the race of Israel. To mark the equality and oneness both companies received the Holy Spirit in the same way, direct from above, without human intervention of any kind. One sees the reason for the second outpouring and baptizing. One may surely, too, easily discern why they did not, and could not, take place afresh. And whatever may be said by men, we should remember that One person only in scripture is said to baptize with the Spirit (Matt. 3:11), and nowhere in the word is there any statement from which to draw the inference, that an apostle could baptize with the Spirit, or that laying on of hands was ever requisite for this baptism to be bestowed.

But are the outpouring and baptizing, some may ask, distinct actions of the Spirit? At one and. the same time both took place, though the ideas conveyed to us by the terms made use of are very different. The outpouring reminds us of the plenitude of God's gift; the baptism describes a special effect upon believers, who, thereby made one body, were henceforth to be conscious of it and declare it. The lines of demarcation between nations were not obliterated, but believers of whatever nationality were members one of another, being members of the body of Christ, the Spirit which was in Him uniting them to Him the Head, and to one another as members of His body. Thus a double tie existed. Believers at Antioch, in Syria, in Macedonia, in Achaia, and Galatia, owned the poor saints at Jerusalem as brethren, with whom they were closely connected by the tie of birth, being children of one Father. Believers too were members of the body of Christ, being united to Him, the Head by the Holy Ghost; and this so really, that one member could not say to another, I have no need of thee (1 Cor. 12:21); nor, if the proper development of the body is to take place, can one member be dispensed with. (Eph. 4:16; Col. 2:19.) And although the body of Christ may be termed a mystical body, it is none the less a real body, and Christians are reminded that there is but one such, the unity formed by the Spirit, which all believers are exhorted to keep (Eph. 4:8), and which, by partaking of the one loaf at the Lord's table, we openly declare that we really are. (1 Cor. 10:17.)

Besides this, the Spirit has builded believers into an habitation κατοικητ■ριον of God (Eph. 2:22), called elsewhere God's house ο■κος (1 Tim. 3:16), and God's temple να■ς. (1 Cor. 3:16.) In this the Holy Ghost dwells. He is not said to dwell in the body. He forms that, but He dwells in the house. The outpouring then of the Spirit was not merely the bestowal of power, but the coming of a

divine Person to take up His abode upon earth in the assembly of God's saints, as the Lord had previously declared. And so really is He on earth, that Ananias and Sapphira tempted Him, and lied to Him. (Acts 5:3 - 9.) So truly does He dwell in the assembly of God, whether local or general, that if any man corrupts the temple of God, him will God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple, addressing the Corinthians, the apostle declares, “ye are.” (1 Cor. 3:17.) And so surely does the Spirit abide with the church whilst it continues on earth, that with the bride (not merely through the bride) He asks the Lord to come as the Morning Star. (Rev. 22:17.)

Secondly, the Spirit's presence on earth concerned the world, and had an important bearing both on mission work in general, and on the due regulation of local assemblies. He was to testify of Christ. This, which the Lord predicted (John 15:26) Peter announced was actually taking place. (Acts 5:32.) His presence too on earth, as come, sent by the Lord Jesus Christ, attests the world's sin in rejecting God's Son, and witnesses of righteousness, because He has gone to His Father, as well as of judgment, for the prince of this world is thereby judged. Three solemn conclusions for the world does the Spirit by His presence here set forth. It is true the world has never seen Him, it cannot see Him, yet His presence is none the less sure, and does concern it most deeply, however it may refuse to heed His testimony.

Further, He directed in mission work, as well as appointed officers in the local assemblies. He selected Paul and Barnabas for their missionary work among the Gentiles, and sent them forth from Himself to accomplish that to which He had called them: (Acts 13:2, 4.) He directed Philip to join company with the eunuch (Acts 8:29), and encouraged Peter to enter the house of Cornelius, escorted thither by the centurion's servants, whom the Spirit had sent for that purpose. (Acts 10:19, 20.) He hindered Paul and his company from laboring in Asia, and would not suffer them to enter Bithynia. (Acts 16:6, 7.) Neither to the left hand nor to the right was Paul to turn, for he was to journey straight on in order to enter Europe by way of Troas. On another occasion He forbade Paul by the instrumentality of others to go up to Jerusalem (Acts 21:4); a communication however to which the apostle gave no heed, and with what results to himself we all know. With the Spirit's action within the assembly the apostle Paul acquaints us. Overseers or bishops were placed by Him (Acts 20:28) in different local assemblies, and He divides to each man gifts χαρ■σματα severally as He will. (1 Cor. 12:11.) Opportunity then should be given in the assembly for the manifestation of the Spirit by whomsoever He may select. And true worship now, that which God owns as such, is by the Spirit of God, as we should probably read in Phil. 3:3.

But not only to work as believers, but to be in them individually, did the Holy Ghost come. “He shall be in you,” the Lord declared. (John 14:17.) In accordance with this we read of saints receiving the Spirit (Acts 19:2; Gal. 3:2); of the Spirit being given to them (Rom. 5:5; 1 Thess. 4:8), and supplied, or ministered, to them (Gal. 3:5); of their having the Spirit (Jude 1, 19), being led of the Spirit (Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:18), and walking in the Spirit (Gal. 5:16); of their being sealed with the Spirit (Eph. 1:13; 4:30), and indwelt by the Spirit, as well as of the Spirit making intercession for them, helping their infirmities, and witnessing with their spirit of their relationship to God. (Rom. 8:9, 11, 16, 26.) But any, and all, of this is true only of believers. For, whilst souls are born of the Spirit, He dwells only in such as are already believers. He was in the prophets of old as the Spirit of Christ. (1 Peter 1:11.) He was with them as David declares. (Psa. 2:11.) But that which was true of every prophet of old, and of every vessel taken up by God for special service, was not true of all God's saints before the cross. Now it is different. And though all are not gifts from the ascended Christ, to

minister in the assembly; nor are all pastors, to care in a special way for the flock; nor are all prophets, to edify God's saints, though all can prophesy, if qualified by the Spirit to do it (1 Cor. 14:31); yet to each one a gift, or gifts, χαρ■σματα, are given to profit withal. And it is the distinctive mark, as well as the common privilege, of every believer to have the Spirit of God within him. (John 14:17.) And everyone, who now with the heart believes God's testimony of forgiveness of sins through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ, does share in this great, this blessed, gift (Acts 2:38; 10:43, 44; Gal. 3:2; Eph. 1:13) which it needed as a rule no apostle of old to give.

So, addressing the Corinthians, Paul reminds them that the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. (1 Cor. 12:7 - 11) Writing to the Galatians, he mentions the gift of the Spirit as common to them all. (Chaps, 3, 4) And, though desirous to impart to the Romans some spiritual gift, to establish them whom he had never as a body seen, and to whom as an assembly none of the eleven had ministered, he writes of them as having the Spirit given to them by God. (Rom. 5:5.) In a similar strain John writes in his Gospel (7:39), and presses on the youngest believer in his Epistle. (1 John 2:20, 27.) And so really does the Spirit dwell in each believer, that his body is a temple of the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. 6:19), and will, if it dies, be raised up, because He has dwelt in it, as Rom. 8:11 really states. Further, any Christian who deals deceitfully with a brother in the matter of his wife is told that he despises not man but God, who hath also given unto us His Holy Spirit. (1 Thess. 4:8.) How practical is the teaching in connection with this truth!

Again, the Spirit is the earnest of our inheritance; by Him too we are sealed, as well as anointed. Of the two first Paul alone writes. He is the earnest, as in us, of the inheritance we shall share by-and-by with the Lord Jesus. By the Spirit too we are sealed of God, thus marked as those who are His. Besides this, the Spirit is the unction. Paul just mentions this (2 Cor. 1:2.1), but John expatiates somewhat on it. (1 John 2:20, 27) Thus of our future portion are we reminded and assured, as well as of our present relationship to Him whose Spirit dwells in us. God would have us informed of all this, and by the Spirit it is effected. He bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and because we are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearty crying Abba Father. (Rom. 8:16; Gal. 4:6.) What mighty and what blessed results flow from the coming of the Holy Ghost! He wrought on men, and worked through men, before the flood. He acted in person by men in addition after the flood. After the cross, in addition to all that, He came to dwell in believers, as well as in God's habitation upon earth. All then which follows from His dwelling upon earth is distinctively Christian truth.

Just one more fact should be mentioned, ere this slight sketch is concluded. Scripture predicts a time of apostasy (2 Thess. 2; Rev. 13), and the appearance of a minister of iniquity called the lawless one. (2 Thess. 2:8.) What has hindered his manifestation up to this very hour? The germs of the evil, which will develop into that apostasy, were on earth in apostolic days. But what hindered then has hindered, and still hinders, the full carrying out of Satan's plans? Scripture seems to intimate that it is the Holy Ghost. It is a power, and a person, τ■ κατ■χον, ■ κατ■χων. What so well answers to this double description as the Holy Spirit of God present on earth, who restrains, because present, the bursting forth of that flood of iniquity, which for a time in Christendom will seem to carry all before it?

The Spirit, however, though He will then have ceased to dwell upon earth, will yet work here as a Held for the manifestation of divine grace and power. Souls will be converted, testimony for God

and for the Lord will go out and very extensive results will be the consequence, and at length, when the Lord shall have come to reign over Israel, and God's opponents have been by Him overthrown, the outpouring of the Spirit, of which the prophets have spoken, will taken place, and rest and peace will find a dwelling-place upon this earth.

E. S.

Chapter 60

In the Wilderness Alone With God

“I do not know whether my heart apprehends things in England aright as to the work of the Lord; and I would desire to see His thoughts ere I speak or write about a work in which His hand is engaged and which is either His own work and then all-important, or else a mixed thing which is not indeed and in fact the very preparation for the Bright and Morning Star though it may link on with that which, or be that out of which, what is prepared for the Bright and Morning Star shall emerge. The great want of soul trust in individuals is God and Christ. The want of clear understanding of expiation and of the new revelation of the character as brought out to light of God, (as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb upon the throne) has pressed upon me not a little as seen in England; and I have feared a tendency to enlarge and to restore without due reference to souls being really in faith and spirit in His presence. I give you my thoughts as they rise afresh, though they have long been again before me.

In early days there was much of patience and a wall to jump over; this gave more character to both workman and those worked upon. The Lord grant that in the removal of barriers (many of them removed through infidelity and rationalism, &c.) we may not have fallen and may not fall into a superficial kind of work. The work has become so vast that one can only commend it to Him, but at the same time, and in proportion as it augments, one needs to keep oneself more and more apart with Him.” G. V. W. to J. B. S. December, 1871.

Chapter 61

Thoughts on Jacob: 1. Genesis 28:20, 21

“IF God will be with me.... so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then shall Jehovah be my God; this stone and.... shall be God's house, and... I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

It was to this end that all God's dealings with Jacob pointed. It was in His counsels to reveal Himself unto men in this character as the eternal, unchangeable, righteously-blessing God; and, when at length Jacob had reached the limit of his desire, and had got to himself much cattle, and maid-servants, and men-servants, and camels, and asses, and therefore for the moment had no further object before him, Jehovah presents Himself to Jacob as the only worthy object, the true satisfying portion, saying, “Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee."

Blessing is ever consequent upon grace, whether in the giver only, or the recipient also: “grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee forever.” But blessing to man in grace, simply, is not the perfect manifestation of Jehovah. It must be righteous grace; for if Jehovah dwell among the children of Israel, it is because He has redeemed them. (Num. 35:34; Ex. 13:15.)

So Jehovah had said unto Abram, “Get thee out of thy country, from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.". “So Abram departed,” and into the land of Canaan “he came.” Again, after Lot was separated from him, He says, “All the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.” And note here, that for the first time “the seed” is associated with Abram. Again the word of Jehovah comes to Abram, but now the promised seed stands out alone, distinct, as the pledge, depository, and assurance of blessing. But still all is grace. No word of righteousness on God's part here—blessing on the ground of unlimited, unconditional, absolute grace, irrespective of what might be due to Him who gave, or of the receiver.

This is not Jehovah acting as such, nor God manifesting Himself perfectly as “grace and truth,” for this could be only in His Son. It is blessing coming out from Jehovah because of hidden grace.

But God delights to manifest Himself in all His fullness; and blessing coming out to us is very different from going in to Him, and finding grace there to stand in.

In the Old Testament all His dealings were for the purpose of bringing out His fullness as Jehovah, “the Eternal,” blessing righteously men on earth. In the New He reveals Himself as the Father, and all His works and words, whether by the Son or by the Spirit through the word, were that children might be brought to Him as the Father.

So we find hitherto to Abram all is simple grace, with secret reference to the coming Seed, in whom all things should be established, and God Himself glorified; for though all is grace, yet is Abraham taught, that if he is to inherit, it must be through death, and that of another, under judgment. (Gen. 15:9-17.)

Then follow fourteen years, a perfect blank (because flesh is established and under trial) having an acknowledged place. After this he must also know what it is, no only to have the sentence of death passed on him in the sacrifice, but also what it is to have it in himself; not, however, before the seed is brought upon the scene for faith. Then can he circumcise flesh in self and the things of self, receiving to himself the promises in Isaac. But when, in fact, the promised son appears, then not only is flesh judged, but cast out also, “for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Throughout it all God is dealing in blessing and disciplinal providence, Himself hidden meanwhile, never known as Jehovah.

Once again does God speak unto Abraham, for the last time, in special declaration of blessing; and here before God does he again come into view in connection with the seed, but both on the ground of resurrection, as a man who had learned that truth, and by faith took the place through substitution and death.

The first revelation of God showed Abraham and his seed in separation; the second, Abraham and his seed in death, but with the promise of life; the third, Abraham and his seed in resurrection.

Though justice is implied, and the claims of God reserved, yet blessing comes out solely on the ground of grace; and the conscience of the believer corresponds to the manifestation of God, so that there is comparatively but feeble apprehension of truth. Nevertheless what was known of God was divine and able to make perfect up to its measure. Notwithstanding it was not the perfect revelation of God to men on earth of Jehovah—not to speak of the Father to men in heaven: this could not be until a man, the Man, was there.

Man yet was not capable of receiving it. By faith he had reached a truth, that of resurrection, from the ground of which redemption through righteousness could be understood and received. So the first communication from Jehovah to Isaac is still in grace—blessing less than ever, if that were possible, subject to conditions, saying, “Go not down into Egypt, dwell in the land which 1 shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land: unto thee and unto thy seed I will give.” He sows that land, and receives an hundredfold; so greatly did the Lord bless him, and this for Abraham's sake, and the people of the land also for his own sake, “for he pitched his tent in Beersheba.” (Gen. 26:31.)

All was founded upon Abraham, but was the reward reckoned to him of grace or desert? Surely grace alone, which gave him to believe in and obey the word of separation, circumcision (death), and resurrection.

Yet all this was not a manifestation of Jehovah, as such. Abraham, planted in grace, is the tree upon which God the Lord can shower His blessings from a distance; but for Him to dwell in the land which is the blessing He designed for it, the land must be morally worthy of Him. No matter the depth of its need and wretchedness, God can dwell, and will dwell, and delights to dwell in it, to bless it, provided He is morally vindicated, and His character witnessed for, in truth, in the place in which He is.

So in all these preliminary ways of God, He, as the Lord, visits the earth, but does not dwell in the land, Whenever He visits, it is indeed for blessing, seen remarkably on the one occasion in which its absence is most conspicuous; for though we find three men, and One of them—the Lord—when blessing Abraham, appearing unto him in the plain of Mamre, He Himself says unto

him, “I will certainly return unto thee.... and Sarah thy wife shall have a son at the time appointed."

(To be continued; if the Lord will)

Chapter 62

Thoughts on Jacob: 2. Genesis 28:20, 21

Yet when judgment is in hand, it is the Lord's strange work: only two men are in view, and the Lord afar off, for “he went his way.” Though He can visit thus and bless His saints, and the land through them, yet neither can He dwell with them, nor in it. His character in connection with men in flesh, though chosen ones on the earth, had never been vindicated, so that He could not own a public connection with them, lest the truth of His character might be obscured, and His name linked with their unrighteousness, instead of giving them communion with His holiness.

Still less was it possible He could dwell in man'! This could not be until the precious blood of Christ was shed, which sanctifieth, not to the purifying of the flesh, but to the purging of Our sins and consciences.

Then, and then alone, could He dwell in men, and among men; since only then would God the Father be perfectly glorified, perfectly manifested, perfectly vindicated, regarding man.

But the time was about to come, in the purpose of God, for Him to manifest the glories of His name, Jehovah. Grace in earthly blessing had been fully manifested by Him. Tacitly to man had been confided the exhibition of righteousness in man, as, for instance, in Abraham's entreaty with Jehovah touching the cities of the plain. Jehovah comes down in grace to find, if possible, some plea by reason of which mercy might still stay justice. “I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, and if not, I will know.” Jehovah comes in grace, Abraham urges righteousness— “Wilt thou destroy the righteous with the wicked? that be far from thee. Shall not the judge of all the earth do right? Let not the Lord be angry."

But what the friend of God does not get, because he dares not ask, since he has a conscience of righteousness, that very thing the Lord, with instant unhesitating grace, accords to the fearful cry of vexed, unstable Lot, a cry wrung from him by dread, and finding vent in paltry and distrustful arguments; showing what the Lord's heart, and will, and mind were; gladly hailing any mediator that would urge a plea for mercy on the ground of grace alone, “for he said, See, I have accepted thee concerning this thing, also that I will not overthrow this city for the which thou hast spoken. Haste thee, escape thither, for I cannot do anything until thou be come thither.” And if for such a mediator He so freely spare, what will He not do for Him who, for them for whom He pleads, and in His death and resurrection, has justified and reconciled them?

Failure in man, as the witness for Jehovah of righteousness, had resulted, but in such a way, that grace could bear with it and overlook it for the time being: except, indeed, in the case of Lot, where the very ground of possible blessing was departed from, and the foundation of God's ways of mercy rejected, thereby bringing judgment on the scene wherein he should have been the salt. For the word of the Lord God by Noah had been, “Cursed be Canaan, a servant of servants shall he be. . . Blessed be the Lord God of Shem, and Canaan shall be his servant.” Yet Lot is found sitting in the gate of Sodom, a servant to the Canaanite; unlike Abraham, who, when he had to do with the powers of the world, took entirely a separate place, and responsibility before the Lord alone.

(Gen. 21:28.) But now the moment had arrived for all things to be measured by a divine standard, and for men to be brought into an acknowledged, established, divine relationship, with God dwelling in their midst, and to provide a suitable dwelling-place and maintenance in accordance with His revealed character.

This responsibility Jacob takes up, saying—

1. Jehovah shall be my God.

2. This atone shall be God's house.

3. I will surely given tenth unto thee.

And who was this about to assert his claim to such relationship, and that he is able to provide such a dwelling-place, and to maintain it? Is it one who has proved himself by faithfulness amid the things in which he is found, and who besides has shown such qualities as would declare his fitness to fill the post? Nay! but one above all others who from the first is seen as a supplanter, taking his brother by the heel and supplanting him in the birthright; and whose life up to the above-noted moment had been characterized only by an act of selfish deceit, chicanery, and lies—not righteous but unrighteous; not upright, but a groveler; not peaceable and yielding, but a paltry grasper. And such a man presumes to put himself on terms with God; making the acknowledgment of Him, and rendering of His due, conditional upon His keeping equity, judgment, and truth, insinuating thus a possibility of failure, judging Him to be such another as Himself, making himself the measure of God's truth. So true is it that we think of God by nature according to the state of our own consciences. But not only so, really making blessing to depend, not upon what God is, but upon his own faithfulness, saying, “If the Lord do this, then will I do that.” So that though the Lord proved faithful and true, yet that would not suffice to bring in the needed blessing, for Jacob would still have to do his part. And did he? Let the word declare! Is there not now a counterpart to this? making God's blessing hinge upon man's faithfulness? Abiding blessing cannot come until God has His due, and when it comes, it is none apart from Him. He Himself is good, and in Him only is any.

The good about to be revealed to man in the earth was this—the Lord dwelling with His people. Unbidden, with all the hurry of flesh, Jacob would make this dependent upon him—a bruised reed indeed, a stinking torch—and rushes in, with legal mind, rash step and grasp, instead of leaving the Lord God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, to work it out by grace in His own time. “If I come again to my father's house in peace, Jehovah shall be my God,” this shall be God's house, and I will maintain it.

All turns upon Jacob: he, the jewel-center, so adamantine in his righteousness, that all God's purposes may work upon him I so inflexible, immovable, that God can use him as the fulcrum upon which His eternal will may be rested, and His glory lifted from the dust.

But man from Adam's stock has ever come short of God's glory, proving worthless for His purposes. In his flesh dwells no good thing, an instrument unfit for use; opposed to His efforts, at enmity with His will, doubting God's word, mistrusting His grace, discrediting His power, and therefore taking really the whole burden and responsibility of the work upon himself. Has not this always been the way of flesh, in blind temerity? How different are the ways of God! He holds

Himself responsible for all, from first to last. He foreknew from the first, and predestinated the extent and character of the blessing, and at the due time called forth the appointed vessel.

Still the grace and truth of God credits Jacob with faith and love, and therefore sets him in the path by which the desired end should be attained. What is that end? That “in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 28:14.)

Note here the double character of blessing—full well declaring the stability of God's eternal counsel. Surely there is a blessing “Too Jacob,” “to him,” to have and hold, secured by God's faithfulness, but dependent for its enjoyment upon Jacob's faithfulness. But, blessed be God, there is also a blessing “in Jacob,” the burden of which rests upon God alone (“the genealogy” which fell to Judah, of whom came Shiloh, the chief ruler, as distinct from the birthright which was given unto the sons of Joseph, from thence the shepherd, the stone of Israel Gen. 49:24; 1 Chron. 5:1, 2), independent altogether of the active instrument. “To thee and to thy seed. . . In thee and in thy seed.” Also to Abraham was it not the same (Gen. 12:2, 3): “I will make of thee a great nation.... and in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” The first committed into Abram's charge, the other held in God's hand alone; the former referring to possession and the land, the last to blessing towards all.

Again (Gen. 17:8), “To thee and to thy seed will I give the land;” and both Ishmael and Isaac have their part in this covenant of possession, but it is with Isaac—the seed unborn—the covenant is established (Gen. 17:21; 21:12), and in him alone the seed is called. Again, in Gen. 22:17, 18, when it is a matter of possession and man's power, it is to Abraham; but if it is a question of eternal blessing from God towards all, it is in his Seed alone, secured and sealed by the immutability of His counsel and the oath of God; in the Seed, the Forerunner who has for us entered into that within the veil, fulfilling all the counsel of God, taking up all the responsibility of man, coming to do God's will in the prepared body, in the path of perfect obedience, bearing the sins of many in the offering of His own body, sanctifying them through the offering of His body once, and by that one offering perfecting for aver them that are sanctified. Thus do we see Him come not only to put away sin by Himself, but to bring in a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness; and not only a vindicated God, dwelling in the land among a redeemed people, but a glorified God, dwelling with men in a righteous heavens and a righteous earth.

Ignorantly does faulty, foolish, failing Jacob undertake this mighty work, taking it from the ground of grace, and placing it upon the shoulders of his own faithfulness! Behold him, in unwise haste, while yet it is high day, and the flocks ungathered, rolling the stone from the well's mouth, and watering Laban's sheep! Thus did not Abraham's servant, who waited and prayed and wondered in silence, and let the virgin haste and run and draw to give him drink and all his camels. Thus did not the meek and lowly One, who, in tender grace and long-suffering patience, refused to fulfill a single wish, as Messiah, Son of man, or Head of all things, with His bride, the church, until the due time and the Father's will required.

What a scene there follows—Jacob fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, blown about by every wind of circumstance—the sport of lust! He could well believe Jehovah would bless others, but as for his own house, himself must provide for that. So flesh provided for, but fills its lust, and in those things which it naturally knows it corrupts itself; worshipping and serving the creature more than the Creator, it is given up to vile affections; not liking to retain the knowledge of

God, it is given up to a reprobate mind.

At length Jacob has attained the utmost limit of his desire by deceit, chicanery, and fraud. Through all, and in spite of all, the unseen God has heard the desire of Jacob's heart, and given him to the full, yet in his own thought he has done it all—God little; known or acknowledged. Jacob's hand, and thought, and fraud have gained it all; all is his. Jacob's cattle are strong, and “the man” (note that word), “the man increased exceedingly, had much cattle, maid-servants, men-servants, camels, and asses."

And now God's time has come. Jacob had uttered his before the Lord, and God's promise must be fulfilled, to bring him back to his father's home in peace, so that it may be tested whether he will perform his vow. So, in view of His eternal purpose, the Lord says to Jacob, return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred. “I am the God of Bethel, where thou vowedst a vow unto me. Arise, get thee out of this land, and return unto the land of thy kindred.” “Then Jacob rose up, and set his sons, and his wives upon camels, and he carried away all his cattle, and all his goods, which he had gotten, the cattle of his getting, which he had gotten, in Padan-Aram, for to go to Isaac his father in the land of Canaan.” How fares it with God's name—God's house—God's dues? This depends, in Jacob's view, upon his recognition of the fact that God had been with him, giving him bread and raiment; if so, Jacob would return a tenth, set up the house, and own Jehovah. He has been taken at his word, and Jehovah in faithfulness performs his part. But notice Jacob's thought! Has God given him aught? Nay, naught. All is his getting which he had gotten. Had he not cared for himself, he had been left bare indeed. To Jacob's conscience these were not the gifts which God had given, but Laban's heart and Laban's images which he had stolen; the objects of Laban's love and worship. (Gen. 31:19, 20, margin.) Has not this always been the tale of religious profession when faith has failed? To serve the world for wages, for bread and raiment, and to end with appropriating the objects of its love and worship—the way of Balsam, and the teaching of Jezebel.

“He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.” If Jacob has not received from God, he has been heaping up treasure to himself, of which he must be stripped as bare as a withered branch, ere he can become a worshipper of God, not to speak of being a witness for His name, a builder and maintainer of His house.

Gently, and with loving, firm, unsparing hand does Jehovah prune away his fruitless branches. The times of ignorance are now passed, and Jacob is taken in hand. “Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art the wretched, and the miserable, and poor and blind and naked.” Laban's flock he had watered while yet high day, in fleshly hurry, at the first; now, at the close of his sojourn, he hastens to depart, ere yet he had completed the perfect term of service. Is not this religious flesh? In impatient zeal joining with the world, to serve it for its profit, and in the end thereof, with undue eagerness, severing that connection. For his two wives twice seven years he served, but only six years for the cattle. Withal he was not in the place where God would have him. Behold the contrast with the Bridegroom yearning greatly for the bride, yet content to be cut off and have nothing!—refusing to serve the world for hire—content to be a stranger unto His brethren, an alien unto His mother's children. To serve His Father in the appointed place—surely profiting the worm—becoming obedient unto death-loving the wages of righteousness, having a right to all, yet taking none, that He might

receive all in resurrection. “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again."

But see what religions flesh, found with the man elected and loved of God, has done! Concealed beneath her skirts the idols of the world! It was not the Jewish bride, Rebekah, that has done this; nor Leah, the wearied one, who found her resting-place with that which had gone before, became wearied and faint in mind, resisted not unto blood, and fell back unto the mountain that might be touched and burned with fire. It is Rachel the loved one of the flock, the younger; that had the heart of Jacob, the beautiful well-favored one, who travailed in hard labor, and in departing brought forth the son of her sorrow, now at God's right hand, the appointed ruler in Israel. Note, that between the travailing with Benoni, and the bringing forth and naming of him Benjamin, Rachel's soul departs; and from Mic. 5:2, 3 we learn that, during this momentary interval, this little while, the thousands of Judah shall be given up, and the “rampant of his brethren” will occupy the earthly scene, who shall not return unto the children of Israel until the bringing forth shall be accomplished. Rachel, therefore, represents in type those to whom the Lord said, “A little while, and ye do not behold me, and again a little while, and ye shall see me. Verily, verily, I say to you, that ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice, but ye will be grieved, but your grief shall be turned to joy. A woman, when she gives birth to a child, has grief, because her hour has come; but when the child is born, she no longer remembers her trouble, on account of the joy that a man has been born into the world. And ye now, therefore, have grief, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no one takes from you.” The remnant of his brethren, bearing the name of God's Israel, and owning wifely responsibility at the time of the giving up of Judah, and before the return unto the children of Israel; the remnant of his brethren; departing from earthly places in bringing forth Benoni, the child of her sorrow, whom she knew as a dew from the Lord in the midst of many people (Deut. 33:18; Gen. 49:28), but who, when owned of Jacob, will also be Benjamin, the remnant of Jacob, among the nations, in the midst of many people, as a lion among the beasts of the forest (Gen. 49:27).

This crime, the theft of Laban's images, is worthy of death, but Jacob knows not of it, and, sheltered by the mighty hand of God, is secure from all but Him. A “heap of witness” separates him from all evil occurrent, and, until that heap of witness be removed, and the pillar be taken out of the way, the world will not seek the hurt of the chosen of God, neither will His saints call for judgment on the world.

The tower of watching is set up by the saint of God, a sign for them that, until their Lord comes, there is peace for and with the world; while for the world the presence of God's saints is a witness that He will avenge unrighteousness and oppression. The “heap of witness” is set up by those of the world who claim relationship with the saints of God, and is a sign for them that so long as the witness remains—religions profession—no harm can come to them. Notice, that Laban covenants not to pass the heap for harm to Jacob, whereas both heap and pillar mast be passed over for Jacob ere the day of reconciliation ends. God, as it were, is set between as judge. So the world will trample Christian profession under foot before personal harm can come to Jacob's seed as Christ's; while wrath cannot be poured out upon the world until not only: Christian watching for the Lord is overpast, but for the conscience of the world no righteous judge exists.

In spite of the protecting interposition of God and His security from every foe, Jacob, in his heart, claims all the praise, for “he aware by the fear of his father Isaac.” Was this what he had agreed to do? According to his own confession God had been with him. Had he not had bread and raiment these twenty years? Now surely was the time to own Jehovah his God. But no, it needed faith. Other dangers were yet to be encountered. Jehovah must, as it were, be held to His word, and proved to the end, before the heart's worship can be His. Besides, Jacob, in bargaining with Laban for his hire, had stood upon righteousness (Gen. 30-33). Had he been righteous? And now, with bold front and swelling words, he asks, What is my trespass? Certainly he knew Jehovah would not own his ways; so he swears by the fear of his father lease. Faith and sin judged were needed before Jehovah could be owned his God.

God's grace had come in, and saved Jacob and his seed from the fruit of his deeds in the service of Laban; but now a deeper danger shows itself, a heavier storm lowers in the distance.

What is the sting of this new scourge? What bolt lies hid in this fresh thunder-cloud? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. Is not God’s grace equal to the crisis? Is anything wanting on His part to assure us of His ability to save? Nay His revelations are ever suited to the occasion, and sufficient.

“Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him, and he said, God's host!” Will he not now judge his ways, and will Jehovah his God? He called that piece Mahanaim—two hosts—God's host and his host. If God is there so is Jacob; and when the day of trial stifles; God vanishes from his thoughts, and Jacob alone remains, for he divides the people with him, and the flocks, and herds, and the camels, into two bands thus filling the whole field of his vision. Jacob, without faith in exercise, is under sin and under law, and unfit to apprehend grace.

Despite the host of God, he is greatly afraid and distressed upon receipt of the tidings about Esau; his guilt, half forgotten, stinging him to fear, bringing his and into bondage before God; for however little in his own sight he might be, at any rate he had become two bands. (Gen. 32:7-10.)

All is Jacob here, and not Jehovah; Jehovah's: glory set aside and only Jacob's blessing thought of. Therefore Jacob's state of soul is such that he is morally incapable of owning Jehovah as his God, and being His witness among men. I, I, I, occupies the scene, and is the whole subject of his prayer. Therefore in this hour of trial he fails to fulfill his vow, and only owns Jehovah as the God of his father Abraham, the God of his father Isaac, the Jehovah who spake to him, but not his God.

Jehovah, as such, in God in righteous grace. Jacob had not judged sin, and therefore would not trust love.

If Jacob will not own Jehovah by His new name, God will in grace give him a blessing other than he sought.

Jehovah’s glory from men depended, as we have seen, upon man trusting truth in God: man's blessing from Jehovah rests anon the finding truth in man. In vain, for ages, has God looked on earth. At the first He saw that the wickedness of men was great in the earth; and the whole mind of the thought of his heart evil only every day. A second time the cry was great, because the sin was very grievous, the cry of them waxed great before the face of the Lord. Again He looked, seeking good, and found they were all gone aside, together become. filthy, none that doeth good, no, not

one; until at length a Babe was born in Bethlehem—the Son of the Highest, the Son of God, yet conceived in the womb of the virgin (the Holy Spirit coming upon her in the power of the Highest), taking part in flesh and blood, in this made like unto the seed of Abraham in all things:—then immediately the glory of Jehovah shines, for truth is found in man, and glory is to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men.

Truth is found in man, and it is Jehovah's glory to bless him; but this is not man's trusting truth in God, upon which Jehovah's glory, manifested in men, depends. Glory in the highest there is, but not glory, only peace, on earth.

Thirty circling seasons pass, and on that same humbled One the heavens open, and God the Spirit, dovelike, descends and abides; and a voice came from heaven, saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” Then can blessing flow unhindered. “The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” This is glory in heaven and man blessed, but not glory on earth and God blessed. A second time, and the glory of the Father comes to earth, but the place is a high mountain apart, and it rested upon One only map, and a voice came out of it, saying again, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I have found my delight,” adding the words, “hear him,” to indicate that He by work and word would create all things new in Himself, so that the tabernacle of God might be with men, that He should tabernacle with them, and they be His people, and God Himself with them, their God. A third time the Father spoke from heaven. He had been blessed and glorified in that One man, and would be again glorified in His vindication: but meanwhile that corn of wheat falls into the ground and dies, and in His death brings forth much fruit, that from the mouths of multitudes might glory flow “to him who loveth them, and washed them from their sins. in his blood, making them a kingdom, priests, unto his God and Father;” and they might worship Him, and say, “Thou art worthy, our Lord and our God, to receive glory, and honor, and power! Thou hast been slain, and hast redeemed to God by thy blood.” “Worthy is the Lamb that has been slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing. To him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb,. blessing, and honor, and glory, and might be to the ages of ages."

Thus is He that sitteth upon the throne, and the Lamb, blessed and glorified by man in a full outflow of praise: but how comes it thus to pass? The man now raised to the highest pinnacle of glory, the center of it all, is the One who stooped to the deepest depth of woe, and in that depth was deserted of His God; yet, in the eternal darkness of that forsaken place, while bearing our sins, the wrath and judgment due to them, being made to drink into His soul all the bitterness, made a curse from God for us, made sin for us, pleading our sins while bearing the bruise and wound of each, yet in His body bearing each, until every one had been wiped, out from God's, sight in His blood forever; yet in that place, of darkness, distance, confusion of face, and unutterable dismay, distress of soul, aversion of God's face, and seeming reversal of His ways, amidst it all He yet trusted in Him. He cried in the daytime, and He was not heard, in the night-season and no reply—forsaken, unhelped; unheard—yet He trusted in the Lord. Never yet had the feeblest creature been so dealt with as now His righteous servant. They that reproached, and the despisers, the mockers, and revilers even said, “He trusted on the Lord,” yet God had brought Him into the dust of death. Through through dark; by day, by night; in life, in death, He trusted on the Lord; in the days of His flesh, having offered up both supplications and entreaties to

Him who was able to save Him out of death, with strong crying and tears.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

Chapter 63

Thoughts on Jacob: 3. Genesis 28:20, 21

“HE loved righteousness, and hated lawlessness,” though it cost His blood, and the forsaking and bruisings of God. “Therefore God, even his God, anointed him with oil of gladness above his companions."

Gladness follows upon righteousness; blessing comes upon grace; gladness is consequent upon righteousness.

“Grace is poured into thy lips, therefore God hath blessed thee forever.” “Thou hast loved righteousness, and hast hated lawlessness, therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy companions.” Now is a foundation laid for gladness forever-laid in blood, laid in righteousness, for a sanctuary in Zion, a tried stone, a sure foundation, that whosoever believeth in Him should not be ashamed.

In truth did the righteous One own Jehovah as His God when all things went against Him. He witnessed for His righteousness, and truth, and grace, even in the dust of death. Nor this alone. In three days did He raise up a temple of God for Him to dwell in, a sanctuary, in which men who had fled thereto might render His full due, and worship Him acceptably forever. How great the contrast to Jacob, the deceitful servant who in fleshly haste had undertaken to do this very thing.

He took the honor of that priestly place uncalled of God, whereas this One has not glorified Himself to be made high priest, but He who had said, “Thou art my Son,” says also, “Thou art a priest forever."

"Jacob took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God, yea, he had power over the angel, and prevailed.” But this man, before He was conceived in the womb, was called Jesus, since, He “should save his people from their sins; was crucified through weakness, that through death he might annul him who has the might of death,” “and was tempted in all things in like manner (sin apart) as we:” with Him power is perfected in weakness, and “through sufferings was he made perfect."

“He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up both supplications and entreaties to him who was able to save him out of death, with strong cryings and tears,” not for Himself, but that He should “become to all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation;” whereas Jacob wept for himself, and made supplication unto Him for himself, saying, “Deliver me, I pray thee,” delivering also into the hand of his servants “every drove by themselves, saying, Pass over before me, and so commanded he the second and the third, and all that followed the droves, saying, Say ye Jacob is behind us."... So went the present over before him. And he rose up that night, and took his two wives, and his two womenservants, and his eleven sons, and sent them over the brook Jabbok, and Jacob was left alone.” Let all things go, if by any means Jacob lives. If ye seek these, let me go my way. Note the contrast! “Jesus, knowing all things that were coming upon him,” went forth, and said,” Whom seek ye?.... If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way."

Jacob at last is found alone, the first time since that night at Luz, when he vowed the vow. If Jacob is not faithful, God is. If Jacob will not keep his word, God must. If Jacob does not bless God, God will bless him. If Jacob owns not God's new name, God calls Jacob by his new name. But first He must find some point of truth. Man cannot partake in any blessing without the required truth for it to rest on. Is it food? He must have the desire; if not, he abhors all manner of meats. If drink, the thirst to slake goes first, or the fountain of living water is deserted, and broken cisterns, which can hold no water, preferred. If clothing, nakedness must first be known and owned. (Gen. 3:7 -21.) So a Savior is for the lost, and cleansing for the filthy, deliverance for the captive, and pardon for the guilty.

If Jehovah is to be revealed and glorified, it can only be in man renewed and redeemed. The proof is that when the old man, Jacob, is brought to a point beyond which God cannot lead him, a pitch of blessing than which a greater cannot be attained, he fails more utterly than ever. Thus God had been with him, fed him, clothed him, kept him, compassed him with a host of angels, and now, wonder of all wonders, has met him face to face; yet Jacob lives, and dares to stand on equal ground with God, and resist Him until the break of day. Is not this ever the course of fleshly man, especially religious man? Was there not “a householder who planted a vineyard, and made a fence round it, and dug a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen.... and sent his bondsmen to receive his fruits” —, without avail— “and at last he sent to them his son. . . But the husbandmen, seeing his son, said, This is the heir, come, let us kill him?” Were they not stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, always resisting the Holy Spirit, as their fathers? Thus Jacob fenced off all the strivings of the Lord—in ignorance, surely, and unbelief. The secret place of Jacob's power must be smitten. If hitherto he has prevailed through strength, and boasted in his hands, now be must be taught the Lord's grace suffices, and to boast rather in his weakness, that the power of the Lord may dwell upon him.

Still a merchantman, and bargaining for gain, he seeks blessing only for himself, with mind oblivious of the Lord. But most surely had the time arrived for Jehovah's glory to be considered. “His eternal power and divinity,” His creative glory had been fully and completely manifested when “God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good” (Gen. 1:1-31).; “and God blessed the seventh day."

His glory in irresponsible irrespective grace had been eternally set forth when the Lord God said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman; between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” (Gen. 3:1-24.) Now man had undertaken to manifest God's grace and righteousness combined. Not alone was it needful that His hand of power should be recognized, and His heart of love exhibited, but His righteous character declared. Now was the time for man to do it, in order that the Lord might tabernacle in the land among the children of Israel.

So the Lord wrestles for His glory, and Jacob strives for his gain; eye to eye, hand to hand, foot to foot. Jehovah breaks through all Jacob's devices, gets at him face to face, meets scheme with scheme, and trick with counter-check, devising evil against him who devised iniquity, answering a fool according to his folly, in truest grace, but prevails not. The flocks, the herds, the servants, the sons, the wives are searched, but Jacob's idol is not found, for Jacob is not there, and self is the object of his service, not Jehovah. At last alone he is found, the secret of his strength untouched.

Unwittingly he was the thief of Laban's Teraphim, the spirit of whoredom was in the midst, but now his pride testifies in his face; be knows not Jehovah, is a worshipper of self, as yet an empty vine, bringing forth fruit unto himself.

One thing alone is left to do; “he touched the hollow of his thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint."

Is the object gained? Does God get the glory sought? “He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh the supremely critical moment has arrived. Will Jacob answer to it? No! No! What is born of the flesh is flesh, even in death and judgment; and Jacob dares to parley with Jehovah, and to make terms with Him. At the first he had made God's glory to depend upon his blessing, and now he would stake his blessing upon his strength, for he said, “I will not let thee go, except thou bless me” —his vow forgotten, Jehovah's name uncared for, His glory unregarded—Jacob first, and last, and altogether.

The truth is out: man has come short of God's glory, and when all is done, Jacob alone is left. He is true to his name, Jacob, a supplanter, whether it be of his brother's birthright, or of Jehovah's glory. There is this truth at least—he does not deny himself, he owns his name, and on this peg of truth the Lord, who cannot deny Himself, can hang the blessing. As yet he own not Jehovah's name, but this truth he has—he owns his own. “If any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going down into the pit.” “Every one whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” So here, at the very darkest moment, when all by man is lost, and, as far as he is concerned, the result is irretrievable ruin, a glint of light from God shines athwart the scene, even as says the prophet: “Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them; he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.

Thus saith the Lord.... therefore night shall be unto you, that ye shall not have a vision, and it shall be dark unto you, that ye shall not divine, and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them..... But truly I am full of power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin.” Just, therefore, so it shall be in the coming time, when, as heretofore, it shall be said, “O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thy help.” So, in the narrative before us, when God's loved one (Jacob) has brought himself into the extremity of ruin, having plowed wickedness, and reaped iniquity, eaten the fruit of lies, because he trusted in his way, and in the greatness of his strength; when it might be said, “Loruhamab,” and “Lo-Ammi,” then the valley of Achor becomes a door of hope, for thus He said: “Thy name shall be no more called Jacob, but Israel.” For in the new-coming man (God's Israel) the mighty one has helped the helpless by the Spirit of the Lord; by the strength of his arm scattering haughty ones, putting down rulers, and exalting the lowly; so that the beggar is raised from the dunghill to the throne of glory, and Jehovah is blessed and tabernacles in the earth. Israel, the chosen servant, the seed of Abraham, shall help the worm Jacob, and glorify Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel, the King of Israel.

Thus Jacob, as the witness for Jehovah's name, forever quits the scene. Self, in every shape, has been his thought from first to last. He has pleaded for himself even when his strength and springs of life were withered with a touch. He has gained his point; for God, having respect to His righteous servant, the root of another race, has reserved His glory till another time. “Jacob asked,

and said, Tell, I pray thee, thy name? And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?” Could He entrust the glories of His name to such a bruised reed Nay! the servant whom He had chosen, His beloved, in whom His soul had found its delight, upon whom He should put His Spirit, alone was fit for such a Charge and task as that. Not so such a withered, halting man as Jacob! Not to such smoking flax will He confide the manifesting forth His glory.

Jacob, notwithstanding, gets his blessing, and has his heart's desire, for “He blessed him there."

Chapter 64

Thoughts on Jacob: 4. Genesis 28:20, 22

Henceforth Jacob is a withered man, bearing about in the body the marks of God's judgment. If God gets glory men bear no mark; the smell of fire passes not upon them where faith is.

In the place where God's judgment has been expressed nothing there can harm; no wound is felt when withered by God's touch. The fruit is for men to eat, the root for God to judge: but how blessed is he who knows not only that Another has borne the curse due to eating of the fruit of flesh! Yet did He ever bear fruit to God, doing nothing of Himself, but He nevertheless, to fulfill His Father's will, linked Himself with the chosen doomed to everlasting wrath because of sins, standing in their room and stead, answering to their name, going forth to meet the offended majesty of God. And be knows besides that He in willing grace surrendered step by step, as each requirement of God's will and purpose met His ear, till life's breath was yielded up, the fountain of His blood was laid bare by the Roman's spear; and thus in Him, in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, has the direful, unchangeable, ineradicable root—sin in the flesh—been judged for them forever. Such is the cross of Christ to faith.

Fruit is first forbidden of the tree of good and evil knowledge; afterward" flesh with the life," the blood, shall man not eat.

With man in innocence it is God's glory to be the trusted Judge of good and evil: man in willfulness restrained gives God the glory by counting life the Lord's, and not for self, but to be rendered up as forfeited to Him. Now a further thing is taught, that man's life is not only forfeited, but strengthless for God.

It was forfeited to God before, and man was responsible to recognize God's rights, the sign being that man should not eat flesh with the life thereof. Now God has claimed the strength of man in flesh, for, put to test, he proved unable in righteousness to use it. When God made man his brother's keeper, then man slew him. Therefore life is forfeited that grace may work. The God of glory now calls man in separation and life forfeited; how little learned this last lesson scripture shows, for scarcely had the horror of great darkness passed away, the smoking furnace and the burning lamp, than Abram leaves resting on the Most High God for an arm of, flesh (Gen. 15:8, 12, 17; 16:2-4), to be His servant in His sanctuary. (Acts 7:7)

As it was no given law that Cain should be his brother's keeper, so to be Jehovah's servant in His sanctuary is no law, but according to man's conscience. (Compare Acts 7:7 and Gen. 28:21, 22.) This task Jacob undertook in self-strength, and utterly had he failed. God's hand of judgment searches out the spring of mischief, and He finds it in the secret place of Jacob's strength. Thenceforth this is withered. Man eats not of it; urged by his conscience it is set apart for God. The sight of Jacob, from whose loins the twelve tribes of Israel sprang, halting on his thigh, speaks too plainly to be unheeded. So men own the form, but quite deny the power, of the truth, "for the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh.... because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank." The counterpart to this

we find in Christendom, in the setting apart of the form of the cross to religious use, but utterly denying the truth of it.

What is the blessed contrast to all this? A man crucified with Christ! Who hung there? Not I, but Christ. He hung upon the tree—the sign of curse, the brand of shame, the mark of perfect evil judged in righteousness—unmingled wrath thoroughly emptied out. The marks of a paid price by which He got right to be Lord of all—by inheritance a more excellent name; in divine title the most excellent. Still, as Son of man He buys Lordship with His blood shed on the cross; and to this the marks of Jesus witness—marks made by the princes of this world, when by the hands of lawless men they crucified and slew Him; but marks, the proof of victory, of the armed strong man overcome, of principalities and powers spoiled—marks that prove Him Lord of living and dead—marks of death and resurrection seen in ascended glory, in the midst of the throne; to be displayed in millennial grace, so that faith which sees shall mourn as though for an only son; and unbelief shall wail because of Him, while enemies are consumed and trampled down, and those who rose against Him made to bow.

What glory to be crucified with Christ! But know that in this cross it was that He became a curse; and the scandal of the cross has not been done away, and brings a curse, a shame, a mock, from those who trust in flesh and persecute because of it. We who glory in the cross may get wounds from men on earth, but before God we bear the brands of Jesus. None can trouble. The withering touch of God's eternal judgment fell on Christ, God gets glory, and the brand to us is one of glory only: no mark of shame, failure, or weakness, of life in flesh forfeited and strengthless, but of life and power, liberty and glory, in the quickening transforming Spirit.

Jacob had a shrunken sinew, for he walked according to flesh, and was blessed there; Paul, the brands of Jesus, walking in the Spirit, and blessed there, for God is glorified in life offered up, and strength in flesh set apart in strengthlessness.

Still the earthen vessel, but the power of God, bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that now and ever the life of Jesus may be manifested in the body; truly also delivered unto death on account of Jesus, that Jesus' life may now be manifested in mortal flesh—blessed, not in flesh, but in spirit. He is, it may be, in endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, straits, stripes, prisons, riots, labors, watchings fastings; but is in the Holy Spirit, the power of God, always rejoicing, enriching many, possessing all things. Thus should he be walking, in flesh truly, but not according to flesh; warring according to God, leading captive every thought into the obedience of the Christ.

Chapter 65

Thoughts on Jacob: 5. Genesis 28:20, 22

Does Jacob chide in wrath when Laban feels his stuff, and finds not his stolen gods, saying, “Thy rams have I not eaten: that which was torn I bare the loss of it... In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night.... and my sleep departed from my eyes.... and thou hast changed my wages ten times?” So another “I” also will boast as in folly. Another servant! One who served in love, for love, not money; announcing God's glad tidings gratuitously; receiving no hire from man for shepherding the flock; in everything, at every time, keeping himself from being a burden, to cut off opportunity from false apostles, deceitful workers, transformed ministers of Satan, who sped themselves, ate the fat, and clothed them with the wool, but fed not the flock: but he instead received stripes in excess, from Jews five times the full tale, forty saving one; was thrice scourged, once stoned; three times suffered shipwreck; passed in the deep a night and day; in perils of rivers, of robbers, from his own race and nations; in city, desert, sea, and among false brethren he vent his spell of service; in labor and toil; in watchings oft; in hunger, thirst, and fastings oft; in cold and nakedness. Thus could he chide with them, denying as they did his title to shepherd them, though giving proof of power from God, love to man, and willingness to be spent utterly.

But more than this from man had these things come, and so indeed, that through a window in a basket by the wall was he let down; but such a one was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise; and now was given him a thorn for the flesh, a messenger of Satan, that he might buffet him.

Jacob could say, “Ye know that with all my power I have served your father, and your father hath deceived me, and changed my wages ten times, and Jacob was wroth, and chode with Laban.” Paul can say, “Most gladly therefore will I rather boast in my weaknesses. Wherefore I will take pleasure in weaknesses, in insults, in necessities, in persecutions, in straits,” but all “for Christ,” not Laban. Not for glory to himself, but for his Lord; not serving for a wife as Jacob, but filling up that which was behind of the tribulations of Christ in his flesh, for His body, the assembly, the bride of Christ. Jealous with a jealousy of God to espouse them unto One Man, to present them a chaste virgin to Christ: not keeping them for himself, not baptizing to perpetuate his own name; herding the flock, but eating not the milk of it; not for a wife, keeping it as Jacob. (Hos. 12:12)

It needed a prophet to bring Israel out of Egypt, and by a prophet was he preserved; but here is more than a prophet, an apostle called of Christ, in whom Christ spoke, proved so in all endurance, signs, and wonders; and works of power. It wanted such a one to bring the flock of Christ from that which was spiritually Sodom and Egypt from Sinai, the place of law. The apostle who brought out the church of God has passed away, but God by His word of grace is able to build up and make wise unto salvation.

Jacob's service led God's flock to Egypt. Moses' message brought them thence, to leave them under law, a sorer bondage; a prophet like to him, a more than Solomon in wisdom, in preaching more than Jonas, stirred up unbelief, to cast aside and crucify the Savior. An apostle from the great Apostle in God's glory, Jesus of Nazareth, was sent to bring God's scattered children into

one. The Son had come from the Father, died on the cross, and went to the Father, that they might be gathered. Now He reveals Himself from heaven to Saul; catches him up into the third heaven (whether in the body or out of the body he cannot tell, God knows), there to reveal unutterable things; gives him a thorn in the flesh, and sends him back to earth to effectuate His purpose.

Besought and urged in such a fashion, by such motives do they own the Spirit's unity! Nay, there are strifes. One says, I am this; another, I am of that; until schism, division, heresy is the universal character of Christendom: souls plunged in deeper sorrow, held in more cruel bondage, bound with heavier gyves, or scattered like sheep without a shepherd. Just as though Christ had never lived, and died, and risen again, nor sent from heaven the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel by the mouth of Paul.

Thus in his flesh he bears a thorn, a messenger of Satan—no messenger of God, as Jacob had. For this he thrice besought the Lord that it might depart from him, without avail. Thrice he prayed in trust and faith, the wish ungranted, that the grace of Christ might rest upon him, and His strength be perfected in His servant's weakness, a weakness such as hindered in the flesh His servant's work; so that, for his Master's sake, he earnestly besought it might depart from him, a pricking brier, a grieving thorn, that made him feel that flesh was there. (Num. 33:55.) Nor let remain supinely, but which made him feel he had a will apart from his Lord's mind, one minding to serve God, it might be, still of himself, and powerless for good. He needed, therefore, thorough brokenness, since a conscious acting will in man, whether the purpose be for good or ill, springs from revolt, and man born after Adam's likeness only can be used through self set aside, and reckoned dead.

How instructive is the difference in the Son come to do His Father's will; to raise up a temple, to save the world, to gather worshippers of the Father! His very food it was to do His will; it was His comfort, and the strengthening of His soul: sowing work indeed! unto the spilling of His life-blood upon the ground! yet doing, nothing from Himself, but whatever He sees the Father doing, doing in like manner. No need of brokenness, since able to do nothing of Himself because of perfect oneness with the Father; yet therefore working everything in perfect self-sufficiency and perfect power; but in the Son's obedient perfectness; Having life and judgment in and from Himself, given of the Father; in power over all to give life and deal out judgment.

He sought not His will, but the Father's that had sent Him; surely Himself doing the work, but works given Him of the Father; doing not His own will, but His that sent Him; casting out or losing nothing He had given Him. For this is His Father's will, that everyone who sees the Son, and believes on Him, should have life eternal, and He will raise him up at the last day. Because of the Father He lived: so they who feed on Him should live because of Him.

Thus by His power, through His Father's will, raising up a temple in Himself; giving His flesh for the life of the world, saving every one given Him of the Father; communicating eternal life, and the Holy Spirit, that they may be spiritual worshippers; and raising them up at the last day, an holy temple in the Lord.

Thrice prayed Jesus, in view of the cup He had to drink. Three aspects did it bear to Him as a man having to do with earthly things. The foremost thought was, “My Father, thy will be done.” (Matt. 26:42.) Then came in His will as Son; a will His Father was both able and all-willing should be

done, “Abba Father, take away this cup from me.” (Mark 14:36.) The second view it therefore bore for Him was His will set aside. “Not what I will.” But when “in conflict He prayed more intently; and His sweat became as great drops of blood falling down upon the earth” (Luke 22:44), it is because these two desires mingle into one. He prays that His will, be it what it may, should be eschewed, the Father's only done; “Father, not my will, but thine be done.” (Luke 22:42.)

Thrice Paul besought, God's will unknown, it might depart from him, the thorn that found his flesh to rankle in, and made him know that flesh was there—the thorn the object, not the will of God—that which hindered his efficiency, the messenger of Satan sent to buffet him. Thrice Jesus prayed that not His own will, but the Father's, might be done. The cup mixed for others drunk by Him, and taking hold of Him, because it was God's wrath, came in but by the way, though pressed upon Him by the ruler of the world, the wielder of the power of death and darkness. And when, as Son in the Father and the Father in Him, He had poured out the fullness of communion in this oneness, saying, “Those thou hast given me I have guarded, and not one of them is perished” (John 17:12); and had drunk in spirit to its dregs, and wrung them out, the cup His Father gave Him, then He goes forth, saying, “I am he! If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way."

Chapter 66

Thoughts on Jacob: 6. Genesis 28, 20, 22

Paul, the faithful steward, thrice besought that the thorn for the flesh might depart from him: in this his will be done. The holy servant Jesus prayed intently three times, fearing the cup, “not My will, Thine be done."

Three times Jacob parleys with the Lord. Three times by craft had he procured his ends—ends ordered of the Lord. He takes away his brother's birthright, his blessing, and his uncle's herds, but throughout Jacob's prayer is that his will, not God's, be done.

Thrice had Isaac failed to bestow the blessing in its fullness Therefore the Lord brings Jacob out to a certain place, the sun being set, the stones of that place being for his pillow, and in a vision of the night gives him an unstinted weed of blessing. The promise is first, “To thee will I give the land whereon thou liest, and to thy seed.” Then is the blessing, “In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Thus, comes first the birthright, which is to the heir according to promise, then the blessing which runs in the genealogy; the first dependent for its enjoyment upon faith and patience; the latter absolute, and inseparable from the stock.

See the perfect fruition of this mere seed sown first in Abraham, Gal. 3:6-14. “In thee all the nations shall be blessed” —blessed with Abraham—his blessing. Here is the blessing first, “justification of life,” the absolute blessing running inalienably in the line of the chosen seed; afterward the promise (Gal. 3:15- 29; 4:1-7), the birthright, the inheritance on the principle of promise made, “to thy seed,” not to “seeds as of many, but as of one, even Christ;” but “ye all are one in Christ Jesus, but if ye are of Christ, then ye are Abraham's aced, heirs according to promise.” Thus the Gentiles being “God's sons by faith in Christ Jesus,” and the Jew “redeemed from under law, that he may receive sonship,” God sends out the Spirit of His Son into their “hearts, crying Abba, Father."

In the passage now before us God gave Jacob the birthright—the inheritance by promise—and the blessing inalienable in the seed, “in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” Besides, He says,” I am with thee.” But Jacob is a merchant, lusting after flesh, desiring to lay up treasure to himself, therefore bargains he with God, and vows a vow; but lust of flesh in hidden energy is the active cause, and bursts forth instantly that flesh is seen. “He looked.” What filled his eyes? “A well,” “three flocks,” Rachel and the sheep of Laban. Hitherto flesh-lust had wrought, coveting the unseen things—the birthright and the blessing: now eye-lust is added, though, perhaps, to Jacob's self unknown. Flesh to the full unfills his lust. Leah, Rachel, at Laban's offer, since suiting Jacob's will; then Bilhah, urged by Rachel, just meeting, it may be, his heart's thought. Lastly, Zilpah, Leah's gift, acceptable to him.

Jacob calls it righteousness, just what he ought to have; but, still unsatisfied, he wanders farther in his crooked paths; in conscious craft he works to take his fill of flesh, and having got it, hastens to depart. But knowing that the balances of deceit are in his hand, he carefully puts from him the thought of God, and not “Thy will be done” with, chiding claims from man his rights.

But God's grace does not leave him, though he say, “I am become rich; I have found out substance in all my labors; they shall find none iniquity in me that were sin.” Yet his God would have him “dwell in Succoth,” and know no God but Him, for there is “no Savior beside him.” So the angels of God meet him, and He forces Jacob, by dint of fear, to weep, and make supplication to Him. His own will He had done in providing for himself, though God had wrought it; now be has power over the angel, and prevails to have the blessing in his own way—not God's will and way—moved by the lust of his eyes—the things which are seen. The glory of the unseen God is out of his thought. God had shown truth and mercies to what, a servant? Now he pleads “the mother and the children.” Jacob selfish at the bottom! He gets his heart's desire, but is “blessed there.” His course runs in God's way, and yet athwart, who smites him not, but withers up his strength—an utter contrast to the steps of Christ! Jacob says in heart, “My will be done,” and has his flesh: afterward his cry is, “Not thy will” —seemingly to get a blessing, really asking that God's will should be set aside. He grants this prayer, and blesses him, but there.

That for which he asks he has. He got the flesh he lusted for, and now he keeps it.

He has provided for his own house, but his conscience tells him God's house has been quite uncared for; left in far-off Luz, a bare stone; and grudging the needed outlay and supply to raise and keep it, therefore necessarily his prayer must be,” Not thy will be done.” For this end he is willing to give up the cattle, if that the mother and the children may be spared: but at bottom it is Jacob's self he clings to, for there lies lust of flesh, which says, “My will be done.” From thence acts eye-lust, saying, “Not thy will be done."

May we turn aside to see this great sight—a man tempted, and failing not? Also note the perfectness of God's revelation. Matthew sees the beloved Son fulfilling God the Father's will and counsels. God only is set before Him. “My Father, thy will be done.” (Matt. 26:42.) Therefore He is carried by the Spirit, as thus not led nor driven, answering the tempter, who by craft opposes God, by bringing God Himself upon the scene, and His spoken will, “Every word which goes out through God's mouth.” No lust of flesh is in Him, but as man mere dependence on the will of God. “My Father, thy will be done.” Then in order comes trust in God, not flesh working by sight, not hankering to see some acknowledgment from God that He was with Him. His voice and word had been enough—not tempting God, however plausibly, by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?” (Ex. 17:7.)

The words, “to keep thee” (Luke 6:10), are left out here. They passed His ear unheeded, as this cry filled His soul, “My Father, thy will be done."

In due place the third temptation, pride of life, proceeds. The two last show the evil one unveiled, and Jesus, with the will of God alone in view, is taken by him—thus not led; a very high mountain is the place; the kingdoms of the world and their glory the scene; and these are more looked at as connected with the will of God—more the systems than the men composing them. Filled thus with God's mind, and God's will before Him, instantly the wrath of Jesus flames forth on the foe. “Get thee away, Satan."

Turn now to Mark: all here is active energy. The Spirit drives him out— “Abba, Father, not what I will.” Amazed, oppressed in spirit, and His soul soon fall of grief—one long outlook to the end—one long prayer that His will, good, holy, and acceptable, should not be willed, but God's.

Self, divinely perfect, set aside—all touching only self unnoted, He is a servant only: no pride of life.

Luke now claims attention. “Father, not my will, thine be done,” is here His thought; and by the Spirit He is led to meet the unveiled devil with whom He had to cope, who, if departing from him for a time, would come again in the power of darkness, so that the whole land and the sun should be darkened. So the devil Jesus answered, and we find the word of God man's life: man, even the Son of man, on God depending, not on what flesh desires. Nay, even “Not my will.” Therefore follows the further truth, “Father, thy will be done.” No pride of life. Led up as a man into a high mountain, shown the kingdoms of the habitable world in a moment of time; all that could captivate or seduce a man, offered Him then and there, for whom all things were made. In the calmness of His prayer, “Father, thy will be done,” He says, “It is written, Thou shalt do homage to the Lord thy God.” Now, as a man to go forth with the prayer upon His lips, “Father, not my will, thine be done,” He asked not to see aught as proof that God would keep Him. God was with Him of a truth. He will not tempt the Lord. No lust of eyes was in Him.

John gives us the One come from the Father, going to the Father, glorifying Him upon the earth, completing the work given Him to do. Therefore the circumstances falling by the way are unrecorded. The meeting wile, with word at the onset, and power with prayer at its close, have no place. It is the Word who is God, the only-begotten Son, declaring God His Father, giving signs on earth, but eternal life and Spirit for heavenly worshippers.

We have seen the lust of the flesh in Jacob—as a merchant bargaining to get it filled..” If God will, I will.” Also the lust of the eyes, by which flesh acts. He seeks, by holding deceitful balances, to get and keep his gain. “I am become two bands.... deliver me the mother and the children Thou saidst, I will surely do thee good.” Whether first or last, it is Jacob still, and eye-lust working. “He lifted up his eyes and looked, and, behold, Esau.” So Jacob acts as guided by his eyes, and settles his surroundings by himself, not the Lord his center; “he put first the handmaid and their children foremost, Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost, and he went first,” and bowed himself to the ground seven times, forgetful of the word of God and the blessing he had schemed to get.

How God delights to own an act of grace! The merest fragment of that work which He had seen was very good and blessed! Would God-manifest-in-flesh illustrate perfectly the grace of God the Father? These very words He chooses to reveal the workings of His heart. “He ran, fell on his neck, and covered him with kisses."

But see the reason why the Spirit draws attention to this scene Where was Esau's action like to God's? or Jacob's as the conscience-stricken sinner born of Adam? Is it not in this that, as the prodigal had thought to win his father's favor by fair words, it was the goings forth of self-born love, long ere, a whisper could have reached his ear of good or ill, that moved the father with compassion, seeing his wretched son a great way off? Thus Jacob, vainly puffed up by a fleshly mind, a man independent, has no understanding of free grace in God nor man, but counts himself a power in himself before God, and able to do something, even though it were only to own Jehovah his God, to make a stone His house, and of what He gave to render back a tenth. As to man, supplanted and deceived, he cannot credit him with grace. Wrong thoughts of God so thoroughly had warped his mind, that nature even he cannot rightly judge. In order to begin aright

in heart, or mind, or act, one must be right with God.

Just see how vain are Jacob's plans to buy a pardon with a present! Yet perhaps he claims the honor of the happy issue. Jacob said, “I will appease him with a present."... “I have sent to tell my lord that I may find grace in thy sight.” But Esau had not even seen the women-servants and men-servants, or flocks, and asses, and oxen, until he had wept upon his brother's neck, and then “he lifted up his eyes, and saw the women and children, and said, Who are these?” and as to the droves, he knew not what it meant till Jacob told him, and then he took it not as price of pardon, but as Jacob's blessing.

The same principles are shown, whether in a fragment of nature ruined, yet bearing the stamp of God's creation, or in Godhead manifested, grace, free, full, unbought, unfettered, springing from itself, which works to satisfy itself in blessing others, measuring the blessing by itself, not the object.

We have seen the self-existent Man depending wholly, and the “one” who lived by a life supplied from God unsubject. The One had said, “My Father, thy will be done;” the other, “Give me my wife.” Now we enter on another stage. That One had said, “Abba, Father, not what I will” this one says in heart, “Not what Thou wilt.” The Lord said unto Jacob, “Return unto the land of thy fathers;” and Jacob had even dreamed that God had said, “Return unto the land of thy kindred;” and had he not “risen up to go to Isaac his father;” and to Esau he affirmed, “I ensue unto my lord to Seir.” But what does he? “Jacob came to Shalem and pitched his tent before the city,” and even buys a parcel of a field where he had spread his tent at the hand of the children of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred lambs. (See margin.)

Notice here, this was no sepulcher bought for a sum of money; it was Abraham alone did thus. Jacob buys a place to live in, purchasing from man God's gift to him; even as before he got by craft God's gift of grace and Isaac's blessing; giving up the rights of God, indeed denying them, in order to re-purchase for himself.

“Machpelah before Mamre, the same is Hebron in the land of Canaan, and the field and the cave that is therein, did Abraham buy for four hundred shekels of silver for a possession of a burying-place of the sons of Heth;” standing for the rights of God, owning his rights in God; owning indeed the curse and the children of it, and the title they had under it, according to the word, “cursed be Canaan.” As a burying place to Canaan it belonged; for such a purpose a possession must be bought. But if to live in, then the land belongs to Abraham as lord; for so the word by Noah had been spoken, “Canaan shall be his servant.” Abraham buys a place to bury in, and lives in it. Jacob bargains for a parcel of a field to live in, and it becomes a place of judgment, death and burial.

How divinely accurate the scriptures! When Jacob in his faith is looked at, and to faith is standing for the fathers, then it tells how they were “placed in the sepulcher which Abraham bought for a sum of money.” But if the faith of Joseph fix the eye of the believer, then in him the scripture says, “Our fathers were carried over to Sychem.... of the sons of Emmor, the father of Sychem.” No mention of a sepulcher, nor purchase; for to faith, however many lambs might be the price, “the portion Jacob took out of the hand of the Amorite with his sword and with his bow."

Wondrous are the ways of God! That which man will not do in fellowship with Him, He does perforce; while faith denies man's deed and owns God's work. Gen. 48:22.

Why does God confirm the outcome of an act of fierce anger, cruel wrath, that brings a curse? Because if not, His way in grace might be impugned. Man in nature has no rights, for life and strength are forfeited to God. Blessing flows from grace; right comes by faith to man. If anything is due to him, it is wrath alone: else were grace set aside. So when God's man, Jacob, holds as valid the title of the world, God, that He may bring grace in truth, must own it too. Thence comes the Passover in Egypt, the sprinkling of the blood: the cross of Christ, and the archangel's voice.

Thus is Jacob all things to all men, if by any means he might profit himself; willing enough to return to the land of his kindred, but not to his kindred as God had said; for between him and them stood the place of sacrifice and obedience to God. (Gen. 31:8, 11, 12) Knowing God's will, if told to do whatever He had said. To Esau he replied, “I come to Seir."

Chapter 67

Thoughts on Jacob: 7. Genesis 28:20, 22

God's long-suffering leaves him not until the utmost bounds are overstepped. Succoth is in the path of God though its limit. Still can He deal in grace. Jacob is not yet the die cast before the eyes of men, by which the beauty of God's moral ways should be esteemed, therefore He can bless. And “Jacob built him an house, and made booths for his cattle” in peace. A stranger, still unknown of men— “few men in number, yea, very few, and strangers in it” —but holding to the everlasting covenant of God. “Therefore He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, He reproved kings for their sake, saying, Touch not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm."

Man's ways, how low and groveling! God's way is one of grace and faithfulness—glorious in holiness. “He desired mercy and not sacrifice;” but Jacob, like Adam, transgressed the covenant—the everlasting covenant. God said unto Abraham, “I will give unto thee and to thy seed the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.” To Jacob Jehovah said, “The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.” If Esau despised his birthright, Jacob bartered God's rights for a portion and peace with the Canaanites,” dealing treachery against the Lord."

Were it possible, he as heir, had cut off the entail forever from himself and seed, since he parted with his right as God's heir, that he might hold in his own right, grounded on the title of the Canaanite.

Thus he passed over from the paths of God into the way of Cain, who loved honor and slew his brother; who, out from the presence of Jehovah, “dwelt in the land of Nod—wandering.... and builded a city, and called the name of the city after the name of his son Enoch” —dedicated—owning God in independence. So Jacob, moved by a fleshly mind, stands in God's land, not in independence only, but defection, wrapping it up withal under the cover of Israel's God; for when “he bought a parcel of a field.... of the hand of the children of Hamor,” “he erected there an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.” But there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God, but soon to be instead, swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery; thus breaking out, and blood touching blood, because they had left off to take heed to the Lord. Jacob is his name, but the Lord will plead with Israel, for He hath a controversy with His people.

Will he not know Jehovah's righteousness? What had He done to him? Brought out of Padan Aram, redeemed from the house of servants; for according to God's reckoning, not Jacob's righteousness, was Laban forced to give him wages (Gen. 30:33; 31:10-13); by His angel brought out, remember now, O Jacob, what the Syrian Laban had consulted, and God had answered him, “Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob either good or bad!"

Forced thus to take Jehovah's ground, and act in grace, now Laban seeks a string in his own heart which even Jacob's hand can harp upon; self-seeking, rash and wrathful Jacob.

Has Jacob daughters? Laban says, “my daughters.” Children? “My children.” Cattle? “My cattle.” “All that thou seest,” Laban says, “is mine.” This is Jehovah's righteousness. His way of grace He takes His springs of action from Himself, blinding as it were, His eyes to all the object is, He gives a gift and blesses the receiver for the gift's sake, since the gift is of Himself.

Not this alone. He takes the gifted one out from his old place and gives him a new standing where all things are of God.

Jehovah follows him from Mizpah unto Peniel, meets him there, and wrestling, withers him, so that no more Jacob is his name, but Israel; and He blessed him there in the name and place of God's appointment.

See the counterpart of this in Israel's history. Jehovah gives a gift, His presence and a king, when prophet, priest, and handmaid of the Lord had failed, been set aside as instruments of power. Then God uses money-loving, lust-tempting Balaam, to unveil the vision of the Almighty, take up his parable, and declare not only that the righteous rise again, but God, beholding His own gift, sees no iniquity in Jacob, neither hath He seen perverseness in Israel.

But more than this, God narrows up His circling glories nearer to Himself. Jacob, placed in kinship with his God, is drawn by every eddying wave of grace closer to the center all things tend to and evolve from. Nothing now against him as Jacob, elect of God, redeemed; all things also for him, as God's new man Israel; washed from the old, and as new set apart for God—His workmanship. But nearer still! rapt into that which is itself divine; sanctified, accepted, graced as a beloved who can give a blessing; once hated as a supplanter, now goodly as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters, blessing those that bless him, because in him is One, a gift of God, who shall come a star out of Jacob, a scepter rising out of Israel.

Thus Esau, moved by sovereign grace, his circumstances being ruled of God that he may act His part, himself unwitting, sets forth God-like grace. His love wells over on the neck of him once hated as a cheat and liar! Why? “I have enough, my brother.” My soul is satisfied, and can run over in a shoreless stream. The glut of blessing is so great that mere relief, a thing on which it may be poured, is in itself a blessing. What odds how deep how wide, nay, bottomless the pit!—a Jacob! So much the better! Its emptiness, its fitness, and the very wages of its worthlessness become a blessing and its means.

This is Jehovah's righteousness, will he not know it?

The fount of love, out-gushing from the depths of God, flows from above, burst up from the fathomless abyss, and in divine all-filling fullness floats frail Jacob, fragrant in its fragrance, back into God Himself,

But there, what is that flood? Water from a Savior's side on Calvary! Water in the word by Jesus used in glory in the Father's house! A sea of glass like crystal before the throne! God is love and light, and all swept onward unto Him by its almighty tide must be thus in it: on earth by faith.

Jacob chosen, wrought of God, and planted; washed, sanctified, and justified; redeemed and graced; knowing Jehovah's righteousness, must judge and cleanse himself and walk in light.

At Peniel God accepted him; at Succoth he built booths, but he remembers not, and therefore knows not Jehovah's righteousness. Slipping clean out of God's paths, giving up God's right, “For Jacob came to Shalem, a city of Shechem, which is in the land of Canaan.... pitched his tent before the city; and he bought a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent.... and he erected him an altar, and called it El-elohe-Israel.

“Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, or bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? While there are yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked!” Jehovah's voice cries, “Shall I count them pure with wicked balances? For they are full of violence, have spoken lies, and in their mouth they have a deceitful tongue."

He is a merchant buying the gifts of God of Luz; at Mahanaim he holds the balances of deceit, at Peniel be loveth to oppress.

How sad! how solemn! Tremble now before the Lord! Do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God! Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy, break up your fallow ground.

Upright with God, unrighteous towards men. The smallest seed of flesh which turns from God's grace, branches one till fruitful with widespread misery. “They covet fields and take by violence, and houses, and take them away; so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage;” the while ye have an altar, El-elohe-Israel.

Now is God's ground of government at stake, and Jacob must be forced to loose his grasp and quit his purchase. “Is the Spirit of Jehovah straitened? Are these His doings? Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? Ye pull off the robe from them that pass by securely as men averse from war. The women of my people have ye cast out from their pleasant houses.” “I desired mercy, not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings;” but ye not only smite them that are sore and heal them not, nor restore those that are out of the way, but also cut off from the blessings of the land those in possession, who have God's covenant. Matt. 10:13; 11:7.

The little leaven kneaded with the dough, and left to work unseen; unjudged in the fire of God's light and love, should, but for grace, soon leaven all the lump, end their own heart become an oven, hot and burning as a flaming fire, to devour them all. “Jacob, he hath mixed himself among the people, he is a cake not turned, half Shechemite, half Israelite, half judged, the other half untouched by fire.” He begged for flesh, has got it, kept it for himself. Corrupted is it? Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it shall destroy you. Jacob in the land is seemingly for God, but really in revolt and joined to the usurper. So judgment, not of faith, but from the Lord must come, lest he should be polluted with his rest. “And Dinah.... went out to see the daughters of the land, and Shechem saw her, and took her and defiled here, and his soul clave unto Dinah, he loved the damsel and spake kindly unto the damsel."

You begged to have your blessing in your hand! How have you kept it? You gathered all together, now you dissipate it You join yourselves to the citizens of that country now, as it were, you feed their swine, and, worse than all, you long to fill your belly with the husks the swine are eating.

At Peniel thou saidst, “Give me the share that falls to me.” At Shechem thou dost buy a field, and Dinah is defiled by Shechem; thy sons by deceit, and Simeon and Levi—instruments of cruelty,

fierce anger, and cruel wrath—are cursed: and thou dost hold thy peace! Thou art a silly dove without heart!

Woe unto them, for they have fled from me! They have transgressed against me... I will change their glory unto shame! I will punish them for their ways and reward them for their doings!

So at another time, “when Israel joined himself unto Baalpeor Jehovah said unto Moses, “Take all the heads of the people and hang them up before Jehovah against the sun.” “So here was folly wrought in Israel.... which ought not to have been done” —matter of grief and wrath—a horrible thing in Israel. “Israel is defiled and Jacob holds his peace. Wail and howl; go stripped and naked; for the beginning of the sin, the transgressions of Israel were found in thee."

In crafty malice, lust of gain, do Israel's sons give men God's title to possess the land, and he, who counted it so worthless as to found his tenure on another's rights, would little scruple to barter circumcision, the reproach of Christ, separation from the world of the ungodly, the seal of faith, the sign of God's inheritance, for treasure in the world.

Unlike the One who came from God, found in the world a treasure, alienate, sold away through sin, held of right in the usurper's hand, and for the joy of it goes and sells all whatever He has and buys the right to all.

These despise the cross, the reproach of the circumcision, and have to endure the shame. These cat off from grace, thus bringing into judgment, the men averse from war, the women and their children, therefore they shall not dwell in Jehovah's land, but shall return to Egypt. Egypt shall gather them, Memphis shall bury them. The days of visitation, the days of recompense are come! Israel is swallowed up now; but know Jehovah's thought, and understand His counsel. Yet will He bring an heir unto thee, who shall go before them to preserve their souls.

"When they were sore, two of the sons of Jacob Simeon and Levi, pinch's brethren, took each man his sword and came upon the city boldly, and slew all the males, and they slew Harrier and Shechem his son with the edge of the sword The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and spoiled the city... they took their sheep, and their oxen, and their asses, and that which was in the city, and that which was in the field, and all their wealth, and all their little ones, and their wives, and spoiled even all that was in the house,” and Jacob “holds his peace."

Firstly, giving up God's right for gain, he now denies the validity of His title. But this, because he has himself in view. So setting self between his eye and God, it is all as though there were no God. Simeon and Levi say, “Should he deal with our sister as with an harlot?” making her honor cover their covetousness. At least is Jacob honest, for he says, “Ye have troubled me to make me to stink.... and I shall be destroyed; I and my house."

Jehovah's name at Peniel, unsaid, unknown, that Jacob may be blessed there. At Shechem, heritage of God, His portion, God's title is ignored. Knowledge is rejected. “He will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to Him.” Though God's name and portion are there set aside, yet He holds His peace, that grace in blessing may go out to Jacob.

One only hope is left in this extremity. All Jacob has is lost in principle; God's title to the whole land set aside, Shechem's right quite blotted out by blood. Jacob holds by force that only which he stands upon, and he but “few in number,” ready to perish.

To Jacob, had the promise been without condition, “The land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it.” If Jacob cannot stand where he has striven, will he lie where God has given? Will he take a place of thorough nothingness? At Peniel with a touch God withered up his strength: let faith lie down at Bethel helpless.

A place of stones which Jacob owned as God's, the house of God, the gate of heaven, where the ladder was set up on the earth, and Jehovah stood above, unfolding all his mercy. “To thee and to thy seed.... in thee and in thy seed.... I am with thee, and will keep thee, and will bring thee again into this land.... and Jacob was afraid."

It was in Jehovah's mind to take out Jacob for Himself, in Jacob's to get back to his father's house in peace.

At Bethel all may be retrieved. Impossible with man, with God all things are possible. Let but His right be owned, though to a place to lie on, and a stone set for a house, yet Jehovah can stand above, and, in the name and place of His appointment, have His house, His portion, and a priest.

Will faith triumph and grace be understood? Then Israel shall be the priest, Bethel the house, Praise God's portion.

Chapter 68

Thoughts on Jacob: 8. Genesis 28:20, 22

And God said unto Jacob, “Arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there, and make there an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.” Jacob then was not two bands, but a man with nothing rightly of his own, and him asleep. Brought out from his kindred and his father's house, where God's blessing rested, that he might be set apart by God, fitted for his priest and sent back from Jehovah in new place, and power, and appointment.

To him God comes in all embracing grace, setting him in this, his nothingness, within the glorious flood of the divine purpose and action. This place must he recognize again; no longer nothing in the helplessness of sleep, but nothing in the testing blast of Jehovah's face; not only motionless but moveless.

It was Abraham's faith to come from Mesopotamia and keep in Canaan. It was Jacob's faith to abide at Bethel whilst Jehovah's plans matured, building there an altar as in the van of God's witnesses; if flesh will wander, God covenants to give preserving grace, till from that base in faith, and with God's power, he conquer all the land.

Deplorable indeed is his return! The strange gods which were in their hand, and the earrings which were in their ears, Jacob hides under the oak which was by Shechem, “And they journeyed.” Filled with ill-gotten gains, they go with their flocks and herds to seek the Lord; but they shall not find Him, He having withdrawn Himself from them. They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; for Jacob has forestalled his portion in God's inheritance and lost it, has sacrificed God's rights to propitiate the world, and foolishly earned their hatred, having staked God's covenant in pledge of peace and amity, and it was forfeited.

One spot alone was then left; this deserted, all was lost to Jacob. It was dedicated by him to the Lord if He fulfilled His promise. Hitherto this had been kept, and would be to the end, ever therefore must it be the Lord's.

This is Jehovah's grace, His righteousness. Remember now, O Israel, that you may know it. In this parcel of a field secured eternally by every right of God and man, bound ever and forever unto God, unloseable, God's grace, Jehovah's righteousness gives Jacob an abiding place and portion to possess.

Is this God's strange work? Nay I ever acts He thus; Bethel, Gilgal, Calvary each tell the tale.

At Shalem Jacob mixes himself among the people. God will change their glory into shame; testify the pride of Israel to his face, hanging his dishonor in the light, for He had seen a horrible thing; Israel is defiled and knows it not. This is in grace.

At Shechem flesh is brought by fraud and force to Israel, and God in grace and truth by word and power forces Jacob to depart; blotting out transgression and unpardonable guilt with blood, shed by the cruel hands of lawless men, making thus atonement.

Will Jacob know God's reckoning, and put away all witness of the deed in zeal for Him? Nay! Jacob judges Laban's gods and says, “Be clean and change your garments;” but holds with itching palm unrighteous gains. He may hide the strange gods and their earrings under the oak which was by Shechem: but they go with flocks and herds to seek the Lord.

In grace and righteousness Jehovah will go and return to His place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek His face. Will Jacob take this two days' journey from the place of death to life, and life in resurrection on the third day

See Israel going out to join with flesh at Baalpeor; and Jehovah said to Moses, “Hang them up before the Lord against the sun.” Then Zimri brings flesh in unto his brethren in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation; and Phinehas rose up, and took a javelin, and went into the tent, and thrust both of them through. “He was jealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel.” Covering up their sin with blood, and turning away His wrath by atonement.

Gilgal corresponds to Bethel: there Jehovah rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off them—blessed grace—this is His righteousness! Will not Israel trust Jehovah? If a Moses judge, he must hang them up; if a Phinehas, they must be smitten through; but if Jehovah judge, and Israel is in faith, a Joshua circumcises them, and they abide there until they are whole.

Again, if Israel is defiled among the people, and his two sons take up judgment, the defilement must be met by the defiler's blood. If defilement is brought to Jacob, and he has zeal for God, his household must not only put away the strange gods, and be clean, and change their garments, but, as a man responsible to God, he must be swept from off the land. “Arise ye, and depart, for this is not your rest, because it is polluted.” “Thou shalt have none that shall cast a cord by lot in the congregation of the Lord."

But grace has one resource still left. Let but Jehovah judge! He will sweep Jacob as such off the scene, but in the new man, Israel, invest him with His title in new standing altogether. “Remember now that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord.” “Arise, go up to Bethel, and make THERE an altar unto God that appeared unto thee when thou fleddest from the face of Esau thy brother.” May it not be said that God gives up His portion that Jacob may be blessed? If Jacob in simplicity obeys, all that God promised him at first, may even now be taken up in God's right, if he will go back in heart and mind to that time; but Jehovah's name cannot be made known till God's new man comes upon the scene.

Will Jacob then remember and know the goodness and long-suffering of God? Nay, he comes far short of God's thought and his own blessing, for he says, “I will make there an altar unto God who answered me in the day of my distress.” He owns the God who delivered Jacob and his bands at Peniel, and blessed him there; not alone allowing willingly the biding of Jehovah's name, but alike indifferent to his new name in which the secret of his blessing lay.

When was the day of his distress? Not Luz, but Jabbok. God would recall Bethel to his mind; Jacob's thoughts turn back to Peniel. Jehovah poured out grace at Bethel, but at Peniel Jacob sought for, and by power procured a blessing after his own mind. The God of glory he pares down in thought to such an one who was with him in the way which he went—a crooked way, a transgressing way indeed.

Jacob clings to his experience, not God's word. God cleaves to His word, and is not bound by Jacob's conscience. If, in blind unbelief, flesh wrests the word, yet it fails not. To faith and doubtless deep in Jacob's heart, seen but by God, the knowledge lay, that at Penuel, it was no fleeing from, but going forth, to meet his brother Esau; though swayed by feelings, Jacob says, Peniel was the day of my distress, wherein I fled from Esau's face. But when he builds his altar, calling it El-bethel, God stamps it as the place where he appeared unto him when he fled from the face of his brother. Jacob's thought was on the time of his experience, God's on the place of His appointment.

But once again, now fixed forever, Jacob prevails to have his way; and lo! the place which should have been the house of God becomes an oak of weeping.

All, all had failed, and Jacob's vow was unperformed in any item. In spite of Peniel and Bethel, not one jot of Jacob's word had come to pass. Jehovah was not owned as his God; the stone set for a pillar was not made God's house; and a tenth of God's gifts were not given Him.

Unknown it might be, yet Jehovah was his God, though he may call the place “God, the God of Bethel.” He might build the altar and forget the house, but God had His house, and if a tenth of God's gifts is in question, He will not deny His rights, He will take it.

Jehovah can wait, but who can resist His will? If Jacob will not do, another must; perchance a Moses or a greater still.

And now ere Jacob is definitively fixed in the place of his ultimate attainment, Deborah dies—the proof of Jehovah's faithfulness, the lightest touch of that strong hand which should bereave them of their children, and cast them away because they will not hearken, and make them wanderers among the nations.

They have returned, but not to the Most High: they are like a deceitful bow, it starts aside, and wounds the hand that bends it. They cry, “We know Thee,” but have transgressed against His covenant. Jehovah accepteth them not, now will He remember their iniquity and visit their sins, they shall go into Egypt.

Jehovah's name unknown; His house disregarded; His portion uncared for; His covenant transgressed: can aught remain? Yes, Jacob.

Jehovah's blessing in abeyance—His new name unrevealed.

Abraham's blessing intermittent, God's everlasting covenant,” In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."

Jacob's blessing spent, “I am with thee and will keep thee, and will bring thee again unto this land; I will not leave thee until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

Into this land, this very spot, he has returned with what result! To Bethel he has come again, Jehovah he knows not. The stone set up as God's house marks no point for him. To him it is all one with Shalem. So El-bethel is but Allon-bachuth—no gate of heaven, but an oak of weeping.

God's eternal counsels never fail. Driven back by unbelief into Himself while fixing Jacob in his place on earth, as Jacob a supplanter ("Thy name is Jacob"), He hangs His purposes, even as to

Jacob's promises—the birthright with a mess of pottage bought—upon the new man Israel: “Thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name, and He called his name Israel.” “Be fruitful and multiply, a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins, and the land which I gave Abraham and Isaac to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee will I give the land.” The blessing forfeited forever from Israel; the promise, the birthright only left; but He, the Heir who takes it up, responsible and able to maintain, is He whom God has separated from His brethren that He may be also the depositary of the blessing.

At the outset Jacob had been found as grapes in the wilderness; as the first ripe in the fig tree at her first time, the object of God's redemption and regard. He went to Shalem, separated himself unto that shame, and their abominations were according as they loved. But all their wickedness, the climax and sum total, is in Bethel; there it finds its full fruition. The last resource of God for Jacob fails, and blessing is no longer possible; therefore then He hated them. Bethel should have been a place of blessing, but he found there Jacob still; therefore will He drive them out of His house, He will love them no more, and at Bethel there begins destruction and the curse.

In Col. 2:23 I am very much disposed to read ■φειδ■α σ■ματος (ο■κ ■ν τιμ■ τινι) πρ■ς πλ. τ■ς σαρκ■ς, neglecting the body (not in a certain honor) as to satiating the flesh. There was, as to satiating the flesh, harshness towards the body, paying it no honor.

Chapter 69

Thoughts on Jacob: 9. Genesis 28:20, 22

Jacob is cast away, but God will call His son Israel, the new man out of Egypt. As Jacob is passed over, no longer in God's reckoning as holding Canaan in fief, and Israel in faith, God's Israel, is alone in view in this promise, so God went up from him in the place where He talked with him, never more to own him in His record, whilst in the land of Canaan, until by faith he goes out to God's separated man in Egypt. All is now lost for Jacob as such; he may set up a pillar, a pillar of stone, preface his act of worship with an offering of thanksgiving, and call the name of the place where God spoke with him, Bethel, but it goes for naught; he has no heart, and God no grace, until in Egypt he shall find his forerunner, God's Heir.

Therefore shall they be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away; as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor; and as the smoke out of the chimney. Yet is Jehovah his God; he shall know Him, for there is no Savior but Him.

He had respect to Jacob in a place of stones, a land of drought, and led him into pasture; but with God's provision Jacob filled himself, taking his ease, eating, drinking, and making merry; was not rich towards Him, forgetting Him; therefore was He to them as a lion, a leopard watching by the way, as a bereaved bear, meeting them to rend their heart's caul.

If Israel hath destroyed himself and the Lord's voice crieth, yet in Him is help, and the man of wisdom sees His name, hears the rod, and who hath appointed it. What is the path of faith for those who are the little flock when all things earthly fail? Seek ye the kingdom of God; provide yourselves a treasure in the heavens which faileth not; for God who clothes the grass will keep you; and the Father will give you the kingdom: since He who comes to cast a fire on the earth, and has already kindled it, though haply but a feeble flicker, a Deborah dying, He (a greater than Joseph, though like to Him) is Himself baptized with a baptism of death, a fire of judgment (Jonas being the sign as plainly as a western cloud foretell a shower, or a south wind heat), to deliver from hell those who hear the word of God and keep it. Them will He ransom from the power of the grave, He will redeem them from death. O death! He will be thy plagues. O grave! He will be thy destruction.

And in the new covenant in His blood all shall not only be retrieved, but in Him the last Adam, the second Man, death has been swallowed up in victory; for the sting of death is sin, and the power of sin, the law, but thanks to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

So if it be the assembly which is His body, or those who shall fill up the number of His elect at His coming, or Israel restored, it is through the blood, and in the resurrection life and power of Him who came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and in grace and power will first bring perfectly into possession those who had no promise of an earthly portion, and were not responsible to Him in it, and by the same grace will thereafter introduce as heir of heavenly blessing those who willfully have forfeited their earthly birthright; and not only so, but relinquish it when brought to them in God's title.

"They journeyed from Bethel!" Sad sentence! The climax of their course of pride, the final turning off from mercy; hitherto had grace lingered, now they are cast off forever! The limit of long-suffering is reached and overpassed; no help remains; no longer Canaan, but Egypt is their lot. All lost! forever lost! darkness closes o'er the scene. Woe! woe unalterable is fixed eternally! "Journeyed from Bethel!" A fleeing from the face of God, hiding from Him; a damming out the source of blessing from his soul has marked the course of Jacob from the first; setting a stone, his wives, his herds, a heap, his bands, a stream, a parcel of a field, an altar between his soul and God. And now the end has come; a second time the sentence has gone forth, "journeyed from Bethel." Surely the record of the Spirit states the fact, it may be, with groans that cannot be uttered. "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?"

Jacob, as a witness for Jehovah's name, is blotted out. As priest, and raiser of Jehovah's house, is passed away. As worshipper, to render Him His due, is cast aside.

"Journeyed from Bethel," and Jehovah's soul unsatisfied! "Woe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits, as the grape gleanings of the vintage, there is no cluster to eat, my soul desired the first ripe fruit." When helpless, at the first time, in the wilderness, He had found Israel like grapes, as the first ripe in the fig tree; but now the best of them is as a briar, the most upright is sharper than a thorn-hedge. The day of thy visitation cometh, now shall be their perplexity.

"And they journeyed from Bethel, and there was but a little way to come to Ephrath." Israel hath forgotten, but God remembers, not only all their wickedness, so that their own doings have beset them about, and the sorrows of a travailing woman have come upon him, but in divine grace, though the place which should have been the beginning of his fruitfulness and strength, becomes a monument of his affliction, yet He who remembered the barren woman to give her a son, also will remember in that day the faith that counted on Jehovah's boundless power and good-will, saying, "The Lord shall add to me another son."

Thus unconscious faith prophesies of grace, and Jehovah's way in rolling away reproach, by giving in a son life, deliverance, and power.

Jehovah remembers His own counsels, and hearkens to the voice of prayer. He sees the ways of men, and acts accordingly. Faith trusts the Lord, but Rachel has to learn that in resurrection only is there life and power—that for nature must a voice "be heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping" — "weeping for her children, and no comfort, because they are not." Yet, thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for in the power of Him who is in resurrection "shall they come again from the land of the enemy;" and there is hope in the after time.

If Benjamin bear rule, it must be in the power of Joseph, rejected, delivered up, exalted, and he must in the meanwhile be a son of sorrow. The birthright in abeyance, even the promise of inheritance, but the blessing shall be bestowed in the person of the man He sent before them; who was sold for a servant; whose feet they hurt with fetters—he was laid in iron until the time that his word came—the word of the Lord tried him.

Israel must also come into Egypt, and Jacob sojourn in the land of Ham.

Jehovah reckons nothing till Joseph come to Egypt; faith then can follow, and God meet Jacob on the ground of mercy. A son of sorrow on the way to Egypt, yet a Joseph there to be exalted, so that all should bow the knee, and the savior of the world, while Rachel wept; but to be called out of Egypt a son of power, though little, yet a ruler.

But at that time they shall not go from Bethlehem to Edar, but from Edar to Bethlehem (Mic. 4:8; 5:2), and the first dominion shall come to the Tower of the flock, the strength of the daughter of Zion, the daughter of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile the daughter of Zion shall be in pain and labor to bring forth, like a woman in travail; for now shalt than go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go to Babylon, and there shalt thou be delivered, there the Lord shall redeem thee. But thou Bethlehem Ephratah, thou art little! out of thee shall He come forth to me that is to be ruler in Israel.

Therefore the first dominion shall come to Judah's remnant, scattered as a flock without a shepherd, but when gathered, though but few, and shepherded, then shall the horn be iron, and the hoof brass, and they shall beat in pieces many peoples.

When using power falsely, Judah mites the Judge of Israel on the cheek; therefore, till He, the everlasting One, takes up the government, they shall be given up: but when out of their travail He comes forth in manifested power as Head of Israel, the whole nation shall be owned, and all Israel be saved.

Note how self-will and corrupt lusts are identified both in 2 Peter 2 and in Jude. They are a letting out of will. So for good we see the apostle's power over his own will. There also we see despising dignities, and the like; no self-restraint. So, in fact, such a thing as communism lets loose corrupt lusts too.

Chapter 70

Thoughts on Jacob: 10. Genesis 28:20, 22

“AND Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem, and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave.” From her came forth the son who carried into Egypt, was made ruler there—and thence Jacob's power begins—while the godly remnant mourns, as from the grave of Israel's hope, because her children are not; and the place which should have been the starting-point of every blessing becomes a grave. Thus is Israel's history, as God's witness, bound betwixt two pillars; the first securing to him, unwitting, Laban's gods; the last marking the place where she, who in ignorance and natural religion had hid them—the poor of the flock—passes from connection with Israel forever, until the son called out from Egypt comes up in the power of resurrection, and the son of sorrow becomes the son of the right hand.

Her grave, thus become the occasion of Gentile mercy, is, on the ground of mercy, a house of bread to many nations.

The power of nature fails to uphold anything, it must be by the gift of grace and mercy. Ephratah, Bethlehem, is man's order—fruitfulness before blessing (Gen. 35:19)—blessing, then fruitfulness, Bethlehem-Ephratah (Mic. 5:2) is God's way.

They have now not believed in Gentile mercy, in order that they also may be objects of mercy. The deliverer shall come out from Egypt. He shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. He shall stand and feed in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. Edar, Bethlehem, Zion mark His course, not Bethel, Ephrath, Edar, as Israel's: for unto Edar unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion: thou Bethlehem-Ephratah, out of thee shall He come forth unto me, to be ruler in Israel; and the Redeemer shall come to Zion.

Now draws Israel's sad history towards a close, as responsible in the land. “It came to pass, when Israel dwelt in that land, that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah, and Israel heard it."

The son dishonoureth the father, a man's enemies are the men of his own house. Therefore faith will look unto the Lord, and he who loves God's truth not alone obeys, as Abram, getting out of country, kindred, father's house, but is content to waive all right to that which in God's promise was his inheritance.

Israel understands not the things which are for his peace, the blessing in him and in his seed, and in his heart withholds the birthright, the inheritance, from Reuben, whose right it was; therefore is he a man cast loose, a wanderer, with no tie in all the land. He must go forth to Egypt, and faith owns the just decree, being ready to go hither, thither, at the word of God, even if it were from off the ground of promise, confiding in the power of God, the God of the living. It flees from place to place, witnessing of a rejected one, counting all things loss for his sake: content to be a little one, with little earthly blessing, that he may be greatest in the kingdom when the heavens rule; a friend of publicans and sinners, that wisdom may be justified of her children. It leaves home, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, and receives in this time an hundredfold with persecution.

“Israel heard it!” Jacob heard, and held his peace when folly had been wrought in Israel. In silence, and unwittingly, had God's claims been denied. In grief and pent-up wrath he disinherits Reuben in his heart. Thus what he would not do by faith, he does in inconsiderate haste. If faith fails to move a man, force goads him to God's goal.

Thus, with wives, twelve sons, and cattle and beasts, and all the substance which he had got in Padan Aram, Jacob came unto Isaac his father, unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned. To him Ephratah-Bethlehem was as Padan Aram: to him Canaan was not God's land; oblivious, like Lot, of the word, “Canaan shall be his servant.” forgetful of the covenant, “I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession;” regardless of the promise, “the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed."

"Israel dwelt in that land,” “the land wherein his father was a stranger, in the land of Canaan.” A sad declension! With God's title-deeds he bought peace, and a portion with the Amorites to dwell in, making thereof destruction and a grave; but, worse than this, he turns his father's sepulcher into a dwelling-place.

With all things lost, if he but take the path of one cast out, he may walk therein in fellowship with God. How good it is to know God's present truth, and act upon it! Thus to do would be at least to make requital for the wrong done Esau; and what as a Canaanite he bought in avarice, and got confirmed by fraud with balances of deceit; then seized by force—he loveth to oppress—that might he now in lowly grace give up. But no his eye saw, his hand took, his lust holds, and Esau, in mere grace of nature, profane as he is, takes God's part; for “Esau took his wives, and his sons, and his daughters, and all the persons of his house, and his cattle, and all his beasts, and all his substance which he had got in the land of Canaan, and went into the country from the face of his brother Jacob; for their riches were more than that they might dwell together: and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them because of their cattle. Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir."

In nature's grace, God's providence and faithfulness in seen things, Esau drinks deeply of his blessing—consistent and persistent in his course; pressing forward in his line of things to lay hold of the promise set before him; unconsciously the instrument on Jacob's failure, whereby God's election, purpose, and calling are established.

“The elder shall serve the younger!” serving him by selling him his birthright—a paltry price to pay for such a portion—yet prevailing to procure a blessing, and in the order of God's providence, which answers nature, breaking from off his neck his brother's yoke when, lust unworking, and in the strength of nature's hardihood, he heeds not Canaan's fruitful plains, where from his wealth of wives and children, goods and cattle, had been gathered, but leaves them in the hold of coveting, amassing Jacob, and goes forth to a land of rocks and separation.

Thus dwelt Esau in Mount Seir, and dukes and kings come of him ere there reigns any king over the children of Israel. So, by force and nature's grace regaining, as it were, his birthright on independent grounds, he takes dominion in the cast-off place, breaking his brother's yoke from off his neck.

Chapter 71

Jesus the Shepherd: John 10:1-80

Jesus was the light of the world, but men knew Him nut. They perceived not the light, for they were born spiritually blind. By nature they were incapable of discerning Him, whose glory was “as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Even the Jews, with all their privileges, did not receive Him. Still He was the light, the true light, and there was no other. What men needed was to have their eyes opened. This Jesus was able to do, even for those born blind, as the miracle in the previous chapter sets forth. The Pharisees, being offended at such grace and power, only showed by it how blind they were; but the one who could now see Him who was the light of the world boldly and perseveringly testified of Christ to them. He was blessedly conscious that his eyes had been opened, and he soon perceived in Jesus the glory of the Son of God. His parents were called as witnesses, who, as fares facts were concerned, simply confirmed his testimony; and every inquiry from the man himself only brought out firm and truthful witness of the power and grace of Christ. All this so drew forth the enmity of their hearts, that they cast him out of the synagogue. Jesus, however, soon found the one who had been cast out for His sake, and brought him into personal acquaintance and intercourse with Himself. The Shepherd knew the sheep, and this loved one knew the Shepherd's voice and would not follow a stranger; they were together now, outside the powerless forms of human religiousness and tradition. The faithful one in Israel was thus outside the camp but with Christ, and there he learned, to his heart's joy, precious instruction as to the person of Christ, and knew that He who had opened his eyes was the Sent One of God.

The Lord of glory had, in the Pharisees' judgment, encroached on the sacred rites of their religion by opening the eyes of the blind on the sabbath-day. They would rather the man had remained blind than such a miracle had been wrought on that day; for take away the observance of days from religions formalists, what have they left? Besides, this act of Christ on the sabbath-day, to their minds, made little of them and of what they taught. So blind were they, that, though boasting of themselves as being Moses' disciples, they could not discern the glory of Him of whom Moses wrote; and such enmity to the Lord did they manifest, with all their religiousness, that one of their rules was that, “if any one confessed him to be the Christ, he should be excommunicated from the synagogue.” (Chap. ix. 22.) Thus their religion excluded Christ (alas I how solemn) and consequently all who took sides with Christ. On this account they cast him out, where the Lord met with him, revealed Himself to him, and drew forth his heart in worship outside the Jewish fold. The Jews were thus left in darkness, and what darkness, which had excluded the light of the world! How very solemn this is! And yet we cannot fail to trace the analogy between the last days of Israel's history and the last phase of the church on earth, which is content to go on with self-gratulations at its own imaginary religions progress; while it has virtually put Christ outside, but where He presents Himself as waiting to give His companionship and blessing to any individual who will open the door to Him. (Rev. 3:17-20.)

The Jews had not heeded the Shepherd's voice. They saw no beauty in Him. But Jesus is at home with the cast-out one, who delights in his new-found Savior and Friend; and the one who had been unwavering and truthful in his witness to the Pharisees now cleaves to the Son of God in the spirit

of an earnest worshipper.

All this brought from the lips of Jesus the conscience-searching words which follow, as well as His own blessed testimony to the characteristics of the good Shepherd, looked at both in contrast with false professors, as welt as what He is intrinsically in, Himself. Deeply moved as the Lord must have been by the circumstances of this scene, He could not forbear saying, “For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.” (Chap. ix. 39.) True, the Lord had not come to judge the world, but to save; but being “the light of the world,” it could not but make manifest the moral qualities of those around Him. Thus the one who was born blind receives sight—the one who saw not sees; and that those who thought they saw (like Nicodemus, for instance, when he came to Jesus by night) might be convicted of their own natural and religious blindness—thus those who saw would be made blind. No doubt the Lord alluded to the Pharisees in this latter class; and it seemed to arouse them, for when they heard these words, “they said unto him, Are we blind also?” To which He replied, “If ye were blind, ye should have no sin;” that is, if they took their true position before God as utterly helpless and needy, He would make the sin-forgiving Savior blessedly known to their souls; but taking the ground of their own competency to judge and teach divine things, it was the most positive proof of their being still in their sins— “but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth.” (Chap. ix. 41.) The fact is the light of the world was there, and they preferred their own darkness rather than have the light of life.

But the Lord does not stop there. He goes on to expose the hollow pretensions of the professed shepherds of Israel. Self-appointed, and having obtained their official position by their own efforts of climbing up some other way, they morally were only thieves and robbers. The voice of such was therefore strange—to the sheep, as we have just seen in the one who had proved the Savior's love. These were some of the features of those who professed to be shepherds of Israel.

The true Shepherd, of whom Moses and the prophets had spoken—the One whom God had sent—we may observe in the first place, entered into the sheepfold by the door. He brought all the credentials of the Shepherd and Stone of Israel. (Gen. 49:24.) The woman's Seed, the Seed of Abraham and of David born in Bethlehem, the virgin's Son, the Child born, and Son given, meek and lowly and yet called Immanuel, He was joyfully received by Jehovah's faithful remnant, such as Simeon and Anna, who were waiting for redemption in Israel. Bringing also afterward, as He did, the qualities of the true Messiah, according to the testimony of prophets, He was manifested as Jehovah's Shepherd, the true Shepherd of the sheep, to whom the porter opened, and He entered in by the door. (Chap. 10:1, 2.)

Secondly, He called His own sheep by name, whether His true apostles or teachers, men, women or children, they were called individually by Him. Those therefore who were of faith, true to God and cast out by false shepherds, became objects of His care and companionship. His way with the man to whom He had given sight in the previous chapter is a sample of this. He addressed him personally, saying, “Dost thou believe on the Son of God?"

Thirdly, He led them out, as we learn from the end of verse 3. He did not bless them, or save them, and lead them back to the Jewish fold; on the contrary, He led them, and blessed them, outside of its national religiousness, which shows that the Jewish nation was in an incurably bad state, not only corrupt and leprous but so dark as to be unable to discover “the light of the world,” when he

so brightly shone upon them. It was therefore not a question of mending the old garment, or of healing a corrupt nation, notwithstanding its rigid attention to outward observances, for it was so full of rottenness and death, as to compel the Good Shepherd to lead His own outside in companionship with Himself, the rejected One. An important principle to notice, that, when God's people corporately depart from Himself as the source of all their blessing, and from His word as their sole authority, the place of a faithful one is to be outside with Christ. This was His way of leading, and it is still His will that we should “go forth unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.” (Heb. 13:13.)

Fourthly, He goes before His sheep. He does not drive them before Him, but He draws them after Him by going before them. Christ was, and still is, despised and rejected of men, and the path of the sheep is to be with Him. If He were cast out of the synagogue, those who confessed Him were cast out also; but the sheep—the faithful in Israel—knew His voice, followed Thin, and refused the voice of strangers.

All this the Pharisees heard, but could not understand. If John 6; 7 showed the formal and dead state of the nation in professing to celebrate the feasts of Passover and Tabernacles, while rejecting the true bread from heaven, and the living Fountain of all joy and blessing, chapter ix. shows at least the blind and degraded condition of the professed shepherds and guides of the people.

But the Lord proceeds, fifthly, and now speaks of Himself as the door of the sheep, that is, that He alone is the way of admission into God's favor and blessing. Many teachers and guides had been in Israel before Him, and, however popular and esteemed among the people they might have been, the solemn fact is, that “the sheep did not hear them.” (Vers. 7, 8.) But now He is the door, and open wide, so that any one may enter in and be saved—thus enter into God's presence by faith in Him, and know intercourse with Him, and come out into His service and find blessing and refreshment— “go in and out, and find pasture.” (Ver. 9.) Thus Jesus not only entered by the door, but is the door of the sheep, the door for any man to enter in and be saved.

The way is thus cleared for now entering more fully on the characteristics of the Good Shepherd; and this the Lord sets before us by contrasting Him with the thief and the hireling, as also by plainly declaring his own moral excellences and ways.

As to the thief, he came to steal, to kill, and to destroy. His object was to benefit himself, and that by covetous and dishonest means, and by inflicting suffering and loss on the sheep; whereas the Good Shepherd. came to save, to give life, and that more abundantly: all through the priceless cost of laying down His own life for the sheep.

The hireling also serves for wages, but has no real love for the sheep, no concern for their welfare, and only thinks of his own gain, so that in time of danger, when he sees the wolf coming, having no claims higher than self-interest, he runs away, leaving the sheep in the enemy's cruel hands; and though he cannot devour the lambs and sheep of Christ, yet he can and will scatter them. On the contrary, Jehovah's Shepherd knows His sheep, loves them, died for them, to redeem them to God, rescue them forever from death and Satan, and have them with Himself in everlasting glory and blessing.

The Good Shepherd then knows His sheep, and they know Him; He calls them, and they hear His voice. He goes before, and leads them, and they follow Him. He is the door by which they entered in and are saved. He delivered them from the wrath to come by His death on the cross. He gives them eternal life—risen life now in Himself. He keeps them so secure, that they can never perish, nor be plucked out of His hand or His Father's hand. Wondrous grate! How widely all these ways of divine love stand in contrast with the thoughts of men! No marvel that the Savior should have said, “All that ever came before me were thieves and robbers."

The Lord, as we have seen, met with a solitary “sheep” here and there, and He led such out from the Jewish “sheepfold;” but He said He had other sheep not of that fold (evidently referring to those to be called out from among the Gentiles), which He intended to bring by bearing His voice, and then there would be one flock (not “fold,” it is a different word in the original), and one Shepherd. (Ver. 16.) This no doubt the Lord is doing now by His gospel, so that before Him His sheep are not now looked at as in folds here and there, but as “one flock,” all under the guardian care and blessing of “one shepherd.” All Jewish believers, and all Gentile believers, at this time are brought into the same character of association and blessing, born of, taught by, and indwelt by the same Spirit, forming one flock—God's assembly. Hence Paul, in addressing the elders of the assembly at Ephesus, says, “Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to shepherd the assembly of God.... For I know that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.” (Acts 20:28, 29.) Peter also, exhorting elders, says, “Shepherd [or feed] the flock of God which is among you. being ensamples to the flock.” (1 Peter 5:2.)

Having thus glanced at some of the moral glories of Jesus the Shepherd, we may now look a little at what scripture teaches us of the official glories of this Good and Great and Chief Shepherd of the sheep. As we have noticed, it was “the good Shepherd's” part to lay down His life for the sheep. Nothing less could express His love, nothing less supply our need, nothing less meet the claims of divine righteousness; and so infinitely acceptable was this wondrous act to the Father that He said, “Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.” (Ver. 17.) What goodness and mercy, while we were sinners, helpless and lost, that Christ died for us and brought eternal glory to God! Wondrous glory, which will shed its unfading luster on the new heavens and new earth throughout all eternity!

He is also spoken of as “the great Shepherd of the sheep,” in being raised from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant; in which not only the value of His one offering in perfecting forever them that are sanctified was publicly declared, but He triumphed over death and Satan. And in Him who is raised from the dead God has given us life—risen life—life more abundantly than could have been given to man before.

But in the One who has ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God, His glorious office of Shepherd is still active on our behalf. Now He is known as the “Chief Shepherd,” because He has many under-shepherds, to whom He has given grace and qualification to shepherd the flock, to feed and tend them during His absence. He is the “Chief Shepherd,” and Peter, who was an under-shepherd, speaks of Him as “the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls."

It is He who sought us when, like sheep gone astray, we wandered in willfulness and pride over the dark mountains of sin and folly, and, having found us, exercised His own matchless grace and

power in securing us forever for Himself. He went after us when we were lost, and having found us, laid us upon His shoulders, and took us home rejoicing. The Shepherd rejoiced, and the Father rejoiced, because the lost one had been received safe and sound, for “there is joy in heaven, in the presence of the angels of God, over one sinner that repenteth;” but when by-and-by He presents us before the presence of His glory, it will be with exceeding joy. The sheep, then, are the objects of the Shepherd's care. He feeds our souls. By His Spirit and word of truth, either with or without other instrumentality, He does comfort and bless us. He has given gifts, having sent down the Holy Ghost, for the blessing and edification of His people. Real care for His flock is the special proof of love to the Lord Him self, as He said to Peter, when he confessed his love and attachment to Him, “Feed my lambs!” “Shepherd my sheep!” “Feed my sheep!” Not one of the flock is overlooked by the “Chief Shepherd;” every circumstance and peculiarity of each is duly regarded by Him. The weak are supported and encouraged; the little ones kept near His heart; all fed and guarded by the all-seeing and unchangeably loving Shepherd. As the prophet said, “He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.” (Isa. 40:11.)

We are admonished to beware lest any man rob us; but looking to the “Chief Shepherd,” and owning thankfully the under-shepherds of His giving, and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, content to be guided by Him, we shall be assuredly led into green pastures beside the still waters, and find rest and blessing there. He restores our souls, and renews our strength, for “he giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.” He will never fail nor forsake us; He leads in paths of righteousness for His name's sake, though it may be in the midst of paths of judgment; and all through the valley of the shadow of death we have nothing to fear: His rod and staff will comfort us. He knows how to feed and cheer us, and bless us with an overflowing cup in the presence of our enemies; and, as He is faithful and true, looking to Him our Shepherd, we may well sing, “I shall not want,” but “goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of Jehovah forever.” it surely then becomes us to go onward, rejoicing in Him, whose love to us knows neither measure nor end.

And if it be said of David that “he fed the people according to the integrity of his heart, and guided them according to the skilfulness of his hands,” how fully and perfectly it can be so said of David's Lord, who, though now in the glory, takes account of every hair of our heads, and is never unmindful of the smallest need of any sheep of His pasture! How sweet to think of the unwearied activities of this tender and gracious Shepherd, so patient with us, so forbearing, so pitiful and wise! Happy indeed are those who are subject to His guidance and instruction; for such not only grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but they learn that wisdom's “ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.” Precious Shepherd! ever mindful of Thy poor sheep.

H. H. S.

Chapter 72

Notes on Job: Introduction

THE book before us is as isolated in form as underneath it is bound up by the closest ties with all scripture. In it we breathe the fresh and free air of desert life, in the strongest antithesis to the settled polity of Israel in Canaan; yet is it quite distinct from the pilgrim character of the fathers, rather approaching the place of Lot, though with a sensible difference as suits the wealthiest chief of Uz, but an independent and honored visitor of the city, not its denizen. No foreign land is so well known as Egypt; yet Job's own habits lie outside it. Revolutions were known, science and art making progress; godly men discussed the deepest moral questions. The marks of hoar antiquity are graven on it, yet it falls in admirably with the latest outflow of grace to the Gentile. Contemporaneous with, if not before, the five books of Moses, it is of all parts of the Old Testament the most free from the trammels of the law or even from allusions to it; yet none the less does it shadow the ways of God with Israel, blessed of old, losing all meanwhile, but about to be blessed once more and for more in the end than in the beginning.

The problem handled in the book is the moral government of God: how to conciliate His righteousness with the sufferings, and even extreme sufferings, of a just and godly man? how to understand the permission of evil, in its worst form of malignant persecution, with His own good, and this before and apart from His revelation in Christ and by redemption? The books of Moses prepare the way for His government of a people, His own elect Israel, where all was to be manifest and a testimony before the world. Here it is His dealings with a soul before the true light shone, and the veil was rout, and sin condemned in the cross, along with the expression of exercises of heart and conscience under God's dealings. Now that we are reconciled to God by Christ's death and know ourselves to be in Christ before God, there is or ought to be a wholly now experience; but it is of the deepest interest and profit to see how the believer was enabled, not merely to walk uprightly when things were prosperous in an evil world, but to confide in God spite of adversity and crushing affliction, and not only to submit to His will as chastening, but to measure and abhor himself in dust and ashes before God. The beginning teaches that not Satan but God is the source of the action, the middle that He only and effectually carries forward the true lesson for the soul, the end that He is exceeding pitiful and of tender mercy. A whole long book devoted to the exercises of a soul in suffering, and he a Gentile, and this in the canon of the Jewish scriptures from the first! But it is not yet what some call the “mystery of the cross:” this was reserved for Christ.

The plan or structure is very distinct. There is a prologue in chapters 1, 2. with a corresponding conclusion or epilogue in the last chapter (42:7-17). The question is raised in heaven between God and Satan, the man on earth most concerned being wholly ignorant of it till grace prevailed and the word revealed all Job, the object of divine interest, becomes therefore the butt of the malice of Satan, who is allowed to inflict his heaviest blows on his possessions and his family, then on his person short of his life, and utterly failing to ensnare the saint into sin disappears from the scene. But God, who had taken the initiative, carries on the trial, which, if it had stopped here, had failed to deal with that which needed to be reached in Job's heart and judged by himself in order to his

deeper blessing. Hence the three friends are introduced, whose presence in silence, as they looked on his overwhelming misery and grief, at length opens his mouth in curses on his day, not on God. (Chap. 3)

Then follows a threefold series of colloquies between Job and his friends, rich in moral suggestion and full of feeling, especially on the part of the sufferer, whose language may seem often in words to approach that of Christ in the Psalm but is really in contrast with His perfection. For He ever abode in the love of His Father, and never failed to justify His God, even when on the cross, abandoned by Him, which Job never was more than any other servant of His that ever lived. (Chaps. 4-31.) Hence Job stands as the instructive foil, and this not as a man merely, but as a man of God, to the Second man and last Adam. So little are the ancients and moderns to be relied on who agree in declaring that Job prefigured Christ as the Victim or undeserving Sufferer. Inconsistency most grave we see not in Christ but in Job, though real integrity—and disinterestedness, whatever said his friends or Satan.

The converse of Christ, in absolute submission and justifying God under suffering (and what suffering!) instead of bitter complaint, is thus lost.

In this profound discussion, after the passionate outburst of the long patient sufferer, each of the three friends first insinuates these charges home on Job—that grave secret sin alone could account for such calamities, that therefore his could be only a show of piety, that in short he must be a hypocrite. To each Job replies, with less or more indignation insisting on his integrity, but while he yearns after God, if he could only get near Him, he complains of His dealings as severe and unpitying. On the third occasion (chaps. 22.-31.), the assailants are so evidently convicted of a too narrow and judicial estimate of God's ways, that Eliphaz drops his original mildness, acts unfairly by Job's reasoning, and plays the sophist himself by converting special instances of divine judgment on the wicked into a sample of His ordinary dealings, ignoring the righteous. Bildad, unable to resist the rejoinder of Job who points out the tangled web of human things, while he admits the occasional intervention in this world of Him who will judge infallibly in the next, is obliged to admit the to man incomprehensible ways of God now, yet still holds to his suspicions of Job under the application of the sententious wisdom of others. After a withering fire from Job of heavier metal from the same arsenal, Job cleaves to the assertion of his sincerity before God, and magnificently contrasts with the petty and acrimonious short-sightedness of his miserable comforters that wisdom which is beyond the ken of the creature and pertains to God alone, however He of His grace may vouchsafe it to him that fears Himself and departs from evil. Zophar is utterly silenced.

Thereon appears a hitherto unnoticed person, Elihu, who had kept silence as became one considerably younger, but now speaks as interpreting God's ways with man, with the soul, so that Job is reduced to silence no less than his friends. Their assaults Elihu defends no more than he insinuates hidden evils against Job, but reproves the irreverence of his replies, vindicates the dealings of God, whether in judgment of man or in discipline of the righteous, and proves how perilous his language might be for encouraging men in the path of reckless pursuit of prosperity here below. He urges on Job self-judgment and submission to God, exposing his self-righteousness, and condemning the wish for death to escape suffering as wholly unworthy, as well as vain before Him, whose glory and withal interest in creation he describes in terms of great

beauty and force. He completely avoids the error of those who see not correction but only judgment in God's ways. (Chaps. 32-37.)

Jehovah then answers Job out of the whirlwind, asserting the majesty of His power, laying bare Job's ignorance to himself, and pointedly demanding, Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct Him? he that reproveth God, let him answer it. This brings out from Job the confession of his vileness, which is carried on still farther, we may say fully, by a fresh appeal of Jehovah mainly grounded on but two of His earthly creatures. (Chaps. 38-42:6.) There could be no more till Christ came not only bringing life and incorruption to light, but clearing up what must then have been left to God as insoluble by man.

The conclusion follows, Elihu the interpreter of good disappearing at the end, as Satan the messenger of evil at the beginning, and Jehovah turning the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends, as well as giving him twice as much as he had before. (Chap. 42:7-17.) The friends were merely silenced; Job opens his mouth in full confession and thus wins forgiveness not merely for himself but for them by interceding on their behalf.

The longevity of Job and the priestly action as head of the family (his historic reality being attested by Ezekiel in the Old Testament and by James in the New) point to patriarchal times: after Abraham and before the Exodus would seem the limits, if indeed Moses himself did not write the book. At any rate Dr. S. Lee has given a copious list of striking coincidences with the Pentateuch. The reader will notice how “the Almighty” (the revelation of God to the fathers) appears familiarly in the speeches of Job and his friends, as well as “God” as such. Jehovah is regularly used only when the writer describes or introduces Himself as speaking. The exception is in chapter 12:9, 28:18 being Adonai and not Jehovah, Genesis proves however that the name of Jehovah was not a secret before God gave it by Moses as a name of relation to Israel. The idolatry alluded to in chapter 31 is the earliest that came in by Satan's craft, and therefore suits well the patriarchal age; but it does prove that the book must have been written after the flood, for we hear of no idolatry before it. The mention of angels as the “sons of God” tallies with the Mosaic phrase in Gen. 6, and Satan's character with the serpent of Gen. 3. For these and similar reasons, some of a linguistic nature, one sees how the book fits in with the days of the earliest revelation from God to man. Nothing can be conceived more opposed to the truthful simplicity of scripture than a late writer (I will not say indulging in a fiction, but) even in a true narrative affecting the archaic style and language of an age long past. Nor is it rational, to take the lowest ground, that the Jewish canon could have admitted such a book unless the prophets had accepted it as inspired no less than authentic, as it is the weightiest and earliest witness against their narrow and exclusive spirit in respect of all outside themselves. The same principle applies to Melchisedec in Genesis and to Jethro in Exodus and Numbers. The book of Job therefore stands properly at the head of the Hagiographa, or poetical books of the Old Testament. Indeed a late Hebrew commentator deserts the general belief of the Rabbins for the skepticism of Samuel Bar Nachman, and a few others, on the express ground of incredulity that the patriarchs of Israel should be so left behind in spiritual power by a Gentile like Job, not to speak of his three, friends and Elihu.

Chapter 73

Notes on Job 1-2

The Spirit of God opens the book with a lovely picture of Job's character, family, and position. We see himself, his sons, and his daughters in all the intimacy of private life, and this in him ruled by the fear of God. “There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. And there were born unto him seven sons and three daughters. His substance also was seven thousand sheep, and thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east.” (Vers. 1-3.)

The earthly position of Job is also very clearly set before us. He was the greatest of all the sons of the East. His sons also had their separate establishments, and the description of their ordinary habits gives occasion for the mention of a vivid trait of Job's piety. “And his sons went and feasted in their houses every one his day; and sent and called for their three sisters, to eat and to drink with them. And it was so, when the days of their feasting were gone about, that Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings according to the number of them all: for Job said, It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts. Thus did Job continually.” (Vers. 4, 5.) Such was the habitual life of this godly Gentile, which the Holy Spirit has manifest pleasure in recording. Doubtless it was the fruit of the grace of God; yet Job had to learn better still both the God of grace, and himself in His presence. It is indeed the great moral of the book.

But in order to such a lesson the veil is lifted for us from a higher scene. Earth is the theater where the godly man is tried, but the spectacle is not later only of apostles and others, but even then of a saint to angels. “Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah, and Satan came also among them. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered Jehovah and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? Then Satan answered Jehovah, and said, Doth Job fear God for naught? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land: but put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Behold, all that he hath is in thy power; only upon himself put not forth thine hand. So Satan went forth from the presence of Jehovah.” (Vers. 8-12.)

How perfect the rebuke to man's dream of God indifferent to all! of a mere theory of earth progressing under natural laws! It was Jehovah who here raised the question: Satan could only avail himself of the prosperity of Job to insinuate self-interest. Were his possessions to be touched, see “if he curse thee not to thy face!” Jehovah gives the adversary permission to put forth his hand, but not against his person. What a comfort that even the enemy's hand is tinder God's hand! All is measured on the side of evil, infinite on that of good, as we ought to know well, for all

things are ours, and we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.

The earthly issue soon appears. “And there was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them; and the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword: and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great. wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee.” (Vers. 18-19.)

Thus we see that not only men's lusts and passions but the elements were in, Satan's hand so far as God allowed. In quick succession perished the herds, the flocks, the camels, and the children: desolation the more keenly felt, because not in one moment, but just time enough to hear of each separately! Outwardly however neither God appeared nor the enemy, but Sabeans, and Chaldeans, and fire of God from heaven; and a whirlwind from beyond the wilderness. What was the effect of these severe and rapid blows on the righteous, sufferer in his possessions and family? Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head,, and fell upon the ground; and worshipped, and said “Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.” (Vers. 20-22.) He sorrowed deeply, and it was right; but he bowed thoroughly to God. Satan was thus completely foiled; but God would descend into lower depths; and bless Job yet further, though to the praise of His own grace alone.

Accordingly the scene opens yet once more in heaven. “Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before Jehovah; and Satan came also among them to present himself before Jehovah. And Jehovah said unto Satan, From whence comest then? And Satan answered Jehovah and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil? and still he holdeth fast his, integrity, although thou movedst me against him to destroy him without cause. And Satan answered Jehovah, and said, Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life. But put forth thine hand now, and touch his bone and his flesh, and he will curse thee to thy face. And Jehovah said unto Satan, Behold, he is in thine hand; but save his life. So went Satan forth from the presence of Jehovah, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes.” (Chap. 2:1-8)

Henceforward the adversary vanishes; he had failed no less completely in his renewed malice. What a comfort to learn in a sense where to all appearance then as now he seems to triumph! But so it ever is, whatever semis: God has His way, as the end proves unanswerably, and he that does

the will of God, whatever his weakness or exposure, abides forever. Yet at first what confusion of things! what suffering for the righteous! The person of Job was smitten as sorely and unsparingly as before he had been stripped of children and possessions—all clean gone; and the one who was nearest to him, instead of being a help-meet, tempts him in despair; but in vain. “Then said his wife unto him, Dost thou still, retain thine integrity? curse God, and die. But he said unto her, Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What I shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil? In all this did not Job sin with his lips.” (Vers. 9, 10.) It will be noticed, however, that here; not before, it is said, “In all this did not Job sin with his lips.” This was much, but it was not all.

God soon was pleased to bring out what was in his heart in a way which man could not expect. Godly friends were used of God to bring to the surface what the adversary had failed utterly to reach or to see. Their silent presence drew out impatience even from the patient Job. It is precisely where we are strongest that God proves our weakness. In Christ alone, we stand. “Now when Job's three friends heard of all this evil that was come upon him, they came every one from his own place, Eliphaz the Temanite, and Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite: for they had made an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. And when they lifted up their eyes afar off, and knew him not, they lifted up their voice and wept; and they rent every one his mantle, and sprinkled dust upon their heads toward heaven. So they sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights, and none spake a word unto him; for they saw that his grief was very great.” (Vers. 11-18.)

Here we pause, and reflect on successive scenes, as genuine in the facts as in their moral depth, which eclipse no less the poor and low and corrupt myths of the ancient heathen, than the equally meager and even impious efforts of modern philosophy to solve the problem of the world and men as they are with God such as He is. Those who turn away from so holy a revelation, and prefer what is utterly inadequate supposing it true, and what soon proves itself ridiculously false, nauseous even to a right-minded person, and presumptuous against God, prove at least what is the state of their hearts and consciences. We easily believe what we like. How blessed then by grace to love the truth! How awful to apostatize from “the Holy, the True,” for unholy fables, old or new! Such alas! is the character of modern infidelity. God's purpose and ways are revealed in His word, and they are as worthy of the only true God as they are of the deepest value for our souls and our walk in fellowship with Him day by day. The present world is not the manifestation of His government; it does not display His estimate of sinner or of saint. Previously to His judgment of the quick and the dead when Christ appears and reigns, He is in His grace causing all things to work together for good to them that love Him. He makes us, even in all its sorrows, more than conquerors through Him that loved us. But in order to this there are lessons we must learn about ourselves: what they are we may be taught in measure at least as we go through this wonderful book, however much had necessarily to await His coming and death who gave the Holy Ghost to guide us into all the truth. Here we do not rise above yearning after a daysman: eternal redemption could not yet be known, nor our perfecting by the one offering of Christ.

Chapter 74

Notes on Job 3-7

The complaint of Job.

The presence of his friends day after day, their silent presence in face of all his troubles, was too much for the long-enduring saint, who after this opened his mouth, and cursed his day; and “Job answered and said,

Perish the day wherein I was born,

And the night that said, A man is conceived.

That day! be it darkness;

Let not God from above ask after it;

And let not light shine upon it;

Let darkness and death-shade reclaim it;

Let clouds tabernacle on it;

Let darkenings of the day affright it.

That night! thick darkness seize on it;

Let it not be joined to the days of the year;

Let it not come into the number of the months.

But that night! let it be barren;

Let no shout of joy come into it;

Let cursers of days curse it,

Who are prepared to rouse leviathan.

The stars of its twilight be dark;

Let it look for light, but have none,

And let it not gaze on the eyelids of the dawn;

Because it shut not the doors of my [mother's] belly,

And hid sorrow from mine eyes.

Why did I not die from the womb-

Come forth from the belly, and expire?

Why did knees anticipate me,

And what breasts that I should suck?

For now I had lain, and been quiet,

I had slept, and then had there been rest for me,

With kings and counselors of the earth,

Who built ruins for themselves;

Or with princes that had gold,

Who filled their houses with silver;

Or, as a hidden abortion, I should not be,

As infants [that] never saw light:

There the wicked cease from raging,

And there the weary are at rest;

Together rest the prisoners;

They hear not the taskmaster's voice;

Small and great are there the same;

And free the slave from his master.

Wherefore giveth He light to the wretched one,

And life to the bitter [in] soul;

Who long for death, and it [is] not,

And dig for it more than for treasure;

Who rejoice to dancing,

Exult when they find the grave?

To a man whose way is hid,

And whom God hath hedged in?

For instead of my bread cometh my sighing,

And like waters are my groans poured forth.

For greatly I feared, and forthwith it overtook me,

And what I dreaded hath come to me.

I was not at ease, I had no quiet,

And no rest, and trouble came."

Thus bitterly does he deprecate the day of his birth and all connected with it. Indeed there had never been a child of Adam or a believer so visited as Job; and as yet he knew not the end, that the Lord is exceeding pitiful, and of tender mercy. He was in the depth of his trial aggravated by the silence of his friends, soon to augment it yet more by the drawn swords of their increasingly expressed suspicion. And so he asks, in the anguish of his soul, why, if such was to be his lot living, he died not from the womb? Why he should have been so tenderly cared for to encounter at length such agony? Why did he not share the quiet of the grave with earth's grandees, who were spending life in building monuments that decay themselves, or cramming their houses with silver and gold they must leave behind; unless he had been as a still-born babe that never saw light, and thus be where the wicked trouble no more, and the weary are at rest, and the captives repose together, with no taskmaster's voice, small and great alike there, and the slave free from his master? The last verses (20-26) put the question, first generally, and then with pointed application to himself, why he should live, being thus miserable. There is no need for giving the impersonal turn of the English Bible and of many others, to verse 20, though there is still the avoidance of uttering the name of God. The full answer could only come in a dead and risen Christ: if it were not so, the most miserable of all men would be the Christian. But now is He risen, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep. Fear of evil is gone forever to him who now walks by faith; for to it evil is gone before God, and nothing but good abides. and triumphs in Him whom we know on the throne of God, now appearing in His presence for us. Hence can the Christian glory in tribulations, and die daily.

Chapters 4, 5.

The first discourse of Eliphaz.

The eldest of the three friends proceeds to reprove Job.

"Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

Should one attempt a word to thee, wilt thou be grieved?

And yet to hold back from speaking, who is able?

Lo, thou hast corrected many,

And slack hands hast thou strengthened,

The stumbling one thy speech did raise,

And sinking knees thou didst confirm;

But now it cometh to thee, and thou art grieved,.

It toucheth thee, and thou art confounded.

[Is] not thy fear thy confidence,

And the uprightness of thy ways thy hope?

Remember, I pray thee, who perished being innocent?

Or where have the upright been blotted out?

So far as I have seen, they that plow iniquity,

And they that sow trouble, reap the same.

By the breath of God they perish,

And by the blast of His nostrils they are consumed.

The roaring of the lion, and the voice of the dark lion,

And the teeth of the young lion are broken.

The strong lion perisheth for lack of prey,

And the whelps of the lioness are scattered.

And to me there stole a word,

And mine ear caught a whisper from it,

In thoughts from visions of the night,

When deep sleep falleth on man.

Shuddering befell me, and trembling,

Which shook the multitude of my bones.

And a spirit glideth before me:

The hairs of my body bristled up.

It stood there—I discerned not its appearance—

An image before mine eyes:

Silence! and a voice I hear,

Is a mortal more just than God?

Is a man purer than his Maker?

Behold, His servants He trusteth not,

And to His angels He ascribeth error;

How much more those who dwell in houses of clay,

The foundation of which [is] in the dust,

Which are crushed as though moths.

From morning to evening they are destroyed;

Before any one marketh it they perish forever.

Is not their cord in them torn away?

They die, and not in wisdom.

Call now; is there any that will answer thee?

And to which of the holy ones wilt thou turn?

For grief killeth a fool,

And jealousy slayeth the simple.

I have seen a fool taking root,

And suddenly I cursed his habitation.

His sons are far from help,

And are crushed in the gate without deliverance;

Whose harvest the hungry one devoureth,

And taketh it off even out of a thorn-hedge,

And the thirsty swalloweth up their wealth.

For evil goeth not forth of the dust,

And trouble doth not sprout out of the ground;

But man is born to trouble,

As the sparks of flame make high their flight.

For my part, then, I would turn to God (El),

And to God (Elohim) would I commit my cause,

Who doeth great things and unsearchable,

Who giveth rain on the face of the earth,

And sendeth water on the face of the fields,

To set the low on high,

And raise up the mourning to prosperity.

He breaketh to pieces the devices of the crafty,

SO that they can do nothing to purpose.

He taketh the wise in their craftiness,

And the counsel of the cunning is overturned.

By day they run against darkness,

And as in the night they grope at noon-day.

And he saveth the poor from the sword out of their month,

And from the hand of the strong.

So there is hope to the poor,

And iniquity shutteth her mouth.

Lo, happy the man whom God correcteth

Therefore despise not the chastening of the Almighty.

For He woundeth, and bindeth up,

He smiteth and His hands make whole.

In six troubles He will deliver thee,

And in seven no evil shall befall thee.

In famine He hath redeemed thee from death,

And in war from the hand of the sword.

In the scourge of the tongue thou art hidden,

And fearest not destruction when it cometh.

At destruction and at famine thou shalt laugh,

And thou shalt not be afraid before beasts of the earth.

For with the stones of the field is thy covenant,

And the wild beasts of the field are at peace with thee.

And thou knowest that thy tabernacle [is] peace,

And thou shalt oversee thy place and miss nothing.

And thou shalt know that thy seed [is] great,

And thine offspring as the green herb of the earth.

Thou shalt go to the grave in a full age,

As the heap of sheaves mounteth up in its Season.

Lo, this we have searched out; so it [is];

Hear it and mark [it] well for thyself."

Such is the opening speech of the elder of the three interlocutors who henceforth proceed to sit in judgment on Job, and are successively answered by him. Unquestionably the gravest of them is Eliphaz, and this first utterance of his lets us into his character and style. Every word may be true

in itself; all is said with the utmost dignity and force; yet it is misapplied and one-sided, and hence, in effect, erroneous as a whole. Eliphaz assumes that God at the present time is displaying His government, and exactly measures prosperity or adversity to men's deserts. This is false ground, and vitiates the application, especially to one like Job given up to be assailed by Satan, and tried to the end (not “the bitter,” but the sweet) by God.

Hence, though the pious sage stands revealed in every sentiment, though ripe experience and moral grandeur are everywhere felt, though the spiritual and the natural worlds contribute their full quota to the argument, though the reproach is as yet mild, and the exhortation appears to be that of faithful friendship and earnest piety, there underlies it an assumption of conscious hidden guilt on Job's part, which could not but aggravate his grief, and which did not fail to call forth his too bitter resentment.

Eliphaz begins with a glance at Job's former profession of righteousness, but it is to reprove him for his actual failure in endurance. Ignorant of himself, and feebly realizing the accumulated and overwhelming pressure on Job, he is honestly astounded at his outburst; and then lays down his law of present retribution, but rather to rouse him from his wild despair to the language of piety than to condemn him as impious. If godly fear was his, as Eliphaz trusted yet, why was it not his confidence? why was not the uprightness of his ways his hope? It is plain that Eliphaz was as ignorant as Job of the source, and character, and aim of the trial then going on. All he sees is the necessary triumph of righteousness, and the irretrievable ruin of the wicked; and this by figures taken not only from men, but the wildest of beasts crushed under God's hand.

Next Eliphaz sets forth in mysterious and awful style an oracle of the night, which impressed his own soul with the folly of earthly, sinful, weak, man's pretension to be more just than God by arraigning His dispensations.

In the beginning of chapter 5 Eliphaz proceeds in a strain of deepening severity, and not without a claim of superior moral judgment. On whom could Job call, if not on God, against whom he was rather murmuring? For himself he saw the sudden and inevitable ruin of the prosperous fool and of all pertaining to him. Job should therefore accept his suffering from God, and turn to Him with supplication, who is not merely great beyond creature search, but bountiful, and this morally to the abject, as surely as He confounds the crafty and the strong. Eliphaz finally counsels submission to the chastening hand of God, who would surely deliver from all evil, and bless him with all good; and this in the name, not merely of himself, but of his friends, on whose entire agreement he reckons with assurance.

It is to be noticed that the Holy Ghost. is pleased to endorse the language of Eliphaz, and this not merely in the earlier revelations but in the fullest light of the New Testament, as we may see in life apostle's use of it to the Corinthians and to the Hebrews. Indeed the issue in the book itself was the remarkable (and probably by himself unexpected) seal of the truth of his closing words, which no doubt at that time fell coldly on the ear and heart of the sufferer.

How natural it is, especially for those who believe in a present moral government of God, to look for a perfect manifestation of His mind in the maintenance of right and the judgment of wrong in the world as it is I.

No doubt this was strongest among the Jews, who might have expected it justly under the theocracy Jehovah was pleased to establish in their midst. But in truth it is a truth indigenous to every land, and common to all ages, and found in every circumstance and grade of life. Here the three friends of Job more and more yield to it, mid Job, who suffered from his allowance of it, was kept from it mainly by the unswerving consciousness of his own integrity, but none the less writhing under the inexplicable web of inflicted misery, the more poignantly felt because he never doubted that God somehow had to do with it all, and righteousness pleads that evil should be punished, and good dwell in peace and honor. Who ever learns till he is taught of God that His children must wait in faith, and suffer patiently in the exercise and trial of their faith, till God has His rights in the return and reign of His Anointed? Then, and not before, shall we reign with Him.

Chapters vi., vii.

THE REPLY OF JOB.

“AND Job answered, and said,

O that my vexation were exactly weighed,

And my calamity raised in the scales together!

For now is it heavier than the sand of the seas,

Therefore do my words rave.

For the arrows of the Almighty are in me,

The poison of which my spirit drinketh up.

The terrors of God array themselves against me.

Doth the wild ass bray by the fresh grass?

Doth an ox low over his fodder?

Is that which is tasteless eaten without salt?

Is there flavor in the white of an egg?

My soul refuseth to touch:

They are as the disease of my bread.

O that my request might come,

And that God would grant my longing,

That it might please God to destroy me,

That He would let loose His hand, and cut me off!

So would it ever be my comfort,

And I would exult if he in pain should not spare,

For I have not denied the words of the Holy One.

What is my strength that I should wait,

And what mine end that I should be patient?

Is my strength the strength of stones?

Is my flesh copper?

Truly is not the nothingness of help with me,

And substance driven away from me?

To the despairing there is gentleness from his friends,

Even to one forsaking the face of the Almighty.

My brethren have deceived as a torrent,

As the bed of torrents which overflow.

Turbid are they from ice;

The snow hideth itself in them:

What time heat cometh, they are cut off;

When it is hot, they are extinguished from their place.

Caravans turn aside out of their way,

They go up into the waste, and vanish.

The caravans of Tema looked,

The companies of Sheba hoped for them;

They were put to shame because one trusted,

They came up to it, and became red with shame.

For truly ye are become nothing,

Ye see a terror, and are dismayed.

Is it that I ever said, Give me,

And bring presents to me from your wealth,

And deliver me out of the enemy's hand,

And redeem me out of the oppressor's hand?

Teach me, and I will be silent,

And show me wherein I have erred.

How sweet are right words!

And what doth reproof from you reprove?

Think you to reprove words,

When the speeches of one despairing are but wind?

Ye would even let fall on the orphan,

And would traffic for your friend.

But now be pleased to face me,

And to your faces it will be if I lie.

Return, I pray, let there be no wrong;

Yea, return; I am still right therein.

Is there wrong in my tongue?

Doth not my palate discern calamities?

Hath not man a warfare on earth,

And are not his days as the days of a hireling?

As the slave panting after the shade,

And as the hireling longing for his wages.

So I am made to inherit months of wretchedness,

And nights of distress are appointed to me.

When I lie down, then I say,

When shall I arise, and the evening be gone?

And I am weary of restlessness till the dawn.

My flesh is clothed with worms and crusts of earth,

My skin healeth, and is again melted;

My days pass more swiftly than a shuttle,

And come to an end without hope.

Remember that my days are a breath,

Mine eye will not return to see good.

The eye of him that seeth me shall not see me;

Thine eyes [look] toward me: I am no more.

The cloud consumeth, and is gone;

So he that goeth down to Sheol cometh not up,

He returneth no more to his house;

His place knoweth him not again.

I also will not restrain my mouth,

I will speak in the anguish of my spirit,

I will complain in the bitterness of my soul.

Am I a sea, or a monster,

That thou settest guard over me?

When I say, My bed shall comfort me,

My couch shall ease my complaint,

Then thou shakest me with dreams,

And makest me tremble through visions of the night,

So that my soul chooseth strangling,

Death rather than these bones: I would not live on;

I loathe it: let me alone; my days are vanity.

What is man that Thou magnifiest him,

And that Thou settest Thy mind on him,

And that Thou visitest him every morning,

And every moment triest him?

How long dost not Thou look away from me,

Nor lettest me alone till I swallow my spittle?

I have sinned; what could I do to Thee?

Watcher of men, why makest Thou me Thy mark,

So that I am become a burden to myself?

And why dost not Thou pardon my transgression,

And put away my iniquity?

For now shall I lie in the dust,

And, if Thou seekest after me, I am no more."

Thus Job pleads for a fairer appraisal of his sore trial along with his random words. It was easy for others to moralize who were at ease, but as inevitable for him to cry out as for the beast without food. He owned the strokes to be from God, and only desired to be crushed, as his conscience was good. Hope for this life was gone. Such an one should have had pity from his friends, who had, on the contrary, played him false, as the wadys of the desert deceive in summer the caravans that count on them. Nor had he asked help, of them, but was willing to learn if they could show his error, instead of caviling at the wild words of one in despair. He asks an open judgment of his ways, and a lenient estimate of his complaints. When a man has served out as a soldier or slave, may be not retire? It was his grief that he could not, after unutterable days and nights of hopeless misery; yet was he but a wind or cloud, and as he thought of it, he must again speak in his anguish. Was he a sea, or sea-monster, so uncontrollable as to be allowed no respite, not even at night, from horrors enough to make him prefer strangling, any death, rather than for such bones as his to live on? What was mortal man that God should make so much of him? and try him as he was tried unintermittingly? Grant that he had sinned; but why set him as a butt till he should pass away in sorrow?

How beautiful is the contrast with Job's repining in Psa. 8 and 144., where a similar question brings out, in and by the Lord Jesus, wholly different answers. Yet the Lord passed into the glory of Son of man set over all things, through infinitely deeper suffering; as He will at length close man's feeble history by His coming in judgment to take the kingdom in power and glory before the universe. Job gives way to murmurs and complaints that God should take such notice of man in daily government: not so He, who was rejected by all, and tasted death for everything, whom now we see exalted above the heavens, and who will ere long judge all men when God gives the word.

Notes on Job 8-10

The second of the three friends takes up Job next. He is inferior to Eliphaz in calm dignity, and less temperate in his insinuations, because more prone to judge by the sight of his eyes and the experience of mankind, and se be ashes in where angels would fear to tread, as they gaze in awe at the wonderful ways of God. It was plain enough to him why Job and his house were punished.

And Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,

How long wilt thou recite these [things],

And the words of thy mouth [be] a strong wind?

Doth God pervert right,

And the Almighty pervert justice?

If thy children have sinned against Him,

And He hath cast them into the hand of their transgression;

If thou seekest earnestly unto God,

And makest supplication to the Almighty,

If thou [wert] pure and upright,

He would surely now wake up for thee,

And restore the habitation of thy righteousness;

And though thy beginning were small,

Yet thy latter end would flourish greatly.

Inquire now of the former generation,

And give heed to the research of their fathers

(For we [are of] yesterday, and know not,

For our days on earth are a shadow);

Shall not they teach thee, say to thee,

And bring forth words out of their heart?

Doth the reed shoot up without mire?

Doth the flag spread out without water?

While yet in its greenness, it is not cut down,

Before all grass doth it dry up.

So [are] the ways of all that forget God,

And the hope of the polluted perisheth,

Whose confidence is out off,

And his truth a spider's house;

He leaneth on his house, but it standeth not,

He fasteneth on it, but it abideth not.

Green [is] he before the sun,

And his suckers run over his garden.

His roots are entwined over the stone-heap,

He looketh on a house of stone,

When he is swallowed out of its place,

Then will it deny him: I saw thee not.

Lo, this [is] the joy of his way,

And out of the dust sprout, others;

Lo, God will not forsake a perfect [man],

Nor graspeth evil-doers by the hand,

Till He fill thy mouth with laughter,

And thy lips with shouting:

They that hate thee shall be clothed with shame,

And the tent of the wicked shall be no more.

Thus does Bildad more than hint, as his explanation of Job's sufferings, that his children had sinned and so brought down the divine displeasure. It must be so, he thought, for God would surely defend the right and punish iniquity. Instead therefore of bluster and complaint, let Job only turn with earnest supplication to God the Almighty, and he will soon find, provided he himself be pure, that prosperity from Him will crown his homestead, and his latter end flourish beyond the beginning. So it came to pass indeed, but by no means as conceived Bildad, who resorts to the wise saws of the ancients in support of strict retribution now at the hand of God. It is from no strength in itself that the papyrus lifts its head so high, but from the abundant mire in which it thrives its little day; and so with the flag or bulrush of the East, from mere and exceeding moisture, not solid ground; and this is so true, that they do not decay slowly, like other plants, but are the first to wither without being cut down. So it is with the wicked, both in their elevation and their ruin: the paths of all that forget God end thus surely and miserably, the hope of the impure is alike fleeting.

The object of their confidence is no firmer than a spider's web, though he may cling to it ever so tenaciously. It has no more permanence than the rank weed which extends over a garden, and entwines its suckers in a stone-heap. But in vain. He may look on a house of stone, but is quickly destroyed, as a mere and mischievous cumberer of the ground, which denies him then as if it never saw him: yet though this is the joy of his way and the bitter end of godless prosperity, there is a succession of such men just as of such weeds; one springs up after another out of the dust, to pass away still more rapidly. If Job be really a perfect man, God will not cast him away (but neither does He grasp the hand of evil-doers) till He give him the amplest grounds for thankful praise, confound his enemies, and destroy the wicked forever. But, as applied to the present case, there was no fellowship with God in Bildad's thoughts, no gracious consideration for the sufferer, and hence his judgment, being according to appearances, was unrighteous.

Chapter 9.

The Answer of Job

What Bildad urged, Job admits might be, and was true enough; yet he feels that not only his own first appeal to his friends for their pity had failed, but the real point was in no wise reached, while the suggestion of hidden sin was. as false as it was uncharitable. He therefore deals unsparingly with their reasonings.

And Job answered and said,

Verily I know that [it is] so,

But how shall mortal man be just, with God?

If He desire to dispute with him,

He cannot answer Him one of a thousand:

Wise in heart, and mighty in strength

Who hath held out against Him, and been unhurt?

He removeth mountains, and they know not

That He hath overturned them in His wrath;

He shaketh the earth out of its place,

And the pillars of it rock themselves;

He commandeth the sun, and it riseth not,

And He setteth a seal about the stars,

Spreading out the heavens Himself alone,

And treading on the heights Of the sea,

Making Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades,

And the chambers of the south;

Doing great things past finding out,

And unraveling things past reckoning.

Lo, He passeth by me, and I see Him not.

And He glideth before me, and I perceive Him not.

Lo, He snatcheth away: who shall turn Him away?

Who saith to Him, What doest Thou?

God turneth not from His wrath:

The helpers of pride have stooped under Him.

How much less should I answer Him—

Choose out my words with Him?

Whom, though I were just, I would not answer;

For mercy would I plead with my Judge.

Though I had cited Him, and He had answered me,

I would not believe that He would listen to me,

For He bruiseth me with a storm,

And multiplieth my wounds without cause.

He suffereth me not to draw my breath,

But surfeiteth me with bitternesses.

If [I turn] to might, lo, [He is] strong,

If to judicial trial, who will cite me?'

If I justify myself, my mouth would condemn me.

I perfect! He would prove me perverse.

I perfect! should not know my own soul,

I should despise my life.

It [is] all one: therefore I said,

He destroyeth the perfect and the wicked.

If the scourge slay suddenly,

He laugheth at the trial of the innocent.

The earth is given into the hand of the wicked,

The face of the judges He veileth

If not then, who [is] he?

And my days are swifter than a runner,

They flee, they see not good;

They have swept past like skiffs of reed,

As an eagle swoopeth on the prey.

If I say, I will forget my plaint,

I will leave off my looks, and brighten up;

I shudder at all my sorrows,

I know that Thou wilt not hold me innocent.

For me, I am to be guilty why labor I then in vain

If I wash myself with snow-water,

And cleanse my hands with lye,

Then wouldest Thou plunge me in the ditch,

And mine own clothes would abhor me.

For [He is] not a man as I [that] I should answer Him.

Let us come together in judgment,

There is between us no arbiter,

Who might lay his hand on us both.

Let Him take His rod from off me,

And let not His terror frighten me;

I would speak, and not fear Him,

But not thus I with myself.

Chapter x.

My soul is weary of my life;

I will give way to my plaint,

I will speak in the bitterness of my soul,

I will say to God, Condemn me not;

Let me know why Thou contendest with me.

[Is it] good to Thee that Thou oppressest,

That Thou despisest the work of Thy hands,

And hast shone on the counsel of the wicked?

Hast Thou eyes of flesh?

Seest Thou as mortal man seeth?

[Are] Thy days as the days of mortal man?

[Are] Thy years as the days of a man,

That thou inquirest for my guilt,

And searchest after my sin,

Upon Thy knowledge that I am not guilty,

And that none can deliver out of Thy hand?

Thy hands have carved me, and fashioned me round about,

And yet Thou destroyest me!

O remember now that as clay Thou formedst me,

And yet Thou bringest me back to dust

Didst Thou not pour me out as milk,

And curdle me like cheese,

Clothe me with skin and flesh,

And fence me with bones and sinews?

Life and favor hast Thou shown me,

And thy care hath preserved my spirit;

And these things hast Thou hid in Thy heart!

I know that this [was] with Thee.

If I should sin, Thou wouldest mark me,

And not in mine iniquity hold me guiltless.

If I be guilty, woe unto me!

And righteous, I durst not raise my head,

Filled with shame, and seeing my misery;

And should it hold itself up, as a lion Thou wouldest hunt me,

And turn again, and act wondrously against me.

Thou wouldest renew Thy witnesses against me

And multiply Thy displeasure against me—

Reinforcements, and a host upon me.

Why then didst Thou bring me forth from the womb?

I might have expired, and no eye had seen me;

I might have been as though I had not been;

I might have been borne from the belly to the grave.

[Are] not my days few? Let Him leave me,

And put Himself from me, that I may brighten up a little,

Before I go, and return not,

To a land of darkness and death-shade,

A land of gloom, like pitch-darkness itself;

Death-shade, without order,

And the shining like pitch-darkness itself.

Bildad had talked truisms as to God's dealing with the wicked and the righteous, but he had not faced the question how mortal man can have a standing of righteousness with God. For his own part he owned man's incapacity, and God's title to act according to His power, In fact, it was exactly what Job himself experienced when Jehovah put His questions to him at the close of the book. To dispute it is to court destruction. To impute his sufferings, therefore, to secret wickedness was ignorance of God's sovereign ways. For he turns from God's power in creation and providence to His overwhelming, collision with feeble and failing man, who cannot so much as perceive Him as He sweeps by in His irresistible might.

If it be thus in the outer world, equally hopeless is the struggle morally, as Job proceeds next to show. How vain to think of a favorable issue in a suit with God! It would be derogatory to His glory to think that He could stoop to such a contest, or give hearing to a creature plea against His ways. Not only must He crush all opposition, but man's own mouth would condemn him, and himself be proved perverse. So he would not dare to think for himself of such a plea, but of crying out for mercy. For the dealings of God externally do not for the present discriminate among men. It is all one so far whether men are guilty or blameless. Job grows bolder and says it out, though his piety still withholds the name of God, as in verse 22 et seqq., as he shrank from seeming to arraign His government of the world. But he does speak bitterly of His patience while judgment lingers, as if mocking at the trial of the innocent. This is what no saint should draw from His permission of wrong and sorrow for a little while. But there is no denying that He veils the faces of judges, the wicked being in the highest seats of the world's authority: if not so, who is it? Can BA dad or Eliphaz contradict the fact, or leave God out of it?

But Job felt that he need not go beyond his own case. God does afflict the blameless as well as the wicked. Job's days had slipped away so that he had scarce tasted what good is: no runner on land, no light skiff on the waters, nor eagle in the air, faster than they; and not this merely, but with painful dread that He could if He would hold him as guilty. Efforts at cheerfulness were therefore as vain for him as endeavors to cleanse himself with the most efficacious detergents. It is not that his conscience was bad; but he sees that, if God enters into judgment with His servant, no man living can be justified. His light would detect every fault, so that the clothes would shrink with horror from the wearer. Job therefore yearns after an umpire or mediator between God and man, who might lay his hands on both, instead of being left in his weakness and failings before the awful and inflexible and withering judgment of a Being so infinitely removed from him. If He would only remove His rod, he would not fear to speak; but he could not in his actual state.

What could Job do then, but complain and deprecate God's condemnation of him, without knowing why He so contended, while He shone on the counsel of the wicked? It was the harder to understand, as God was not blind or fleeting like man, needed no inquisition for sin, and knew the innocence of the sufferer, who could not escape and yet was His own curiously elaborated creature, preserved from first to last as if for these things, inevitably doomed right or wrong, and afraid to assert the right, lest it should provoke worse. Why, if not removed from birth, was there not some respite before going to the land of darkness? But in this grievous expostulation against God, it will be, as it has been, remarked, that Job addresses and entreats God, even while he is as unjust toward God as he thinks God unjust toward him. He had yet to learn the pitifulness and tender mercy of God, spite of and above Satan's malice, though the day was not yet come for the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father to declare the God whom no man has seen, and as the Son of man to glorify God, even as to sin, in the cross, whereon He also bore our sins who believe. How little we appreciate the value of the true light that now shines!

Notes on Job 11-14

First Discourse Of Zophar.

The third speaker now advances, who manifests the least knowledge of himself or consideration for Job, and therefore yields forthwith to a more violent tone of censure.

And Zophar, the Naamathite, answered and said,

Shall not the multitude of words be answered?

And shall a man of lips be justified?

Thy babbling puts men to silence:

And thou mockest, and no one saith, Shame!

And thou art to say, My doctrine [is] pure,

And I am clean in Thine eyes!

But O that God would indeed speak,

And open His lips against thee,

And make known to thee the secrets of wisdom;

That they are doubled by inspection,

And God remitteth to thee of thine iniquity.

Canst thou, searching, find out God?

Canst thou the Almighty find out to perfection?

Heights of heaven, what canst thou do?

Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?

Longer than the earth [is] its measure,

And broader than the sea.

If He pass by, and arrest,

And gather together, who can hinder Him?

For He knoweth men of vanity,

And seeth wickedness without considering [it].

But empty man would be wise,

Yet is man born a wild ass's colt.

If thou direct thy heart,

And spread out thy hands to Him;

If iniquity [be] in thy hand, put it far away,

And let not evil dwell in thy tents;

For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot,

And shalt be steadfast without fearing.

For thou shalt forget trouble,

Shalt remember [it] as waters passed away;

And the future shall arise brighter than noonday;

Thou shalt Soar—shalt be as the morning.

And thou shalt trust, because there is hope,

And thou shalt search, thou shalt rest securely,

And thou shalt lie down, and none shall cause trembling,

And many shall caress thy face.

But the eyes of the wicked waste,

And refuge vanisheth away from them,

And their hope [is] a breathing out of the soul.

Thus Zophar gives Job credit for nothing beyond a multitude of words and idle talk. The unanswerable grounds against their hypothesis of strict present retribution were to him only babbling, and the bold affirmation that the wicked are allowed of God to prosper in this world seemed but a mockery of those who really could not answer, whatever their replies. He yields to great irritation because of Job's assertion of his soundness in the faith and in his life, and only desired that God would speak as Job had so boldly challenged, as little as any expecting that interposition which He was about to vouchsafe, not only for them, but for our sakes. Zophar had not a doubt what the sentence would be. He had not learned that we should not judge, lest we be judged, and that our judgments do really judge ourselves: if solid and gracious, proving that we dwell in God, as dwelling in love, and walking according to light; if harsh, in the like degree manifesting how far we are governed by thoughts and feelings which have no source higher than self. Job would find that the secrets of wisdom are doubled by looking in, and that God did not exact of him what his iniquity deserved. He held to the gravest fears of his friend.

Next, Zophar descants grandly on the absolute and infinite perfection of God. The heights of heaven, the depths of hell, the length of the earth, the breadth of the sea, fail to measure His wisdom. How disastrous for man to stand before Him, were He to institute proceedings, as Job

had so rashly challenged. How soon he would find out the folly of his wisdom, let his heart vie in obstinacy with that of a wild ass!

Finally, Zophar exhorts to supplication and repentance as the only door of escape for Job, but a sure opening into a bright and prosperous and secure life, if he would avoid the inevitable doom of the wicked.

Chapters 12-14.

The Answer of Job

And Job answered, and said,

Truly ye [are] the people,

And wisdom shall die with you.

But I have a heart as well as you,

I do not sink beneath you:

And with whom [are] not such things as these?

A mockery to his neighbors am I,

One calling on God, and He heard him:

The just, upright, one a mockery!

For misfortune scorn, in the thoughts of the secure,

[Is] ready, for those that slide with the feet.

To the spoilers are the tents at peace,

And those who provoke God have security—

He who causes God to enter into his hand.

But ask now even the beasts—they can teach thee—

And the fowl of the heavens, and it will declare to thee,

Or think on the earth, and it shall teach thee,

And fishes of the sea shall tell out to thee:

Who doth not know by all these

That the hand of Jehovah hath done this?

In whose hand [is] the soul of every living thing,

And the spirit of all flesh of men?

Doth not the ear try words,

As the palate tasteth food for itself?

Among the aged is wisdom,

And length of days is understanding.

With Him [are] wisdom and might,

He hath counsel and understanding.

He breaketh down, and it is not built up.

He shutteth up on man, and it is not opened.

Lo, He restraineth the waters, and they dry up;

And He sendeth them forth, and they overturn the land.

With Him [are] strength and wisdom,

His the deceived and the deceiver,

Leading counselors away spoiled,

And judges He maketh foolish;

The hand of kings He looseth,

And bindeth a girdle on their loins.

He leadeth priests, away spoiled,

And overthroweth the strong.

He removeth the lips of the trusted,

And taketh away the tact of the aged.

He poureth contempt upon princes,

And looseth the girdle of the mighty.

He discovereth deep things out of darkness,

And bringeth out to light death-shade.

He magnifieth nations, and destroyeth them,

He leadeth out nations, and leadeth them in.

He taketh away the heart

Of the chief of the people of the land,

And He causeth them to wander

In a wilderness—no way.

They grope in the dark without light,

And He maketh them wander as a drunkard.

Chapter 13

Lo, mine eye hath seen all,

Mine ear hath heard and understood.

What ye know, I know also,

I do not sink beneath you.

But I will speak to the Almighty,

And I desire to plead with God;

But ye [are] forgers of lies,

Physicians of no value [are] ye all.

O that ye would altogether be silent,

And it would become your wisdom.

Hear now my reproof,

And attend to the pleadings of my lips.

For God do ye speak wickedly,

And for Him do ye talk deceit?

Will ye lift up His countenance?

Will ye contend for God?

Is it well that He should search you out?

Or deceive ye Him, as one man deceiveth another?

He will surely reprove you, if ye secretly accept persons.

Doth not His excellency terrify you,

And His dread fall upon you?

Your maxims are proverbs of ashes,

Your bulwarks, bulwarks of clay

Be silent from me, and I speak;

And let pass over me what [will].

Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth?

And put my life in my hand?

Lo, He will slay me, yet will I trust Him;

But my ways to His face I will argue.

This also will be my salvation,

That no polluted one shall come before Him.

Hear, O hear, my declaration

And my utterances with your ears.

Lo, now, I have ordered my cause,

I know that I shall be justified.

Who is he [that] will contend with me?

Then indeed I would be silent, and expire.

Only two things do not Thou to me:

Then will I not hide myself from Thee.

Thy hand put far off from me,

And let not Thy terror terrify me.

Then call Thou, and I will answer,

Or let me speak, and answer Thou me.

How many my iniquities and sins!

My transgression and my sin make me know.

Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face,

And regardest me as an enemy to Thee?

Wilt Thou terrify a driven leaf,

And wilt Thou pursue dry stubble?

For Thou writest for me bitter things,

And makest me inherit the iniquities of my youth;

And puttest my feet in the stocks,

And watchest all my paths,

On the soles of my feet Thou outtest;

And he as a rotten thing consumeth,

As a garment which the moth hath eaten.

Chapter 14.

Man, born of woman,

Is of few days, and full of trouble,

Cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down,

And he fleeth as a shadow, and abideth not,

And on such an one Thou openest Thine eyes!

And me dost Thou bring into judgment with Thee?

Who giveth a clean out of an unclean thing?

Not one!

If his days are determined,

The number of his months with Thee,

Thou hart set his bound which he shall not pass.

Look away from him that he may rest,

That he may enjoy as a hireling his day.

For there is hope for a tree if it be cut down,

That it will shoot again, and its sprout fail not,

Though its root wax old in the earth,

And its stump die in the dust:

Through the scent of water it flourisheth,

And putteth forth like a young plant.

But man dieth, and is prostrate,

And man expireth, and where is he?

Waters roll away from a sea,

And the stream becometh waste and dry,

So man lieth down, and riseth not:

Till the heavens be no more, they wake not,

Nor are roused out of their sleep.

Ah that thou wouldest hide me in Sheol,

Hide me till the turning of Thine anger,

Appoint me a set time, and then remember me!

If a man die, shall he live?

All the days of my warfare would I wait

Till my exchange should come.

Thou wouldest call, and I would answer Thee:

After the work of Thine hands Thou yearnest.

But now Thou numberest my steps:

Watchest Thou not over my sins?

My transgression is sealed up in a bag,

And thou sewest up mine iniquity.

And yet a falling mountain decayeth,

And a rock is removed from its place,

Waters wear away stones,

Its floodings sweep away the soil of the earth,

And Thou destroyest the hope of man,

To the last Thou overpowerest him, and he goeth;

Thou changest his face, and sendest him away.

His sons come to honor, and he knoweth it not;

And they are abased, and he perceiveth it not;

But his flesh in him hath pain, and his soul in him mourneth.

Thus the sufferer is provoked to treat the language of his friends, especially Zophar's, with sarcasm, and to defend his own ground as sounder than theirs. He feels how empty were their truisms as applied to his peculiar case, and how his rejection of them was driving themselves to the harshest judgment of his trials. It was an upturning of all right that he should be a jeer to his friends—one that called on God, and was heard by Him, just and upright, yet mocked! But it was the world's way, dwelling at ease themselves, to have scorn ready for the unfortunate, a fresh shove for such as have begun to slide; or, if the alternative be right, they may be glad in their hour of trouble of a lantern despised when all seems easy. But Job reiterates with boldness his counter-proposition, that in the world as it is, not the pious but the rapacious have safe tabernacles, and that none enjoy for the time more security than those that provoke God, who nevertheless seems to fling blessings without stint into their hand. They might argue as they pleased, but facts were opposed everywhere; even in the animal kingdom a similar principle

reigns. The beasts, the birds, the fishes, tell the same tale, and Jehovah's hand has done this. (Compare Isa. 41:20.)

Yes, the mystery of God's permission of evil remains. The mystery of His will is another thing, revealed now, not then, and only to be manifested at the coming of the Lord, when all things shall be gathered in one under His Headship. (Eph. 1:9, 10.) It is not yet the time to order all as the expression of His will, though He is the maker and sovereign disposer of all. Undoubtedly experience has its place, as each has his own measure of discrimination which should profit by length of days; but there are no laws discoverable or possible to bind God, in whom alone is perfect wisdom and power in providence. There are laws which He has imprinted on all above our eyes and below our feet, and around us; but the highest, truest law of all, if law it should be called, is that God is free, not bound, to act, free to act as and when He will. So He acts with man as with the elements, with the more and the less wicked, with counselors, and judges, and kings, with priests, and heroes, and senators, with whole nations, reduced or aggrandized, with their chiefs infatuated to utter ruin. God is sovereign.

Such was the result of Job's observations, and they could not deny its justice. But he preferred having to do with God, as to his sorrows, rather than with such sophists as they had shown themselves to be—worthless physicians, quacks, to whom he would prescribe silence, which might pass for wisdom. They had assumed to speak for God, but was it right to speak dishonestly or presumptuously? God did not want their favor any more than their fallacies. When their time came to he searched out, they would adopt very different language. Their zeal for God was according to neither knowledge nor conscience; and their confusion and dread must result from His intervention, as the issue proved. Their apothegms were of ashes, their bulwarks (hardly “bodies,” as in English Version) of clay: fresh reason why they should hold their peace, and leave him to have all out with God, desperate as it might seem, and come what would. But His slaying him was not what he dreaded; his conscience was good, and he would defend his ways before Him. That no hypocrite, none polluted, comes into His presence was a pledge of salvation to him, not a source of dismay. He calls attention to his demand earnestly and forcibly, assured of his innocence, and not refusing to die if deserving it; but he deprecates two things before the decision of the cause: first, that God would remove His hand from him; and, secondly, that He crush him not with His majesty. He desired to know what the iniquities were, why God hid His face and dealt so bitterly with him, that his body was perishing under the utmost pain and ignominy.

This leads him to a more general view of man's sad and frail estate, but still expressly with his own case before his eyes. (Chap. 14:8.) If the fountain were corrupt, one need not wonder at the foulness of its stream. Since his brief allotted space is all in God's hands, why not look away, and give him a little respite, that he may enjoy as a hireling his day? And the more, as life on earth closes for man hopelessly, though a tree cut down may sprout again, while, like waters that fail and dry up, man lies down, and rises no more while the heavens abide. He speaks of “man” for this world, and nothing can really be conceived more exact. It was not the time or place to introduce the special blessedness of the first resurrection, which we shall find has its echo elsewhere in this book. Every scripture is given by inspiration, and consistent with every other.

Job then returns to the expression of his desire that God would secrete him in the grave till His anger was turned away, appoint him a time, and then remember him. If a man die, shall he live?

Job was the very reverse of a skeptic. He looks for his time of renovation or exchange, and does not doubt at bottom God's yearning after the work of His hands. Man is surely to live again; spirit, and soul, and body, he will be renewed. But this contrast which he believes throws him back on the, to him, inexplicable trials he was experiencing, and he yields to a fresh torrent of feeling as he dwells on the ruin of man under the eye and hand of God, so completely that, whether his son comes to honor or nothingness, he is none the wiser, the only thing known being his own pain outwardly and inwardly.

Notes on Job 15-17

Second Discourse of Eliphaz

The second series of discussion now opens with the appeal of Eliphaz, who lets out with less reserve the increasing sense his soul had that Job must lack integrity. As before, there is weighty truth in what he urges, and it is urged with great force; but the application to the sufferer was groundless, and therefore unjust in the last degree.

And Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

Will a wise man answer with windy knowledge,

And fill his belly with the east wind,

Arguing with speech that availeth not,

And with words in which is no profit?

Yea, thou makest void the fear of God,

And diminishest devotion before God.

For thine iniquity teacheth thy mouth,

And thou choosest the tongue of the crafty;

Thy mouth condemneth thee, and not I,

And thine own lips testify against thee.

[Wast] thou born the first man,

And wast thou brought forth before the hills?

Didst thou listen in the councils of God,

And dost thou reserve wisdom to thyself?

What knowest thou that we know not?

[What] understandest thou that [is] not with us?

Also among us is the hoary, and the aged,

Richer in days than thy father.

[Are] the consolations of God too small for thee,

And a word in gentleness with thee?

Why doth thine heart carry thee away,

And why do thine eyes wink,

That thou turnest thy spirit against God,

And lettest words go out of thy mouth?

What [is] man that he should be clean,

And one born of woman that he should be righteous?

Behold, in His holy ones He trusteth not,

And the heavens are not clean in His eyes;

How much less the abominable and corrupt,

Man, that drinketh iniquity like water

I will show thee: hear me;

And what I have seen I will relate,

Which wise men have declared

And have not hid, from their fathers,

To whom alone the land was given,

And through the midst of whom no stranger passed.

All the days of the wicked he is in torment,

And the number of years is laid up for the oppressor.

The voice of terrors [is] in his ears;

In peace the destroyer falleth on him.

He despaireth of returning from the darkness,

And he is marked out for the sword.

He wandereth for bread: where [is it]?

He knoweth that ready at his hand is a day of darkness.

Trouble and anguish make him afraid,

They overpower him, as a king ready for the onset.

For against God he stretched out his hand,

And against the Almighty played the hero,

Ran against Him with neck (proudly),

With the thick bosses of his shields.

For he covereth his face with his fatness,

And gathereth fat on [his] loins:

And he inhabiteth desolate cities,

Houses that no man dwelleth in,

Which are destined for heaps.

He becometh not rich, and his wealth endureth not,

Nor doth his substance extend in the earth.

He escapeth not from darkness:

A flame withereth his shoots,

And he passeth away by the breath of his month.

Let him not trust in vanity; he is deceived;

For vanity shall be his recompense;

Before his day it is fulfilled,

And his branch is not green;

He shaketh off like a vine his grapes,

And casteth down like an olive his blossoms.

For the company of the polluted [is] barrenness,

And fire devoureth the tents of bribery;

They conceive misery, and bring forth vanity,

And their womb prepareth deceit.

Thus we see that Eliphaz arraigns Job of that moral folly which forgets the presence and light of God, by haughty words blinding others to what God was judging, underneath the fair appearance of his life. He charges his language with worse than bluster, for he sees in it that which was calculated to turn souls aside from the fear of God; and thus Job, in his opinion, was self-condemned. To deny God's present retribution, Eliphaz thought, was to undermine confidence in His ways, and to encourage men to all lawlessness. It was not only conscious guilt talking with the air of offended innocence, but in this venturing to shake the foundations of God's government. (Vers. 1-6)

Then he proceeds to tax Job with the grossest assumption of superiority in wisdom, without the least ground for it. To allow himself in such contempt of others, Job ought to be the first man, yea, born before the hills, and an assessor in the council of Eloah, conscious of secrets which were confined to his own heart. This Eliphaz gravely doubts, and challenges Job to prove the reality of his claim, putting in a plea for himself and his friends as unworthily set at naught, instead of having

the honor due to age and experience. Indeed it was not of this merely that he complained; for if it was wrong to despise elders, how much more to speak of God as they had just heard! and this from a man who should remember his own corrupt nature and ways, and the holy majesty of God, before whom the heavens are not clean, and the holy ones beneath His confidence.

Finally Eliphaz proceeds to set upon Job what mature and incorrupt wisdom had found true from the beginning, before the voice of strangers had imported those sophistications of which they had heard too much. The wicked man has an internal tormenter in his own conscience even now, which does not fail to embitter his brief allotted time. He is ever foreboding death in life, want in abundance. The voice of alarm never deserts his ears. In peace the destroyer is invading him; and, if darkness encompass him, he has no hope of emerging, he knows that the day of darkness is ready at his hand, full of anguish and distress, even though he plays the hero against God, and rushes on Him as if he could fight it out. But God is not mocked, and the end, if it tarry, comes; so he who thus braved God inhabits places given over to desolation, and his possessions vanish away, and darkness envelopes him, and flame devours his suckers, and himself departs by a blast from God's mouth.

Thus awfully does Eliphaz describe the hollow prosperity, the actual wretchedness, and the inevitable destruction of the godless. As God was not feared, vanity is the impress stamped on all. A man's life consists not in the abundance of his possessions, and they that set their mind on them must learn their vanity in the day of trial. They may promise like the palm, or the vine, or the olive; but all is vain. Barrenness shall be the portion of him and his, and judgment consumes the tabernacles greedy after evil gain. It is but to conceive misery, and bring forth vanity, and frame deception.

Chapters 16, 17

The Answer of Job

And Job answered and said,

I have heard many such things,

And comforters of distress [are] ye all.

Are windy words at an end?

Or what vexeth thee that thou answerest?

I also could speak like you,

If your soul were instead of my soul,

I could weave words against you,

And shake my head at you;

With my mouth I could strengthen you,

And the commiseration of my life could assuage.

If I speak my pain is not assuaged,

And if I forbear, what departeth from me?

Surely now He hath exhausted me,

Thou hast desolated all my company, and bound me;

It became a witness, and rose up against me,

My leanness accuseth me to the face;

His wrath hath torn and warred on me;

He hath gnashed on me with his teeth;

Mine enemy whetteth his eyes on me.

They gaped at me with their month,

With reproach they smote my cheeks.

They strengthen themselves together against me.

God hath shut me up to the unrighteous,

And thrown me over into the hand of the wicked.

I sat at ease, and He smashed me,

And seized me by the neck, and dashed me,

And set me as a mark for Himself;

His arrows compassed me about;

He cleaveth my reins, and spareth not.

He poureth out my gall on the ground.

He breaketh me breach upon breach,

He runneth upon me like a warrior.

I have sewed sackcloth on my skin,

And stuck my horn into the dust.

My face is red with weeping,

And on mine eyelids [is] death shade,

Though no violence [is] in my hands,

And my prayer [is] pure.

O earth, cover thou not my blood,

And let my cry have no place.

Even now, behold, my witness [is] in the heavens,

And my testifier in the heights.

My mockers [are] my friends;

Mine eye poureth out to God,

That He would decide for the man with God,

As a son of man for his friend;

My years of number come,

And I go the way I shall not return.

Chapter 17

My spirit is broken, my days are extinct,

For me the graves!

Truly mockeries [are] with me,

And mine eye dwelleth on their contention.

Deposit, I pray Thee, be surety for me with Thyself:

Who else would strike hands with me?

For their heart Thou hast hid to understanding,

Therefore Thou wilt not exalt [them].

He that delivereth friends for a spoil,

The eyes of his children shall waste away.

And He hath set me as a bye-word of people,

And I am one to be spit on in the face.

Mine eye also is dim with sorrow,

And all my frame a shadow.

Upright [men] will be amazed at this,

And the guiltless stirred up against the ungodly.

But the righteous shall hold on his way,

And the clean of hands increase in strength.

But as for you all, return now, and come on;

Yet I find not a wise one among you.

My days are gone, my plans are broken—

The possessions of my heart.

Night they put for day, light near

Out of the face of darkness!

If I wait, sheol [is] my house,

I have spread my bed in the darkness,

To corruption I have cried, Thou art my father,

To the worm, My mother and my sister.

Where then now [is] my hope?

Yea, my hope, who beholdeth it?

To the bars of sheol it goeth down,

When at the same time is rest on the dust.

Patient as Job proved, he does not spare the obstinacy of his friends, who could not make good, and who would not retract, their uncharitable inferences. Hence he begins his second reply to Eliphaz with a sharp complaint at their threadbare comments. Consolation there was none, only trouble extreme, in the words of them all. Hence he longed for an end of words of no more weight than the wind. It would be better to answer calmly, if they must speak, and not with the sharpness of vexation. Were it possible for them to stand in his stead, he could say at least as cutting words, and shake his head quite as tryingly. With his mouth he could strengthen them and assuage with lip-consolation.

But here he arrests himself; his pain was none the less if he spoke; and if he forbore, what left him He recurs to his deepest grief. If he could only look up, and find Him all brightness and love. But it was not so. He had fairly tired him out with afflictions, desolated all his circle, and tied himself up. His bodily state, his emaciation, testified against him openly. He was torn as by a wild beast with every mark of cruel unsparing wrath, teeth gnashing, eyes sharpened, mouth gaping. Thus did his enemies smite his cheeks with reproach, and muster in full force against him. God, he says plainly, had shut him up to the perverse man, and turned him over into the hand of the wicked. Nothing can exceed the graphic power with which he describes his troubles: out of ease seized by the neck, and smashed and broken in pieces, and set up as a mark to smite, with arrows whirring round, and his reins split unsparingly, and his gall poured to the earth, broken by breach upon breach, as could not but be if such a warrior ran upon him; so that he was brought down to the last degree of misery, as well as degradation, grief upon grief, and with nothing save the shadow of death before his eyelids, though no violence stained his hand, and his prayer was pure.

Job therefore calls on the earth not to hide his blood, his life then, as it were, poured out, that it might stand forth to open vision), and to the same end that his cry should find no place to rest in here below, but go straight on high. Therefore his eye turned upward, and he speaks in confident faith that spite of his inexplicable, or rather as yet unexplained, calamities, his witness is in

heaven, even God Himself, to testify on his behalf in those high places. From his friends, who were but mockers, through total misapprehension of the case and haste to judge him, rather than own their ignorance, he can but weep out his sorrow and supplication to God. Such seems to be the simplest way of translating and understanding the language, which is far from easy; instead of taking [Hebrew word] as a plural of excellency in the sense of “interpreter,” and thus rendering it, “My interpreter is my friend,” &c., and applying all throughout to God, who knows all, and will not distort or misconceive anything, whatever the present may convey to those who look at the surface. There is certainly in any rendering the looking for God to plead as well as judge: which it is strange that any Christian should think said by Job “with melancholy quaintness,” instead of seeing in it a singular longing after that which was more fully realized in the mediation of Christ with God, a man for men, and God with God. But truth, to be prized and really known, must first be learned in the soul's guilt and need, not by the flickering lamp of a scholar. It was so assuredly that Job was uttering this striking anticipation of what every believer learns through the Holy Spirit, but in his own deep wants, as laid bare humblingly before God. Vindication in this life Job did not expect; but grace was yet to give, as it gives us too, more than faith looks for. For faith is in us, though of God and has its measure; grace is in Him, free, unmixed, and unlimited!

In chapter 17, which of course carries on the same line as the close of chapter 16, Job speaks of what he could not but expect naturally under such a pressure of overwhelming blows and piercing stabs. His spirit was broken, the light of his days gone out, the graves before him. There is obscurity in the next clause, mainly from the opening words, which, taken as “if not,” imply that, unless he were mistaken, he was subject to the strangest illusions, and these so pertinaciously present, that his eye could dwell on nothing else. But others understand the sense to be a form of asseveration. Truly mockery is with me (that is, speaking of the effort to make him, a dying man, confess what he knew was unfounded, and only existing in their evil surmisings), and on their quarreling, or pertinacity, mine eye dwelleth. Job therefore entreats of God to engage and be surety for him with Himself; who else would strike hands with him? His friends had proved themselves morally incompetent, and He who had closed their heart to understanding would not exalt them. If one betrays his friends to be spoiled, the eyes of his children shall pine away. But however he himself might now be a bye-word, and openly an object of insult, his eye dim through grief and his whole frame a shadow, upright men should yet be amazed at this, and the guiltless roused against the ungodly, but the righteous should hold fast on their way, and the man of clean hands increase in strength.

Finally, Job bids them come on again, though satisfied of their total lack of spiritual understanding. He had made up his mind for death, as well as the utter dissolution of his every cherished plan. His friends might hold out fresh and bright anticipations on his repentance, putting night for day, and light near out of very darkness; whereas, if he was to hope, the grave was his house, and his bed spread in darkness, corruption and the worm his nearest of kin. Where, then, was his hope? Yea, his hope, who sees it? He sees none other than descending to the grave, where they should rest together on the dust. How blessedly in contrast with such gloomy words of a saint is the strong encouragement we possess, having fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us, which we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and entering into that within the veil, whither the forerunner is for us entered, Jesus, made an high priest for over according to the order of Melchisedec.

Notes on Job 18-19

Bildad's Second Discourse

Bildad, who is ever brief, retorts on the copious and impassioned answers of Job, not only as contemptuous towards his friends, but as altogether vain in the effort to justify himself, while evidently an object of divine displeasure and judgment for concealed evil. Did he alone constitute an exception to the invariably righteous government of God? If not, why such a volume of words, and why such vehement invectives? Divine judgment, however, would take his way none the less surely and awfully for universal warning.

And Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,

How long will ye make a hunt for words?

Consider, and afterward we will speak.

Why are we accounted as cattle,

Stopped up [that is, stupid] in your eyes?

He teareth his soul in his anger:

Shall the earth be forsaken for thee,

And shall a rock be removed out of its place?

Yea, the light of the wicked shall be put out,

And the flame of his fire shall not shine.

The light in his tabernacle shall be dark,

And his lamp shall be put out with him.

The steps of his strength shall be straitened,

And his own counsel shall cast him down.

For by his feet is he driven into a net,

And he walketh over the meshes;

The trap seizeth on his heel;

The snare prevaileth over him;

His cord [is] hidden in the earth,

And his trap upon the pathway.

Terrors shall terrify him around,

And scare him at his footsteps.

His calamity [is] hungry,

And destruction [is] ready at his side.

The first-born of death devoureth the parts of his skin—

Devoureth his parts.

His confidence shall be torn out of his tent,

And shall march him off to the king of terrors;

There shall dwell in his tent what [is] not his;

On his dwelling shall sulfur be scattered.

Beneath, his roots shall be dried up,

And above, his branch shall he cut off.

His memorial shall perish from the earth,

And he shall have no name on the plain.

They shall drive him from light into darkness,

And shall chase him from the world.

No shoot nor sprout shall he have among his people,

And no escaped one in his dwellings.

At his day they of the west will be astonished,

And they of the east take fright.

Surely so the dwellings of the wicked,

And this the place of [him that] knoweth not God.

Thus keenly does Bildad cleave to his severe impression of Job's state before God, formed by the (to him) irresistible evidence of divine judgments, which had swept away all his prosperity, his family, his health, and left him a prey to agonizing sorrows and conflicts in his soul. How could any reasonable man question more than he that God had a controversy with Job, who was suffering only as he deserved, as surely as God is just? He therefore felt no small vexation at the continuance of a controversy when the case was really and unanswerably plain. It was only Job's contemptuous self-assurance that could evade for a moment the force of their reasoning. Let Job be as violently restive as he may, he will find out in the end that, as they are not to be counted cattle for stupidity, so the moral government of God is as immovable as the course of the earth, or the stubborn rock. What a man sows he reaps: if evil, ruin; if good, blessing. But of the latter Bildad has not a word to say. Did he know what grace works through faith? Faith can not only remove the

rock, but cast a mountain into the sea.

Of this Bildad knew little or nothing. He only thinks of the deep wickedness, whatever the fair outside, which had drawn down on Job such unparalleled misery from God. So, in forcible figures, he sets out the extinction of all light in the ungodly, when the flame of his fire should shine no more, and the lamp over him should go out. No effects should extricate, but rather involve him more; and not rashness, but his own counsel, plunge him in utter ruin. No craft avails, but ensnares, him that trusts himself instead of God; and hence his own feet send him into the net, and he walks over the meshes, heedless of what is underneath. The trap, the snare, the cord, meet him wherever he turns; terrors alarm him on every aide, and dog his footsteps. His calamity, instead of being satiated, is hungry for more; and destruction, or a heavy load of suffering, is at his side, ready to weigh him down. Deadly disease—death's firstborn—is already devouring the parts of his skin—devouring, more than the skin, the parts themselves. In short, all that makes his tent bright, in the present or in prospect, is torn out, and he has to march off to the king of terrors.

Nor does the blast of God stop with the evil-doer; but, extending far and long beyond himself, it hangs over his memory, and pursues his descendants. Hence there dwells in his tent that which shall not be his own, and over his habitation sulfur is scattered. Nothing but withers above ground, and all underneath dries away. Neither in the settled parts of the earth does his memorial stand, nor has he a name in the wilderness, but he is an outlaw from the habitable world, consigned from light to darkness, with no sprout nor shoot remaining among his people, not one escaped in his dwellings. The desolation is complete; so much so, that they of the west are astounded on account of his day, and they of the east take fright; unless, with some ancients and moderns, we take these words as descriptions, not of place, but time, and so understand “posterity” and “ancestors.” But it is hard to see how “ancestors” could be horrified, though we can readily think of “posterity” being astonished. Bildad concludes his answer with the assurance that only thus does it befall the dwellings of the wicked, and thus the place of him that knows not God. The application, in his mind, is as obvious as it is mistaken; the abstract truth abides, and has its own just place.

Chapter 19

The Answer of Job

None can wonder that the strong language was extremely wounding to him whose integrity was not only questioned, but regarded as the cover of mere godless hypocrisy, and his sufferings as the precursor of a destruction without remedy. His rejoinder shows, however, that if Job felt the solemn warning to be not only beside the mark, but impertinent and cruel, he rises completely above the atmosphere of his self-constituted judges, owns the hand of God in all his sorrows without reserve, looks for final vindication, and most gravely admonishes those who misjudged him.

And Job answered and said,

How long will ye vex my soul,

And crush me to pieces with words?

These ten times ye reproach me,

And are not ashamed to stun me;

And, after all, if I have erred,

With me doth mine error lodge.

If indeed ye boast against me,

And argue my reproach against me,

Know now that God hath wrested me,

And compassed me round with His net.

Lo, I cry of violence, and am not heard,

I call out, but [there is] no justice.

He hath hedged my way that I cannot pass,

And hath set darkness on my paths.

He hath stripped me of my glory,

And hath taken the crown of my head.

He ruineth me on every side, and I am going;

And my hope He uprooteth like a tree.

He kindleth His anger against me,

And He regardeth me as His enemies.

His troops come together, and heap up their way against me,

And encamp round about my tabernacle.

My brethren He put far away from me,

And mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.

My kinsmen have ceased, and my confidants have forgotten me.

Guests of my house, and, my maid, count me a stranger,

A foreigner I am become in their eyes.

I call to my servant, but he answereth not;

With my mouth I make supplication to him.

My breath is strange to my wife,

And my entreaties for the children of my body.

Even youngsters despise me; I rise, and they speak of me.

All my intimates abhorred me, and those I loved turned against me.

My bone cleaveth to my skin and my flesh;

And I am escaped with the skin of my teeth.

Pity me, pity me, O ye, my friends,

For the hand of God hath stricken me.

Why do ye persecute me as God,

And are ye not satisfied with my flesh?

O that my words were but written!

O that they were but inscribed in a book!

With a pen of iron and lead,

Graven in a rock forever

And I know my Redeemer liveth,

And later he shall stand up on the earth;

And after my skin this is torn in pieces,

Yet from my flesh shall I see God,

Whom I shall see for myself,

And mine eyes shall behold, and not a stranger:

My reins consume in mine inwards.

If ye say, How shall we persecute him,

And the root of the matter is found in him?

Fear for yourselves before the sword,

For there is wrath, crimes of the sword;

That ye may know [there is] a judgment.

Thus does Job deprecate the persistent suspicion which pursues him, spite of his solemn protestations of innocence. If it were indeed a chastisement of evil, it was his own affair. But he would meet their thought, and frankly acknowledge that his trouble did come from God. It was He who had hurled him down, and compassed him in inextricable toils. It was He who refused to listen to his cry, and gave no ear to his appeals. It was Eloah who had hedged up his way that he could not escape, covered his path with darkness, stripped him of honor, and taken the crown from off his head, crushing him on every side, so that he was going, and uprooting even his hope. It was He whose anger burned against him, and who counted him as of His foes, massing His troops, and rearing mounds against him, and encamping right around. Nor this only: it was He who

embittered his social circle, and the privacy of home; his brethren removed, his acquaintance estranged, his kinsmen failed, his familiars oblivious; his sojourners, his maid, counting him a stranger, an alien; his servant called in vain, though supplicated abjectly; himself an object of aversion to his wife, even when yearning after those nearest to him. The very youngsters despised him, and if he rose, spoke at him, instead of paying any respect; all his intimates loathed him, and those he loved were turned against him. For indeed he was emaciation personally, escaped with nothing but the skin of his teeth.

But he once more appeals to their compassion in presence of such ruin and misery, and the more because he owned it to be the hand of Eloah; and he asks why they should follow him up like God, and not be satisfied with his flesh. Then does the truth of God's intervention at the end flash so brightly before his soul that he wishes his words written, inscribed in the book, nay, graved with a pen of iron and with lead on a rook forever. And no wonder. He knows his Kinsman-Redeemer lives, and, the Last One, shall stand on the dust; and, no matter what the ravages of this mortal, from his flesh he shall see Eloah—see Him for himself, his eyes seeing Him, and not a stranger; so that his reins within pine for it now. Hence he admonishes his friends, if they persecuted and sought to fasten on him a moral cause for his woes, to dread an avenging sword for themselves. For if that be the day of resurrection power, it will be also one of retributive dealing and wrath, when the sins that escape man await God's sword. There will be no mistake then as to judgment.

Notes on Job 20-21

Second Discourse of Zophar

The last of the three comes forward once more, even avowing the haste, if not irritation, under which he sought to deal with Job. Zophar's main point is the transient character of the evil-doer's triumph. If such an one seem to rise up fast to the highest pinnacle of prosperity, it is but to be precipitated suddenly into the lowest pit of wretchedness and infamy, the evident object of divine resentment.

And Zophar the Naamathite answered and said,

Therefore do my thoughts give answer to me,

And hence my haste in me.

A reprimand to my shame I have to hear;

Yet the spirit of my understanding answereth for me.

Knowest thou this from of old,

From the placing of man on the earth?

From near [is] the triumphing of the wicked,

And the joy of the ungodly for a moment.

Though his height mount to the heavens,

And his head reach the cloud,

Like his dung he perisheth forever;

They that saw him shall say, Where [is] he?

Like a dream shall he fly away, and not be found,

And he shall be scared away like a vision of the night.

The eye scanned him, [but] not again;

And his place beholdeth him no more.

His children shall seek to please the poor,

And his hands give back his wealth.

His bones were full of youthful vigor,

Which will lie with him in the dust.

Though evil maketh sweet in his mouth—

He hideth it under his tongue,

He is sparing of it, and will not let it go,

And retaineth it in the midst of his palate—

His food is changed in his bowels,

The poison of asps is within him.

Wealth hath he swallowed, and shall disgorge it:

God will eject it again out of his belly.

He shall suck the poison of asps:

The tongue of the viper shall slay him.

He shall not gaze on rivulets,

Plowings of streams of honey and butter.

What he labored for, he shall restore, and not swallow.

As the property his exchange, and he rejoiceth not,

For he crushed, abandoned, the poor,

Seized a house, and built it not;

For he knew no rest in his belly;

He shall not escape with his desirable thing,

There is no remnant of his eating.

Therefore his prosperity endureth not.

In the fullness of his superfluity he is straitened,

Every hand of a wretch shall be upon him.

That it may be to the filling of his belly,

He shall send against him the burning of His anger,

And rain upon him with his food.

He fleeth from a weapon of iron,

A bow of copper pierceth him through;

It is drawn, and it cometh out of the body,

And the glittering sword proceedeth out of his gall:

Upon him [are] terrors.

All darkness [is] hid for his treasures,

A fire not blown consumeth him;

It shall fare ill with what is left in his tent.

The heavens reveal his iniquity,

And the earth riseth up against him.

The increase of his house departeth,

Things that ran away in the day of His anger.

This [is] the portion of the wicked man from God [Elohim],

And the heritage of his sentence from God [El].

The triumphant tone of Job provoked the hasty and self-confident spirit of Zophar, and deep shame, because of a reproachful reproof, which he considered as undeserved, by his friends, as it ill became the man who was suffering the due reward of his deeds and state. Hence he was burning to speak and rejoin, and his irrepressible impulse he mistook for fullness of solid matter. Yet, as applied to the case in hand, they were no more than his own “thoughts,” true to his usual egotism, as distinguished from the grave wisdom of Eliphaz, and the traditional knowledge of Bildad. Job, in his opinion, had better beware: a jubilee of the godless is of the briefest. Lift up his head as he may, he perished forever, as the most offensive thing that men sweep away, so that they that see him say, Where is he? It is the fullest contrast with the positive blessing of faith: he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. He that does it not is as a dream, or night-vision. Scanned once, he is not before the eye again; his place knows him no more.

Retribution sets in too for his children as well as himself. How could it be otherwise? For, however sweet to him, and enjoyed tenaciously, evil might be, it was poison within; and the riches so greedily and unscrupulously devoured God makes him vomit forth, himself too slain as by a venomous bite. Honey and cream may flow in rivulets, brooks, streams, but they yield no pleasure to him. What he had labored for he gives back, and swallows not; as the property of exchange, he rejoices not; for he ground down and forsook the poor, seized on a house he was not to build, being cut off before his plans were mature, and he could enjoy. For, insatiate in inward greed, he should not escape with what he values most—not a remnant for his eating—and his prosperity does not endure.

How blinding is religious prejudice which could think thus of Job! Wrath is cruel, anger is outrageous, and who is able to stand before envy or jealousy? But error in religious judgment may be the most cutting of all, and this in proportion to the earnestness with which it is embraced; for the thought of God is then abused to exclude every atom of human, not to say of brotherly, kindness. See how the final scene is painted! In the fullness of abundance, says Zophar, his straits come: not a wretch that stretches not out his hand against him. God will give him plenty, but it will be the burning of His wrath, raining it on him with his food. Does he seek to avoid some weapon of iron? The bow of copper pierces him through. The language is most telling. It is drawn, and no

sooner this than it comes forth from his flesh, the glittering sword out of his gall. Some understand “He is gone! terrors over him,” which certainly falls in with the graphic suddenness of the ruin described. But the older versions are adverse to Rosenmiiller, Schultens, &c., who take it thus.

Finally, not wealth, but all darkness, is hid for his treasures; he is heaping it up for the day of wrath; fire not blown on, but burning from within, shall consume him, and what has escaped former judgments shall then fare ill in his tent. Instead of the heavens and the earth appearing to attest his innocence, according to Job's appeal in chapter xvi. 18, et seqq., they must give their evidence decisively against him, the increase of his house too departing as evanescent things in the day of divine wrath. This is the lot of the wicked man from Elohim, and his heritage awarded by El is, that he should lose all and be lost himself.

Chapter 21: Job's Answer

And Job answered and said,

Hear my speech with attention,

And let this be your consolation.

Suffer me, and I will speak,

And after I have spoken thou mayest mock.

As for me, [is] my complaint to man?

And why then should not my spirit be short?

Turn to me, and be astonished, and lay hand on month.

Truly, if I think on [it], I am troubled,

And my flesh doth shudder.

Why do the wicked live, become old,

And mighty in wealth?

Their seed is established with them in their sight,

And their issues before their eyes.

Their houses [are] peace, without fear,

And the rod of God [is] not upon them.

His bull gendereth, and faileth not,

His cow calveth, and miscarrieth not.

They send forth their sucklings as a flock,

And their children frisk.

They lift [their voice] to timbrel and harp,

And rejoice at the sound of a pipe.

They wear out their days in prosperity,

And in a moment sink [to] Sheol.

Yet they say to God, Depart from us

For we desired not the knowledge of Thy ways:

What [is] the Almighty that we should serve Him?

And what profit have we if we meet Him?

Lo! their good [is] not in their hand.

The counsel of the wicked be far from me.

How oft is the lamp of the wicked put out,

And their destruction cometh upon them—

Torments He appointeth in His anger!

They are as straw before wind,

And as chaff a whirlwind stealeth.

God layeth up his iniquity for his children,

He repayeth him, and he knoweth [it].

His own eyes see his blow,

And he drinketh of the wrath of the Almighty.

For what delight [hath] he in his house after him,

When the number of his months is cut off?

Shall [one] teach God [El.] knowledge,

And He nevertheless judgeth the righteous?

This [man] dieth in the fullness of his strength,

Altogether at ease, and quiet,

His troughs are full of milk,

And the marrow of his bones is soaked.

And this [man] dieth with a bitter soul,

And hath not eaten of the good.

Together they lie down in the dust.

And the worm covereth them over.

Lo! I know your thoughts,

And the plots ye do violently against me.

For ye say, Where [is] the house of the prince?

And where the tent of the habitations of the wicked?

Have ye not asked the passers-by?

And their signs do ye not know?

To a day of destruction the wicked is spared,

To a day of great wrath they are led off.

Who to his face declareth his way,

And who requiteth him what he hath done?

And he, to the graves he is brought,

And over the heap one keepeth watch.

Sweet to him are the clods of the valley,

And after him draweth everybody.

And [there is] no counting before him.

How vainly then ye comfort me!

Your answers remain falsehood.

Job subjects his third assailant to a closer examination, after a call to hear, not without severity. It would console him most for them to listen attentively. After he had spoken, Zophar might continue what he cannot but call mockery. Job felt far more truly than they that his was no common trial, and that they had wholly failed to help him in discerning its ground, character, and object. That it came from God he doubted no more than they; that it looked, yet could not be, penal he felt; yet was he wholly unable to divine the how and wherefore of his strange, and profound, and prolonged sufferings. They might complain if he complained as to man. But that God should so try one who held fast to his integrity to Himself, and who utterly denied their surmises of hidden wickedness, did try his spirit to the utmost, and account for his impatience. But he summons with marked solemnity to hear what he admits made himself shudder, yet an undeniable truth, in flat contradiction of their narrow thoughts, and wise saws, and uncharitable dogmatizing, that the wicked, instead of being cut down young, live on, grow old, become great in power, with their posterity established about and before them, and their offspring before their eyes; that their households are free from fear or scourge; that their farms flourish; that they enjoy life to the full, spending their days prosperously, till, in a moment, not with lingering disease or racked with agony, they sink to Sheol; yet, spite of every good, not only not owning God in thankful praise, but desiring no knowledge of God, yea distance from Him, and accounting prayer wholly useless.

Job, however, stands to it that somehow the prosperity of the wicked is not in their hand, but God's, yet he abhors their counsel and ways. How often, he asks, does their lamp go out, and destruction break on them, as God is pleased to apportion in His displeasure? It may be now and then, hardly often; it is false to say always. The day is coming when the ungodly, instead of prospering, shall be like the chaff which the wind driveth away. (Psa. 1) The friends antedated the time, directing their eyes (blinded, alas!) to the present, like Christendom, instead of waiting, like Job, for the resurrection and the kingdom. It may fall on his children, not on the man himself, in this world. Job looks on to the judgment, when the evildoer must suffer. Let none then misjudge God's ways, or draw unfounded inferences from His government at present. Look at these two men, each with a full cup, one of happiness, the other of misery; both lying dead together. Appearances prove nothing but the haste and folly of those who judge before the time. Such were their thoughts and plots, to the wrong of himself. They might have learned better from those that pass by, that the wicked is spared for a day of doom; yet who would tell him so? He is buried with no less care than others, people following in his wake, as countless souls before. Thus evidently vain was their consolation, and their answers fallacious.

Notes on Job 22

Third Discourse of Eliphaz

The third series in the discussion opens with a discourse from Eliphaz, in which he sets forth the superiority of God to all results from the service of man, however noble in his own eyes. Provoked by the pertinacity of Job in the denial of hidden sin, he launches out first into questions, then into direct charges, which betrayed his conviction that Job, far from the righteous man he assumed to be, was really hard, selfish, unfeeling, and unjust, himself really the mere man of might and arrogance, who had sent away widows and orphans, till he was caught in his own meshes and troubled by fear. Indeed he does not hesitate to impute freethinking to Job, heedless of the warning God has given even in this world, that they may not shut out Himself and His oversight, cheated by the serpent to think that He is too high to notice mere worms of the earth. But as the wicked cannot thus act even now with impunity, so the righteous rejoice at His dealings however solemn. To Him therefore Eliphaz commends Job. Acquaintance with Him, and repentance in His sight, would soon be followed by outward and inward blessings; so that he should not only be relieved from the divine pressure now upon him, but be used to intercede for others, and should deliver the guilty through his integrity.

And Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said,

Can a man [a hero] then profit God?

For, being wise, he profiteth himself.

Is it then a pleasure to the Almighty if thou art righteous,

And gain if thou makest thy ways perfect?

Will He out of fear of thee argue with thee,

Enter into judgment with thee?

Is not thy wickedness great,

And no end of thine iniquities?

For thou distrainedst thy brother without cause,

And didst strip off the clothes of the naked;

To the weary thou gavest no water,

And from the hungry didst withhold bread.

And the man of might—his was the land,

And the accepted of face dwelleth in it.

Widows didst thou send empty away,

And the arms of the fatherless were broken.

Therefore round about thee are snares,

And sudden fear overpowereth thee.

Or seest thou not the darkness,

And the flood of waters covering thee?

Is not God [Eloah] in the height of the heavens?

And see the top of the stars, how high they are!

And thou sayest, What knoweth God

Will He judge through the darkness?

Thick clouds [are] a covering to Him, and He seeth not,

And He walketh on the circle of the heavens.

Wilt thou keep to the old way

Which men of iniquity trod,

Who were snatched away untimely:

A flood was poured on their foundation;

Who were saying to God, Depart from us,

And what could the Almighty do for them?

And He filled their houses with good!

But the counsel of the wicked is far from me.

The righteous will see and rejoice,

And the innocent mock at them:

Is not our adversary cut down?

And the fire devoureth their residue.

Acquaint thyself, I pray thee, with Him, and be at peace;

Thereby shall good come to thee.

Receive, I pray thee, law from His mouth,

And lay up His words in thy heart.

If thou return to the Almighty, thou shalt be built up;

([If] thou put iniquity far away from thy tent),

And put precious ore on the dust,

And that of Ophir as stones of brooks;

And the Almighty shall be thy precious ores,

And silver of toilings to thee.

For then in the Almighty shalt thou delight,

And lift up thy face to God [Eloah].

Thou shalt pray to Him, and He shall hear thee,

And thou shalt pay thy vows,

And thou shalt decree a thing, and it is established to thee,

And light shall shine on thy ways.

When they are dejected, then shalt thou say, Lift up,

And He will save him of downcast eyes;

He will deliver him that is not guiltless,

And he is rescued by the cleanness of thy hands.

Thus does Eliphaz press on Job the inquiries whether God could derive benefit from the worth of any man, be he who he may, because his prudence benefits himself—whether Job's righteousness was a pleasure to the Almighty, or the blamelessness of his ways a gain to Him. He resents the notion as absurd and insolent, that God could be influenced to swerve from His unbending rectitude, and therefore infers extreme wickedness from the extreme dealings of His hand. Was it not monstrous for Job to challenge Him to an action at law? It was not to be thought of that He would argue with Job through fear of him. There was but one reasonable conclusion: Job was suffering greatly because his wickedness was great, and his iniquities not ended. Warming with indignation, he ventures to specify the sins he conceived to be judged of God in the case. Stripped of his goods, had he furnished water to the weary, or bread to the famished? Had he not been inhuman enough to take a pledge of his brother causelessly, yea, to deprive the naked of their clothing? His course had really been a mingled one of power on the one hand, and of favor on the other, arrogant, yet fawning, so as to settle himself in the earth which he sought, whatever he might aver to the contrary. And if he sent widows away empty, and the arms of the fatherless were not held up but broken, who could wonder that snares were all around him, and sudden fear confounding him? Was it not the awful foreboding of coming and worse judgment?

It is a fair question whether verse 11 be more correctly taken as concluding the first part of the chapter, as is most obvious and commonly understood, or as introducing a new and still worse imputation. If the latter, the sense would run thus: Job had already owned in chapter 19 that God had fenced up his way that he could not pass, and had set darkness upon his paths. Eliphaz now turns the confession against him, by asking if he did not see the darkness and the flood of waters

covering him. So not a few, from Ewald to Delitzch. The Septuagint has τ■ φ■ς σοι ε■ς σκ■τος ■π■βη, κ. τ. λ. (“the light hath turned out darkness to thee"), whence it would appear that these Greek translators must have read [Hebrew word] rather than the opening particle, [Hebrew word], on the correctness of which assumption Michaelis acts in adopting it as the true text.

There can be no doubt that the charge which follows is one of deadly skeptical impiety; as if the incomparable glory of God excluded His concerning Himself with the actions and thoughts of man on earth. Job had indeed dwelt on the unsearchable wisdom and might of God as sovereign and irresistible; he had complained of severe dealings, but nothing could be less true, or more undeserved, than that he denied His government. The insinuation was duo only to the perverse hypothesis of Eliphaz. Job was at dealt as far as himself from saying, What doth God know? Will He judge through the darkness? Thick clouds are a covering to Him, and He seeth not, and He walketh on the circle of the heavens. Such language and such thoughts were foreign to Job. Certainly Eliphaz could not be more opposed to the old path trodden by the antediluvian sinners, who had been swept away before the time, when their foundation was poured away in a flood (or a flood poured on it). And most justly; for did they not say to God, Depart from us; and what could the Almighty do for them, though He had filled their houses with good? In vain then did Eliphaz retort on Job his own saying here, as at the beginning of his discourse. (Compare chap. 21:14-16) Job was as sincere in his abhorrence of the sentiment as Eliphaz, who had no real ground for thus reflecting on Job. It was the bitter fruit of his hard, and narrow, and misleading theory of present affliction, as if it could flow from no source but God's estimate of our evil.

Not that God does not mark, when and where He pleases, His sense of man's impiety; and when He does, Job joins Eliphaz and the righteous generally in setting it to his seal that God is wise and just: above all will it be manifest in that day when divine judgment will deal definitively with all that is opposed to God's will and to His people. But the memory is apt to be treacherous in controversy, else Eliphaz could not have forgotten how impressively Job had brought before his friends that day, and without the least hesitation of heart or conscience. So that we might apply to him the spirit of the New Testament word, and affirm that he was one of those who love the Lord's appearing, when evil shall no more oppress nor defile, but vanish before the light and joy of day.

Next comes the exhortation. It is well when, in love and with a sound judgment, we are admonished; but was it so here? A word fitly spoken, how good it is! But the call in this case assumed that Job was a wicked man, and we may find occasion to admire the patience he manifests, as well as see where he falls short. It is delightful to hear the message of love go forth, but what where it implies that a true believer is a hypocrite?

In truth Job was better acquainted with God than any of his friends: how painful to have the gravest of them so speaking as to impute worse than ignorance! “Acquaint thyself, I pray thee, with him, and be at peace: thereby shall good come to thee. Receive, I pray thee, law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thy heart.” There are those to whom such a call would be loving and appropriate. The mistake was as to Job's state. The friends might have learned much; they had presumed to judge, and they had judged wrongly. They had no right notion of God's gracious work with souls to humble them, breaking self down, and making His grace infinitely precious. Hence, as they saw nothing but retributive dealing with hidden wickedness, the extraordinary trials of Job gave them the fullest possible impression; and Eliphaz, regarding him as a renegade, exhorts him

to return to the Almighty, and he shall be built up, and to put iniquity far away from his tabernacles: a faithful saying, if addressed to one far away from God; but how galling to a deeply-tried saint to be exhorted to lay his precious ore on the dust, and that of Ophir as pebbles of the brooks, and Shaddai should be to him his precious ores and hard-won silver! “For then in Shaddai shalt thou delight, and lift up thy face to Eloah: thou shalt pray to him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. And thou shalt decree a thing, and it is established to thee, and light shall shine on thy ways."

This seemed needed and wise advice, doubtless, to Eliphaz, and in many a case it would be most applicable; but it was wholly out of place for Job, to whom gold or silver were as the dust of the balance, and the favor of God everything. There was no solution of the trial as yet. Hidden sin was not in question, nor consequently repentance of it, but a deep submission to God's will, who could employ the enemy to bring out the patience of the sufferer, and his friends to lay bare his impatience. Eliphaz did not so much as touch the true question. He misjudged Job, and would have aggravated the malady instead of curing it. There was no lack of practical righteousness in the ways of Job, nor did his failure lie in the neglect of kindness to others, nor even of prayer to God. But was he nothing in his own eyes? Was grace everything to him? Did a word that Eliphaz had said tend to teach him either lesson?

It is remarkable, however, that the close of Eliphaz's discourse was yet to be verified before the book ends, in the efficacy of Job's intercession for Eliphaz himself. “When they are dejected, then shalt thou say, Lift up, and He will save him of downcast eyes; He will deliver him that is not guiltless, and he is rescued by the cleanness of thy hands."

It may be observed here that [Hebrew word], which the Authorized Version takes in the more common sense of “island,” or “house,” as Good prefers, is really a negative particle, which reappears in Ichabod (not-glory): so Gesenius clearly proves, with a discussion on its origin, in his Hebrew and Chaldee Thes. i., 79, 80. Dathe follows Reiske's proposal to read [Hebrew word], a man; but, even if allowable in itself, this enfeebles the idea; for if intercession rescues one who is not guiltless, it is more to the purpose than availing only for the innocent. Indeed the true version had been given long ago by Tremellins and Junius, and even in the Chaldee paraphrase, and followed by Schultens and others.

Chapter 81

Notes on Job 23-24

Answers of Job

The tone of the answer is calmer, and somewhat more comely, though he says that today also his complaint is rebellion (or bitter), and his stroke heavier than his groaning. But his desire is, as before, to draw near to God, and have His decision, in the face of all the circumstances that seemed to testify against his integrity, and of friends carried away by appearance, and as ready to condemn him now as his worst enemies. Nothing disturbs fellowship more than misjudgment, unless it be positive sin, especially when concealed under high pretension to godliness; and this was just the question between Job and his friends. On the other hand, while re-asserting his good conscience and his ways, Job owns to a shrinking from His presence, because He is inflexible in His decrees, and unnerves the heart by the thought of Himself more than darkness. And this leads him, in chapter xxiv., to show, not that God has not a moral government now, but how incomprehensible it is to man, the first half dwelling on the sad sufferings of the innocent under wicked and mighty foes, the second on the successful evil-doers, who long carry on their villainy in secret, till condign punishment comes from God, as it will, beyond doubt, at the end.

Chapter 23.

And Job answered and said,

Also today [is] my complaint rebellion,

My stroke is heavier than my groaning.

O that I knew where to find Him!

I would come unto His chair of state,

I would draw up the cause before Him,

And would fill my mouth with arguments;

I would know the words He would answer me,

And understand what He would say to me.

Would He contend with me by main strength?

Nay, but He would give heed to me.

There would a righteous one be pleading with Him,

And I should be forever quit of my judge.

Behold, I go eastward, but He is not there,

And westward, but I cannot perceive Him;

To the north, where He worketh, but cannot behold [Him];

He veileth the south, and I see [Him] not.

But He knoweth the way, who is with me;

He trieth me, as gold I come forth.

To His step my foot hath held,

His way have I kept, and not turned aside:

The commandment of His lips I have not left,

More than my law [or my daily bread],

Have I kept the sayings of His mouth.

But He [is] in one thing, and who will turn Him?

And His soul desireth, and He will accomplish.

For He performeth what is appointed me,

And much of the like [is] with Him.

Therefore I am confounded before His face;

I consider, and am afraid before Him.

For God [El] hath made my heart soft,

And the Almighty hath confounded me,

For I was not cut off before the darkness,

And before me covered He the thick darkness.

Chapter 24

Why, since times are not hid from the Almighty,

Do not those who know Him see His days?

They remove landmarks; they rob flocks, and feed;

They drive the ass of the orphan, they distrain the ox of the widow;

They thrust the needy out of the way,

The poor of the land must hide together.

Behold, wild asses in the wilderness, they go forth,

Early about their work, after prey;

The desert is to him bread for the little ones;

In the field they reap his cattle fodder,

And the vineyard of the wicked they glean.

They make the naked lodge without clothing,

And without covering in the cold.

With the rain of mountains they are drenched,

And, shelterless, they embrace a rock.

They pluck the orphan from the breast,

And on the poor lay distraint.

Naked they go without clothing,

And hungry they bear the sheaf,

They make oil within their walls,

They tread wine-vats and they thirst.

Out of the city mortals groan,

And the Soul of the wounded crieth out;

Yet God regardeth not the folly!

They are among the rebels against the light,

They know not His ways, nor remain in His paths.

With the light the murderer riseth,

He slayeth the poor and needy,

And in the night he is as a thief.

And the adulterer's' eye watches for the twilight,

Saying, “No eye observeth me,"

And he layeth a veil over the face.

In the dark he breaketh into houses,

They keep themselves close by day, they know not the light.

For morning is to them altogether death-shade,

When he discerneth the terrors of the death-shade.

Light [is] he on the face of the waters;

The portion of those on the land is despised,

He turneth not to the way of the vineyards.

Drought and heat consume the snow-waters;

[So doth] sheol [those that] have sinned,

The womb forgetteth him, the worm feedeth on him,

He is no more remembered, and wickedness is broken like a tree.

He devoureth the barren that beareth not, and doeth the widow no good.

And he hath drawn the mighty by his power,

He riseth, and none believeth in life.

He [God] giveth confidence to him, and he is supported;

And His eyes are on their ways.

High they are a little while, and are not,

And they sink; like all they are shut up,

And are cut off, like the topping ears of corn.

And if not so now, who proveth me a liar,

And maketh my word naught?

The sufferer still pleads the extremity of his sorrows as accounting for his rebellious complaint, and affirms that the hand laid on him was even heavier than his groaning. If he could only find God, he would stand before His tribunal, lay out his case before Him, and argue it out fully there, where he would learn from Himself the grounds of what seemed wholly inexplicable, and understand why He had so dealt with His servant. Far from meeting with fresh trial there, or such scorn as his friends poured on him, he was confident that God would use His power to strengthen his weakness. The hands of God were infinitely preferable to man's, even were he the oldest of his friends, and he was confident, being assured of his own integrity. He should thus get quit of his judge, instead of enduring the lingering suspicion of those who reasoned from the outside show of things, without a single fact to justify it. Nothing is harder to disprove than that which has its only, but deep, root in the minds of opponents who assume to have God's mind, and commit themselves thoroughly to saying so.

But there was his fresh trouble: he knew not where to find God. If he went east or west, it was equally vain; either He was not there, or Job could not perceive Him: If he turned to the north, with its hail and snows, where He works, he could not get a glimpse; much less where He veils the south in mist and cloud.

But of this he was sure, that God knew the way with Job, and that, after His trial of him, he should come forth as gold; for, as he so frequently says, his foot had held firmly to His step, and he had, without turning aside, kept His way. From the commandment of His lips he had not swerved: more than his law (for Job used to speak and act as a prince) had he kept the sayings of His mouth.

But then there was the serious reflection that, as God was assuredly in these extraordinary afflictions, Job felt the impossibility of turning Him aside from His inscrutable purpose, and that what was appointed to him would come to pass without fail, for He has His mind, and does it always. Therefore was Job confounded before His face, and fear grew as he considered it. For El unnerved his heart, and Shaddai confounded him. Eliphaz might talk of the darkness which he owned did surround him, and he might impute it to hidden iniquity; it was God's doing so that appalled and perplexed him. Some understand the last sentence to mean that he had this sense of dread because God did not cut him off before the darkness came, and He had not covered the thick blackness from his face.

So the beginning of chapter 24 has furnished room for no small debate, many moderns preferring to understand and divide it thus: Why are times not reserved by the Almighty, and do His friends [literally knowers] not see His days? The times are judicial terms when He dispenses justice, and the days are an even more common expression of like intervention. The difference is that the latter clause makes the sense of the former still narrower, or more definite. I have given what most approves itself to my mind, and distinguishes between the times not hid from Shaddai, and those who know Him not seeing His days of retribution. It would not have been strange in those ignorant of Him. It is the enigma of psalms and prophets, and must be till Christ solves it.

Then Job expands on the allowed evil of men, who profit by it shamelessly. Who of men can reckon up the shades of human fraud and force, of corruption and violence, without and within, but above all on the defenseless and the poor? The country and the city, the desert and the sea, are the varied scenes of wickedness as varied, whore men embezzle and plunder; and in the abodes of civilization the darkness before the day calls them out to intrigues and crimes as dark, without a notice from God; while the restless sea gives scope to a deeper restlessness; yet they die, and are buried just as others. Again, family ties yield as little guarantee against cruelty as the public life where a despot reigns, regardless of everything but his own will.

It is not that Job doubted all to be under the eye of God, though as yet His hand be not on the world, while death comes in to cut off the highest when they least expect it. He is sure that his estimate cannot be gainsaid.

Notes on Job 25-26

Third Discourse of Bildad

This brief chapter contains the final discourse of Bildad. It is plain that the three friends are all but silenced. We shall see are long that Zophar has not a word more to add. Job has much in proof that they, none of them, saw aright even the surface of his trial, not to speak of God's ways underneath. Yet Bildad speaks grandly of God's dominion as suited to overwhelm all thought of human righteousness, and sets out the sun and stars as pale and impure in presence of His light: how much more a mortal, son of Adam!

And Bildad the Shuhite answered and said,

With Him [are] dominion and fear;

He maketh peace in His high places.

Is their number to His armies?

And on whom ariseth not His light?

And how is mortal man righteous with God (El)?

And how is he pure, born of a woman

Behold, to the moon, and it shineth not,

And the stars are not pure in His eyes:

How much less mortal man, a maggot;

And the son of man, a worm!

Such is the closing effort of Bildad, evidently wishing to say something, rather than having something to say. So far as it is a reply, it seems directed against the opening of Job's answer to Eliphaz (chap. 23), as has been noticed by others. The main point is the awful majesty of God, who must resent the unhallowed thought of man's drawing near to His throne, above all, to debate with Him as if He could mistake, or the creature vindicate itself against His dealings. What gross forgetfulness of His countless hosts, as if His power could be measured by man; and what ignorance of His all-reaching light, which penetrates and manifests the remotest and otherwise hidden objects in the universe!

But he does injustice to Job's asseverations of integrity, if he alludes to them in the latter part (for Job in no way denied man's natural impurity), but had, on the contrary, already heard, in reply to himself, a full demolition of every pretension to righteousness in chap. ix. Job simply repudiated the imputation of deep evil, cloaked by high professions of piety, on his part, as the cause of his exceeding trial. But he was as far as Bildad from putting the creature on a false level with the

Creator, least of all man, morally corrupt as he is. The lights of heaven lack luster in his eyes: what is a sinner accounted? Abstractly, what he urges is unquestionable truth; as a reply and application to Job, perverse and futile.

Chapter 26

Answer Of Job

The rejoinder of Job begins with bitter sarcasm on the abundant help afforded by Bildad's curt speech, which really betrayed the inability of the friends to continue the discussion, and that judgment must go by default, on the triumphant counter-proof that in this life the righteous may suffer, and the wicked prosper. He then asserts the magnificent power of God, with a bold elevation far beyond Bildad, who failed to see the true question.

And Job answered and said,

How thou hast helped the powerless,

Saved the arm that is strengthless

How thou hast counseled the unwise,

And declared wisdom in abundance

To whom hast thou uttered words?

And whose breath came forth from thee?

The shades [Rephaim] tremble

Beneath the waters, and they that dwell there.

Sheol [is] naked before Him,

And destruction hath no covering.

He spreadeth the north over the void,

He hangeth the earth upon nothing.

He bindeth up waters in His thick clouds,

And the cloud is not rent under them.

He fasteneth the face of the throne,

He spreadeth over it His cloud.

He hath placed a bound on the face of the waters,

Up to the limits of light and darkness.

The pillars of the heavens tremble,

And are astonished at His rebuke.

By His power He stilleth the sea,

And by His understanding smiteth Rehab.

By His Spirit the heavens are brightness,

His hand pierceth the fleeing serpent.

Lo, these [are] the ends of His ways,

And what a whisper of a word we hear of Him!

And the thunder of His might who understandeth?

The irony with which Job notices the last effort of the interlocutors is not more withering than is evident the sublime description of God's glory in creation. Job begins with the, to us, invisible depths to which are consigned the gigantic forms of those who once fought against God, and are now made to tremble, though the hour of judgment be not yet come. He sees not only peace in the high places, but the dread of God piercing far beyond the earthly scenes of His government. Sheol and Anaddon stand unveiled before Him. How incomparably nobler and more accurate is the description of the world than anything in the mythology of the heathen, or their philosophy God is spoken of as spreading the north over empty space, Himself sustaining the vault of heaven, and suspending the earth on nothing, tying up the waters in thick clouds, so that their contents should not escape till He please; while He encloses the face of the throne (the outside of the heavens towards the earth), spreading over it His clouds. Then Job glances at the waters beneath, and the horizon, where darkness meets light; but the mightiest of earth's pillars, towering on high, are made to tremble and wonder at God's rebuke, while the restless sea is stilled at His pleasure, and the proud foe is smitten by His knowledge. It is by His Spirit that the heavens are brightness, and it is His hand that woundeth the fleeing serpent, a figurative description of the constellation in the sky. Yet Job rightly feels that these are but the extremities or fringes of His Ways; and if it be but a whisper that we hear, what must be the thunder of His might?

Notes on Job 27

Fresh Discourse of Job Begins

Bildad has been answered as well as Eliphaz; and now Zophar, the remaining or third censor, is silent. Not so Job; he has more to say, to which he gives a sententious form. He swears by the living God that, though he had not been vindicated as yet by Him, but, on the contrary, called still to a most bitter trial, he would never while he lived admit that the surmises against him were right, nor give up the assertion of his integrity—that they indeed were the guilty people who falsely accused him. For what is the hope of the impure (or hypocrite) when God deals with his soul? Does he delight himself in Shaddai, or call on Him at all times? They had all seen such a case, and therefore had no excuse for confounding Job's with it, and so speaking the merest trash. At any rate, as they had proved themselves incapable of a just application, he would let them know the sure end of ungodliness: calamities, without and within, for his offspring as for himself, till every trace of ill-gotten gain vanished, and death opened the inevitable doom for the man whom men, if not the wind itself, hissed out of his place, exulting over his destruction.

And Job continued to utter his parable, and said,

God [El] liveth! He hath turned aside my right,

And the Almighty hath embittered my soul;

All the while Thy breath [is] in me,

And God's spirit in my nostrils,

My lips shall not speak wickedness,

Nor my tongue utter deceit.

Abomination to me if I justify you

Till I expire I will not part from mine integrity:

I hold to my righteousness, and will not let it go:

Of my days my heart reproacheth not.

Mine enemies be as the wicked,

And mine adversary as the unrighteous.

For what [is] the hope of the impure that he shall gain,

When God shall draw out his soul?

Doth God [El] hear his cry when trouble cometh on him?

Doth he delight in the Almighty? Doth he call on God at all times?

I will teach you of the hand of God:

What [is] with the Almighty I hide not.

Behold, ye all of you have seen; and why this—years altogether vain?

This [is] the portion of a wicked man with God,

And the heritage of oppressors they receive from the Almighty.

If his children multiply, [it is] for the sword,

And his offspring have not enough of bread;

His residue are buried in death, and their widows weep not.

If he heap up silver as dust, and prepare clothing as clay,

He prepareth, but the righteous shall put [it] on,

And the innocent shall divide the silver,

He hath built his house as a moth, and as a booth the watchman needeth.

He lieth down, but shall not be gathered;

He openeth his eyes, and he is not.

Terrors overtake him as waters, by night a tempest stealeth him away.

An east wind taketh him up, and he is gone, and it sweepeth him out of his place;

And it casteth at him, and spareth not; from its hand he would gladly flee.

It clappeth its hands at him, and hisseth him out of his place.

The opening language, differing from all that introduces Job's words hitherto, seems to imply that he paused, after his reply to Bildad, long enough to show that Zophar and the rest had nothing more to say, though no doubt as yet unconvinced. He begins again with unwonted solemnity. He appeals to the living El, though owning that He it was who turned aside His judgment, and made his soul bitter for the present, that as long as he breathed his lips should not speak wickedness, nor his tongue murmur deceit. It would be but profanation for him to allow them to be in the right; so to his dying breath he would stand to his integrity, and hold fast his righteousness, without letting it go. For indeed his conscience was good; his heart reproached none of his doings. He was conscious of nothing to account for his trials; yet thereby he had allowed already that he was not justified. But what could he think of those who availed themselves of the trials that pressed him down? He could come to no other conclusion than that, if he were innocent, they who took the place of his enemy must be regarded as the wicked party, and those who assailed him as the unrighteous. He was at least as sure as they that the hope of the hypocrite or profane must perish when God shall summon his soul, and that as God hears not his cry when the long-deferred trouble falls on him, so he neither delights in God at any time, nor calls on Him at all times. That

Job had claimed for himself continual clinging to God and vindication of His honor, spite of his own unparalleled sorrows at His hand, the friends well knew; and, because they could not reconcile the two things, they had betrayed themselves into the guilt of surmising Job to be guilty.

In the latter part of the chapter Job expatiates with great force on a case which they had before their eyes no less than he, but which he must expound for them, as they had utterly failed to lay it before him. It is the end of the godless, a theme he would have avoided if his conscience were not good. They had trifled vainly with the matter. He would teach them of God's hand, and not keep back what is with Shaddai. For his children, however many, come the sword and want; they fall, unburied and unwept even of those nearest to them. His treasures go to strangers who are worthy. The house he built turns out as frail as a moth, like a shed the watchman puts up by the way. He lies down rich, to wake up to his ruin before God; and his destruction too is as sudden as overwhelming, terrors overtaking him as waters, like a whirlwind by night, which snatches him up, and whirls him away, spite of pitiful efforts to escape, as if it really mocked his misery and the place that once knew him.

In 1 John 5 there seems to be (in the witness that eternal life is in the Son, not in Adam, as heretofore noticed) a double testimony: the water and the blood, which tell of death, the breach with all of the first man, that not till Christ was dead, or otherwise than by death, was there cleansing; the Spirit, witness of life according to the glory of the second Adam. Life is in the Son; but the Son, as man on the cross, as come in the midst of the old thing, has been rejected, and died, and died for atonement and cleansing. But the Son is also glorified man, and as such Head of the new thing in power.

Notes on John 7:1-13

The Lord had thus propounded His humiliation and His death, with His ascension to heaven, completely setting aside the carnal expectations then prevalent as to His kingdom. He had done more than this; He had taught the absolute necessity of appropriating Himself, both incarnate and dying, for eternal life. He had pointed forward all hope to resurrection at the last day, however unintelligible to the Jews, and repulsive even to many of His disciples. They looked for present honor and glory through the Messiah; they could not bear death with Him, opening into resurrection life and glory.

“[And] after these things Jesus walked in Galilee, for he was unwilling to walk in Judaea, because the Jews were seeking to kill him. Now the feast of the Jews, the tabernacles, was near. His brethren therefore said unto him, Remove hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples too may behold thy works which thou doest; for no one doeth anything in secret, and seeketh himself to be in public. If thou doest these things show thyself to the world. For not even did his brethren believe in him.” (Ver 8:1-5.)

Thus we see the Lord in the despised place, the True Light, not in the city of solemnities, where darkness reigned the more, because it was least suspected; and in Galilee He walks about on His errand of love. He does not wait for souls to seek Him; He seeks them, that, believing, they might have life in Him. Judaea He avoids, knowing that the people of that part of the country, identifying themselves with the murderous hatred of their rulers, were seeking to kill Him. He was unwilling, not (one need not say) afraid, to walk about there. He was subject to His Father's will in this. He must complete the work given Him to do. As He said to certain Pharisees who sought to move Him by naming Herod's desire to kill Him, I cast out demons and accomplish healings today and tomorrow, and on the third day I am perfected (that is, reach the end of my course); but I must proceed today, and tomorrow, and the next (day), because it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. He knew perfectly the end from the beginning. He feared not man. He goes up at the appointed moment to do and suffer all the will of God, as well as all from man and Satan.

The festival then at hand, the feast of tabernacles, tests man afresh, or rather our Lord tests by means of it. Those attached to Him by natural kin, His brethren, were impatient at His Galilean sojourn, at His separateness from the center of religious life and honor. As the Passover closely connected itself with the truth of the last chapter, so the Tabernacles furnished the occasion for what the Lord brings out here. There the blood of the lamb, itself eaten by the Israelites, points to His death, let them hear or forbear. Here the gathering of the people to rejoice was after the harvest and the vintage, types of the various forms of divine judgment at the end of the age when Israel, at rest in the land, will remember their former days of pilgrimage. It was preeminently the season of triumph, which proclaimed all the promises, fulfilled.

But was it really so now? Because Jesus, the Messiah, was there, and working each works as He did, was the time come for the accomplishment of Israel's hopes? So His brethren thought, because they wished it for themselves, though they put forward His disciples, and their need of

seeing His works, and this in Judaea. No thought had they of God, not the faintest conception that in the obscurity of Galilee Jesus was glorifying the Father, and manifesting the Father's name to those the Father gave Him. They betrayed their own condition, their ignorance of God, their lack of self judgment, their unconsciousness, not only of their own ruin, but of the world, their unbelief of Him who deigned to be born of their family—who He was, and what He had come to do, was in none of their thoughts. They reasoned from self, not from God, and were thus so much the more hopelessly wrong as it concerned the Lord. “No one,” said they, “doeth anything in secret, and seeketh to be in public. If thou doest these things, show thyself to the world.” It was what they would have done. They sought, and conceived that every wise man must seek, present glory. Had they never heard One who taught even His disciples to do their alms, and pray and fast, in secret to their Father, who will render accordingly? If they had, the truth and will of God certainly had left no impression. The real ground of the wish and words was in this, that, as the evangelist solemnly adds, even His brethren did not believe in Him.

“Jesus therefore saith to them, My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify concerning it that its works are evil. Go ye up to the feast. I go not up to this feast, for my time is not yet fulfilled.” (Vers. 6-9.)

In no sense does flesh profit, and the friendship with the world is enmity with God, Satan taking advantage of both against man as well as God. Jesus abides in perfect dependence (to speak of this only). His movements were invariably in obedience. In everything it was a question to Him of the Father. His single eye saw that His time to show Himself to the world was, and could be, not yet. Death, as He had implied even before His Galilean ministry began (John 2:19- 22), and still more emphatically opened out in John 6, was before not displayed to the world. This will be in its due time; but here, as ever, the order is the sufferings that pertain to Christ, and the glories after these. First must He suffer many things and be rejected of this generation. Man's time, contrariwise, was always ready. They spoke as of the world, and the world heard them. They loved the world, and the things of the world; and the love of the Father was not in them, but, what they valued more, they were loved by the world as its own. Terrible position for His brethren, but not more terrible than true! How could the world hate those who so prized its honors? Jesus it did hate with a deadly hatred, because He bore witness about it that its works are evil; a testimony most of all galling to the religious world, to the men of Judaea and Jerusalem. Hence the Lord bids them go up to this feast, while He tells them that He goes not up, His time not yet being fulfilled.

The significance of this is the more marked by His action in contradistinction from theirs, and, as read above all, in the light of His subsequent testimony on the great day of the feast. “Having said these things to them, he abode in Galilee. But when his brethren had gone up, then he himself also went up not manifestly, but as in secret. The Jews therefore sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring about him among the crowds. Some said, He [is] good; others said, No; but he deceiveth the crowd. No one, however, spoke openly about him because of fear of the Jews.” (Vers. 10 - 18.) The seventh chapter of John, for the truth taught is based on the sixth, has this point of view; it supposes the Lord not only in death but in ascension. There is a manifest break with the world, and flesh is treated as no longer capable of association or communion. It really never was capable; but now it takes its own way, and the Lord withdraws. His brethren go up to the feast of tabernacles without Him; He does not go up, but abides in Galilee. Only after they had gone does He go, and then not manifestly, as they desired, but as in

secret—more so than ever before. He is content to be, as it were, hidden, type of that which He really is now, and we with Him, as far as our life is concerned—hid in God.

This gives rise to questions and whispers about Him among the crowds, some speaking patronizingly, others with the utmost ill will and contempt; but even so there was no discourse in public, or plainly. The leaders of Judaea kept men in fear.

Chapter 85

Notes on John 7:14-31

That the Lord had a deeper purpose in view was soon apparent. He had refused to go with His brethren; He had affirmed that the fit moment for displaying Himself to the world was not come. But God had a present mission for His Son, and He goes to Jerusalem to fulfill it.

"But now in the midst of the feast Jesus went up unto the temple and taught. The Jews therefore wondered, saying, How knoweth this [man] letters, having not learned? Jesus therefore answered them and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If one desire to do his will, he shall know about the doctrine whether it is of God or I speak from myself. He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory; but he that seeketh the glory of him that sent him, he is true, and no unrighteousness is in him." (Vers. 14-18.)

There was no secrecy now: Jesus was teaching in the temple. It was His actual work. Soon He would suffer in atonement. Now it was the time for giving out the truth, to the astonishment of those who lived in the region of law and ordinance, who could only ask how He could know since He had not learned. They knew Him not, they rose not above human sources. Jesus was quick and careful to vindicate His Father. What is learned from man man is proud of. His doctrine He would not allow to be His own in the sense of independence, any more than of derivation from human teaching which they owned to be out of the question. It was not of man but of Him that sent Him. Was this a high claim and easily made? Any one of single eye would soon see its reality. Faith alone gives a single eye. Others speculate and err. God guides and teaches him who desires to practice His will, as Christ gives the positive assurance that he shall know concerning the doctrine whether it is of God or whether He speaks from Himself. How comforting as well as surely verified! The Son was making known the Father; and God is faithful in this as in every other way. He who counts every hair of our heads and apart from whom not a sparrow falls to the ground cares for His children. Every one that is of the truth hears the voice of Christ. Whatever their pretensions, all others are not of the truth: else they would know that His teaching is of God. Where we do not know, we must suspect ourselves, not blame God; if we really desired to do, we should soon learn, God's will. Certainly He did not speak from Himself. Yet of all men He was most entitled. But if He is the true God, He is true man and came to exalt His Father, not Himself. He had no private ends to serve. Lord of all He became the servant of all, above all of God. Self is what blinds the race, even the faithful, so far as it is allowed to act. He that speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but Jesus never did so—always served to the glory of Him that sent Him. There is, there can be, no solid guarantee of the truth where God's glory is not sought and secured. Christ in this was perfect; and so He here declares that He is true and no unrighteousness is in Him. As self is what hinders the truth, so it is just to neither God nor man. Jesus is both true and righteous.

Further, when men boast, they are sure to be wrong not only in other things but most where they are haughtiest. Did the Jews pique themselves on the law of Moses? How vain to boast of that law which none of them practiced! Yet so it was, as the Lord pressed on their consciences here. They

reasoned, but what was their walk? “Hath not Moses given you the law? and none of you doeth the law. Why do ye seek to kill me?” (Ver. 19.) Jesus is ever the touchstone. One might never have learned their murderous malice but for Him who brought God close and convicted them of sin. This they could not bear and so sought to get rid of Him, in their zeal for the law violating it utterly, and in their dark rebelliousness rejecting Him who gave it by Moses. But is it now uncommon to glory in the law and hate the truth?

Yet the people in general were not aware how far hatred was impelling the leaders, and had no suspicion that they were bent on the death of Jesus. “The crowd answered, Thou hast a demon: who seeketh to kill thee? Jesus answered and said to them, One work I did, and ye all wonder because of this. Moses hath given you circumcision (not that it is of Moses but of the fathers), and on a sabbath ye circumcise a man. If a man receiveth circumcision on a sabbath, that the law of Moses may not be broken, are ye angry at me because I made a man entirely sound on a sabbath?” (Ver. 20-23.) In their ignorance the crowd spoke with rash irreverence and violence against the Lord, who stops not to notice it but draws attention to the absurdity of their quarreling as well as wondering at one work of His, the cure of the infirm at Bethesda on the sabbath, when it was a common matter of course to circumcise a male child on the eighth day spite of its being a sabbath, and this in honor of the law of Moses, though in fact circumcision was rather of the fathers. The Lord closes His reproof with an exhortation which touches the root of their cavils: “Judge not according to sight, but judge the righteous judgment.” (Ver. 24.) They had brought in God, and were consequently wrong not on the surface merely but altogether. If the readings (as in Tischendorf's text) be κπ■νετε.... κρ■νατε, the first warns against the evil habit in general, the second urges the righteous judgment they should follow on this occasion. It is clear that one wants divine guidance if we are not to judge according to appearance, but that is what God is so willing to vouchsafe His children, not teaching only but direction and judgment. Knowing all, He knows also how to communicate what is needed by His own.

The Lord's plain speaking surprised, if the multitude, not such as knew the enmity of the rulers. “Some therefore of them of Jerusalem said, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? And, behold, he speaketh openly, and they say nothing to him. Have the rulers indeed decided that this is the Christ? Howbeit we know whence he is; but when the Christ cometh, no one knoweth whence he is. Jesus therefore cried in the temple teaching and saying, Ye both know me and ye know whence I am; and I have not come from myself, but he that sent me is true whom ye know not, I know him, for I am from him, and he hath sent me.” (Ver. 25 - 29.) The men of Jerusalem, knowing too much of the rulers to accept their decisions absolutely, indulge in irony, but they too prove their ignorance like the rest. They did not know whence Jesus was, whilst they ought to have known where and when the Messiah was to be born.

Jesus in replying contrasts their assumed knowledge of Him and His origin with their positive ignorance of the Father who sent Him. He assuredly knew the Father as He was from Him and sent by Him. And the Father was not only truthful but true, as the Son could attest in all its force, not the Jews who knew not the Father. This drew on Him the very desire to lay hold of Him with which He had charged them. How little man knows himself any more than God, as Jesus shows! “They sought therefore to take him, and none laid hand on him, because his hour had not yet come. But many of the crowd believed on him, and said, When the Christ cometh, will he do more signs than these which this [man] did?" (Vers. 30,31.) Those who rejected the Lord for their

tradition and will were only the more exasperated by the truth; but they were powerless till His hour came. God abides God, spite of man and Satan. His purpose stands though the enemies betray and commit themselves; but even when they do their worst, they but fulfill the scriptures they deny and the will of God they detest. Another effect also appears: “many of the crowd believed on him.” The truth might not enter conscience, and so the result be human; but at least it was felt and owned that from the Messiah none need expect more signs. Still all is vain Godward but Christ and the faith that receives Himself.

Chapter 86

Notes on John 7:32-39

The religious leaders are disturbed at any impression made on the multitude and show their fear as well as their enmity. They dislike the truth they did not themselves possess and would gladly get rid of Him who told it out. “The Pharisees heard the crowd murmuring these things about him, and the high priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize him. Then said Jesus, Yet a little while am I with you, and I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and not find; and where I am, ye cannot come.” (Vers. 32- 34.) The Lord speaks with a solemn calmness. All efforts to apprehend Him would be vain till the appointed moment; nor need they hurry. It was but a little while for Him to be with them: then He is going to His Father. So it is ever in this Gospel. It is no question of the rejection of men nor of the Jews despising Him, though both were true and fully set out by the synoptic evangelists; but here the Spirit shows us One fully conscious of where He was going, and so speaking to all, if any by grace might believe and see God's glory in Him. Soon unbelief would seek and not find Him. What does the world know of the Father? Heaven is to it more dreary than the earth. “Where I am, ye cannot come;” nor would they if they could. Nothing is so repulsive to a sinner as the light, presence, and glory of God.

“The Jews therefore said unto each other, Where is this [man] about to go that we shall not find him? Is he about to go unto the dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? What is this word which he said, Ye shall seek me and not find; and where I am, ye cannot come?” (Vers. 35, 36.) It was blindness indeed; nor is any darkness so dense as that of unbelief. But it is striking that what the unbelieving pride of the Jew deemed incredible is what God has made true of Christ exalted to His right hand. It is not more certain that He went on high than that He came and preached peace to the Gentiles that were far off and peace to them that were nigh (Jews), giving both access by one Spirit to the Father. The dispersed among the Greeks, are those that Peter shows to have found in Him the object of their faith, believing on Jesus in the Father's house as they believed on God; and Paul no less clearly shows that He is teaching the Greeks. To those that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God's power and God's wisdom—Christ crucified, let others count it an offense or foolishness. But He is none the less the Lord of glory, which none of the princes of this age knew: had they known, they would not have crucified Him. And so it was that scripture was verified, man humbled, and God glorified; even as those that dwelt in Jerusalem and their rulers, not knowing Him nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by their judgment of Him. And now is God pleased to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, “which is Christ among you the hope of glory.” He is lost meanwhile to the Jew, who seeking Him not in faith cannot find Him nor come where He is, for He is in heaven and they given up more and more to an earthly mind, groveling after filthy lucre.

But the Faithful Witness speaks. “Now in the last, the great, day of the feast Jesus stood and cried, If any one thirst, let him come unto me and drink. He that believeth on me, even as the scripture said, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this said he of the Spirit, which they that believed on him were about to receive, for [the] Spirit was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified.” (Vers. 37-39.)

It is not the new birth, but the Holy Ghost in power of testimony, rather than of worship. Thus is it distinguished not merely from John 3 but also from chapter 4, even though He be given at the same time to be a fountain of living water springing up to eternal life within the believer and rivers of living water flowing out, which suppose the soul already born afresh. It is not here however communion with the Father and the Son in the energy of the Spirit which goes upward in adoration, but the same Spirit going outward to refresh largely the weary and parched in the wilderness from the inmost affections of the believer. Both figures are strikingly true, but they are different though enjoyed by the same individual. They are the characteristic power and privilege of the Christian, not only the divine life but this in the power of the Spirit going up to its source in praise or flowing out actually in testimony to Christ in a dry and thirsty land. Here it is the glorified man who is the object, as in chapter 4 the Son of God is the giver.

Even so there is the most careful guard against coming to the Lord merely for teaching as a scholar or for material as a teacher: both in divine things attitudes of peril to the soul. “If any one thirsty let him come unto me and drink” It is the heart met in its own need, not men invited to draw for others, but to drink for themselves; and thus it is they safely and best learn so as to teach others also. “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” Such is the general testimony of Old Testament scriptures; and so the Lord urges even more distinctly. But this follows not only the coming but the glorification of Jesus founded on His work. Only then could the streams flow thus abundantly from “the inward parts,” truth being there already and God on His part perfectly glorified in the cross. The Holy Spirit could act freely and in power, on the owned ruin of the first, to the glory of Him who is at God's hand and in those who are His for a little while in a dry and thirsty land where otherwise no water is. But now to His praise whom the Spirit is here to glorify water is given, not alone the fountain to refresh within, but rivers to flow out. The Israelites never rose to this, even in figure. They drank of water from the rock, and afterward, when the rod of priestly power had budded, the rock was but to be spoken to in order to yield abundantly. But no Israelite, not even a Moses and Aaron, could be the channel of living water, as every believer now; and this, let it be repeated, no premium on the Christian, but solely in witness of God's delight in Christ and appreciation of His work, wherein as He is, so are we in this world.

The feast, and the day of it so noted, are not without deep significance. It was not Pentecost as might be thought natural in view of the gift of the Spirit, but Tabernacles. Indeed if the feast of weeks was ever the epoch of any acts or discourses of our Lord in the fourth Gospel, it is carefully kept out of sight, and this because it falls within the province of Paul rather than of John whose characteristic truth is the revelation of God and of the Father in the man Christ Jesus on earth, not the Head of the body on high. It is not therefore the Spirit baptizing into one body which is here treated but power of testimony, and this from the most intimate enjoyment of the soul, through that Spirit who comes from Jesus glorified. We are not in heaven yet but passing through the wilderness. The day of glory is not come, but He who died in atonement is in glory, and thence sends down the Spirit on us who are here that we may have a divine association with Him there. What could give such force to testimony? There is more than the brightest hope; for the Spirit is a present link with Him who is on high; yet is there all the power of hope bearing us onward and above surrounding circumstances, for the glory itself does not yet appear, though He who will introduce it is already in it, its center and in its highest sphere. His hour will come to show Himself to the world; meanwhile we are in the secret of His exaltation and waiting for His display, while we

have the Holy Ghost sent down by Him from that glory which He gives us to know and so much the more to fee] the dreary desert through which we pass. This is not our rest; it is polluted; and here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. But we are awaiting, not righteousness nor the Spirit of glory, but through the Spirit by faith the hope of righteousness (that is, the glory of God). And He who is not only in the glory, the Head and Heir of all things, but will shortly come to bring us like Himself there, gives us the Spirit as rivers of living water to fill us inwardly and to flow abroad, let the wilderness be ever so parched.

I do not know a stronger expression of the intimacy of the Spirit's indwelling in us as contrasted with His working of old even though by saints. But here there is supposed such a deep intermingling with the inner man's affections and thoughts as is eminently characteristic of the Christian's possession of the Spirit, and the more remarkably because it is in view of a rich outflow of testimony to Christ on high. Hence there could be no such privilege till Jesus was glorified consequent on His glorifying of God morally by the death of the cross.

The phraseology of verse 39, though at first it may sound strange, is strictly accurate and suitable. The Spirit is beyond doubt a person, but He is viewed here as the characterizing fact of a state not yet in being. Hence it is πνε■μα without the article. Again it is ■ν not ■γ■νετο. He never began to exist, for His being was divine and eternal. But it was not yet a fact for man on earth. At Pentecost He was sent down from heaven. Compare Acts 19, where the question was, Did ye receive the Holy Spirit when ye believed? and the answer is, We did not even hear if the Holy Spirit was. The meaning is not at all as to His existence but His baptism, of which John the Baptist had testified to his disciples.

Notes on John 7:40-52

We have had, then, the Lord's anticipative declaration of the power of the Spirit which the believer was about to receive, which he did receive at Pentecost and thenceforward: not the quickening of the unbeliever, nor yet power rising up in worship, but flowing forth abundantly from the inner man in testimony, both eminently characteristic of Christianity. How painful that Christendom should now, and for ages, show itself incredulous and hostile! But thus it is that God's warnings must be verified in every tittle. In man's hands each dispensation makes manifest nothing so much as faithlessness to its own special privileges and responsibility. Thus Israel not only rebelled against the law but renounced Jehovah for heathen vanities, the remnant even rejecting their own Messiah. Is the Spirit now sent down and present since Jesus was glorified? Christendom, since the apostolic days, ran greedily after law and forms, reinstating thus the first man, to the denial of the cross on earth and of the Second man in heaven about to come again. It opposes itself to no truth so expressly as to that which it is called above all to testify in word and deed.

The words of our Lord made a certain impression; but all is in vain unless conscience be reached before God. “[Some] of the crowd, therefore, when they heard these sayings, said, This is truly the prophet; others said, This is the Christ; others said, Doth the Christ, then, come out of Galilee? Did not the scripture say that the Christ cometh of the seed of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David was? A division therefore took place in the crowd on account of him; and some of them wished to seize him, but none laid his hands on him.” (Vers. 40-44)

Men do not only join what God separates, but separate what God joins. Some called Him the prophet, others the Christ, as we have seen from the beginning of this Gospel, a distinction then prevalent but unfounded. The objections which lack of knowledge makes expose an ignorance which the least conscientious inquiry must have dispelled. With faith too there may be, and often is, want of light; but, spite of obstacles, it holds on to what it discerns to be of God, instead of being stumbled by a difficulty which further knowledge would have shown to be unreal. Bartimaeus, when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was at hand, did not fail to cry,” Son of David, have mercy on me;” and his faith reaped the blessing immediately. None the less was He the Messiah from Bethlehem, and of David's line, because He was the despised prophet of Galilee. But unbelief is blind to His glory, and finds only an occasion of division in the only center of union. Yet, whatever the hostility of men, they could not take Him till the hour was come, little as they thought it, for God to accomplish the reconciliation in His cross.

There were darker traits, however, in the religious leaders than in the crowd; and this the Spirit next brings before us. “The officers therefore came unto the high priests and Pharisees, and to them they said, Why did ye not bring Him? The officers answered, Never man so spake as this man. The Pharisees therefore answered them, Are ye also deceived? Did any one of the rulers believe on him, or of the Pharisees? But this crowd, that knoweth not the law, are accursed.” (Vers. 45-49.) Here conscience answered to the words of the Lord in such a manner at least as to draw out before their masters an involuntary confession of the power with which He spoke. It was

not as the scribes. But the Pharisees, with invincible hardness, retort on their weakness, challenge them to produce one of the rulers of the Pharisees that believed, and betray their contempt for the mass of their countrymen. Boasting in law, they, by transgression of the law, and far worse, were then dishonoring God. But God brings forward an unexpected, even if feeble, witness from among themselves, not only a Pharisee but a ruler.

“Nicodemus saith unto them, being one of them, Doth our law judge the man, unless it have first heard from him, and known what he doeth? They answered and said to him, Art thou also out of Galilee? Search and see that no prophet ariseth out of Galilee.” (Vers. 50-52.) Unable to resist the righteous requirement of their own law, they proved that their insubjection had a deeper root by their haughty contempt, not now of the ignorant rabble, but of not the least of their own chiefs; and, as usual, they manifest that men are never so sure to err as when most confident in an arm of flesh. Indeed, it is the fatality of tradition mongers to be always astray, whether in Judaism or in Christendom. Scripture alone is reliable; and those who profess to be ruled by scripture as interpreted by tradition, will be found, like all who serve two masters, to hold to tradition and its uncertainty, and to despise scripture spite of its divine authority, with a blindness to their own state which is truly pitiable though not less censurable also. Thus Eusebins, though by no means the least able or the most superstitious of the Fathers, makes the grossest mistakes in reporting ecclesiastical facts from the Acts of the Apostles, or elsewhere. So here the Pharisees assume that no prophet arises out of Galilee. They were wrong in every possible way. Were they prophets to speak for God at that time? Had they never heard of Jonah or Nahum? The greatest of the prophets who wrote not—the mysterious Tishbite—who had arisen, and will yet again arise, was of Gilead, and so even more remote than Galilee from the seat of religious pride, being on the east of the Jordan. But the truth is, that the One their soul abhorred, on whom the poor of the flock waited, had come forth out of Bethlehem Ephratah, whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity. Of Him they were profoundly ignorant, though law and prophets everywhere testified to Him; but the pillar of the clouds which encompassed Him gave no light to the proud men of Jerusalem. Their darkness comprehended not the true light.

Chapter 88

Notes on John 7:53 and 8:1-11

We are now arrived at a section of our Gospel, the external condition of which is to the reflecting mind a solemn evidence of human unbelief, here as daring as usually it appears to hesitate. No evangelist has suffered as much in this way, not even Mark, whose close disappears from two of the most ancient manuscripts. But as, we saw, the angel's visit to trouble the waters of Bethesda was unwelcome to not a few copyists of John 5, so here again incredulity indisposed some to reproduce the story of the adulteress. This is plain from some copies (as L A), which leave a blank—a fact wholly inexplicable, if the scribe had not been aware of a paragraph which he knew to exist, but, for reasons of his own, thought fit to omit. Others, again, transposed it to another place, as the cursives, 1, 19, 20, 129, 135, 207, 301, 347, &c, to the end of the Gospel (and 225 after chap. 7:36), and even to another evangelist, as 13, 69, 124, and 461, though alien in tone from all but John, and suiting no place in John but here, where the mass of authority gives it. à A (probably) B C (probably) T X with many cursives and ancient versions simply omit the passage; D F (defective) G H K U T (defective), not far short of 300 cursives, and many versions have it. It is marked by an asterisk, or obelisk, in E M S Λ, &c. The variations of the copies which do give it are considerable. This brief view of the evidence may suffice for the general reader, as it is more than enough to prove the peculiarity of the case externally.

As regards the internal evidence, some have alleged against the passage its entire diversity from the style of the Gospel elsewhere; and this, not merely in words and idiom which John never uses, but in its whole cast and character, which is said to savor more of the synoptic Gospels.

All this, however, fails to meet the positive weight of truth in the passage, and its fitness at this very point of the Gospel utterly unaccountable in a forgery or a tradition. The Lord is displaying the true light in His person, as contrasted with others who boasted in the law. We have seen their conscienceless discussion in the preceding chapter. “And they went each to his home, but Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.” Afar from man's uncertainty and contempt, the Son of God retired to enjoy the fellowship of the Father. Thence He returns for service. “And early in the morning he came again to the temple, and all the people were coming unto him; and he sat down, and was teaching them.” (Ver. 2.) The Lord's habit in this respect, recorded by Luke (21:37, 38; 22:36), is a strange reason for discrediting John's mention of this particular instance. Nor do I see any reason to question that it was not merely “the crowd” (■χλος), but “the people” in a large sense (λα■ς) which here flocked to the Lord's teaching in the temple.

“And the scribes and the Pharisees bring to him a woman taken in adultery, and having set her in [the] midst, they say to him, Teacher, this woman was taken in the very act of adultery. Now in the law Moses charged us that such should be stoned: thou, therefore, what sayest thou? But this they said proving him, that they might have [whereof] to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger was writing on the ground.” (Vers. 8-6.)

Such is man at his best estate when he sees and hears Jesus, but refuses the grace and truth which came by Him. They were not ignorant men, but learned in the scriptures; they were not the

crowd that knew not the law, but possessed of the highest reputation for religion. Nor could there be a question as to the guilt and degradation of the woman. Why they brought her, and not her paramour, does not appear. But her they brought in the hope, not only of perplexing, but of finding ground of accusation against, the Lord. It seemed to them a dilemma which allowed of no escape. Moses, said they, bade the Jews stone such as she. What did Jesus say? If He only confirmed the decree of the law, where was the grace so much boasted of? If He let her off, did He not evidently set Himself in opposition, not only to Moses, but to Jehovah? What profound iniquity! No horror at sin, even of the darkest dye, but an unfeeling perversion of the exposed adulteress, to entrap the Holy One of God.

But if the Lord wrote on the ground, it was in no way as if He heard them not. Rather was it to give them time to weigh their guilty question, and guiltier motive, while their hope of entrapping Him betrayed them more and more to commit themselves as He stooped to the ground.

“And when they continued asking him, he lifted himself up, and said to them, Let him that is without sin among you first cast the stone at her; and, again stooping down, he was writing on the ground. But they, having heard [it] and being convicted by their consciences, kept going out one by one, beginning from the elder ones until the last; and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in [the] midst.” (Ver. 79.) Thus did the Lord show Himself the true light which lightens every man. Occupied with the law in its condemnation of the adulteress, and indeed far more essaying to condemn the Lord Himself, their darkness is laid bare by these few solemn words. God judges sin, not gross sins, but all sin, be it what it may be; and the Judge of quick and dead was He who thus searched them through and through. It was no question of the law for either now: they shrank abashed from the light, even though Jesus stooped down again, and was writing on the ground. Assuredly He heard their question, and discerned their iniquitous aim, veiled as it was; and now they heard Him, and cowered before His all scathing words of light. Convicted by their consciences, but in no way repentant, they sought to flee, ashamed to see His face, who stooped once more, and thus gave them time to retire, if they refused to bow with broken spirit and heartfelt confession. This, however, it is not the object of the passage to illustrate, but the supremacy of divine light in Jesus, let Him be ever so lowly, and in presence of the proudest. And they were going off, one by one, beginning at the elder until the last, beginning at those who dreaded most their own exposure—an exposure which the youngest could not bear, only less ashamed of their fellows than of Jesus, who had awakened the feeling. How awful the contrast with their own sweet singer, who, spite of his sins, could say by grace, “Thou art my hiding place!” —hiding in God, not from Him, and having before him One who could, and would, cover all his iniquities, and impute nothing. Vain indeed is our effort to cover our sins, or to escape from His presence. But unbelief trusts itself, not Him, and shows the will to get away from His light, as it may for a little season, till judgment come. How will it be then? It will be theirs to stoop in shame and everlasting contempt, when evasion cannot be even for a moment, and all is fixed forever.

Jesus, then, was left alone, as far as the tempting scribes and Pharisees were concerned, and the woman in the midst; for “all the people” appear to have been around, and He addresses them in a subsequent discourse, which seems to be founded on this very incident, as giving occasion to it. (See vers. 12 and seqq.) “And Jesus lifting himself up, and seeing no one but the woman, said to her, Woman, where are they, thine accusers? Did no one condemn thee? And she said, No one, Sir. And Jesus said to her, Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more.” (Vers. 10, 11) It is the

mistake of Augustine, as of others in modern no less than ancient times, that we have here “misera” in the presence of “misericordia,” which is much more true of the scene at the end of Luke 7. Here the Lord acts as light, not only in the detection of His self-righteous and sinful adversaries, but throughout. There was no need, however, for His exposure of the woman caught in the very act of sin. Hence the ignorance of the scribes who left out the tale was as glaring as their impiety was without excuse. There is not the last semblance of levity in dealing with her evil. The Lord simply brings out the fact that her accusers retreat from the light which convicted their conscience, when the law had utterly failed to reach it; and as they could not condemn her, because they were sinners no less truly than herself, so He would not. It was not His work to deal with causes criminal any more than civil. But if grace and truth came by Him, He is none the less the true light; and so He abides here. As we do not hear of repentance in the woman, so we have no such words from Him as,” Thy sins are forgiven thee,” “Thy faith hath saved thee,” “Go in peace.” He is the light still, and goes not beyond “go and sin no more.” By-and-by He will act as a king, and judge righteously; on their own showing He speaks as a “teacher,” not a magistrate. And it was a question of sin, but most unexpectedly of theirs as well as hers, if they face the light of God.

The words of our Lord are utterly lowered by each as infer that, either to the accusers or to the accused, He restrains sin to that offense against purity of which the woman was guilty. He means any and all sin as intolerable to God, who is light, and in whom is no darkness at all.

Chapter 89

Notes on John 8:12-20

The Lord continues His teaching of the people, but not without allusion to the incident which had just occurred, or rather to the character in which He had dealt with it. Nothing can be more evident than the True Light which was then shining and lightening every man. It is the more striking because the word “light” does not occur in that transaction; but the fact is thoroughly in harmony with what immediately follows.

“Again then Jesus spoke to them saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall in no wise walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” (Ver. 12.) His rejection by the Jews always brings Him out in a still larger character of blessing and glory to others. In our Gospel however the Spirit speaks of what He is personally or independently of all circumstances. He is “the light of the world.” His glory, His grace, could not be confined to Israel. He is come to deliver from Satan's power and give the enjoyment of God. Hence, whatever be the darkness of men, and it was now profound among the Jews, “He that followeth me shall in no wise walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” The Christian is not only called out of darkness into God's wonderful light, but he becomes light in the Lord, a child of light, and he walks in the light, being brought to God who is light; and in the light, as John says, we have fellowship one with another, for in Him is life as well as light; or, as He says here, His follower has “the light of life.” He has Christ who is both.

So energetic a testimony rouses the pride and enmity of those who listened. They could not but feel that He spoke of a privilege and blessing which they did not enjoy. “The Pharisees therefore said to him, Thou bearest witness of thyself; thy witness is not true.” (Ver. 13.) They turn His own words in chapter v. 31 against Himself, but most unfairly; for there He was speaking of testimony alone and human, such as vanity gives itself; here, as He proceeds to show, He has the very highest support in God Himself. “Jesus answered and said to them, Even though I bear witness of myself, my witness is true; for I know whence I came, and where I go, [but] ye know not whence I come or where I go.” (Ver. 14.) They were wholly ignorant of the Father as of the Son. They never thought of heaven. The Lord had the constant consciousness of the truth of His person and mission; and His witness was inseparable from the Father's. As He says elsewhere,” I and my Father are one” He never lost the sense for a moment whence He came and whither He was going away, whereas they never had a thought of it. They were in utter darkness, though the light was there shining in Him. How truly then He could say, “Ye judge according to the flesh, I judge no one. And if also I judge, my judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.” (Ver. 15, 16.)

Self is the source and object of all the activity of the flesh, according to which the Jews were judging. Christ brought love as well as light into the world. He was judging none; He was serving all. This made Him intolerable to the self-complacent. Yet is He to be the judge of all. In His resurrection God has given the pledge that He is to judge the world, even as in His own person He is the fitting one to do so, being Son of man as well as Son of God. “And if also I judge, my

judgment is true, because I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me." (Ver. 16.) It was an admitted principle that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word should be established. To this the Lord here appeals: "And in your law too it is written that the witness of two men is true." (Ver. 17.) How much more then the testimony of the Father and the Son. "I am he that testifieth concerning myself, and the Father that sent me testifieth concerning me." (Ver. 18.) Of this too the Lord had spoken before (in chap, 5) but they had not heard to receive it, but only to despise Him.

"They said to him then, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye know neither me nor my Father. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also." (Ver. 19.) Such ignorance of the only true God and of Jesus whom He sent is death, eternal death; and the more solemn, because it was said not to the heathen but to Jews who had the oracles of God. And these things they were saying because they knew not the Father nor the Son; as the hour would come when they would think to render God service by killing Christ's disciples. Their sayings and doings betrayed their state of utter alienation from and ignorance of the Father. All that followed of persecution and hatred, whether for Christ or for the church, was but the consequence. "These words he spoke in the treasury, teaching in the temple; and no one seized him, because his hour was not yet come." (Ver. 20.) Their malice was as manifest as it was deadly; and it was against the Father as much as the Son.

But, spite of will, they were powerless till the time was come. Then was He given up to their murderous iniquity; then too still deeper counsels were in accomplishment through the sacrifice of Himself. If on the one hand He was cut off and had nothing of His Messianic rights in the midst of the Jews in the land, He was on the other suffering for sins, just for unjust, to bring all who believe to God, to be glorified on high and to have a bride given Him associated with Himself in His supremacy over all things. But this would carry us into the apostle Paul's teaching. Let us pursue the line given to John, where we behold the Word made flesh, and His divine glory shining through the veil of humiliation, and in this chapter particularly, first as light convicting, then as the light of life possessed by His followers; but if His word were rejected, no less was He the Son who alone can make free, yea the I AM, let men avail themselves of His manhood to scorn and stone and crucify Him as they may.

Chapter 90

Notes on John 8:21-29

The next discourse turns on our Lord's announcement of His departure—a truth of the most solemn import, especially for Israel responsible to receive Him as their Messiah.

“He said therefore again to them, I go away, and ye shall seek me and shall die in your sinwhere I go away, ye cannot come. The Jews therefore said, “Will he kill himself because he saith, Where I go away, ye cannot come? And he said to them, Ye are of the things beneath, I am of those above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore to you that ye shall die in your sins; for, unless ye believe that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins.” (Ver. 21-24.)

The departure of Jesus after His coming is the overthrow of Judaism and the necessary condition of Christianity. We must not be surprised then, if our Lord again and again recurs to it, to its moral associations and consequences, and above all to its bearing on Himself personally, ever the uppermost thought of our evangelist. He was going, and they should seek Him and die in their sin. They sought amiss and found Him not. They sought a Messiah that they might gratify their ambition and worldly lusts; and such is not the Messiah of God, who is now found of those that sought Him not, after having spread out His hands all the day to a rebellious people that walked in a way anything but good after their own thoughts. But God is not mocked, and he who sows to the flesh reaps corruption: if it be not public judgment, it is none the less the recompense of evil into the guilty bosom. “Ye shall die in your sin.” They were rejecting Christ and cleaving to their own will and way. There was no fellowship between them and Him. “My soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.” The issue would make it still more apparent: “Where I go away, ye cannot come.” They could not follow Him.

The Lord was going to heaven, to His Father. Their treasure was not there, nor therefore their heart, as both were on His part. So too as grace attracts the heart of the believer to Christ, faith follows Him where He is; and He will come and bring us there in due time that, where He is, there we may be also. Unbelief clings to self, to the earth, to present things; and so it was and is with the Jews: “Where I go away, ye cannot come.” They were rejecting the only One who could wean from earth or fit for heaven, meeting them in their sin that they might not die in it but live through Him. But Him they would not have and are lost, and proved it by their utterly false estimate of Him and of themselves, present or future, as we see in what follows. “The Jews therefore said, Will he kill himself because he saith, Where I go away, ye cannot come?"

But he tells them out more. “And he said to them, Ye are of the things beneath, I am of those above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. I said therefore to you, that ye shall die in your sins.” Here the Lord solemnly unveils the sources of things. To be of this world now is to be not merely of earth but from beneath. Such is the Jew that rejects Jesus who is of the things above. Therefore should they die in their sins: their nature and their works evil, and they refusing the only light of life, how else could they end? “For, unless ye believe that I am [he], ye shall die in your sins.” The truth shines out fully from a rejected Christ—not only His personal glory, but their subjection to Satan who employs them to dishonor Him. But His rejection is their everlasting ruin.

They die in their sins and have to judge them Him whom they refused to believe in for life eternal.

“They kept saying therefore to him, Who art thou? Jesus said to them, Absolutely that which I also am speaking to you.” (Ver. 25.) Jesus is not merely the way and the life but the truth. He is, in the principle of His being, what He speaks. A less expected answer could not be, nor one more withering to their thoughts of themselves and of Him. He alone of all men could say as much; yet was He the lowliest of men. His ways and words were in perfect accord; and all expressed the mind of God. It is not merely that He does what He says, but He is thoroughly and essentially what also He sets out in word. The truth is the reality of things spoken. We cannot know God but by Him; nor can we know man but by Him. Good and evil are displayed or detected only by Him. Such was the One the Jews were then rejecting. They have then lost the truth. Impossible to have the truth apart from Jesus, who adds “I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you; but he that sent me is true, and I, what I heard from him, speak these things unto the world.” He was a servant though Son, and uttered what the Father pleased as needed truth, not according to the affluence of what He had to say and judge respecting the Jews. “They knew not that He was speaking to them of the Father. Then said Jesus [to them], When ye shall have lifted up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am [he] and from myself am doing nothing, but, even as the Father taught me, thus I speak. And he that sent me is with me: he left me not alone, because the things pleasing to him I do always.” (Vers. 26-29.) It is the actual truth presented by God which tests the soul. A former testimony, however true, does not provoke opposition in the same way. Often indeed unbelief avails itself of the past to strengthen its present antagonism to what God is doing. Thus the Jews avail themselves of the unity of God to deny the Son and the Father, and they knew not of whom Jesus was speaking. His cross might not convince them divinely or win their heart to God; but it would convict them of deliberate and willful rejection of the Messiah, and prove that what He spoke He spoke from the highest authority. As He was sent, so was He taught. The Father was with Him too, for Christ was doing always the things that pleased Him. If we know this in our measure, how much more fully and unwaveringly was it true of Him who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth!

Chapter 91

Notes on John 8:30-46

It is an encouraging fact that a time of unbelieving detraction may be used of God to work extensively in souls. “While he was speaking these things, many believed on him.” (Ver. 30.) But faith, where divinely given, is inseparable from life, exercises itself in liberty, and is subject to the Son of God; where it is human, it soon wearies of His presence, and abandons Him, whom it never truly appreciated, for license either of mind or of ways in rebellion against Him. Hence the urgency of the Lord's solemn appeal. Continuance in and with Him is of God.

“Jesus therefore said to the Jews that had believed him, If ye abide in my word, ye are truly my disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to any one: how sayest thou, Ye shall become free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say to you, every one that practiseth sin is a bondman of sin. Now the bondman abideth not in the house forever; the Son abideth forever. If therefore the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed, but ye seek to kill me because my word maketh no way in you. I speak what I have seen with my Father, and ye therefore practice what ye have seen with your father, They answered and said to him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith to them, If ye are Abraham's children, ye would practice the works of Abraham; but now ye seek to kill me, a man who hath spoken to you the truth which I heard from God: this Abraham did not practice. Ye practice the works of your father. They said [therefore] to him, We were not born of fornication; we have one father, God. Jesus said to them, If God were your father ye would have loved me, for I came forth from God and am come; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not know my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father, the devil, and ye desire to practice the lusts of your father. He was a murderer from [the] beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: whenever he speaketh, he speaketh the lie of his own things, because he is a liar, and the father of it; but because I speak the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? If I speak truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God; for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God.” (Vers. 31-47.)

To abide in His word then is the condition of being in truth Christ's disciple. Others may be interested greatly, but they soon grow weary, or turn ere long to other objects. Christ's disciple cleaves to His word, and finds fresh springs in what first attracted. His word proves itself thus divine, as it is faith which abides in it, and the truth is thus not only learned, but known. Vagueness and uncertainty disappear, while the truth, instead of gendering bondage, like the law, makes the soul free, whatever its previous slavery. “There is growth in the truth and liberty by it. Law deals with the corrupt and proud will of man to condemn it on God's part as is right; the truth communicates the knowledge of Himself as revealed in His word, and thus gives life and liberty, privileges unintelligible to the natural man, who hates the sovereign grace of God as much as he exalts and loves himself, while he despises and distrusts others. Man's only thought therefore of obtaining righteousness is through the law; he knows not the virtue of the truth, and dreads liberty as though it must end in license, while at the same time they are proud of their own position, as if it

were inalienable, and God were their servant, not they bound to be His. Hence the Jews answered Jesus, “We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to any one: how sayest thou, Ye shall become free?"

Far from this was the truth. Even outwardly, not to speak of the soul, the Jews were, and had long been, in servitude to the Gentiles. So Ezra (chap, 9) confessed at the evening sacrifice: “Since the days of our fathers have we been in great trespass unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hands of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to spoil, and to confusion of face, as it is thin day. And now for a little space grace hath been showed from Jehovah our God, to leave us a remnant to escape, and to give us a nail in his holy place, that our God may lighten our eyes, and give us a little reviving in our bondage. For we were bondmen; yet our God hath not forsaken us in our bondage, but hath extended mercy unto us in the sight of the kings of Persia,” &c. So, again, Nehemiah (chap, 9): “Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy Spirit in thy prophets; yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hands of the people of the lands..... Behold, we are servants this day, and for the land that thou gavest unto our fathers, to eat the fruit thereof, and the good thereof; behold, we are servants in it, and it yieldeth much increase unto the kings whom thou hast set over us because of our sins; and they have dominion over our bodies, and over our cattle, at their pleasure, and we are in great distress.” Thus had men of conscience felt when they lay under conquerors milder far than the Romans who now ruled. It was not that the Jews today were lightened, but that they had grown so used to the yoke as to forget and deny it altogether. And if it were in face of God's righteous government externally, much less did they estimate aright their true state before God, as the Lord Jesus was bringing it out now. Their haughty spirit was nettled at His word, which laid bare their thralldom to the enemy. “We are Abraham's seed, and have never been in bondage to any one: how sayest thou, Ye shall become free?” Jesus in His answer brought in the light of God, for eternity indeed, but also for the present. “Verily, verily, I say to you, every one that practiseth sin is a bondman of sin.” How true, solemn, and humiliating! No bondage so real, none so degrading, as that of sin: could they seriously deny it to be theirs?

But the Lord intimates more. None under sin is entitled to speak of permanence. Such an one exists only on sufferance till judgment. Bondage there was none when God created and made according to His mind; nor will there be when He shall make all things new. The bondman, in every sense, belongs only to the transitory reign of sin and sorrow. So says the Lord: “Now the bondman abideth not in the house forever.” Another and contrasted relationship suits God's will; “the son abideth forever.” But there is infinitely more in Christ. He is not merely son, but “the Son.” He is the Son in His own right and title, as God and as man, in time and in eternity. He is therefore not “free” only, as all sons are, but such in His glory that He can and does make free in virtue of the grace which pertains to Him alone. Thus it is not only the truth which sets free, where law could only condemn, but the Son also gives and confirms the same character of liberty according to His own fullness. It is a question of what suits, not them merely, but Him. He could make free those who hear Him, and abide in His word, and nothing else but free. It is worthy of Him to deliver from sin and Satan; and “if the Son make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” He frees after a divine sort. He brings into His own character of relationship out of the bondage to sin, which the first man made our sad inheritance. The last Adam is a quickening Spirit and a Deliverer. Let us stand fast in His

liberty, and be not entangled again with any yoke of bondage, as the apostle exhorts the Galatians against that misuse of the law, whatever its shape.

To be Abraham's seed, as the Lord lets the Jews know, is a sorry safeguard. One might be of Abraham, and be the worst enemies of God. Such were the Jews then, who were seeking to kill Christ because His word had no hold in them. Every one acts according to his source; character follows it. So our Lord deigns to say, “I speak what I have seen with my Father; and ye therefore practice what ye have seen with your father.” To be of Abraham does not save from Satan. To hear the Son, to believe in Him, is to have eternal life and derive one's nature from God. They boasted most of Abraham who were still in the darkness of unbelief and the enemy's power. Hence “they answered and said to him, Our father is Abraham. Jesus saith to them, If ye are Abraham's children, ye would practice the works of Abraham; but now ye seek to kill me, a man who hath spoken to you the truth which I heard from God: this Abraham did not practice. Ye practice the works of your father.” (Vers. 39-41.) It was allowed already that they were descended from the father of the faithful; but did they bear the family likeness? Was it not an aggravation of their evil that they stood in contrast with him from whom they vaunted themselves sprung? Abraham believed, and it was counted to him for righteousness. They believed not, but sought to kill the man, albeit the Son of God, who spoke to them the truth which He heard from God. Whose works were these? Certainly not Abraham's, but a very different father's.

The Jews felt what was implied, and at once take the highest ground. “They said [therefore] to him, We were, not born of fornication; we have one father, God. Jesus said to them, If God were your father, ye would have loved me, for I came forth from God and am come; for neither have I come of myself, but he sent me. Why do ye not know my speech? Because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father, the devil, and ye desire to practice the lusts of your father. He was a murderer from [the] beginning, and standeth not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: whenever he speaketh, he speaketh the lie out of his own things, because he is a liar, and the father of it; but because I speak the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? If I speak truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God; for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God.” (Vers. 41-47.)

The case is thus closed as regards the Jews. They were of the devil beyond all doubt, as this solemn controversy proved. It is really the conviction of man as against Christ, in every land, tongue, age. He turns out no other when tested by the truth, by the Son; however circumstances differ, this is the issue, and it comes out worst where things look fairest. If there was a family on earth, which might have seemed removed the farthest from impurity, it was the Jews; if any could claim to have God as their father, they most of all. But Jesus is the touchstone; and they are thereby proved to be God's enemies, not His children; else they would have loved Him who came out from God, and was then present in their midst, who had not even come of His own motion but at God's sending. He came and was sent in love; they rose against Him in hatred, seeking to kill Him.

The Jews did not even know His speech, such utter strangers were they to Him, or the God who spoke by Him. The reason is most grave—they could not hear His word. It is through understanding the thought, the scope, the mind of the person speaking that one knows the phraseology, and not the inverse. If the inner purpose is not received, the outer form is unknown.

So it was with Jesus speaking to the Jews—so it is preeminently with the testimony in John's writings now. Men complain of mysticism in the expression, because they have no notion of the truth intended. The hindrance is in the blinding power of the devil, who is the source of their thoughts and feelings, as surely as he is the adversary of Christ. Men's judgments flow from their will and affections, and these are under the sway of His enemy. And as he pushes on men, especially those who are specially responsible to bow to Christ, as the Jews then were, to practice the lusts of their father, so violence follows as naturally as falsehood. For Satan was a murderer from the beginning, and stands not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Jesus alone of men is the truth; He is not only God, but the One who reveals God to man. In Him is no sin, nor did He sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. He was the manifest opposite, in all respects, of the devil, who, whenever he speaks, speaks falsehood out of his own store, because he is a liar and the father of it. Jesus is the truth, and makes it known to those who otherwise cannot know it. “But because I speak the truth, ye believe me not.” How awful, yet how just, God's judgment of such! For we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth; and what can be the end of these things but death and judgment?

Finally, the Lord proceeds to challenge them, in order to lay bare their groundless malice: “Which of you convinceth me of sin? If I speak truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth the words of God: for this cause ye hear them not, because ye are not of God.” He was the Holy One, no less than the Truth, and surely both go together. And thus were they convicted of being, in word and deed, in thought and feeling, wholly alienated from, and rebellions against, God. They were not of God, save in haughty pretension, which only made their distance from Him, and opposition to Him, more glaring. Instead of convincing Christ of sin, they were themselves slaves of sin; instead of speaking truth, they rejected Him who is the Truth; instead of hearing the words of God, they hated Him who spoke them, because they were not of God, but of the devil. Terrible picture, which the unerring light failed not to draw and leave, never to be effaced, of His adversaries! To be not of God is to be wholly without good, and left in evil, exposed to its consequences, according to the judgment of Him who cannot, will not, change in His abhorrence of it. Such were and are the rejecters of Jesus.

Notes on John 8:48-59

There is nothing a man so reluctantly allows as evil in himself; there is nothing he so much resents as another's saying evil of him, and leaving him no loophole of escape. So was it now with the Jews whom the Lord denied to be of God, as they heard not His words. Never had their self complacency been thus disturbed before. The scorn of the heathen was as nothing compared with such a libel, which was severe in proportion to its self-evident truth. For the ground taken was indisputable. Who could doubt that he who is of God heareth the words of God? How solemn, then, to face the fact that One who spoke as none ever did declared with holy calmness that therefore they did not hear, because they were not of God! Conscience might wince, but refused to bow. Will, ill-will, alone declared itself, save indeed that it was animated from beneath.

"The Jews answered and said to him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a demon? Jesus answered, I have not a demon, but honor my Father, and ye dishonor me. But seek not my glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say to you, If any one keep my word, death he shall never see." (Vers. 48-51.) Thenceforth the Jews, unable to refute, and unwilling to confess, the truth, betake themselves to insolent retort and railing. They justify and openly repeat their application of "Samaritan" to Him; for what could more prove enmity in their eyes than to refuse their claim to be preeminently God's people? If He declared them to be of their father, the devil, they did not scruple to rejoin that He had a demon. He was outside the Israel of God and the God of Israel.

No Christian then has ever suffered worse in this way of dishonor than Christ. The disciple is not above his Lord, and can expect no exemption. And none are so prone to reproach others falsely as those who are themselves really slaves of the enemy. But let us learn of Him who was meek and lowly of heart, and now calmly repudiates their taxing Him with a demon. Not so, but He was honoring His Father, they dishonoring Him. Yet was there no personal resentment as on his part, who courts his own honor now, or punishes afterward^ such as insult him. "But I seek not my glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth." He leaves all with His Father, Himself content to serve, able and ready to save. "Verily, verily, I say to you, if any one" —let him be the vilest of His foes— "keep my word, death he shall never see." Such an utterance was worthy of all solemnity on His part, of all acceptation on theirs.

"The Jews therefore said to him, Now we know that thou hast a demon. Abraham died, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If any one keep thy word, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham which died, and the prophets died? whom makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is my Father that glorifieth me, of whom ye say, He is our God, and ye have not known him, but I know him; and if I should say I know him not, I shall be like you, a liar; but I know him, and keep his word. Abraham your father exulted to see my day, and he saw it, and rejoiced. The Jews therefore said to him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. They took up therefore stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the

temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." (Vers. 52-59.)

Unbelief reasons from its own thoughts, and is never so confident as when completely wrong. So the Jews, misinterpreting the faithful savings of the Lord Jesus, avail themselves of it triumphantly as the proof that Abraham and the prophets could not be of His school, for they, beyond controversy, were already dead. He must be possessed, therefore, to speak thus. Did He set up to be greater than they? Whom did He make Himself? Alas! it is here that man, Jew or Gentile, is blind. Jesus made Himself nothing, emptied Himself, taking a bondman's form, becoming a man, though being God over all blessed forever, and as the humbled man exalted by God the Father. If the eye be single, the whole body is fall of light. So it was with Him who came here, and became man, to do the will of God, in whom He could, and did, confide to glorify Him. His path was one of unbroken fellowship as of obedience. He never sought His own glory, He always kept His Father's word; He could say, from first to last, I know Him; in all leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. We may learn of Him that, if it be the grossest presumption for men of the world to affect the knowledge of God the Father, it is the greatest wrong in a child of His to deny it. "If I should say I know him not, I shall be like you, a liar." But He that claims to know Him keeps His word, and herein gives the testimony of reality along with that claim. The Spirit of truth is the Holy Spirit, and where He communicates the truth He also effectually works in holiness according to God's will.

But the Lord did not hesitate to meet the challenge of Abraham, and lets the Jew know that the father of the faithful exulted to see His day (as ever, I presume, His appearing in glory), and saw, and rejoiced. It was, of course, by faith, like the not seeing or tasting death in the context; but the Jews took all in a mere physical way, and on their arguing from His comparative youth to the denial of Abraham's seeing Him, the still deeper utterance comes forth, "Verily, verily, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." It was said, the good confession before the Jews, the truth of truths, the infinite mystery of His Person, which to know is to know the true God and eternal life, as He is both. Such He was, such He is, from everlasting to everlasting. Incarnation in no way impeached it, but rather gave occasion for its revelation in man to men. He who was God is become man, and as He cannot cease to be God, so will not cease to be man. He is the Eternal, though also a man, and has taken manhood into union with Himself, the Son, the Word, not with God only, but God. "Before Abraham was (γεν■σθαι), I am" (ε■μ■). Abraham came into being. Jesus is God, and God is. "I am" is the expression of eternal subsistence, of Godhead. He could as truly have said, Before Adam was, I am; but the question was about Abraham, and with that calm dignity which never goes beyond the needed truth, He asserts it, and no more; but what He asserts could not be true were He not the ever-present and unchanging One, the I am before Adam, angels, and all things; as, indeed, He it was who created them. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that has been made.

Not to know Him is the fatal ignorance of the world; to deny Him, the unbelieving lie of the Jew, as of all who assume to know God independently, and to the exclusion of His divine glory. And it is death while they live, eternal death, soon to be the second death, not extinction, but punishment in: the lake of fire. Meanwhile unbelief can with impunity show its spite. "Then took they up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple." The remaining clauses are probably taken from Luke 4:30, with the first verse of our next chapter.

Chapter 93

Notes on John 9:1-12

The light of God had shone in Jesus (light, not of Jews only, but of the world); yet was He rejected, increasingly and utterly, and with deadly hatred. There was no miracle wrought; it was emphatically His words that we hear, but asserting at length the divine glory of His person. This roused, as it always does, the rancor of unbelief. They believe not on Him, because they bow neither to their own ruin nor to the grace of God, which thus comes down to meet it, revealing the God who is unknown. But Jesus pursues His way of love, and unfolds it in a new and suited form, only to meet with similar rejection afresh, as our chapter and the next will show.

"And passing along he saw a man blind from birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Rabbi, which sinned, this [man] or his parents, that he should be born blind? Jesus answered, Neither this [man] sinned nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifested in him. I [or we] must work the works of him that sent me while it is day: night cometh, when no one can work. When I am in the world I am the world's light." (Vers. 1-4.)

It was an act of pure grace which the Lord was about to do. Nobody, had appealed to Him, not even the blind man or his parents. The disciples only raised a question, one of those curious speculations in which the later Jews delighted: was it the man's sin, or his parents', which had involved him in congenital blindness? Certainly no such Pythagorean fancy prevailed then in Judea, as that a than might have sinned in a previous existence on earth, and be punished for it in an after-state also on earth. Nor is there any sufficient reason to endorse a pious and learned author's view, that the disciples might have entertained—what rabbis afterward drew front Gen. 25:22—the notion of sin before birth. It seems easy to understand that they conceived, however strangely, of punishment inflicted anticipatively on one whose eventual sin was foreseen by God. Doubtless it was unsound; but this need be no difficulty in the way; for what question or assertion of the disciples did not betray error enough to draw out the unerring correction, so precious to them and us, of our Lord? He now puts the, case on its real purpose in the divine mind—that the works of God might be manifested in him. It is the day of grace now; therefore was Jesus come; and this was just an opportunity for the display of the gracious power. Yet man understands not grace but by faith, and even believers only so far as faith is in exercise. Government is the natural thought when one sees God's cognizance of everything and every one here below. But it was not then, nor is it now, the time for His government of the world. Here lay the mistake of the disciples then, as of Job's friends of old—a mistake which leads souls, not only to censoriousness and misjudgment, but to forget their own sins and need of repentance in occupying themselves with what they count God's vengeance on others.

Here, however, it is not the side of uncharitable self-righteousness which the Lord exposes. He speaks of the activity and purpose of grace as the key. It was no question of sin, either in the blind man or in his parents, but of God's manifesting His works in his grievous need and sorrow.

Further, the pressure of His rejection was felt by our Lord, whatever the holy calm which could so quickly turn from man's murderous hatred to a work of divine love. “I must work the works of him

that sent me while it is day: night cometh, when no one can work.” He was the “light” of the “day” which was then shining for Him to do the will and manifest the love of the One who sent Him, yea, to declare God (see chap. 1:18), whom man otherwise was incapable of seeing. Truly the need was great, for man, like the one in question, was utterly blind. But Jesus was the Creator, though man amongst men. Let Him be in the world, He is its light. It attaches alike to His mission, and to His person, and to His divine nature.

"Having said these things, he spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and spread the clay over his eyes, and said to him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, which is interpreted, Sent. He went away therefore, and washed, and came seeing.” (Vers. 6, 7.) This was no unmeaning act on Christ's part, no mere test of obedience on the man's. It was a sign of the truth which the chapter reveals, or at least in harmony with it. For He who was there manifesting the works of God was Himself a man, and had deigned to take the body prepared for Him; most holy, beyond all doubt, as became the Son of God, who knew no sin, about to be made sin for us on the cross, but none the less really of the woman, of flesh and blood, as the children's were. But incarnation, precious as is the grace of the Lord in it, of itself is quite insufficient for man's need; yea, it seems rather to add at first to the difficulty, as did the clay on the man's eyes. The Spirit must work by the word, as well as the Son come into the world, Jesus Christ come in flesh. Without the effectual work of the Holy Spirit in man he cannot see. Compare John 3 So it is here; the man must go to the pool of Siloam, and wash there. Attention is the more fixed on this by the appended interpretation or meaning of the word. It signifies the soul's recognition that Jesus was the sent One of God, sent to do His will and finish His work, the Son, yet servant withal, to accomplish the great salvation of God. The heart is thus purified by faith. Now the man has eyes and can see, not when the clay was laid on, but when he washed in the pool of Siloam. Christ must be here, and a man too, in contact with men in all their darkness; but only when the Holy Ghost applies the word to the conscience do they, owning Him to be the Sent of God, receive sight. Not incarnation only but the efficacious work of the Spirit is needed that man may see according to God. According to His own mercy He saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that, being justified by His grace, we might Become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.

“The neighbors therefore, and those who used to see him before that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sitteth and beggeth? Some said, It is he; others said, No, but he is like him; but he said, It is I. They said therefore to him, How then were thine eyes opened? He answered, The man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said to me, Go unto Siloam, and wash. Having gone away then and washed I received sight. And they said to him, Where is he? He saith, I do not know.” (Vers. 8-12.)

Those accustomed to the blind beggar could not conceal their surprise and perplexity; for as the sightless eyes are a prime disfigurement of the human face, so their presence thus unexpectedly changed the man's entire expression. No wonder that they wondered; yet was the fact certain, and the evidence incontestable. God took care that there should be many witnesses, and would make the testimony felt the more it was discussed and weighed. Had they known who Jesus was, and for what He was sent, they would have understood the fitness of the work done that day. But he on whom the work was wrought gave out no uncertain sound. He was the man whom they were used to see sitting and begging. His witness to Jesus is most explicit. He does not know much yet, but

what he knows he declares with plain decision. How could he doubt whose eyes were opened? Did they ask how it was? His answer was ready and unreserved, “The man that is [or a man] called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said to me, Go to Siloam and wash.” And the mighty effect followed at once— “And having gone away and washed, I received sight.” They are curious to know where Jesus is, but the man is as frank in acknowledging his ignorance of this, as before in confessing the reality of what He had done. It might not be to his own praise that he did not return to Jesus in thanksgiving for God's grace; but God would use it to show how wholly the worker and the object of the work were above collusion. How few have the honesty to say “I do not know” when they know as little as he, who here owns it. Yet is it no light condition of learning more.

On the other hand we see that the Lord not only would draw attention by men's debate, and the man's distinct testimony, but leaves the man for the present, that, by his own reflection on what was done and answering their questions, he might be prepared both for trial that was coming, and for still better blessing from and in Himself. The agitation among the neighbors was to be followed quickly by the more serious inquisition of the religious chiefs. These, as we shall see, readily find matter in the good deed for their usual malevolence toward that which brought honor to God independently of them. Worldly religion, whatever its profession, is really and always a systematic effort to make God the servant of man's pride and selfishness. It knows not love, and values not holiness; it is offended by the faith that, feeding on the word, serves by the Spirit of God, glories in Christ Jesus, and has no confidence in, the flesh. It hates walking in the light as a constant thing, as it only wants religion at its fit times and seasons as a shield against the day of death and the hour of judgment. Hence, for the Son of God to be here on earth, a man presented to men's eyes, blind as they are, and sending them where they can wash and see, outside the regular established religion of the land and without the medium of the accredited guides, is intolerable. It comes out plainly in what follows, a most weighty and, I doubt not, intended lesson in this instructive narrative.

Notes on John 9:13-25

Whenever God acts, the men of religion set up to judge, and the neighbors fear their displeasure more than they pitied the blind man or rejoiced in his healing. Such men are accredited of the world, and count it their province to decide such questions, while others love to have it so. What then will the Pharisees say? They had caviled before.

"They bring unto the Pharisees him that was once blind." (Ver. 13.) Nor are the Pharisees slow to detect a flaw, as they supposed. Not that the man had not been blind, nor that Jesus had failed to give him sight; but had they not both, Jesus especially, broken the law? "Now it was sabbath [on the day] when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes." (Ver. 14.) How little men, particularly those whom public opinion regard as pillars, are apt to suspect that their will exposes them to Satan But so it is, and above all, where the Son of God is concerned, who was manifested that He might destroy the works of the devil, and give us an understanding that we should know Him that is true. But those who, confident in their traditions, dare to arraign the Savior, commit themselves the more to the enemy, because they flatter themselves that they are upholding the cause of God. Thus are they ensnared to the destruction of themselves and of all who heed them.

"Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how be received sight. And he said to them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see. Some of the Pharisees said, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath. Others said, How can a sinful man do such signs? And there was a division among them." (Vers. 15, 16.) They are uneasy, whatever may be their affectation of superior sanctity and zeal for God's honor. The power which gave sight where blindness had ever rested hitherto startled them, and excited their curiosity, with the desire of discovering an evil source if not of alarming the man. But grace wrought in him, and gave him quiet courage to confess the good deed wrought, albeit on a sabbath and without a word about it. "He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed and do see." God calls us, when blessed through Christ, all to be confessors, though not all martyrs; and surely it is the least we owe Him in praise and our fellow-men in love.

But all true confession is odious to the religious world and its leaders. "Therefore said some of the Pharisees, This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath." This malicious plea had been already refuted; but Pharisaism has no heart for, no subjection to, the truth. It had never entered their consciences, or they had forgotten it in their zeal for forms and traditions. But how sad the self-deceit of men destitute of true holiness, or of real obedience, daring to arraign the Holy One of God!

Yet others there were among them not so blinded by party passion or personal envy, who ventured to say a word, if they took no further step. "Others said, How can a sinful man do such signs?" All they meant was, that He who wrought thus could be no such deceiver or impostor as the rest conceived. They had no right view of Himself, of His person, or His relation to God. They had not the faintest idea that He was God manifest in flesh; but they questioned whether He must not be "of God," since He did such signs. "And there was a division among them." Thus, as they

were not yet of one mind, there was a delay for Satan's design.

But in their restlessness they examine once more the man, and are used unwittingly by the God of grace to help him on in the apprehension and acknowledgment of the truth which is according to piety. “They say, therefore, to the blind [man] again, Thou, what sayest thou of him, because he opened thine eyes? And he said, He is a prophet.” (Ver. 17.) The first examination was as to the fact and the manner. Now they want to force out of the man his thoughts of his benefactor, in their malice wishing to find a plea for condemning both. On the other hand, the grace of God is as manifest as it is sweet in using the painful trial and exercise of soul to His own glory, through the man led on and blessed only the more. He knew their hatred of Jesus, yet he answers their challenge boldly, “He is a prophet” —a decided advance on his previous confession, though far from the truth he is soon to learn. He owns that Jesus has the mind of God as well as His power.

Baffled by his quiet firmness, the religious inquisitors turned to another and accustomed means of assault. As the neighbors in their perplexity appeal to the Pharisees, so these work on and by natural relationships. They would try whether some disproof could not be suede out of the parents. Clearly unbelief lies at the bottom of all. Man, being fallen and evil, is unwilling to believe in the goodness of God, above all in His grace to himself. Had the neighbors bowed to the clear evidence Of God's intervention, they would not have brought the man to the Pharisees; had the Pharisees, they would not have persisted in sifting again and again beyond the ascertainment of the fact, still less would they have awakened the fears of the family. “The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him that he was blind, and received sight, until they called the parents of him that received sight, and asked him, saying, Is this your son who, ye say, was born blind? how then doth he now see? His parents therefore answered and said, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now seeth we know not, or who opened his eyes we know not; ask himself, he is of age, he will speak for himself. These things said his parents because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that, if any one should confess him [to be] Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. On this account his parents said, He is of age; ask him.” (Vers. 18-23.)

The matter of fact is thus again the cardinal question as it really was; and as to this the parents answered conclusively. That the man saw now was undeniable, and this through Jesus, as he declared; that he was their son and born blind, the parents maintained unhesitatingly. The conclusion was irresistible, if unbelief did not resist everything where God is concerned. The parents answer only where they are concerned. It was not that they, or any reasonable person, doubted that Jesus had wrought the miracle; but they dreaded the consequence, from Pharisaic enmity, of going beyond their own circle of natural knowledge, and pleaded ignorance of how it was done, or of who it was that did it. Overborne by fear of the Pharisees, they forget even the affection that would otherwise have sheltered their offspring from the impending blow, and they throw all the burden on their own son. “Ask him; he is of age, he will speak concerning himself.” Thus their very fears, on which the Pharisees reckoned for a denial of the facts, God used to make it solely a controversy between the Pharisees and the man himself, when they were compelled by the evidence of the parents to accept as a certain fact that he who now saw had been ever blind, and blind till just now.

Another thing also comes out very plainly, that the enmity of the Jews to the Lord Jesus was known to have gone ere this, so far as to threaten with excommunication every one that confessed Him to be the Christ.

Hence the man is once more appealed to, and all question of the miracle is dropped. “Therefore they called a second time the man who was blind, and said to him, Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner. He therefore answered, If he is a sinner I know not. One thing I know, that, blind as I was, now I see.” (Vers. 24, 25.) They now assume the highest ground; they at least bold to the divine side, if others are carried away by the apparent good done to man. Accordingly they call on him to give glory to God, whilst they assert their unqualified assurance that Jesus was a sinner. Nor has it been an uncommon thing, from that day to this, for men to profess to honor God at the expense of His Son; as the Lord warned His disciples to expect to the uttermost, where the Father and the Son are unknown. But the man in his simplicity puts forward the fact which he deeply felt, and they would fain hide. “If he is a sinner I know not. One thing I know, that, blind as I was, I now see.” No argument can stand against the logic of reality, above all of such a reality as this. He certainly did not know Jesus to be a sinner; but that it could not be he alleges the most distinct and irrefragable proof, and this on their own ground of what was before all. If reasoning is unseasonable and powerless, what is religious antipathy in presence of an undeniable fact which proves the mighty power and goodness of God? Their efforts showed their ill-will to Him who had thus wrought: the blessed reality remained, whatever the insinuations or the assaults of unbelief.

It is well also to remark that with faith goes a mighty operation of God, with its own characteristic effects, and more important in every soul that believes the gospel than even that of which the man, once blind but now seeing, was so sensible. Those who believe are quickened from death in trespasses and sins, and they henceforth live to God. Crucified with Christ, they nevertheless live, yet not they themselves properly, but Christ lives in them. They are thereby partakers of divine nature, being born of God. It is no improvement of their old nature as men. They are born of water and of the Spirit, begotten by the word of truth. With faith goes this new life, which shows itself in wholly different thoughts and affections, as well as ways or walk. Of its gradual progress in the midst of opposition and persecution the story of this blind man, who now saw, is no unapt illustration.

Chapter 95

Notes on John 9:26-41

The pertinacity of the Pharisees finds in the man a quiet courage, which stands out in contrast with the fears of his parents and even urges the claims of Him who had wrought so good and great a deed on His adversaries in a way they could not resist. They ply the man with the question, How? he answers with the question, Why?

“They said, therefore, to him [again], What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes? He answered them, I told you already, and ye did not hear: why do ye wish to hear again? Do ye also wish to become his disciples? They railed at him, and said, Thou art his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God hath spoken to Moses, but this man we know not whence he is.” (Vers. 26-29.)

He who was once blind, but now saw, discerned the true state of the case, as those did not who had never experienced His gracious power. He felt satisfied that their opposition was invincible. The apostle of grace none the less, but the more, warns the despisers of their self-willed unbelief and danger of perishing. The same spirit of faith expresses itself in him who just now was but a blind beggar, even as from those that had not should be taken away what they seemed to have. Christ is a rock of strength to the one, and of offense to the other. They thus expose themselves to the sharp rebuke of their folly by the man they affected to despise. Zealous for the servant whom they set up as master, they confessed their ignorance of Him who is Lord of all.

“The man answered and said to them, Why in this is the wonderful thing, that ye know not whence he is, and he hath opened mine eyes! We know that God heareth not sinners, but if any one be God-fearing, and do his will, him he heareth. Since time [began] was it not heard that any one opened a born blind man's eyes. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing. They answered and said to him, In sins thou west born wholly, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.” (Vers. 30-34.)

The man's answer was as solid as to the point. He discards the attack on himself personally, and treats it as a question between the religious leaders, who avowedly could not tell where He was who had wrought a work wholly unexampled as a display of God's power. It was hard, if not impossible, to believe that such a one could be evil, as they had imputed. “We know that God heareth not sinners; but if any one be God-fearing, and do his will, him he heareth.” For what can be surer, as a general principle, than that “them that honor me I will honor, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed.” Indeed this was plain as between Jesus (to take the lowest ground) and the Pharisees, whose moral incapacity astonishes the man. What, then, remained for his adversaries? Nothing but contemptuous rage, and the extreme blow of the ecclesiastical arm. “They cast him out,” but not before they unwittingly testified to the force of his words: “In sins wast thou born wholly, and dost thou teach us?"

But they cast him out into the arms and bosom of the Lord. For, as we are next told, “Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and, having found him, he said, Believest thou on the Son of God [or

man]? He answered and said, And who is he, Lord, that I may believe on him? Jesus said to him, Thou hast both seen him, and he that speaketh with thee is he. And he said, I believe, Lord; and he did him homage." (Vers. 35-37.) Such is the final step of God's grace in working with the blind man. He is thrust outside Judaism for the truth's sake, consequent on the work wrought on his person; he there is found by Christ, and led to know and believe in Him, far beyond any thought, however true, he had previously conceived. It was faith in his own testimony and person.

It is really the history of a soul that goes onward, under the guidance of God, who makes the grace, of the Lord and His glory shine the more fully after one is outside the world's religion, whether cast or going out. And such is the character of Christianity, as the believing had at length to learn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, and from its final chapter. So patient was the Spirit of grace with those of the ancient people of God, dull to learn the new thing which God has introduced through and in our Lord Jesus. But, late as it may be, the breach with earthly religion must come. Let us go forth, therefore, unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach; and this so much the more because we have boldness to enter into the holies by the blood of Jesus, the new and living way which He has dedicated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh. But the work was not yet done which opened this way, nor the Spirit shed to give souls the consciousness of righteous title. We have one, therefore, not yet going forth thus, but cast out by hatred, far more against the name of Jesus than against the man—yea, we may say against the man solely for Jesus' sake, who had heard of, and felt for, and found the sheep thus worried of men.

But a perplexing difference of reading follows, which claims more than a bare critical notice. "Dost thou believe on the Son of man?" say the Sinaitic, the Vatican, and the Cambridge (of Beza) manuscripts, supported by the Sahidic, Roman edition of the Aethiopic, &c., more than a dozen uncials, all the cursives, and the rest of the ancient versions, &c., give us το■; θεο■:, "of God." But Tischendorf, in his eighth, or last, edition, adopts το■ ■νθρ■που. Nor can it be denied that, as the rule, the Lord habitually and graciously loved to present to Himself in relation to man; as, again, it is plain that this chapter in particular sets Him forth, not as the light, Word, and God, like the preceding one, but as the Incarnate One who was sent to manifest the works of God, the rejected Messiah about to suffer but to be exalted over all. On the other hand, that the Son of God is the great distinctive testimony of our gospel, none can overlook; and we can well understand how the light of this glorious truth (bursting on the soul gradually led on, spite of, and, in a certain sense, through the blind hostility of the Pharisees) draws him out in homage to the Lord. It was, at any rate, the Son of God in grace, a man on earth, who had been seen by, and was talking with, one who had experienced His light-giving power.

"And Jesus said, For judgment I came into this world, that they that see not may see, and they that see may become blind. And some of the Pharisees that were with him heard these things, and said to him, Are we blind also? Jesus said to them, If ye were blind, ye would not have sin; but now ye say, We sin, your sin remaineth." (Vers. 39-41.)

The Lord thereon shows how His coming acted, and was meant to act, on souls. It had a higher purpose and more permanent result than any energy, however mighty and benign, that dealt with the body. He was the life to those, however dark, who received Him: those who rejected Him sealed their own ruin everlastingly, whatever their estimate of themselves, or in the mind of others. The Jew, especially the Pharisee, might be ever so confident that he himself was a guide of the

blind, a light of those in darkness; but the coming of the only True Light brought to evident nothingness all such haughty pretensions as surely as it gave eyes to such as owned their blindness. No flesh, therefore, shall glory: he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord who was come, a man, but God on earth, for this reversal of fallen man's thoughts, and display of His own grace. Pharisaic pride refuses to bow to Jesus, imputing blindness as they thought; but if it speaks, it is obliged to hear its most withering sentence from the Judge of all mankind. For blindness there is all grace and power in Christ; but what can be the portion of those who, stone-blind, say they see? Their sin remains, as well as blindness, which of itself is no sin, though its consequence.

Chapter 96

Notes on John 10:1-10

The Lord proceeds to set forth the consequences of His rejection, spite of His dignity, under a variety of forms. It is the disclosure of His grace to and for the sheep, from His humiliation as man and servant even to the laying down His life in all its intrinsic excellency, and of His glory as one with the Father.

“Verily, verily, I say to you, he that entereth not through the door into the fold of the sheep but climbeth up otherwise, he is a thief and a robber; but he that entereth through the door is shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. When he hath put forth all his own, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, because they know his voice; but a stranger they will in nowise follow, but will, flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers. This proverb said Jesus to them; but they knew not what things they were which he was speaking to them.” (Vers. 1-6.)

It is an allegorical mode of speech, departing so far from ordinary language, but adopting a figure very familiar to the law, the psalms, and the prophets. (Gen. 49; Psa. 80; Isa. 40; Ezekiel xxxiv.; Zech. 11; 13) The application to pastors of the church is ridiculously out of place and. time. It is the Shepherd of Israel in contrast with those who claimed to guide the ancient people of God. Even He, albeit a divine person, entered in the appointed way. Others who had no competency were no less destitute of title or commission. The woman's Seed, the virgin's Son, the Seed of Abraham, the Son of David, the mighty God, the Father of the age to come, coming forth out of Bethlehem, from of old, from everlasting, yet to be cut off after sixty-nine of Daniel's seventy weeks, the righteous Servant abased beyond all yet to be exalted above all, what did not meet to point Him out and exclude every rival? Yes, the rejected Christ is He that entered through the door, Shepherd of the sheep—none but He.

All others sought to mount some other way. Theudas might boast to be somebody, Judas draw away people after him, Pharisees love the first seats, scribes and doctors of law lay heavy burdens on men; but the, sheep, taught of God, hear His voice, not theirs; even as the porter, the Spirit, in His care for the glory of God, opened to Him only, as we see from the beginning in the Simeons and Annas and all who waited for redemption in Jerusalem. The others, small or great, orderly or revolutionary, had no right to the sheep; they were nothing better than thieves or robbers. He only is Shepherd, and the sheep hear His voice. They are His own, and He calls them as such by name. Who could, who would, but Himself? He knows and loves them, making them feel that He has an interest in them, such as God alone could have.

Again, Christ entered in, but He leads out. Judaism is doomed. The Israel of God follow Him outside. It was no question now of gathering back into the land the outcasts of Israel, or the dispersed of Judah; this must await another day. Now He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. “When He shall have put forth all His own” —for if such were the principle of His action now, still it was to be the necessary effect of His death on the cross—He goes before them, and the sheep follow Him, because they know His voice. It is the wisdom of God for the simple.

Precious word of God, the hearing of His voice! It is due to His person, it is the fruit of His grace, it is their true and only safeguard. And a stranger will they in no wise follow, but will flee from him, because they know not the voice of strangers. The “stranger” has nothing to do with them; however he might seek it, what have they to do with him? Their wisdom is to follow Jesus, whose they are, whose voice they hear and know. How simple, were we but simple! How honoring to the Son! This too best pleases the Father. It is through faith we are kept, not by discerning shades of skepticism or superstition, though this may be for some a duty or call of love for others.

But such words are powerless to the men of either reason or tradition. For they seek their own honor, they give or receive it one of another. Jesus came in the Father's name, and Him they receive not. They avow themselves strangers to Him; they deny that any can know His voice. Had they heard it themselves, they would not doubt it could be known. They prefer and follow a stranger. The superstitious exalt their church: were it God's church, it would repudiate such exaltation at the expense of Christ. The skeptical exalt man as he is. But both agree in ignoring the Shepherd's voice. So it is now, and so it was then.

“This proverb said Jesus to them, but they knew not what things they were which he was speaking to them.” (Ver. 6.) His sayings are as Himself: if He is valued, so are they; if He is not believed on, neither are they understood. He is the light and the truth. All that He says depends on faith in Him for its apprehension. And therefore it is that in 1 John 2 the very babes of the family of God are said to know all things. Knowing Christ, they have an unction from the Holy One. It is not by learning, but by the possession of Christ, that they refuse errors which have ensnared unnumbered doctors of divinity. They are thus kept bright and fresh, simple and secure, because dependent on Him. These who count themselves wise venture to judge for themselves, and perish in their unbelieving presumption. To hear His voice is the humblest thing in the world, yet has it the power and wisdom of God with it. What they heard from the beginning abides in them, but for the stranger they have no ear nor heart. They are satisfied with Christ's voice. They know the truth in Him, and that no lie is of the truth. They are glad of every help which reminds them of His words, and brings them home to their souls. A stranger's voice they distrust, and flee from him. They are right—God would have us value no other voice.

“Therefore said Jesus again to them, Verily, verily, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All as many as came [before me] are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: through me if any one have entered, he will be saved, and will go in and will go out, and will find pasture. The thief cometh not unless that he may steal and slaughter and destroy; I came that they might have life, and have abundantly.” (Vers. 7-10.)

In the former allegory the Lord speaks of Himself generally as Shepherd of the sheep, and this to put them forth, going at the head of them as they follow Him. Now He employs a different figure of Himself in direct terms, and with no less solemnity: “Verily, verily, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep.” There is no confusion with the former relation. It is not a question now of the sheepfold. This He had entered, with every proof suited to man by God—proofs personal, moral, ministerial, miraculous, and prophetic; but the carnal mind is invincible in its unbelief, and withal being enmity against God, it is if possible less subject to His grace (which it understands not, but suspects) than to His law, which conscience feels to be just and right. When bowed or broken in the sense of sin against God, how sweet to hear the voice of Jesus! “I am the door of the sheep” —not of the fold,

but of such as are of God, who yearn after the knowledge of Him, and deliverance from self. “All, as many as came.... are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them.” They were not sent, but came without warrant; they sought their own things, not those of Jesus Christ, not of others therefore; corrupt or violent, how could they avail, either for the sheep, or for God's glory? To them the porter did not open, and, if the adversary deceived, the sheep listened not; these were guarded, however tried.

But now another was here. “I am the door: through me if any have entered, he will be saved, and will go in and will go out, and will find pasture.” How striking, yet perfectly simple, the fullness of grace touched in His words! It is no longer the narrow enclosure, but in principle for “any one” to enter; and if one shall have entered through Christ, there is salvation, liberty, and food—the sure, free, and rich blessing of Christianity. All turns on His glorious person. Grace bringing salvation to any, to all, has appeared. When law shut up a people from the depravities of a rebellious and idolatrous race, when it schooled those who heeded it, we can see why the wisdom of God chose a single nation for this great moral experiment. But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we (the sheep of the fold) might receive sonship. But because ye are sons (the Gentiles that believe the gospel) God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying Abba, Father. (Gal. 4) The gift was too precious, the boon too efficacious, to be pent up in the strait limits of Israel, especially as the Light manifested the darkness universal around.

Whoever then has entered through Christ will be saved, will go in and will go out, and will find all he lacks. God that spared not His own Son but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not also with Him freely give us all things? The law condemned the sinner, placed him in bondage, and sentenced him to die. The Unchanging One changes all for the believer, be he who he may. This is grace as well as truth, and both came through and in Christ the Lord. What a Savior! How worthy of the God who gave and sent Him, His only-begotten Son, into the world, that we might live through Him

Outside Christ is sin and misery. Such is the world; and of all the world no part so delusive, so selfish, so fatal to itself and all governed by it, as the religious world and its leaders, the leaders now of infidelity as well as of superstition. Here is the testimony of Christ, of Him who is the truth; “the thief cometh not unless that he may steal, and slaughter, and destroy.” No creature can rise above its level: what then can the creature do that is steeped in unremoved evil and selfishness? It may sink indefinitely; it cannot possibly rise above itself. The world's hatred may become more deadly, its darkness more dense; but no ideas, no feelings, no helps, no ordinances, can change its nature, though the pretension to be of God when it is not, may, and must, precipitate into the depths of avarice and cruelty—the more destructive, because the false claim of His name shuts up every avenue of ordinary human pity, and the reality of what is of God provokes in the unreal the determination to get rid of what condemns itself.

How blessed the contrast of Christ! “I came that they might have life, and have abundantly.” He was the life, and life was in Him, not light only but life. All outside Him lay in darkness and death. He not only was sent of the Father but came and came that the sheep might have life; and He would give it abundantly, as was most due to His personal glory and His work, a work ever before Him here. Hence it was only in resurrection that He breathed on the disciples. As Jehovah God

breathed on Adam, and the man became a living soul, after a different sort from every other living thing on earth, so did He who was alike the risen Man and true God breathe a better life on those who believed in Him. It is life eternal, and this after all question of sin and law was settled for faith by His death.

Chapter 97

Notes on John 10:11-18

The Lord next presents Himself in the beautiful character of the good Shepherd; a most affecting and expressive proof of His lowly love, when we think who He is, and what we are.

“I am the good Shepherd. The good Shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. [But] he that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth; and the hireling fleeth because he is a hireling, and no care hath he for the sheep.” (Vers. 11-13.)

This indeed is love; not that we loved Him, but that He loved us, and died in propitiation for our sins. The giving up of life, in any case, for others would have been the fullest manifestation of love: how much more in His to whom the sheep belonged, who had been from of old promised to stand and feed in the strength of Jehovah, in the majesty of the name of Jehovah his God Greatness to the ends of the earth is a little thing compared with the good Shepherd's laying down His life for the sheep. It is the same Messiah; but how incalculably greater the testimony to His love in thus dying, than in reigning ever so gloriously, however suitable and due to Himself as well as to God's glory, and blessed for man when the kingdom comes!

Another phase of human pretension in divine things next appears, not thieves and robbers, as before, but the “hireling,” the man who meddles with the sheep, without higher motive than his own pelf or greed. “The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,” as sung one of our own poets, and not untruly; but here the Lord first describes not their trials, but his character who claims what is not his own but Christ's, and so deserts them openly in the hour of danger. He “beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth.” It is the adversary, by whatever means or instruments he may work. Then follows the peril they incur, and the actual injury done. “And the wolf snatched them, and scattereth, because he is a hireling, and no care hath he for the sheep.” As divine love wrought in God's purpose and will, so in Christ's death; nor is there anything good or acceptable where love is not the motive. It is the true and only right spring of service; even as the Lord intimated to the servant, now fully restored and reinstated, after his denial of Himself, “Feed my lambs—my sheep.” Not that He does not propose rewards the most glorious to encourage the servant who is already in the path of Christ, and apt to be cast down by its difficulties; but love alone is recognized as that which constrains him to serve. Christ was the perfection of self-sacrificing love; and it is Satan who, as the wolf, seizes and scatters what is so precious to Him, through the selfishness of such as abandon the sheep in their greatest peril, the mercenary having no care for the sheep. The character of man and Satan is as plain as that of Christ, which last comes out in other traits in the next verses. From Him self was wholly absent, love only was there.

(Footnote that has no corresponding marker: This clause ■ δ■ μισθωτ■ς φε■γει is not given in ■(A is somewhat uncertain) B D L some cursives, ancient versions, &c., but a dozen uncials of inferior age and weight, with most cursives and some of the old versions insert as in Text. Rec.)

“I am the good Shepherd, and know mine, and mine know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep.” (Vers. 14, 15.)

Here it is in the mutual knowledge of the Shepherd and the sheep that His goodness is shown, and this, wondrous to say, after the pattern of the Father's knowledge of the Son, and the Son's of the Father. It is a knowledge after a divine sort, and as true in His absence as in His presence. It was not such sheltering care as the Messiah might and will extend to His people, however tender; for He too shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arms, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. But there had never been such transparent intimacy as between Him while on earth and His Father; and after this pattern, and none other, was it to be between Him on high and the sheep here below. This mutuality of knowledge disappears almost entirely in the Authorized Version through the unhappy full stop between verses 14, 15, and the consequent mistranslation of the earlier clause of verse 15.

The Lord returns to His laying down His life for the sheep. Nor can we wonder; for as He could give no greater proof of love, so there is nothing which is so strengthening, as well as humbling, to our souls, nothing that so glorifies God, and no other turning-point for the blessing of the universe. At this point, however, it is the good Shepherd's love for the sheep.

Here the Lord can speak distinctly for the first time of other objects of His love. He might come minister of the circumcision for the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But His love could not be so circumscribed, when His death opens the floodgates. The mention of His death leads Him to speak of what was quite outside Israel. “And other sheep I have which were not of this fold” —not of the Jewish people within their enclosure of law and ordinance...,” them also I must lead, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.” (Ver. 16.)

It is not, as in the English Bible and others, following the Vulgate, “one fold,” but “one flock.” God owns no such thing now as a fold. It is exclusively Jewish; and the idea came in among Christians through the Judaizing of the church, while the truth of the church, when seen, makes such a thought or word, as applied to itself, intolerable. The truth is, as we have heard, that the Lord was to put forth all His own, He going before them, and the sheep following. So it was with the Jewish fold. But other sheep He had which were not of it. “Them also I must lead; and they shall hear my voice.” It was to be from among the Gentiles; and the believers there hear His voice, believe the gospel. But they form no new enclosure, fenced in by law, like the fold of Israel. The liberty of Christ is of the essence of Christianity, not only life and pardon, but freedom as well as food. For if Christ be all, what lack can there be? The Jewish sheep have been led out, the Gentile sheep are gathered, and both compose one flock, as truly as there is one Shepherd.

One cause that has done as much as anything to dull the saints to the perception of the truth here is the fact of so many denominational enclosures in which they find themselves. It seems hard to say that such a state of things, built up by Reformers and others of peculiar energy since the Reformation, is unauthorized. But what saith the scripture, our only standard? “One flock, one Shepherd.” How painful to find one so prejudiced as to say, “Many folds, but one flock “! But this is to pervert the word of God, which admits of no fold now, rather than to expound it.

Another element which has wrought powerfully in favor of “one fold” is the mischievous confusion of the church with Israel, Zion, &c., which runs through not only common theology but even the

headings of the Authorized Version, and constantly therefore is before all eyes. Hence, if we are now so identified with the ancient people of God, that we are warranted to interpret all that is said of them in the Old Testament as our present portion, one cannot be surprised that this should tend to a similar result in the New.

But Christ's death has an aspect towards His Father of the deepest delight and complacency, besides being the basis of redemption and of Christianity. “On this account the Father loveth me, because I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again: this commandment I received from my Father.” (Vers. 17, 18.) The Lord does not add here “for the sheep,” nor should we limit His death to ourselves. He lets us see the value His own laying down His life had in itself. It was a fresh motive for the Father's love; and no wonder, if it were only as the unfathomable depth to which His own devotedness could go down. But in deed none but the Father knows what He found in it of love, confidence in Him, self-abandonment, and moral excellence in every way, crowned by the personal dignity of Him who, standing in ineffably near relationship to the Father himself, was thus pleased to die. Hence it could not but be that the Son would take His life again, not now in connection with the earth and man living on it, but risen from the dead, and so the power and pattern of Christianity.

In this profound humiliation, to which the Lord submitted in grace, there is the utmost care to guard against the least suspicion that could lower His glory as the Son and God. It is not, as in Matthew (where He is viewed as the rejected Messiah, but Son of man, not merely the destined head of all nations and tribes and tongues, but in command of the holy angels, His angels): He had only to call on His Father, who would furnish Him more than twelve legions of angels. And what would have availed all Rome's legions against those heavenly beings, mighty in strength, that do His word? But how then, He blessedly adds, could the scriptures, be fulfilled that thus it must be? Divine person though He was, He had come to die; the Life Eternal which was with the Father before there was either man or earth, He had deigned to become man, that He might thus lay down His life and take it again. But here He speaks not more in lowly love than as consciously God: “No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again: this commandment I received from my Father.” On the one hand there is the calm assertion of the right as well as power to lay down His life and to take it again; and as none but the Creator could do the latter, so no creature is entitled to do the former. None but God has power and title to do both, and the Word, without of course ceasing to be divine (which indeed could not be), became flesh that He might thus die and rise. On the other hand, even in this, which might have been justly deemed the most strictly personal of all acts, He abides the obedient man, and would do only the will of His Father. He had come to do the will of God. This is perfection, and found in Jesus alone. Well may we adore Him with the Father who gave Him! He is worthy.

Notes on John 10:19-30

These wondrous words were not without effect even then among the Jews. Love unknown before, the lowliness of a servant, the dignity of One consciously divine, wrought in some consciences, while they roused others to a deeper hatred. So it is, and must be, in a world of sinful men, where God and Satan are both at work in the momentous conflict of good and evil.

“There was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings; but many of them said, He hath a demon, and is mad: why hear ye him? Others said, These are not the words of one possessed by a demon: can a demon open blind [men's] eyes?” (Vers. 19-21.) The greater the grace, and the deeper the truth, the less does the natural mind appreciate Christ. He is indeed the test of every soul that hears His word. But if some imputed what was infinitely above man to a demon, and to the raving consequent on such a possession, others there were who felt how far the words were from those of a demoniac, and who bowed to the divine power which sealed them. The words and the works to their consciences had another character and import.

"Now it was the feast of the dedication at Jerusalem, [and] it was winter; and Jesus was walking in the temple in the porch of Solomon. The Jews therefore surrounded him, and said to him, How long dost thou hold our soul in suspense? If thou art the Christ, tell us openly. Jesus answered, I told you, and ye believe not. The works which I do in the name of my Father, these bear witness of me; but ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall in no wise ever perish, and no one shall seize them out of my hand. My Father who hath given to me is greater than all, and no one is able to seize out of the hand of my Father. I and my Father are one.” (Vers. 22-80.)

We are many of us familiar with the effort to sustain tradition and human authority in divine things by such a passage as the opening of verse 22. But it is really futile. For here we learn nothing of our Lord's participation in any observances of men, whatever they may have been, but of His being then in Jerusalem, winter as it was, and walking in Solomon's porch, when the Jews came round, and kept saying to Him, Till when (or How long) dost thou excite our soul (or keep it in suspense)? Wretched and guilty as their unbelief was, the Jews drew no such inference from His presence then and there. They were uneasy, spite of their opposition to Him. “If thou art the Christ, tell us openly.” But the fatal hour was at hand, and the power of darkness; and the light was about to pass away from them after its full manifestation in their midst. “Jesus answered, I told you, and ye believe not.” Take only His words recorded in John 5; 7, and 8. A plainer and richer testimony could not be. But testimony does not always last. It is given freely, fully, patiently, and may then be turned aside from those who reject to such as hear. Thus is God wont to act, and so does the Lord answer on this occasion. “I told you, and ye believe not."

But there was more than words, however truly divine, words of grace and truth according to His person. There were works of similar character; and the Jews were accustomed to look for a sign. If they sought honestly, they might see signs beyond man's numbering or estimate. “The works which I do in the name of my Father, they bear witness of me.” What could account for such

hardness in any heart? “But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep.” Solemn solution of a difficulty, of a resistance to truth, of a rejection of Christ, as true now as ever!

Men trust to themselves, to their own feelings, to their own judgments. Have these never played them false? Have they ever been true before God? What suicidal folly not to distrust themselves, and look to God, cry to God, ask of God, what is His way, His truth, His Son! But no, this were to believe and be saved, and they will not. They are too proud. They will not bow to the word that arraigns them as sinners, even though it sends them the message of remission of sins on their faith. They feel that such grace on God's part supposes utter guilt and ruin on theirs, and this they are too hard, too proud, to own. They believe not; they are not of the Savior's sheep. Criminals, heathen, perhaps, may need a Savior; not decent, moral, religious men like themselves! They do not, will not, believe, and are lost, not because they are too great sinners for Christ, but because they refuse Christ as the Savior, and deny their ruin as sinners. They prefer to go on as they are, as the great mass of men: God, they think, is too merciful, and they hope to improve some day if they feel not quite right to-day. Thus are they lost. Such is the way and end of many an unbeliever now, as of the Jews then.

How, then, are Christ's sheep characterized? We need not hesitate to receive the answer, for here is His own account of them. “My sheep hear my voice:” a quality incomparably better than doing this, or that, or all things without it. It is the obedience of faith, the holy parent of all holy issues. Without faith it is impossible to please God; and this is the present characteristic of those who are of faith; they hear the voice of Christ. It is not self-assertion, nor the forgetfulness of their own sinfulness and of His glory. It is the truest owning of His grace, and of their own need; and thus only are souls blessed to God's glory.

This, however, is not their only privilege. “And I know them,” says the Savior. It is not here said that they know Christ, however true by grace. But He knows them, all their thoughts and feelings, their words and ways, their dangers and difficulties, their past, present, and future. He knows themselves, in short, perfectly, and in perfect love. How infinite the favor and the blessing!

But there is more. The sheep not only hear Christ's voice, but, says He, “they follow me.” For faith is living and practical, or worse than useless. And as it is due to Christ that His own should follow Him, so they need it, exposed as they are to countless foes, seen and unseen. It is their security, whatever the circumstances they pass through: Christ who leads the sheep cannot fail, and, as He knows them, so they follow Him.

“And I give them life eternal, and they shall never perish, and no one shall seize them out of my hand.” Thus the Lord guarantees His own life to them, not the life of Adam, who brought in death, and died, and left the sad inheritance to all his offspring; whereas the second Man and last Adam, being Son of God, quickens whom He will, and quickens with and to life everlasting. Is it said, however, that the sheep are weak? Unquestionably; but here He excludes fear and anxiety for all who believe in Him, for He immediately adds that “they shall in no wise ever be lost.” No intrinsic weakness, therefore, shall compromise their safety for a moment. Nor shall hostile force or wiles jeopard them; for “no one shall seize them out of my hand.” (Vers. 27, 28.)

Could love assure its objects of more? His love would impart to them the certainty of His own deepest joy, His Father's love, as sure as His own; and so He closes His communication with it.

“My Father who hath given to me is greater than all, and no one is able to seize out of the hand of my Father. I and my Father are one.” (Vers. 29, 30.) Here we rise into that height of holy love and infinite power of which none could speak but the Son; and He speaks of the secrets of Godhead with the intimate familiarity proper to the Only-begotten who is in the Father's bosom. He needed none to testify of man, for He knew what was in man, being Himself God; and He knew what was in God for the self-same reason. Heaven or earth made no difference, time or eternity. Not a creature is unapparent before Him, but all things are naked and laid bare in His eyes with whom we have to do. And He declares that the Father who had made the gift resists all that can threaten harm, and as He has given to Christ, so He is greater than all, and none can seize out of His hand. Indeed the Son and the Father are one, not one person (which ■σμ■ν, with every other scripture bearing on it, refutes), but one thing, ■ν, one divine nature or essence (as other scriptures equally prove). The lowliest of men, the Shepherd of the sheep, He is the Son of the Father, true God and eternal life. And He and the Father are not more truly one in divine essence than in the fellowship of divine love for the sheep.

Chapter 99

Notes on John 10:31-42

Thus did the Lord assume and imply divine glory as His, no less than the Father's, spite of the place of man de had taken in the humiliation of love, in order to undo the works of the devil, and deliver guilty sinners who hear His voice from the bondage o: sin and God's most righteous judgment. This roused again the murderous hatred of His hearers.

“The Jews therefore again took stones, that they might stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works I showed you from the Father: for which work of them do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy, and because thou, being a man, makest thyself God.” (Vers. 31-33.)

Alas for the will and self-confidence of man! They were right in saying that Jesus was a man; they were not wrong in understanding that He claimed to be God. But it was the insinuation of Satan working on man's unbelief of all beyond his senses and mind, that He who was God would not deign, in love to men and for the divine glory, to become man, in order to accomplish redemption. Was it incredible that God should stoop so low for these most worthy ends? And had not Jesus given adequate evidence of His glory and relation to the Father, in power and goodness, as well as truth? A life of purity unknown, of dependence on God beyond parallel, of active goodness untiring,, of humility and of suffering the more surprising, because in evident command of power unlimited in testimony to the Father, and this in accomplishment of the entire chain of scripture types and prophecy, combine to hurl back the imputation of imposture on the old serpent, the liar and father of it, whose great lie is to oust God from being the object of man's faith and service and worship for false objects, or no object but self, which however little suspected is really Satan's service.

Nothing therefore so rouses Satan as God thus presented in and by the Lord Jesus, who displays His own perfect meekness and man's enmity by no intervention of power to save Him from insult and injury. “First he must suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation” —a generation which goes on still morally, and will, till He returns in glory to judge. They therefore took stones to stone Him; for Satan is a murderer as well as a liar, and nothing so awakens violence, even to death, as the truth which condemns men pretending to religion. To their blinded and infuriated minds it was blasphemy for Him to say that He gave His followers eternal life beyond the weakness or the power of the creature—blasphemy to assert that He and the Father were one; whereas it is the truth, so vital and necessary that none who reject it can be saved. His words were as good as His works, and even more momentous to man; while both were of the Father. He that God sent, as John testified, spoke the words of God. It was they who blasphemed, denying Him to be God who, in grace to them, condescended to become man.

But He meets them on their own ground by an a fortiori argument, which left His personal glory un touched. “Jesus answered them, Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods? If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), say ye of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of

God?” (Vers. 34-36.)

Thus does He reason most conclusively from the less to the greater; for every Jew knew that their inspired books, as for instance Psa. 82, calls judges Elohim (gods), as commissioned by God and responsible to judge in His name. If such a title could be used of a mere magistrate in scripture (and its authority is indissoluble), how unreasonable to tax with blasphemy Him whom the Father set apart, and sent into the world, because He said He was God's Son! He is not affirming or demonstrating what He is in this, but simply convicting them of their perverseness on the ground of their law.

“If I do not the works of my Father, believe not; but if I do, even if ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may perceive and [believe, or] know that the Father is in me, and I in him.” (Vers. 87, 88.) There was no denying the irresistible force of this appeal. The character of the works bore testimony, not only to divine power, but to this in the fullness of love. Think as they might of Him, the works were unmistakable, that they might learn and come to know the unity of the Father and the Son. It is not that He enfeebles the dignity of His person, or the truth of His words; but He was pleading with them, and dealing with their consciences, by those works which attested not more the power than the grace of God, and consequently His glory who wrought them. But self-will holds out against all proofs.

“They sought, therefore, again to seize him, and he departed out of their hand. And he went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was at first baptizing, and abode there. And many came unto him and said, John did no sign, but all things whatsoever John said about him were true. And many believed on him there.” (Vers. 39-42.) Thus it was not that their unbelief was incomplete, but that His time was not yet come. The Lord therefore retires till the moment appointed of God, and meanwhile goes to the scene of John's work at the first, and there abode, where grace wins many a soul that recognized in Him the truth of John's testimony.

Notes on John 11:1-10

The Lord was rejected, rejected in His words, rejected in His works. Both were perfect, but man felt that God was brought near to them by both; and, an enemy of God, he increasingly musters hatred against His Son, His image.

But the grace of God still waits on guilty man, and would give a fresh, full, and final testimony to Jesus. And here we begin with that which was most of all characteristic of our Gospel, His divine Sonship displayed in resurrection power. All is public now; all near or in Jerusalem. The design of God governs here as everywhere. All the evangelists present the testimony to His Messianic glory, the second of these three testimonies, though none with such fullness of detail as Matthew, whose function it was pre-eminently to show Him as the Son of David according to prophecy, but rejected now, and about to return in power and glory. It was John's place above all to mark Him out as Son of God, and this the Holy Spirit does by giving us through his Gospel the resurrection of Lazarus. He is in resurrection the life-giving Spirit, as contrasted with Adam; but He is the Son eternally, and the Son quickens whom He will, before death no less than after resurrection; and this is here exhibited with all fullness of detail.

"Now there was a certain [man] sick, Lazarus, from Bethany, of the village of Mary and Martha her sister. But Mary was she that anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick. The sisters then sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick." (Vers. 1-8.) Thus does John introduce the account. It puts us at once in presence of all concerned, the household whither He used to retire from the sterile, but guilty, parties of Jerusalem. Who had not heard of the woman that anointed the Lord with unguent, and wiped His feet with Her hair? Wherever the gospel was preached in the whole world, this was told for a memorial of her. But her name had been withheld till now. It was John's place to mention what so closely touched the person of the Lord. John names others, if he conceals his own name. It was Mary; and she with her sister sent a message to the Lord, reckoning on the promptness of His love. They were not disappointed. His love exceeded all their thought, as His glory was beyond their faith, however real it might be. But their faith was tried, as it always is.

"But when Jesus heard, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified by it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. When therefore he heard that he was sick, he then remained two days in the place where he was; then after this he saith to his disciples, Let us go into Judea again. The disciples say to him, Rabbi, the Jews were just now seeking to stone thee, and goest thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours of the day If any one walk in the day, he doth not stumble, because he seeth the light of this world; but if any one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him." (Vers. 4-10.)

First appearances are ever in this world against the good, and holy, and true. Those who seek occasion against what is according to God, can easily find excuse for their own evil. And the moral object of God, as of His word, tests every soul that comes into contact. So here the Lord knew the

end from the beginning, when He said, This sickness is not unto death; but he who was quick to judge by the beginning must inevitably misjudge. What would he have judged who heard Him say, Lazarus, come forth, and saw the dead man come forth from the cave of burial?

Resurrection displays the glorious power of God beyond all else. It arrests, and is intended to arrest, man, who knows too well what sickness is, and how hopelessly death severs him from all his activities. The sickness of Lazarus then, just because it ran up into death, was about to furnish a meet occasion for God's glory, and this, too, in the glorifying of His Son thereby.

There are those who delight in what they call “the reign of law;” but what is the sense of such thoughts or words when brought to the touchstone of resurrection? Does not the raising of the dead prove the supremacy of God's power over that which is a law, if there be an invariable lot appointed to sinful man here below, the law of death? And certainly death is not the cause of resurrection; but the Son is He who wields the power of life. He quickens whom He will, for He is God, but as the Sent One, the dependent and obedient Servant, for He is man. Such was Jesus here in this world, and this manifested most fully a short time before He laid down His life for the sheep.

But man is a poor judge of divine love, and even saints learn it only by faith. Jesus will have us confide in His love. For this is love, not that we loved Him, but that He loved us, and proved it in His dying a propitiation for us. Even here, too, how significantly the evangelist says that Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus, just before the mention of His staying two days in the place where He was after the message came. If a mere man, with power to heal, loved another that was sick, how soon he would have healed the patient! And Jesus had already shown His power to heal in the same hour. No matter what the intervening distance, or how unconscious the sufferer, why not speak the word on behalf of Lazarus? Did He love the nobleman of Capernaum and His boy? did He love the Gentile centurion and his servant, better than Lazarus? Assuredly nothing of the sort; but it was for the glory of God that the Son of God might be glorified by that very sickness, not arrested, but allowed to work its way.

The Lord was about to raise the dead Lazarus; and this when it had not the appearance of a law, but rather by grace the exemption of one from the law of death. How truly for the glory of God was the result! Not so was the way man would have wrought at once if he could. He who was God, and loved as no man ever did, abode two days where He was, and then calmly said to the disciples, Let us go into Judea again. Then wonder, Did He not know better than they the murderous rancor of the Jews? Had He forgotten their repeated efforts to stone Him? Why, then, did He propose to go thither again? He was here to do the will of His Father; and here was a work to do for His glory. His eye certainly was ever single, His body full of light.

“Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours of the day? If any one walk in the day, he stumbleth not., because he seeth the light of the world; but if any one walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.” If it was the will of the Father, it was day, and as Jesus was not only sent by the living Father, but lived on account of Him, so for the disciple He is the light, and the food, and the motive. The known will and word of God is the light of day; to be without it is to walk in the night, and stumbling is the sure consequence. If Christ be before us, the light will be in us, and we stumble not. May we evermore heed His word!

Chapter 101

Notes on John 11:11-29

THE Lord would exercise the hearts of His own. As His abiding in the same place for two days was not the impulse of human feeling, and His going to the place of deadly hatred was according to the light He walked in and was, so He has more to say which they had to ponder.

“These things said he, and after this he saith to them, Lazarus our friend is fallen asleep; but I go that I may wake him. Therefore said the disciples to him, Lord, if he is fallen asleep, he will recover. But Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he was speaking [literally speaketh] of the rest of sleep. Then said Jesus to them plainly, Lazarus is dead; and I rejoice on your account that I was not there, that ye may believe. But let us go unto him. Thomas therefore, that is called Didymus, Said to his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with him.” (Vers. 11-16.) The Lord begins to disclose what He was about to do; but they were dull to think of death, on the one hand, or of His resurrection power, on the other. The prevention of death, the healing of disease, is far short of triumph over death. The disciples were to be strengthened by the sight of resurrection before He died on the cross.

It is important to note that here, as everywhere, sleep is said of the body. It is the suited word of faith for death: how dark the unbelief that perverts it, as some do, to materialize the soul!

But the Lord, who tries faith, meets the weakness of His disciples, and clears up the difficulty. He tells them plainly” Lazarus is dead,” and expresses His joy on their account that He was not there (that is, merely to heal), in order that they might believe, when they knew better His power to quicken and raise the dead. Gloomy Thomas can see only His rushing into death when He proposed to go to Judea, though his love to the Lord prompts him to say, Let us also go that we may die with Him. How poor are the thoughts of a disciple, even where affection was true to the Master, who was indeed about to die in willing grace for them—yea, for their sins—that they might live forever, justified from all things; but who would prove before He died a sacrifice that He could not only live, but give life to the dead as He would, yet in obedience to, and communion with, His Father! Such is our Savior.

“Jesus therefore, on coming, found that he was four days in the tomb. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem about fifteen furlongs off; and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary and their company, that they might comfort them concerning their brother. Martha then, when she heard Jesus is coming, met him; but Mary was sitting in the house. Martha then said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. And now I know that, whatsoever thou mayest ask of God, God will give thee. Jesus saith to her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith to him, I know that he shall rise in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth on me shall never die [literally, shall in no wise die forever]. Believest thou this? She saith to him, Yea, Lord, I do believe [I have believed, and do] that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world. And having said this, she went away, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Teacher is here, and calleth for thee. When she heard [it],

she riseth quickly, and cometh unto him." (Vers. 17-29.)

The interval since death and burial is carefully stated, as well as the contiguity of the spot to Jerusalem, and the number of Jews who at the moment had joined the company of Martha and Mary, with a view to console them in their sorrow. God was ordering all for a bright testimony to His Son.

Again Martha prompt as ever when she heard of Jesus approaching, went to meet Him, while Mary kept sitting in the house, with a deeper sense of death, but at least as ready to go when summoned. Meanwhile she waits, as the Lord knew well and appreciated. When Martha did meet the Lord, she confesses His power to have warded off death by His presence. She owns Him as the Messiah; and as such she is confident that even now, whatever He may ask of God will be given Him. No doubt she meant this as a strong expression of her faith. But it was to correct this error, to give an incomparably fuller apprehension, that the Lord came now to raise Lazarus. Hence she applies to the Lord language far below His true relation to the Father:,t'cra lip allay Tov OCI;P. Had she said, ipiuTipti TOV w-a7Apa it would have been more becoming. It is all right to use airja, of us, for the place of a suppliant or petitioner becomes us; but the word of more familiar demand, OptoTrite, is suitable to Him. This, however, she, though a believer, had to learn.

When Jesus tells Martha that her brother shall rise again, she replies at once, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. But the Lord was here, not to teach truths known already, but to give what was unknown, and this in the glory of His own person. Therefore said Jesus to Martha, I am the resurrection and the life, and in this order as strictly applicable to the case in hand, Lazarus being dead and buried. He was the resurrection no less than the life, and this in fullness of power. "He that believeth on me, though he should die, shall live; and every one that liveth and believeth in me shall never die: believest thou this?" It is the superiority of life in Christ over all impediments, to be displayed at His coming. For we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. Thus at the coming of the Lord the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we, the living that remain, without passing through death, shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Thus will He be proved the resurrection and the life: the resurrection, because the dead believers immediately arise, obedient to His voice; the life, because every one that lives and believes on Him has mortality swallowed up of life at the same moment.

This tests Martha. To the Lord's inquiry, "Believest thou this?" she can only give the vague reply, Yea, Lord, I have believed, and do believe, that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, that should come into the world: a word containing truth, doubtless, but no real answer to the question. She felt the uneasiness usual even to saints, who hear what is beyond their depth; and she thinks of her sister as one that would understand incomparably better than herself; and so, without staying to learn, she hurried off, and called Mary secretly, saying, "The Teacher is here, and calleth thee," who, when she heard, quickly rises and comes. How sweet the call to her heart!

Chapter 102

Notes on John 11:30-44

There was not the smallest haste in the movements of our Lord. Indeed we may rather note His calm bearing in presence of the one sister, so quick to go before she was called, and of the other when she was. Jesus abides the same, a man, yet in the quiet dignity of the Son of God.

“Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was in the place where Martha came to meet him. The Jews therefore who were with her in the house, and consoling her, having seen Mary that she quickly rose up, and went out, followed her, thinking she goeth unto the tomb, that she may weep there.” (Vers. 30, 31) It was not so, however; but the grace of Christ meant that there He should meet Mary, soon about to behold a bright outshining of the glory of God in her beloved Lord. What strangers to Jesus were those who would console her in vain before death!

Not that Mary was above the pressure of death more than others. She repeats what Martha said; but she was of a different spirit in repeating it. “Mary, therefore, when she came where Jesus was, having seen him, fell at his feet, saying to him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” (Ver. 32) But if she saw in Him as yet only power to preserve, if she had to learn that He is the resurrection and the life, at least she fell at His feet, as Martha did not; and the Lord, if He says nothing, will soon answer in deed and in truth. But the consciousness of divine glory, and this about to manifest itself superior to death in presence of all, in no way detracted from the sensibilities of His spirit. On the contrary, the very next verses let us know how deep were the emotions of our blessed Lord at this moment.

“Jesus, therefore, when he saw her weeping, and the Jews that came with her weeping, was deeply moved in spirit, and troubled himself, and said, Where have ye laid him? They say to him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said, Behold how he loved him! And some of them said, Could not this [man] that opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that this [man] also should not have died?” (Vers. 33-37.)

The word translated “deeply moved” occurs elsewhere for a “strict,” or stern “charge,” as in Matt. 9:30, Mark 1:13; or an angry speech, as in Mark 14:5. Here it is rather the inward feeling than the expression, approached rather nearly by such use as that in Lucian (Nec. 20), of fretting or groaning. It means the strong, and it may be indignant, feeling the Lord experienced at the power of death over not the Jews only but Mary, wielded, as it still was, by the enemy. This is still farther expressed by the phrase that follows, as well as by verse 38. His tender sympathy appears rather in His weeping (ver. 35), after asking where they had laid Lazarus, and the invitation to come and see. His indignant sense of Satan's power through sin did not interfere in the least with His deep compassion; and what we see here is but the counterpart of His habitual bearing the diseases, and taking the infirmities, which the first gospel applies from Isa. 53:4. Never was it mere power, nor was it only sympathy, but the entrance of His spirit into every case He cured, the bearing of the weight on His heart before God of all that oppressed sin-stricken man. Here it was the still graver ravages of death in the family He loved.

But we may note that in our Lord's case, profound as was His grief, it was His servant. “‘ He troubled himself.” It did not gain the mastery, as our affections are apt to do with us. Every feeling in Christ was perfect in kind and measure, as well as season. His groaning, His trouble, His weeping—what were they not in God's sight! How precious should they not be to us! Even the Jews could not but say, “Behold how he loved him!” What had they thought had they known He was just going to raise the dead man? If they did not recall His power, it was only the unavailing regret that He who healed the blind had not forefended death in the case of Lazarus. They were utterly at fault about this sickness, as blind to the glory of God as to the way of it, that the Son of God would be glorified thereby. Faith in the glory of His person alone rightly interprets and appreciates in its measure the depth of His love. “Jesus wept.” What a difference these words convey to Him who sees nothing but a man, who knows Him to be the mighty God, the only-begotten Son! Even the unbeliever could not in this case fail to own His love; but how immensely that love is enhanced by His divine dignity, and the consciousness that He was about to act in the power of divine life above death

And it of all consequence that we should believe and know, without doubt, that all that Jesus showed Himself that day on behalf of Lazarus, He is, and far more, for His own, and that He will prose it for every one of us at His coming. For there is now also the fruit of the travail of His soul, and the power of His resurrection, after the fullest judgment of sin in the cross. Hence all His love and power can act unhinderedly on our behalf, as they surely will to the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified thereby. What men then beheld was but a testimony, however truly divine; but at His coming the troth will be fully out in power. Now is the time to believe and confess the truth in the midst of a crooked and perverted generation. May we be enabled to shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life

“Jesus therefore again, deeply moved in himself, cometh unto the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus saith, Take away the stone. Martha, the sister of the deceased, saith to him, Lord, he already stinketh, for he is four days [dead]. Jesus saith to her, Said I not to thee that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God They took away, therefore, the stone; and Jesus lifted his eyes upward, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou heardest me. And I knew that thon hearest me always; but on account of the crowd that standeth around I said it, that they may believe that thou didst send me. And having said this, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And the dead came forth, having the feet and the hands bound with graveclothes, and his face was bound round with a handkerchief. Jesus saith to them, Loose him, and let him go.” (Vers. 38-44.)

It was no longer the time for words, and Jesus, again realizing in Himself the power which shut opt God's glory from man; comes to the cave with a stone laid on it, which served for tomb. There the unbelief of Martha ventured (what does it not?) to oppose the Lord's word to remove the stone: He, that all might be clear; she, because His words disappointed her baste, if indeed she expected anything. But if Martha could not rise above the bumbling effects of death, which she would shut out from others, Jesus would not hide what was due to God in grace to man. How quickly the word of the Lord is forgotten in presence of the sad circumstances of human ruin! Faith gives the word heed, and reaps the blessing in due time. Listen to Jesus. He is heard already. He knows beforehand that He has what He asks, heard now; as always. The Father was concerned no less than the Son, and it was said that those who heard might believe that the Father sent Him forth.

And then comes the word of power: “Lazarus, come forth.” He had prayed to the Father, jealous above all for His glory, and never forgetful of the place He had Himself come down to as man. But He was the Son, He could quicken whom He would, and so He does. Yet even in the majesty of this divine display, He intermingles after, as well as before, what drew men's attention, that they might not be faithless but believing. What difficulty was there in the stone? For Himself He needed to remove nothing. It was for their sakes, to see man in the loathsomeness of death before he was raised. And so now what for Him mattered the binding of the graveclothes, or of the handkerchief? The grace of the Lord by both would only give them the better confirmation of what He had wrought. He could have loosed Lazarus as easily as He could have caused the stone to disappear; He could have willed all without crying with a loud voice; but He, who would that we should confide in the power of His word, would have us note the corruption that precedes quickening and the bondage which may follow it now. Liberty is needed well as life, but it is unnatural that one, who is made to live, should be longer bound.

Notes on John 11:45-57

Mighty as was the work of thus raising Lazarus, we see here, as everywhere, how dependent man is on grace. Sin makes him the slave of Satan, little as he suspects it. His will is against God, in His goodness or in His judgment, in His word or His works; and the greater the mercy, the less he likes what is so contrary to his thoughts, and so humbling to his pride. If many were impressed and believed, some went mischievously to the enemy with their information.

“Many of the Jews, therefore, that came to Mary, and beheld what he did, believed on him; but some of them went unto the Pharisees, and told them what Jesus did. The chief priests, therefore, and the Pharisees gathered together a council, and said, What do we, for this man hath many signs? and if we leave him thus, all will believe on him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation. But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest of that year, said to them, Ye know nothing, nor reckon that it is profitable for you that one man should die for the people, and not the whole nation perish. Now this he said not from himself, but, being high priest of that year, he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that also he should gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. From that day, therefore, they consulted that they might kill him. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but went away thence into the country near the desert, unto a city called Ephraim, and there he tarried with the disciples."

(Vers. 45-54.)

The chief priests and the Pharisees are immediately on the alert. They assemble a council; they wonder at their own inactivity in presence of the many signs done by Jesus; they fear that, if left alone, He may become universally acceptable, and that they may provoke the Romans to destroy them, church and state, as men now say. How affecting to see the power of Satan blinding those most who take the highest place in zeal for God after the flesh! It was their desperately wicked purpose to put Him to death, a purpose as desperately effected, which led to the cross, in which He did become the attractive center to men of every class, and nation, and moral condition; and it was their guilt in this especially, though not this alone, which drew on them the wrath of “the king,” who sent his forces, destroyed those murderers, and burnt their city. All righteous blood came upon them, and their house is left desolate unto this day, and this too by the dreaded hand of the Romans, whom they professed to propitiate by the death of Jesus.

And most solemn it is to see that God at the last hardens those who have long hardened themselves against the truth. So He is by-and-by to send men a working of error, that they should believe what is false, that all might be judged who have not believed the truth, but found pleasure in unrighteousness; and this most justly, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. It was He who spoke by Balaam, against his will, to bless His people, though hired of Balak to curse them, and proving afterward, not only by hi& corrupting wiles, but to his own destruction, how little the prophecies then were from himself. It is He who now speaks by Caiaphas, whose high-priesthood in that year gave his words the more official weight. Not that it

was an orderly condition that there should be such shiftings of the high priest. But so it was total confusion when the Son of God came here; so, most of all, when He was to die. No wonder that God, long silent, should speak by the high priest of that year. He is sovereign. He can employ evil as well as good—these heartily, those spite of themselves—and if their will be in it, with a sense as wicked as themselves.

So it was here, When Caiaphas said, “Ye know nothing, nor reckon that it is profitable that one man die for the people, and not the whole nation perish.” God was not in his thoughts but self without conscience. The evangelist comments on this, that he said it not from himself, but, being high priest of that year, prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that He should also gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad. In the heart of Caiaphas it was an unprincipled sentiment; in the mind of the Spirit it was not only most holy, but even the foundation of God's righteousness in Christ, on which is based the future hope of Israel, and the actual gathering of God's scattered children, the church. From that day measures were taken in concert to compass the death of our Lord, who retired to the northern wilderness of Judea, and there abode awhile with the disciples in the city called Ephraim. The hour was coming.

“But the passover of the Jews was near; and many went hp unto Jerusalem out of the country before the passover, that they might purify themselves. They were seeking, therefore, Jesus, and said among themselves, standing in the temple, What think ye? That he will not at all come unto the feast? Now the high priest and the Pharisees had given commandment that if any one knew where he was, he should inform, that they might take him.” (Vers. 55-57.)

Thus the closing scene is at hand; and Jesus pursues His service in retirement during the little interval before the passover, the last so soon to be fulfilled in His death. They went up to purify themselves before the feast, which gives rise to their seeking Him, and surmising as to His not coming. For orders had been given to inform as to His whereabouts, in order to His apprehension. Little did any, friends or foes, anticipate that one would be found among the chosen twelve to indicate the spot whither the Lord was wont to resort; but He knew all that should come upon Him. How far is man suspecting that it is all a question between Satan and God, and that, if evil seems to gain the upper hand, good triumphs even now to faith, as it will in the judgment of evil to every eye ere long!

Chapter 104

Notes on John 12:1-11

Such was the testimony God gave to the Lord Jesus as the Son in resurrection power, with the plain result of deadly hatred in those that bowed not in faith. Here, before a fresh witness is given, we are permitted to see Him in the home of those He loved at Bethany, where the Spirit gives us a fresh proof of grace in the recognition of His glory, and this in view of His death.

"Jesus, therefore, six days before the passover, came unto Bethany, where was Lazarus, whom Jesus raised from [the] dead. They made there for him a supper and Martha served, but Lazarus was one of those at table with him. Mary then, having taken a pound of ointment of costly pure nard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. And Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples, that was about to give him up, said], Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denaries, and given to poor [persons]? And this he said, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and, having the bag, used to bear what was deposited. Jesus then said, Leave her to have kept it for the day of my burial; for the poor ye have always with you, but me ye have not always." (Vers. 1-8.)

In presence of the Lord each comes out in his true colors. Jesus personally, as everywhere, is the object of God, the light which makes all manifest. But He does more. As He had brought life into the scene of death, the witnesses of His power and grace are there in their due place, according to their measure, one only having that special discernment which the love that is of God imparts, though grace may interpret it according to its own power. They made for Him a supper there, Martha serving, Lazarus at table with Him, Mary anointing His feet with the precious spikenard, and the house filled with the odor of the unguent. The Lord felt and explained its meaning, according to His own wisdom and love.

But if one of the blessed family was led by a wisdom above her own, in single-eyed devotedness, to an act most fitting and significant at that time, one of His disciples was not found wanting for the work of the enemy, which makes nothing of Jesus. All of good or evil turns at bottom into a true or false estimate of Him. We may be, and are, slow to learn the lesson, albeit of greater moment than any other; but it is the object of the Spirit in all scripture to teach us it, and nowhere so conspicuously, or more profoundly, than in this Gospel. So Judas Iscariot, one of His disciples, that was about to give Him up, says, Why was this ointment not sold for three hundred denaries, and given to poor people? He never thought of Jesus! Yet Mary's act might naturally have awakened affection. What was He not to her? Judas coolly calculates the lowest selling price of the nard; he falsely puts poor persons forward, for whom he had no real care; he would have liked that sum added to his unlawful gains. Nothing can be more thoroughly withering, more calmly true, than the comment of the Holy Ghost in verse 6. But what said Jesus? "Leave her to have kept it for the day of My burial: for the poor ye have always, but Me ye have not always."

Here is the truth said in divine love. It was not that Mary had received any prophetic intimation. It was the spiritual instinct of a heart that had found the Son of God in Jesus, of a heart that felt the danger that hung over Him as man. Others might think of His miracles, and hope that murderous

intents might pass away at Jerusalem as at Nazareth. Mary was not so easily satisfied, though she had witnessed His resurrection power with as deep feelings as any soul on earth. And she was led of God to do what had a weightier import by far in the Lord's eyes than in her own. The love that had prompted it was of God, and this is above all price. “If a man would give all his substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.” So said he who knew above the sons of men the vanity of human love, with the amplest means ever vouchsafed to the head of any house. But what was Mary's unguent, or the love that brought it out (kept as it had been, and now she knew why at that critical moment), compared with His who vindicated her, and was about to die for all, even for Judas?

It is indeed a scene to dwell on, most instructive and affecting, whether one contemplates the family as a whole, or Mary in particular, whether one may think of the disciples (for Matthew and Mark show that all were unappreciative, some even angry), or of the one whose dark influence acted so ill on the rest, and, above all, when one looks and listens to Him whose grace formed Mary's heart according to its own nature and ways.

"A [or, the] great crowd of the Jews therefore knew that he was [lit. is] there, and came not on account of Jews only but that they might see Lazarus also whom he raised from [the] dead. But the chief priests consulted that they might kill Lazarus also, because on his account many of the Jews were going away and believing on Jesus.” (Ver. 9-11.) “The Jews,” as often remarked, are not merely Israelites, but men of Judea, and greatly under the influence of the rulers in their hostility to Jesus as in other things. But they are not the rulers, and one sees the difference marked in these verses. The great crowd however seemed influenced quite as much by curiosity as by better motive. To see Lazarus who was raised from the dead is a very different thing from believing God. Still there was reality among some; and hence the deeper and deliberate malice of the chief priests, because many of the Jews were deserting them and believing on Jesus.

Notes on John 12:12-26

Mary had not at all misread the position of the Lord. The crisis was at hand. Perfectly did He understand to what point every current was flowing; he knew what was in man, in Satan, and in God, and that as the malice of the creature would thus push to the uttermost in rebellious hatred, God would go farther still in redeeming love, but withal in His most solemn judgment of sin. Of this moral glory how little as yet could any heart conceive!

But the final testimony must be full. Jesus had already shown Himself Son of God in power by raising Lazarus from the grave wherein he had lain a dead man: a testimony characteristic of John's Gospel, and peculiar to it. Men have raised objections, which only prove their own spiritual incapacity; for here it exactly suits, as it would nowhere else, and it was the right place and time too. All was divinely ordered.

The next testimony is to His Messianic title, and fittingly, therefore, given in every one of the Gospels. It could be wanting to none, and we find it as the next fact recorded by our evangelist.

"On the morrow, a great crowd that came unto the feast, having beard that Jesus is coming into Jerusalem, took branches of palm, and went out to meet him, and cried, Hosanna, blessed [is] he that cometh in Jehovah's name, [even] the king of Israel. And Jesus, having found a young ass, sat upon it, as it is written, Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting upon an ass's colt. These things his disciples knew not at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of him, and they did these things to him. The crowd therefore that was with him bore witness, because he called Lazarus out of the tomb, and raised him from [the] dead. Therefore also the crowd met him, because they heard that he had done this sign. The Pharisees therefore said among themselves, Ye behold that ye profit nothing: lo, the world is gone away after him.” (Vers. 12-19.)

Thus did the crowd welcome Him as Messiah, applying to Him very justly the language of Psa. 118, which the Lord in Matt. 23 declares shall be said by the repentant remnant who shall see Him when He returns to reign. Till then the house, once hallowed by Jehovah and bearing His name, is but their house, and left unto them desolate, as indeed they had made it a house of merchandise and a den of robbers. Nor was it mere enthusiasm in the crowd, but God at work; and the Lord Himself sat on the young ass, according to the prophecy of Zech. 9. It is remarkable how both Matthew and John omit the clause of the prophet which did not then apply, however sure by-and-by, for He knew well that He was to suffer then, in order to bring salvation when He comes again in glory. It was but a testimony at the time, and in the word to faith; when He comes, having salvation for His own, it will be in destructive judgment of all that oppose. Even His disciples knew not these things at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things were written of Him and they did these things to Him. He needed not that any should testify either of man or of Himself. Past, present, future, earth and heaven, were open to His gaze. He who made all knew all; as John constantly shows in harmony with the glory of His person, which is everywhere prominent, save what He was pleased, in His capacity of servant, not to know, leaving

it in the authority of the Father. (Mark 13) In the light of His glorification the disciples learned the import of the word and of the facts. It was His resurrection power which impressed the crowd so mightily. They did not draw the full lesson of faith, but concluded that He must be the promised Son of David, and met Him as such; while the Pharisees could not but own among themselves that obviously their stand and opposition was in vain, and the world, the prizes of unbelief, gone after Him. Little knew they what is proclaimed just afterward: “Now is the judgment of this world.” He sought its salvation, not popularity.

But another scene completes the circle of the testimony here given before the close.

"And there were certain Greeks of those corning up to worship at the feast; these therefore came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida of Galilee, and asked him, saying, Sir, we desire to see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew; and Andrew cometh, and Philip, and they tell Jesus. But Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say to you, except the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it beareth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any one serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there also my servant shall be; if any one serve me, him will my Father honor.” (Vers. 20-26.)

These were Gentiles, Greeks, and not merely Hellenists, who desired to see the Lord, and Philip and Andrew name it to Him. It was enough. The Lord opens the great truth. It is not now the Son of God quickening or raising the dead, nor the Son of David coming to Sion according to prophecy, but the Son of man glorified. This He explains after the solemn asseveration, so often found in our Gospel, under the well-known figure of death and resurrection in nature. “Verily, verily, except the corn of wheat falling into the ground die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it beareth much fruit.” He Himself was the true corn thus to produce fruit abundantly, yet even so only by death and resurrection. This was not, could not be, from defect of power in Him. It was from man's estate that it could not righteously be otherwise before God. Death only can meet the evil, or fill the void, and His death alone. For all others it wore vain, yea, fatal. Death to them must be for themselves to perish. He only could save, but through His death and resurrection; for as He would die, so He could rise, and by the infinite value of His death avail for others so as to raise them righteously. Living even, He must abide alone; dying, He bears much fruit in the energy of His resurrection.

Thus was He the Son of man glorified. It was for sin that God at length might be glorified; and now He was. Sin brought in death; His dying for it, by God's grace and to God's glory, laid the basis for the change of all things, even for the new heavens and earth in the eternal state; how much more for all that believe to be meanwhile blessed in a new life before they are changed into the likeness of His glory, when He comes for them! “He shall see His seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied.” So said the first of prophets, and this founded on His death— “when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin,” in accordance with His own words here seven centuries after, when approached that wondrous hour and act of man's guilt when he meant pain and ignominy, when God inflicted incomparably worse in His unsparing and unfathomable judgment. To Him the hour was come that the Son of man should be glorified. What perfect self-sacrifice! What devotedness to God! What love to man, even to His bitterest enemies! Such was Jesus going down to death, yea, death of the cross; and such the fruit unfailing.

The principle, too, becomes a primary one thenceforth, not ease and honor and advancement for self, which is now the greatest loss, but suffering and shame, and, if need be death, now in this world for Christ's sake. Such is practical Christianity. “He that loveth his life loseth it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall also my servant be; if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.” And what an honor! He assuredly knows what it is, and how to give it. But it is not in self-devised and self-imposed abasements; neither in flagellations of the back, nor in lickings of the dust, nor in like heathenish effort that dishonors the body to the satisfying of the flesh. It is in what the Holy Spirit alone can guide and sustain, in serving Christ—a service inseparable from following Him, its beginning eternal life in the Son, its end the same life in glory with Him, for such will the Father honor. May we be strengthened to discern and do the truth!

Chapter 106

Notes on John 12:27-36

The Lord reverts to thoughts of His approaching death. There is no avoidance of contemplating that which it was part of His perfection to feel, as no man ever did. He estimates it rightly and fully as before, instead of braving it as men do who cannot escape. To Him it was no inevitable doom, but divine love, that God might be glorified in a guilty world, that sinners might be saved righteously, that the entire creation in heaven and earth (I say not τ■ καταχθον■, the infernal beings) might be reconciled and blessed forever. He, and He only, had authority to lay down His life (ψυχ■ν), as He had authority to take it again. As He is the Resurrection and the Life (ζω■), so no one takes the life He had in this world from Him, but He lays it down of Himself, though also in obedience of His Father, and to the everlasting glory of God, as the fullness of His person enabled Him to do. Nonetheless, but the more, did He feel the gravity, humiliation, and suffering of what was before Him. There was the deepest sense of death, not only as man and Messiah, but of its import from man's hand, and from God's judgment. Not an element of grief, and pain, and shame, and horror was absent from His heart, compatible with the perfection of His person and relationship to God.

"Now is my soul troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour; but on account of this came I unto this hour. Father, glorify thy name." (Vers. 27, 28.) He was the Life, yet came to die; was light and love, yet rejected and hated as man never knew before, nor will again. The reality of His manhood, the glory of His Godhead, in no way hindered His sorrow: His being who and what He was, and perfect in all, only gave Him infinite capacity to feel and fathom what He endured, none the less because He came to endure it all, and had now before Him in immediate prospect, though none of men saw it but Himself. He had not been perfect man if His soul had not been troubled, so as to feel, "What am I to say?" He had not been Son of God as man, had He not in His soul-trouble prayed, "Father, save me from this hour," and quite as little, "but on this account came I unto this hour," crowned with, "Father, glorify thy name." To have felt and expressed the first petition perfectly suited Him who was man in such circumstances; to have added the second was worthy of Him who is God no less than man in one undivided person; to have said both was perfection in both, in sorrow as in joy, as to death no less than life.

The Father appreciates and answers accordingly. "Then came there a voice out of heaven, I both have glorified and will glorify [it] again. The crowd then that stood and heard said that it thundered; others said, An angel hath spoken to him." (Vers. 28, 29.) Augustine and Jerome confound this with chapter 17:5, from which it is wholly and demonstrably distinct, but we must never expect spiritual intelligence, sometimes not even common orthodoxy, from the Fathers, so-called. The later passage in our Gospel is the Son requesting the Father that He as the risen Man should be glorified, on the completion of His work, as well as consonantly with the rights of His person, along with the Father Himself in the glory which the Son had along with Him before the world.

The passage before us refers to what had just been, and what was going to be, done in this world; for as the Father had glorified His name in the resurrection of Lazarus, so yet more infinitely would

He in the rising from the dead of His own Son. The moderns, such as Dean Alford, fail, in meager, vague, and even erroneous thought, to reach the mark as much, or more, than the ancients. For how poor it is to tell us that διὰ τοῦτο= ἵνα σωθῶ ἐκ τῆς ὥρας ταύτης, that I might be safe from this hour, that is, the going into and exhausting this hour, this cup, is the appointed way of My glorification; or, as Meyer says, that Thy name may be glorified, which is to anticipate what follows. It was really to die, though undoubtedly the glory of the Father by the Son. So again, δόξασα points to something much more definite than "in the manifestation hitherto made of the Son of God, imperfect as it was (see Matt. 16:16, 17); in all Old Testament type and prophecy; in creation, and indeed (Aug. in John 3:4) antequam facerem mundum." Lastly, it is losing the exact force to treat πάλιν as a mere intensification of the δοξάζειν, instead of seeing a distinct and higher display of that resurrection power which marked out the Son of God.

As to the question why some said the voice from heaven was thunder, others the speaking of an angel to the Lord, it seems vain to speculate. It was really speculation on the part of the crowd, who all fell short of the truth. Unbelief of Him can weaken or get rid of all testimony till He come in judgment. Yet was it really in grace to them, for "Jesus answered and said, Not on men's account hath this voice come, but on yours. Now is [the] judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out: and I, if I be lifted up out of the earth, will draw all to me. But this he said signifying by what death he was about to die. The crowd [then] answered him, We have heard out of the law that the Christ is to abide forever; and how sayest thou that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man? Jesus then said to them, Yet a little time the light is among you. Walk while ye have the light, that the darkness may not overtake you; and he that walketh in darkness knoweth not where he goeth. While ye have the light, believe in the light, that ye may become sons of light." (Vers. 30-36.)

These words, if any, are surely of the most solemn import, and the more, as Christendom now, as ever, ignores their truth. For men, Christian men, believe nothing less than that "now in the judgment of this world," even while some of them look for the casting out of its prince in due time. The glory of the Son of man is founded on death. The rejection of the Messiah gives occasion for what is thus incomparably larger and more profound; and thus is God's glory immutably secured, and much fruit borne, even the blessing of those otherwise lost, now blessed, not merely by, but with, Christ. But if heaven be thereby opened (for the cross and heaven answers to each other), the world is judged. Before God and to faith now is its judgment, and not only when execution takes place publicly and in power. But now it is judged for him who has the mind of Christ, who shares His rejection and awaits glory with Him on high. A living Messiah should have gathered the twelve tribes of Israel round Himself as their Chief, raised up of God according to promise; but He was to be lifted up out of the earth, crucified, Satan's seeming victory to be but real and everlasting defeat, and so known to faith, while we wait for the day which shall declare it beyond contradiction. Christ on the cross is a very different object from reigning over His people in grace, and abiding forever; yet they should here read it also out of the law, for there it is dimly. But grace makes Him manifest thus lifted up, the attractive center for all, Gentile or Jew, spite of their sins, which He then bore in His own body. A suffering Son of man was, and is, no article of Jewish faith, though certainly revealed in their scriptures. To their expression of ignorance the Lord replies by telling them how brief was the stay of the light, by warning them of the darkness about to seize on them, and by exhorting them to faith in the light, if they would escape the darkness and have the light to

characterize themselves.

Notes on John 12:37-50

The close was at hand, and a token even then was given, that the light would not be always there. “Jesus spoke these things and, going away, hid himself from them. But though he had done so many signs before them, they did not believe on him, that the word of Esaias the prophet which he said might be fulfilled. Lord, who believed our report? and to whom was the Lord's arm revealed? On this account they could not believe because Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and he hardened their heart that they may not see with their eyes and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I heal them. These things said Esaias, because [or when] he saw his glory, and spoke concerning him. Still, however, from among the rulers also many believed on him, but on account of the Pharisees did not confess, that they might not be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the glory of men more than the glory of God.” (Vers. 86-48.)

Such was the result of the only absolutely perfect testimony ever rendered in this world, the words, and ways, and signs of the Son of God; and this, not where blank ignorance might be pleaded in extenuation, but where God had done all possible to prepare the way by prophecy, and to arouse attention by miracle in the midst of a people used to divine intervention. But man's unbelief, left to itself and Satan, can shut out every sight and sound from God. So ıt was among the Jews of our Lord's day, and so it continues till this day. It is still “this generation,” which shall not pass away till all God's threats be fulfilled. Of the outward judgments, however, John does not speak, but the synoptic evangelists; John of having Him no more who is all. For what is it to lose the light, to be abandoned to that darkness where he who walks in it knows not where he goes? And this is precisely the state of the Jew; the more aggravated because they had the light for a little among them, and did not believe, so that they failed to become children of light, and the darkness seized on them. Thus was the prince of prophets fulfilled by their unbelief in their own ruin, and this in both the parts of his prophecy, early and late, which speculation vainly seeks to divorce. But we believe the inspired evangelist, not the presumptuous professor, and are as assured that both prophecies are Isaiah's, as that they were divinely given and now fulfilled in the Jew so long incredulous. But as the first citation shows the guilt of rejecting God's testimony, so the second though really earlier points to the solemn fact of judicial blindness, never pronounced, still less executed, of God, till patience has had its perfect work and man has filled up the measure of his guilt beyond measure. Under such a sentence of hardening no doubt they could not believe; but the sentence came because of wickedness consummated in willful rejection of God and His will when they did not believe in spite of the fullest appeals to their hearts and consciences. As the first citation shows utter unbelief when Christ came in humiliation and suffering to do the work of atonement, so the latter conveys the dread word which shut them up in blindness before the light they had so long despised, followed up by the inspired comment that these things said Isaiah when he saw Christ's glory and spoke of Him. It is Jehovah in the prophecy, Christ in the Gospel; but they are one; as indeed Acts 28:25-27 enables us to include the Holy Spirit. How thoroughly confirmed and confirming the still older oracle in Deut. 6:4; “Jehovah our God is one Jehovah.” John 12 and Acts 28 weaken it in nothing, but add to its force and expressiveness, as they show

out more and more the patience of God and the darkness of the Jew after ages of trifling with His mercy and His menaces alike. And the darkness increased as the light shone out.

But ungodliness shows itself not only in the insubjection of the heart to believe, but in the cowardliness of the soul to confess the Lord (Rev. 21:8); as we see here that “many from among the chief rulers believed on him, but on account of the Pharisees did not confess, that they might not be put out of the synagogue.” And the motive or moral reason is given; they loved glory from men rather than glory from God. They feared the religions world, being keenly sensible of human glory, but dull to that which is from God. But we must not forget that, if with the heart man believes to righteousness, with the mouth confession is made to satiation. God makes much of confession of His Son, nor can we safely own salvation otherwise.

Next, comes the final public testimony of our Lord, given in this Gospel. “But Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me believeth not on me but on him that sent me; and he that beholdeth me beholdeth him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that every one that believeth on me may not abide in darkness. And if any one have heard my words and not kept [them], I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that slighteth me and receiveth not my words hath one that judgeth him; the word which I have spoken, that will judge him in the last day, because I did not speak from myself, but the Father who sent me hath himself given me commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak; and I know that his commandment is life eternal. What things then I speak, as the Father hath said to me, so I speak.” (Vers. 44-50)

The Lord spoke with earnestness as elsewhere; and it was due to men in His grace, considering the solemn issues at stake, and the divine glory concerned. It was a question of His Father who sent Him, no less than of Himself. To believe on the Son, to behold Him, was to behold and believe on the Father. They were inseparably one, as He had already declared; and he who had the Son had the Father also. Further, the Lord was come as light into the world (for it was no question of Israel only) that every believer on Him might not abide in darkness. He has the light of life, and not life only; He is light in the Lord. It was therefore ruin to have heard and not kept His words; but such was the grace in which He came, that He could add, I judge him not, for I came not that I might judge the world, but that I might save the world. How then would His glory be vindicated in his case who slights Him and receives not His words? He has that which judges him, the word. “The word which I have spoken, that shall judge him in the last day;” and the more surely, because Jesus spoke not from Himself, as if He sought His own will or glory, but was simply uniformly subject to the Father, who not only sent Him but enjoined what He was to say and speak; the Father's commandment He knew to be life eternal. Jesus was as subject to Him in His utterances as in His doings, being here to declare Him and do His will.

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Chapter 109

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—9

The first parable does apply closely to the church as a professing thing under responsibility to God, add the professing church will indeed meet with the fate of the evil bondsman; but the church—the bride—can never be said to have gone forth to meet the Bridegroom, and probably the second parable accurately applies to faithful ones of Israel (five wise virgins), who shall take the place on earth of the church immediately it is called away; and the professing thing to be destroyed—the five foolish. The words of our Lord suggest this; for after describing the destruction; of the evil bondsman, He says, “Then shall the kingdom of the heavens be made like...."

In the first of the second pair of parables, the Lord takes up again the case of that which occupies the place of responsibility to Him as a bondservant to his lord, but it is no longer to feed those that are within the house, but to traffic with those who are without. Here also the faithful ones in Israel responsible for witness, having their Lord's substance to traffic with, even His name and word, seem to be shown forth; or, perhaps, it is the church in its character as witness on earth, manifested in its first and last developments: first as the bondsman with five talents, where we get it as gathered out principally from the remnant of Israel, with a large measure of gift bestowed and consequent responsibility; and afterward as the bondsman with two talents, where it 18 as brought out wholly from the Gentiles with but little strength or gift, but still faithful in that which it has. The one that had the one talent is the empty shell of profession, which will remain on earth when the kernel of faith is gone, but still held responsible as owning the word and name of its Lord, but which all the way through has but hid the heavenly treasure, turning it to a base use, making it serve an earthly purpose; whose lot, therefore, shall be to be cast out into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth; for at the least the talent of profession should be placed in the hands of those who really deal in the heavenly treasure, and not be placed in the earth, where it can produce no fruit, but only become soiled by the contact.

As this parable shows us judgment and reward of those who on earth deal with heavenly things, so the next brings to view the judgment of those who on earth have had to do with heavenly men. In this case we are taken clean off anything approaching church ground, and even that of profession, whether Christian or Jewish.

Here the King comes forth in the fullness of His power and glory, and all the nations are gathered before Him, and the blessing or cursing, the reward or punishment, shall be simply according to the reception or rejection of those who have represented the King (His brethren), whilst He waited in His longsuffering, sending forth the gospel of the kingdom—the everlasting gospel, ere He set His throne in judgment to judge the world in righteousness and the people with equity; to rebuke the heathen and destroy the wicked; to bring the wickedness of the wicked to an end, but to establish the just; causing all the ends of the world to remember and turn unto Him, and all the kindreds of the nations to worship before Him. But now His throne is set, the kingdom of the world, of our Lord and of His Christ, is come, and, according to the treatment of His brethren, His

ambassadors, His little ones, so shall the judgment be.

The end is now at hand, and the Lamb which had been set apart three and a half years before is now to be slain, that the blood of deliverance (the Passover) may be sprinkled. But while the wicked, whom Jehovah will use as His sword (Psa. 17:13, 14), are taking counsel together in the high places of the land against Jehovah and against His anointed, faith, by the lowly hand of a woman in the house of a leper—an outcast—receives Him, owns Him and honors Him Lord of all power and might, King of kings, and Lord of lords, though apparently so poor, despised, and destitute, that His nearest friends counted it an act of foolish waste to anoint that kingly head which, while giving rest to all, had not itself “where to repose, and wheresoever that gospel of the kingdom shall be preached, there shall this woman's act be spoken of for a memorial of her—an example of believing love—the path for faith to walk in; her deed of love and faith standing out in solitary beauty and grandeur amidst that dark and terrible scene—the single bright gleam which shone alone through the thick oppressive gloom of selfishness and pride which pressed in on every side, shall be the note harped upon by every proclaimer of the glad tidings of the coming kingdom; it shall be set forth as a specimen of that faith which shall obtain entrance into and participation in that blessed state. This incident is therefore given in direct reference to the time and circumstances previously described by our Lord to His disciples, and is reserved for direct application until then.

Judas is found an exact contrast, for his expectations of present profit being all disappointed, the very one he hoped had been the King of Israel now speaking about being buried, and what little he might have possessed himself of having been wasted upon his master's head, he determines to make what he can while yet he has the chance, and in order that he may save something out of the coming wreck of every hope which he foresees, he sells his Master for the price of a slave; and as Mary's blessing shall be the portion of all who shall have ministered to the needs of the despised and persecuted proclaimers of the coming of their King, who will reckon it as having been done unto Himself, so shall the curse of Judas come upon all who have neglected and despised the least of the brethren of their Lord.

So conscious are the disciples of their lack of simple trust in their Lord and Master, and of confidence in one another, that while they could one and all unhesitatingly pronounce indignant judgment that it was a waste to spend three hundred fence in an act of private homage to Him, yet they feel that any one of them might be guilty of an act of grossest treachery. Their eyes were fixed upon an earthly portion, though doubtless in connection with their Lord (excepting Judas, who had decided to have this world's treasure, if not by following Him then by selling Him), and if this earthly portion were to fail, then all beyond was darkness and a blank which they could not penetrate. They began to feel like sheep without a shepherd, that they might run into any kind of evil; like ships without a rudder, at the mercy of every wind and current; and Peter's protestation of fidelity proceeding from the same source as the trembling doubt of the others showed that all alike would fail in the hour of need, and that flesh, whether in a Peter or a Judas, was a rotten thing, a broken reed that would pierce the hand that leaned upon it.

The blessed Lord knowing that it is at this point (the cross) that flesh must have an end—the testing place of faith—the terrible gulf, at the brink of which the natural heart lingers tremblingly so long, where every hope and thought and joy of nature must be lost forever, and that He, the only

one who had ever yet been called upon to go down into that bottomless abyss, that shoreless fathomless ocean of the wrath of God, was going through it in all its solemn awful terrors, in order that He might bring through scatheless all who should believe on Him; and that the work He had undertaken He would perfectly perform, leaving not a hoof behind, but bringing all in the joy of perfect deliverance to the other side; yet knowing the terrible trial for faith to trust itself in those dark waters, though it pass dry shod, now leaves a memorial for the heart to cling to in the dreadful path, which should buoy it up and give it peace, taking its eyes off all the fearful scene and fixing them upon Himself, unseen yet realized and touched by faith.

So while they eat before the dreaded hour arrived, all (except Him who had undertaken the work) unconscious of the imminence of the time, pregnant with eternal consequences, Jesus takes the bread, blesses, breaks, and gives to His disciples, saying, “Take, eat; this is my body.” Never now will they be able to anoint that head; wise in their own conceits, the opportunity passed away forever. Now if they would honor that body, they must receive it as a piece of bread, not anointing Him as King, nor fighting for Him as Lord, but feeding upon Him as life and strength, nourishment and comfort. No longer a body to be seen and touched and handled, but an unseen presence having a seen memorial, through which it might be seen and touched and handled by the soul.

Then, having taken the cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying,” Drink ye all of it. For this is my blood, that of the new covenant, that shed for many, for the remission of sins.” This was to assure their souls the sea was dry, the fire was quenched, the sword had drunk its fill, and the overflowings of that blood were for their stay and joy in the way. The cup once filled with wrath had been emptied and its dregs wrung out, and instead, the blood, which told of pardon, peace with God, and separation from a world of sin and woe, now filled it to its brim. Real and absolutely true for the soul and faith as the Lord has made the cup of His blood which we drink, yet He goes on distinctly to declare that the fruit of the vine is not His blood; for He says He will in no wise drink of that until He drinks it new with us in the kingdom of His Father.

The Lord having thus given some tangible thing for faith to cling to in its passage through the dark and terrible gulf of judgment against sin—full and overflowing indeed for Him, but therefore dry for all who followed Him—He now permits three of His disciples, who were to have a separate testimony, distinct in its character for each to deliver, to behold the deep grief and sorrow of soul even unto death, which He suffered on account of righteousness through the blind and hardened rejection of Himself and His claims by those among whom He had cast His lot; whose blessing it had been to have received Him, but upon whom utter judgment and the irrevocable curse should come by occasion of their unbelief. The complete blasting of every hope which He might have entertained as the true Messiah, the apparent frustration of the will of God and breaking of every promise, the shameful dishonor about to come upon the place, the city, and the people, upon which the name of God was called, a byword, a hissing, and a reproach throughout the nations, brought upon them by their own hand; and not alone the cutting off of Himself, God's anointed One, but also the smiting of Him as the Shepherd of the little flock, the few sheep in the wilderness, and their scattering.

Thus the piercing of the only Son—the Son of David, the wounding in the house of His friends, the smiting of the Shepherd with the awful consequences to people, friends, and flock, and shame upon the great name of Him who owned them, beat with such vehement force upon His soul, that

the lifeblood, distilling as drops of sweat upon His brow, fell thence to the earth. “Lord, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians say, For mischief did he bring them out to slay them in the mountains? Turn from thy fierce wrath and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever.” And He in drinking this one cup of death was about to taste all the bitterness and suck out its dregs of the reproach and shame and curse decreed upon alt alike, king and people, place and name, root and branch, head and foot: for in Him all of promise, blessing, glory, peace, power, goodness, was treasured, and to cut Him off was to cut off all and leave not a hope behind, but with Himself to plunge all into a black and bottomless abyss, from whence there was no return.

Yet in obedience to a Father all wise, all gracious, omnipotent, He drinks the dreadful draft, and gives His bondman James to behold His cheerful submission, that he may exhort the twelve tribes by that example to count it all joy when they fall into divers temptations, trusting in the Father of lights, from whom cometh every good and every perfect gift, with whom is no variation or shadow of a turning, that therefore they may have patience and await the precious fruit of the earth, having patience for it until it receive the early and the latter rain, stablishing their hearts since the coming of the Lord is drawn nigh.

To Peter likewise, the apostle of Jesus Christ to the sojourners of the dispersion, that he might uplift Christ as our model that we should follow in His steps, who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth; who, when reviled, reviled not again; when suffering, threatened not, but gave Himself over into the hands of Him who judges righteously, exhorting us to arm ourselves with the same mind, for if we have likewise suffered in the flesh we shall have done with sin.

To John also, that he might show us that fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ involves absolute separation from all that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, since if any man love the world the love of the Father is not in him; that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all, and walking in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanses us from all sin; and he that loves his brother is one that abides in the light, and we thus know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren; whereas the world hates us, because its works are wicked and ours righteous.

The Son of man, the one to be the anointed firstborn, is now delivered up into the hands of sinners. The Rabbi, Teacher, Prophet, delivered up by the false friend, is now wounded in the house of His friends. The Shepherd of Israel, who had, daily teaching in the temple, made the flock to lie down in green pastures and had led them beside the still waters, restoring their soul and leading them in the paths of righteousness; the shepherd, who was the fellow of Jehovah of Hosts, and could have commanded more than twelve legions of angels, is now smitten with the sword and the sheep are scattered; His dearest friends who could sleep while He watched for that dread hour in agony of soul and supplication, but who waking, when bid to sleep, wound Him more with ill-timed fleshly energy, now all forsake Him, who had with such loving powerful hand guided them through all their journey in the paths of pleasantness and peace. But Peter, in the power of fleshly

love, through which he had before proved himself an adversary and now an enemy to his Master's work though not to His person, follows Him afar off, to see the end; and the high priest, and the elders, and the whole council, sought false witness against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death, saying, “This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours;” but they found none until two come forward and say, “He said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and in three days build it.” But it was indeed false witness, for He had said that if they destroyed the temple of His body, truly the temple of God, in three days He would (not build it, but) raise it up. This was the sign He had Himself given them, as proving His authority to cleanse His Father's house, to demand the fruit of His Father's vineyard, even worshippers, who should worship Him in spirit and in truth; but the husbandmen had refused to render thus the fruits, and had corrupted the temple of God still more, so that, from a house of merchandise, it had become a den of thieves—nay, more, of murderers, for not only had they openly refused to render the fruits to their Lord's just claims, but now had they compassed the death of His beloved Son, the heir of the vineyard.

And now there stand together the spiritual man, and the man of flesh—the man after God's own heart, and the people's choice. God's High Priest, and the false usurper, who, wielding fleshly power and authority, seeks to compel the spiritual man to acknowledge his right to judge, but to no purpose, until, finding his claims met by a superior authority at every point, he dares to challenge a decision between them before the throne of Him whom both acknowledged as the source of all their claims. He demands the sentence upon one single issue, abandoning all secondary counts, requiring judgment upon the one point which was really the only one at issue between them—which of them was the true Anointed One of God. “I adjure thee,” he says, “by the living God that thou tell us if thou art the Christ, the Son of God.” Then comes the sentence forth, and from the mouth of Him whose right the usurper had denied, for in the person of that meek and lowly One the living God was present in their midst, though not indeed to judge, unless His judgment were demanded, but to save, and that by suffering: therefore is He silent, when to speak would be to judge: but when the righteousness and holiness of His throne is called in question, and He Himself called upon to decide whether He will have fellowship with truth or falsehood, then speak He must, and speaking declare His judgment. “Thou hast said,” Jesus says. “Moreover I say to you, from henceforth ye shall see the Son of man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Much as they had hated Him when, silent as a sheep dumb before his shearers, now that His full title and glory and power and majesty are revealed, proved by righteousness, holiness, and truth—blameless before God and man, so that not even false witness can be brought to convict Him—then outburst all the malignities of man's heart, and hatred against God; and since in His love to them as the creatures of His hand, He had come to save them from the unutterable curse, to be to the praise of the glory of God, in eternal life and joy; and in obedience to His Father's will, having emptied and humbled Himself, and being by the will of God delivered up into the hands of sinners, they wreak upon Him all the spite that the paltry mind of man, urged on by the malevolence of the devil, can suggest. They spit in His face, and buffet Him, some strike Him with the palms of their hands, saying, “Prophesy to us, Christ, who is it that struck thee?” So do they pierce and lacerate the soul of Him who should have been to them precious as a firstborn, an only son.

Terribly bitter as this cup was to Him who had wept over the hand that struck Him, knowing the requital of vengeance that would follow, saying, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and stones those that are sent unto her, how often would I have gathered thy children as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” Yet a much deeper wound, going right to the quick, was given by one who counted himself His dearest friend; thrice did the sharp sword of denial pierce His soul. Those three years of constant loving care forgotten: the tender sympathy and love, the watching night and day with prayer, the patient endurance of folly, pride, self-will, hardness of heart, and unbelief—the unwearied teaching, the words of wisdom given as able to be borne, here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept; the mighty acts of power, words of truth, and ceaseless outflowings of perfect self-sacrificing love, all forgotten in a moment, at the question of a maid, increasing in shamelessness and sin, from a public denial before all of any connection with his Lord, to a denial of the person of his Lord, attesting that denial with an oath, and going on to a further denial of his Lord, beginning to curse and to swear, being ready to deny his own identity.

But the night of agony and shame for Shepherd and sheep, Master and disciple, the Lord and His friends, is at its close, and at the first note which heralded the day dawn, Peter comes to himself, remembers the word of Jesus: his faith fails not—the prayer of his dear Lord receiving a triumphant answer, so that, going out outside, he weeps bitterly. The morning has arrived, and the natural heart of sinful man, arrived at its perfect development, takes counsel to destroy the only perfect thing the world had ever seen: but it must be done so as to appear a praiseworthy and just action—nay, more, as being themselves quite free from motive, except a regard for what was due to God and man—a righteous deed, to put a blasphemer to death but so merciful are they, so sensitive, they shrink from doing it themselves; but God will not permit them to throw the flimsiest veil of decency over their deed, to screen in anywise its abhorrent vileness from their eyes, for scarcely had they delivered Jesus up to the heathen governor, thus proving traitors to their God and King, than Judas, the representative man of the fleshly people, returns to them the wages of his iniquity, declaring he had delivered up guiltless blood:—now they must go on to an act of premeditated, willful, murder, and not, as hitherto, of ignorant and unbelieving hate.

Peter denied his Lord, delivering Him up, in a certain way, to secure his own safety. Judas delivered Him up in order to make a profit out of Him, not wishing to kill Him; but the heads of the people deliver Him up of malice aforethought, that He might be put to death. Compare Peter with Reuben—the remnant of faith—the poor of the flock—the little ones (Gen. 37:21); Judas with Judah—the nation—the royal seed—the people of God, house of David (Gen. 37:26); the high priests and elders of the people, with the eight other brothers (Gen. 37:18 - 20).

Jesus denies Himself, delivers Himself up, surrenders altogether His claims to the throne and kingdom as a natural man, that He may take them up again in resurrection; and this is the force of the prophecy of Jeremiah mentioned, of which the quotation in Zechariah is the complement. In Jeremiah it is the Lord as Son of David, Son of a virgin, the Jewish Messiah (Hanameel, the one whom God has graciously given) selling all right and claim to His inheritance—to all that He inherited in that capacity, and buying it back for Himself, as represented in Jeremiah (may the Lord establish Him), at the cost of seven shekels, a perfect price, and ten pieces of silver—the seven shekels representing the price of His own life, and the ten pieces the believing remnant of Israel, whose hopes He completely destroyed by humbling Himself unto death—laying down His life.

Thus, as the Shepherd that should feed His people Israel, He lays down His life for the sheep, and the sheep are scattered. But in order that He may take it again in a new power and character, and bring the scattered ones and those who were not of that fold, no longer to a fold, but into a flock, making one flock, and one Shepherd. Thus, as Judah bartered away her Ruler for a potter's field, a place to bury strangers in, so the Lord should count them but as strangers, and defiled, breaking them as a potter's vessel, and burying them in Tophet, till there should be no place to bury; casting down the price of blood in the house of Jehovah, that it might be called a field of blood unto this day.

The religious system claiming acknowledgment from God having thus been shown to be disowned by Him, accounted by Him a blood field, not His “house of peace” —a valley of lamentation, not a mount of praise; they, on their part, having wrested the judgment of the poor man, and compassed the slaying of the innocent and righteous one; the fleshly man—Cain—violently enforcing his claim to be God's priest by smiting the spiritual man—Abel; the spiritual Man, as God's King, His Anointed One, is brought face to face with him, who, as in the place of God, wielded governmental power over the peoples of the earth, who immediately challenges His title— “Art thou the king of the Jews?” and at once receives reply, “Thou sayest.” He is there before His murderers and persecutors, not to answer their malicious and false accusations, but to assert and prove His claims, by being just in the presence of injustice, and making falsehood manifest by truth. But though the professed witness for God upon earth had proved its utter ruin by rejecting, and aiming to destroy His pure and holy One, there was one step more in evil which they could take—having refused the good, there was only left to choose the evil in its place: this they now proceed to do. To rid themselves of God's good Man was their aim, and they cared not at what cost or loss to themselves. Give us Barabbas, and let Christ be crucified, say they; and as His weight of worth and innocence more and more inclines the scale of justice to His side, the greater their hate and madness grows, and the more recklessly, like fevered gamblers, do they cast their dearest treasures into the balances to make the issue meet their will—power, honor, title, at last life itself “His blood be on us and on our children” is cast, that their end may be gained, and now they take ground on which law and justice can meet them.

Life for life—eye for eye—tooth for tooth. If His life were innocent, then they agree to pay according to law its worth and value. Though they had refused to relieve Judas of the responsibility of betraying the innocent, yet now they eagerly accept the consequences of spilling guiltless blood; and Pilate, who had made the condemnation equivalent to a verdict of innocent, delivers Jesus into their hands to be crucified. In mockery the soldiers bow the knee to the lowly Nazarene—soon will come to pass a repetition of that scene in terrible reality: no longer a scarlet cloak, but clothed with a garment dipped in blood; not a crown woven out of thorns, but many diadems upon His head, not now mutely bearing taunts and scoffs, but smiting with a sharp two-edged sword going out of His mouth; an iron rod for scepter, not a reed wherewith to beat Him on His head: no more the gentle One, reviling not again, who had walked so carefully through the world that not a bruised reed was broken nor the smoking flax quenched, but treading now the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty; not in solemn mockery hailed king of the Jews, but every knee now bending, and every tongue confessing Him to be King of kings and Lord of lords—His name in manifestation and the place of power, written upon His garment and upon His thigh—once His accusation, written over His head upon the cross, “This is Jesus, the King of

the Jews," while the passersby reviled, the chief priests mocked, the scribes and elders also, and the robbers even who had been crucified with Him casting the same reproaches on Him. Though man the Monarch of creation mocks, inanimate nature mourns, and for three hours darkness covers the whole land, as though veiling from view that awful agony by which the great sin debt was paid, and creation bought back into liberty and blessing. The tide of woes rose, wave after wave, upon His soul, and the sorrows of death compassed Him, the floods of ungodly men rolled in upon Him, the cords of the grave compassed Him about, and the snares of death overtook Him—mutely, meekly, did that brave, strong, gentle bosom bear the fearful load, till from His heart was bruised the bitter cry, fragrant to God because the cry of faith, My God, my God, why hast thou abandoned me?

Turning back to 1 Sam. 17, after Saul had called down the judgment of God which had fallen upon guiltless Jonathan, as substitute for the guilty nation, and had himself been rejected of God for disobedience and hypocrisy, the Philistines gather together at Shochoh of Judah, that is, "enclosure of praise," and pitched between it and Azekah, that is, "field broken up" —in Ephesdammin—that is, "ceasing of blood-shedding" —and Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together at the valley of "Elah," that is," strength." Just so, after Jesus had been smitten for the transgression of God's people—had been made a sacrifice for sins, and the whole Jewish system had been given up for unbelief and falsehood—its sacrifices and worship being rendered null and void by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ [once for all, the powers of evil, permitted by God to sojourn here for a season (Philistines— "sojourners")—gather together to fight against the "enclosure of praise," that is, "the temple worship," and pitch between the temple worship (Shochoh) and the devout worshipper ("Azekah"), effectually separating the one from the other—having made the daily sacrifice, and all shedding of blood to cease ("Ephesdammin"), the one sacrifice for sins having been offered. The earthly system of religion (Saul) gathers its forces together in the place of its strength—Elah—its rites and ceremonies.

But out of the camp of the Philistines there goes out a champion, named Goliath of Gath, who cries to the armies of Israel, "Why are ye come out to set your battle in array? Am not I a Philistine, and ye servants to Saul? Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us." And the Philistine said, "I defy the armies of Israel this day; give me a man, that we may fight together." And when Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid. So one, hitherto concealed, now is manifested as the champion of the world powers (Goliath of Gath, that is, captivity of the winepress): he that, through the righteous judgment of God against sin, had the power of death, that is, the devil: and under that power of his the Lord of life has gone, and, as far as Israel knows, is shut up forever, so that he, to all appearance, is master of the situation. Jesus, the rightful heir (Jonathan) is altogether put to silence, under God's judgment—the new man is not yet revealed, and the adversary can boldly challenge all the powers of the Jewish system to choose a man who could cope with and kill him. They themselves had been the means by which the only one who could have conquered him had been put to silence, and now, seeing the things that took place, they can only return beating their breasts (Luke 23:4.S; 1 Sam. 17:11), or commune together in sadness, or assemble with shut doors for fear, and the enemy can defy the armies of Israel to produce a man able to fight with him.

Is it the Jew, as such, that is challenged? He beholds the only Jew of power nailed to a cross, and beats his breast in impotence, despair, and shame. Is it the remnant of faith? They can but commune in sadness at the thought that the One whom they had hoped was about to redeem Israel had been delivered up to the judgment of death, and crucified. Is it the disciples assembled on the first day of the week? It is within closed doors for fear.

Chapter 110

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—10

Forty days does the Philistine present himself in triumph, but meanwhile God is preparing Himself a champion to take up the challenge. He is feeding the flock of God in the place of Rachel's sorrow and grave, of Ruth's fruitfulness and joy, from whence between the time of the smiting on the cheek and the return of the remnant of His brethren to the children of Israel, He should come forth unto God, who is to be ruler in Israel, even Jesus, acting by the Holy Spirit—the body of Christ upon earth, indwelt by and in the power of the Holy Ghost. The time of His manifestation to Israel, as such, was not yet, until the forty days had elapsed (Acts 1:2, 3; 1 Sam. 17:12); but at length the Father sends the Beloved with a full supply, for all His brethren of Israel, of perfect blessing, the fruit of a finished work, in which each one should share individually, and also collectively participate, even resurrection! He takes from His Father for His brethren ten omers of parched corn, a share for each of Israel, a perfect portion for each, of the firstfruits of resurrection, waved before the Lord on the first day of the week after the passover, raising them up in Himself, and causing them to sit together in heavenly place in Him; but making them also in themselves, though baken with leaven, the firstfruits unto the Lord, a new meat offering unto Him—their bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto Him; this by taking His place for them in the glory, forty days after the morning of resurrection, they having to wait a perfect interval of time, seven days before they are brought into the power of His work and place. Now they, and all the Jewish people and polity, were still in the valley of Elah, the place of strength (1 Sam. 17:17), looking for some exhibition of earthly power and sovereignty (Acts 1:6), still entrenched amidst Jewish forms and ordinances (Acts 1:15-26). To them thus entrenched He comes. No longer the flock in the wilderness, but either as Saul's host, to conquer by a fleshly religion, or to be baptized into one body and be accepted in the Beloved— “David” —to conquer in the power of the Spirit. For the fiftieth day has arrived, the day of Pentecost is now accomplishing, the harvest is ripe: shall their souls' food, and nourishment, and strength for the battle, be such as Saul or David gives? Shall Saul's host going forth to the fight, and shouting for the battle, be the champion, or David, the shepherd lad, armed with an empty sling?

He runs into the army, comes, salutes his brethren, and talks with them; and as he talks, the sojourner of the winepress—Captivity by name—comes forth, and utters his defiance, and David hears. How was it that Jonathan, God's man of faith, who heretofore had driven back the whole army of the aliens, aided by his armor bearer only, permitted such a reproach to Israel and Israel's God? Ah! reproach had broken his heart, shame and dishonor had made him full of heaviness; but for the sake of the God of Israel had he borne reproach for His sake, shame had covered his face, and his mighty enemies, they that should have lamented, and comforted him, had given him gall for meat, vinegar to drink, had persecuted him whom God had smitten, and talked to the grief of His wounded; therefore he became a stranger to his brethren, an alien to his mother's children, and, instead of Baying them, he must curse them. “Let their eyes be darkness, that they see not, and their loins continually to shake. Let their table become a snare, and what was for welfare a trap. Let their habitation be desolate; let none dwell in their tents. Let them be blotted out of the

book of the living, and not be written with the righteous."

They had fought against him without a cause; for his love they were his adversaries; they had rewarded him evil for good, and hatred for love; when he had wrought salvation in Israel, Israel's chief had called down the curse upon him, and now had the curse recoiled. Saul had loved it—it had now come unto him. He had not delighted in blessing, so now it was far from him; he had clothed himself with cursing as with a garment, and it now came unto him like water, and as oil into his bones, as a garment which covered him, and a girdle which girded him continually. A wicked one was now set over him, and an adversary stood at his right hand; his days should be but few, and another was about to take his office. The blood of one who had served so faithfully and well was on him and his people, and Jonathan awaits deliverance by David, that they might know that the Lord had done it, and had laid on him the iniquities of them all. As they had brought the curse upon him, so are they now ashamed, clothed with shame, and covered with their own confusion; for all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.

This clearly sets forth the state of the Jewish system, and the position the Lord held towards it as the heir in whom the earthly hopes were centered: they had said, “Come, let us kill him,” and the Lord of the vineyard was about to destroy miserably the wicked husbandmen, and let out the vineyard to others. Judas, the type and representative of the system, in whom the evil principles that worked in the mass found their most perfect development, because brought into nearest contact with light and love, and therefore forced to be that, or its opposite, hypocrisy and hatred, Judas was indeed tasting the full bitterness of being under the power of the adversary: he had gone out guilty, his prayer had become sin, his children were fatherless, his wife a widow; his days had been few, his habitation desolate, and another appointed to his office. So that the decreed woe had come upon him by whom the offense had come, and whoso chose to consider might see that God's smitten One was guiltless, and that judgment should overtake the guilty; therefore, while wrath was treasured up against the day of wrath, and righteous judgment of God, yet mercy through the One who died, and rose again, might rejoice against judgment, and salvation come to Israel by the new man, David, the Beloved. The One who, as the rejected and murdered heir, could call upon the Lord of the vineyard to destroy, as the Son of the Father, the Beloved, could pray, “Father, forgive them;” and thus David, the children of God baptized into one body, the body of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, has power from God, the Holy Spirit having come upon them to witness for Jesus, speaking the great things of God, and saying, “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine, seeming to possess the power of death, and defying the armies of the living God, keeping them all their lifetime subject to bondage through fear of death?” But if the youngest, hitherto in the wilderness feeding his father's sheep, stands forth for God, he surely incurs the jealous anger of his elder brother. Is it Abel, worshipping the living God, and by faith offering to Him a life out of death, Cain will surely be wroth; does Jacob count the birthright worth possessing, then Esau will hate him, when he finds that he cannot inherit the blessing: does Joseph declare the mind of God to his brethren, it does but stir up the malice of his brethren to purpose his death. So there is an elder one now, a kinsman according to flesh, an Israelite (whose is the Revealed mind of God), whose is the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the lawgiving, and the service, and the promises—who, seeing this youngest one come down, can mocking say, “They are full of new wine.” But David has an answer to the point— “What have I now done? is there not a cause?” Let this be known to you, and give heed to my words: these are not drunken as ye

suppose. It is the third hour of the day: let no man's heart fail him. When with the little flock in the wilderness, single-handed were the powers of evil smitten and destroyed, whether working by Jew or Gentile, whether using God's judgment or man's malice (the cheek teeth of the great lion had been broken, and the northern beast had been driven into a land barren and desolate," Joel 1:6; 2:20, that is, the power that would work by these in the time to come), and the Lord that delivered then would deliver now. The Spirit of God which had raised Christ from the dead had come down now to dwell in mortal bodies, and would hereafter be poured out upon all flesh, before the great and gloriously appearing day of the Lord come, so that whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But the clothing and armor of Saul; his helmet of brass, and coat of mail, and sword, do not fit David, any more than Joel's prophecy exactly applies to the church, but to the Jewish remnant, which will be the owned thing of God in its generation, and out of which the church was formed at this time; so Peter soon puts off Joel's prophecy, saying, I have not proved it, and instead takes the name of Jesus for his staff, and the five parts or stages of His work, as the smooth stones for his sling, namely, His life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and pouring out of the Spirit, and thus draws near to the enemy, who, on his part, comes armed with circumcision, the law, and the temple, as his power for victory, by which to keep Israel in bondage, disclaiming the church for its youth and freshness.

What was this broken staff to Him, this rod lifted up, this Jesus the Nazarene, the crucified—was He a Gentile dog, to be thus spoken to? Ah! he might boast that he had the power of death, could crucify and slay, but the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel's armies, could raise again from the dead. He whom lawless men had crucified and slain God had raised up, and exalted to His right hand, who had poured out His Holy Spirit, that all the earth might know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this assembly, the whole house of Israel, might know assuredly that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear (compare Hos. 1:6 - 11; Rom. 9:25 - 28; 1 Sam. 17:47; Acts 2:36 - 40); for the battle is the Lord's, and He hath made this Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord and Christ. Thus hastens Peter to meet the Philistine—him that had the power of death, keeping God's Israel in bondage all their lifetime through fear of death—taking, by the Holy Spirit, from his bag of bread of life the stone which told of resurrection, taken from the brook, now dry, in which the waters of death had rolled, slinging it, smiting him in his forehead, that the stone sunk in, and he fell upon his face to the earth; for, having heard, they were pricked in heart, and said, what shall we do, brethren? Then said Peter, "Repent, and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for remission of sins, and ye will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." So he prevailed, with a sling and a stone, and smote and slew the enemy.

But no outward sign of power, or weapon of offense, save the sling and stone, had the church so to give proof and token of the victory, it must use in figure the very weapon of the enemy, even death, and that a death by judgment (the sword, Rom. 13:4)—baptism; for those who accepted his word were baptized, and there were added that day three thousand souls, turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, realizing in some little measure the truth of death and resurrection, even that deliverance was to them, since wrath and judgment had been fully satisfied. Not wholly, however, did they know the power of the work that had been done, for, though they were together, and had all things common, breaking bread in the house, yet they were also every day being constantly in the temple. God, doubtless, making them a sign and token to the whole house of Israel of the work He was then doing in their midst, though the body of the Man

in heaven became so connected with the earthly power, recognized by it, treated with an amount of condescension, “having favor with all the people,” that it was like rending soul from body, even after being subjected to the cruelest treatment, to separate. God used it, in His grace, to draw out of the mass of unbelief the truehearted ones, the remnant of Gath, the Jonathans of Israel, whose souls were knit to David—the church loving Him, who was its head and life, as their own soul, making a covenant, acknowledging Him alone as worthy to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing, and giving up all hopes and expectation of a man on earth, and centering all their confidence in One in heaven.

Thus the church prospers, and is accepted in the eight of all the people (1 Sam. 18:5; Acts 2:42 - 47), and fear was upon every soul; and when the Lord Jesus, by the hand of Peter (Acts 3:6), cures the man lame from his birth, the people are filled with wonder and amazement, and run together, greatly wondering, while the man himself, once hopelessly lame, in the place from whence all blessing should have flowed to Israel, now walks and leaps, and praises God, singing and dancing in heart with joy. Saul may indeed have slain His thousands, but David his tens of thousands. The despised rejected Nazarene, crucified but now raised and glorified, hidden in the heavens but working in and by us unlettered Galileans who are His witnesses (Acts 2:32; 3:15), hath done this which ye behold and hear, has made this man strong, whom ye behold and know (Acts 2:33; 3:16; see ver. 24), and is sent blessing you, in turning each one from your wickedness. Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever. But they who receive honor one of another, seeking not that which comes from God only, will be worth to hear such honor ascribed to one who spoke not of Himself, nor pleased Himself, but always did His Father's will; who, because of the Father's judgment, and to do the Father's will had emptied Himself, made Himself of no reputation, humbling Himself even unto death, And that the death of the cross; giving His garments to be parted, and His vesture to be cast lots for; laying down His life, as Jonathan, the rightful heir, for the sheep of His pasture, that He might take it again, as David, the beloved, whose throne should be established forever.

Surely would the priests and captains of the temple, and the Sadducees, be distressed that such honor should be ascribed to Jesus whom they had crucified, and the quick-sightedness which characterizes the children of this world in worldly things would make them say, “What can he have more but the kingdom?” This new thing will usurp our place and power in the people's mind, for the number of the men had become five thousand; therefore with jealousy did they eye the church from that day and forward, laying hands on them, and putting them in ward till the morrow. And it came to pass on the morrow that the evil spirit (1 Sam. 18:10; Acts 4:5) was permitted from God to work upon the whole Jewish polity, officially represented in its responsible heads at Jerusalem, its headquarters. Annas, the high priest, Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and as many as were of high priestly family, and the Holy Spirit plays upon the harp of God before them by the hand of Peter, testifying to the power of the name of Jesus Christ, the Nazarene, whom they had crucified, whom God had raised up, that in His name, by Him, the infirm man stood before them sound, and salvation is in none other, either for king or people: “for neither is there any name under heaven which is given among men by which we must be saved.” But the sweet notes of God's glad tidings fall now upon ears strung by the evil spirit of jealousy, and hearts quivering with wounded pride; the mouth of God's witnesses must be stopped; if God gives grace to Abel, Abel must be bruised to death. If David prospers, Saul must kill him. If, by means of the church, an evident sign has

come to pass, the council being in the place of fleshly power and authority—javelin in hand, must exercise it, and threaten them severely. Twice does the God of all grace, by the hand of Peter, strike cunningly the gospel strains before the responsible fleshly religious system: this second time more completely representing the whole people, for besides all who were of high priestly family, it now comprised all the elderhood of the sons of Israel; but no cunning charmer could move the heart of the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear. Their poison was like the poison of the serpent, the more genial the warmth, the greater the venom, urged to increasing bitterness and wrath, in proportion to the increasing grace and power manifested by the church, till at last nothing would be left for God but to break their teeth in their mouth.

At first were they witnessed to of resurrection, now of exaltation, of the lowly One, made by them, a shame and reproach in an ignominious death, at God's, right hand, to give repentance and remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit also, that they might likewise be His witnesses, if now they would obey Him. But neither the gift of tongues, nor the life of grace, nor the power to heal, nor the words of life and love, can move their jealous heart, except to greater bitterness and wrath, and a more determined purpose to smite, even to the wall. This second time also was their murderous intent frustrated, and the church avoided out of their presence twice, the reason of their enmity being still the same, the rage of jealousy and lust of power; for the people glorified God and magnified the church for all the mighty works that were done, and therefore fear the church, because the power of God is upon it, and because it behaves wisely before the people, fearing lest, after all, the work should be from God, and they be found also fighters against God.

(To be continued)

Chapter 111

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—11

So great is the honor in which the church is held of all the people (Acts 5:13, 1 Sam. 18:16), going out and coming in before them, that the Jewish council find that it is not politic openly to persecute them further (Acts 4:16, 17; 5:24, 26, 28); but having determined their death, seek to procure it without implicating themselves. Just as Saul sought to compass David's death at the hands of the Philistines, by promising him his eldest daughter Merab ("increase") in marriage, so the chiefs of the people, represented in Gamaliel, are glad to see the church “increase” so mightily; not because it is the Lord's battles that are fought, but that whatever the result, they confidently anticipate profit to themselves. If this counsel, or this work, have its origin from men, and the Romans destroy it, as had happened in previous cases, well, their dirty work will have been done, and their hands clean; but if from God, well, the Philistines will be the sufferers.

At this time it seemed as if the nation promised well to be knit to Christ (Acts 5:11, 16, 28; 6:7, 8), but when the moment came to take the final step, God's flock preferred to wander into the meadows of delight of the earthly system, rather than follow the Good Shepherd, who would have led them into green pastures, and beside the still waters (1 Sam. 18:17 - 19. Adriel the Meholathite, “God's flock in the meadows of delight.” Acts 5:33; 6:9 - 11.) But a younger daughter has this earthly thing— “Michal,” a brook, a remnant, running out from among the rest—who loves the Beloved, the brook in the way, of which He should drink, as pledge that the rod of His strength should go out of Zion, that His people should be willing in the day of His power. But, blessed as is the foretaste of the fullness hereafter to be enjoyed, it can be used by the evil spirit working in the earthly system to accomplish under a cloak what it dare not do openly, so the prejudices and jealousies of system, working in the disciples' hearts, bring more trouble, and threaten more damage, to the church than persecution from without, for the Hellenists and Hebrews begin to murmur one against the other, but the overruling sovereign grace of God uses even this as a means of greater glory to David, His beloved. For the twelve apostles are more entirely separated unto prayer and the ministry of the word; and seven men, whose sympathies were led out into wider connection with the outside Gentile world, are brought to the forefront. Thus the secret working of the spirit of evil in system is the occasion of double honor to the church in Jerusalem, which is the body of Christ.

Thus the hearts of all the simple ones are joined to Christ, for the word of God increased, the number of disciples in Jerusalem was very greatly multiplied, and a great crowd of priests obeyed the faith. But with all who clung to earthly things this exhibition of power and glory only stirs up greater fear and hatred, which, smoldering awhile, burst out at length in disputation against Stephen; but he behaves more wisely than all the servants of Saul (1 Sam. 18:30; Acts 6:8 - 10), so that the name of Christ is much set by. Much as the chief priests and the elders of the people, led by jealousy of the spiritual power manifested in the church, conscious that they were themselves destitute of it, desired to get rid of this David, and left no stone unturned by which to do it under a fair pretext, yet the work wrought was of such a character as appealed to the heart and expectation of every Jew. Gamaliel is the expositor of this feeling, common alike to the

Jonathans—the remnant of faith as Jews—and to all the servants of the earthly religion, when he speaks good of David, in the council warning them as to what they were going to do as regards the men, that they should not sin against those whose works had been very good, and by whom, it might be, God would work a great salvation for all Israel; advising them to withdraw from these men, and to let them alone, and sin not against innocent blood. And they hearkened unto his voice, and discharged the apostles.

Thus God uses Gamaliel (that is, “kindness of God"), and these Jewish hopes, common to all, as a means of giving the church time and opportunity fully to declare the glad tidings that Jesus was the Christ in the presence of Saul himself; for every day in the temple they ceased not teaching and announcing that Jesus was the Christ (1 Sam. 19:1 - 7; Acts 5:34 - 42). And there was war again, and Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought wonders and great signs among the people, but ever the more the grace of God shines out, the fiercer the spirit of evil in the earthly system; for there rose up certain of the synagogues, disputing with Stephen, hearkening not to the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke, but seeking to smite him unto death, rousing the people, the elders, and the scribes, they seize him, and bring him to the council. First it had been those of the high priestly family who had sought the life of the church, afterward those in conjunction with all the elder hood of the sons of Israel; and now, this third time, we find, not these alone, but the people also associated with them in the persecution of the church. Their object, like Pharaoh's of old, was to smite back into bondage the escaped of Israel, by treachery and force to smite David even to the wall; but the attempt ends in disastrous failure, the blow recoils upon themselves, and the system to which they sought to transfix the body of Christ is, in the effort, shaken to its fall, for while the earthly thing brings against God's man by His member Stephen a witness which is false, the Holy Spirit of God brings a true witness against them as a nation, a crushing and unanswerable accusation, and their violent, illegal, murderous act; but freed Stephen from their power forever, while it must have shocked every pious man amongst them. It was also, by the will of God, made the occasion of delivering the church from every connection with the Jewish system as the seat of its life and power; for all the assembly fled and escaped and were scattered into the countries of Judea and Samaria. But the apostles, who seem to have formed themselves into a company, and were in that but an image of the true David, remain in Jerusalem, apparently desirous of keeping up an appearance of connection with the Jewish system, as having Jewish standing and Jewish hopes, while the assembly, acting in the mind of Him who is the Head, escapes forever from the authority of the Jewish hierarchy into secure habitations among the Samaritans, Ethiopians, Greeks and Romans, never more to have its life exposed to their treachery and caprice. Thus Philip goes down to a city, and baptizes both men and women into the name of Jesus Christ. Again, by the Holy Spirit, he goes to meet an Ethiopian, on the desert road to Gaza, and announces to him the glad tidings of Jesus. Afterward, sent by the Spirit of the Lord, he is found in the Gentile city of Azotus, announcing the glad tidings to all the cities till he came to Caesarea. But, great as was the measure of liberty into which the church was thus brought, it had not yet reached its true place of separation. Stephen was, as it were, the messenger of the church to tell the Lord Jesus all that Saul had done. He had seen Him as Son of man standing at the right hand of God—a high place—and he went to dwell with Him in the habitation there.

The answer to the message was the sending of the body on earth into places of habitation among the Gentiles, where it was with difficulty, and by a great stretch of authority, that the chief priests

could reach them. But what the spirit of evil, working in and by means of the guilty religious system, cannot do by outward violence, he seeks to procure covertly, but without success, his instruments and messengers being turned into monuments of the grace and power of God. For instance, when Philip goes down to Samaria, healing and working signs, the crowds give heed to the word spoken, as they had before done to Simon; and Simon also, and perhaps others; but when brought into the direct vision of Christ by the gift of the Holy Spirit, He separates between the precious and the vile, appointing each to his own place, purging out the hypocrite and him that had no part nor lot in the matter, and bringing to naught the wiles of the enemy, in introducing secretly, by means of the prospect of advantage, that which defileth, worketh abomination, and maketh a lie into the holy thing of God. Again, when the church by Philip meets with the bond servant of the Jewish system, and reveals to him the person of Jesus by faith, at once the devotee is changed into a worshipper; the wanderer in the desert of Jerusalem worship, hungry, thirsty, and fainting, is brought forth into a right way, rejoicing to go to a city of habitation.

And, thirdly, the glad tidings are announced in the strongholds of flesh, whether Jewish or Gentile, even in all the cities between Ashdod and Caesarea. At length the chosen champion of the earthly system, who stood a head and shoulders above all others, had profited more in the Jews' religion than any others of his own age: a Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin, brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, of the strictest sect of his religion a Pharisee, in whom is centered the hopes of the nation, Saul of Tarsus, determines to take the matter up himself, and asks letters to Damascus of the high priests, that he may take the disciples of the Lord, and bring them bound to Jerusalem. But suddenly, when near his journey's end, He who is the great exhaustless well of living water, and who had long looked from His watchtower on high upon this parched soul, all the more thirsty because of his restless zeal, suddenly reveals Himself by the Holy Ghost, as David the beloved, the Head of His body, the church, the despised thing, Jesus of Nazareth, whom Saul was persecuting, A moment before he was the embodiment of fleshly religion, wrought on by the spirit of evil, now the member of the body of Christ, indwelt and inwrought of the Holy Ghost. “Walking in the light of sparks of his own kindling, suddenly shone upon by a light out of heaven, once blind, with eyes for all but Jesus, but having seen that Just one, his opened eyes see none other. He whose feet had been swift to shed blood is now led by the hand as a helpless child. Clothed in all the pomp and pride of authority and power—stripped of all, lying down naked, without sight, he neither eats nor drinks for three days.

Wondrous change! Well might they say, “Is Saul also among the prophets?” Is not this he who destroyed in Jerusalem “those who called on this name?” for “he preached Jesus that he is the Son of God.” The church having, by means of the tribulation that took place on the case of Stephen, been completely and manifestly severed from all connection with, and bondage to, the Jewish system, God, in His longsuffering grace, sends another testimony, gives another trial, still by the church, but by the church taking a place, in a position it had never claimed before. Hitherto it had owned obedience, now it takes a distinct and separate place, and declares a testimony altogether apart from any Jewish hopes and expectations, for Jesus is preached no longer as the servant, the one like Moses, the Messiah of the Jews, foreordained to them, as Peter preached: nor is it as Son of man, as Stephen saw Him, that He is now declared; but that He is the Son of God, and though, through the mercy of God, He is thus revealed to the Jews first, yet it is a word specially intended for the Gentiles, and sent by the hand of one who, though a Hebrew of the

Hebrews, yet was the apostle to the Gentiles, and not to the circumcision. But there was ever deep in his heart, and in fellowship with the Lord Jesus, in the feeling, an earnest longing and desire for his brethren according to the flesh; having great grief and uninterrupted pain in his heart because of their hardness and consequent rejection; and God uses this devoted love to his kinsmen, and fervent wish to preserve for them as a nation the blessing of the glad tidings of Christ, to send by Paul the best and last declaration of His grace. For straightway in the synagogue he preaches that Jesus is the Son of God; but with little avail, for when he falls to proving this is the Christ, the Jews consult together to kill him. And when, having left Damascus inconsequence, he arrives at Jerusalem, and speaks boldly in the name of the Lord, the Hellenist Jews seek to kill him. Thus, whether it is the strict orthodox Jew, or the Hellenist, half Sadducean, freethinker, or any of the sects between these extremes, each and all alike resist the Holy Spirit, and reject the completed revelation of the goodness of God. Anxious as Paul is to preach the gospel to the Jews, so that he could have wished himself a curse from Christ for them, yet he is conscious of his calling as apostle to the Gentiles, and longs to fill up that which is behind of the sufferings of Christ, for His body's sake, which is the church: but it needed a personal communication from the Lord Jesus Himself before Paul could give up his cherished plan of preaching the gospel to his nation. These two, in a measure, conflicting powers are found working in Saul, the Jew, with Jewish aspirations and sympathies, and Paul, the Christian, with but one object filling his whole being, and that object Christ. The former he counted dead, the latter was his life. Yet if, as apostle to the nations, he glorified his ministry, it was with a desire to provoke to jealousy those who were his flesh, in order to save some from among them, both was he to believe that his nation was so hardened and blinded through unbelief that they would reject the witness of such a one as he was. Thrice, as we have seen, does he declare unto them the good news, that there is a rich repast in the house of bread for those who hunger for the bread of life; a sacrifice for the sin laden, to which all the family are welcome.

But while thus his bowels yearn over his brethren according to flesh, yet obediently he bows to the commands of the Spirit of Christ, leaving Damascus for the wilderness, afterward submitting to be let down through the wall, being lowered in a basket by night; and thirdly, being warned by the Lord Jesus in the temple, suffers himself to be brought down by the brethren to Caesarea, and sent away to Tarsus. However much he felt his mission was to the Gentiles, and gloried in it, yet the remnant of Israel had ever the first place in his heart, as well as in his preaching: so, during these three distinct testimonies, he conceals, as it were, himself, as representing the body of Christ, the church, and takes his place among Jews, as one with Jewish hopes and expectations. But nothing can conceal the plain fact that his seat is empty, that he is not where he once was, though at first it only excites surprise that he, who formerly persecuted, should now announce the glad tidings of the faith which formerly he ravaged. But this feeling soon changes, for when, during the second period, he confounds the Jews, proving that this is the Christ, this despised Nazarene, that Messiah must no longer be looked for out of Jerusalem or earthly system, but that He is to be found in the smallest among the many thousands of Judah, even in Bethlehem, where the brethren have a sacrifice: then prejudice stirs up malice, both against the witness and the One witnessed of, the Jews plainly seeing that the position taken up by the church entirely excludes the earthly kingdom, so long as it should remain, and therefore they seek to put it and those who represented it out of the way, and nothing more remained but to shoot one more arrow of witness against, rather than to, the nation, and that in the very stronghold of their

system—Jerusalem—and then to bow submissively to the command, make speed, haste, stay not," go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me." Bitter as was the grief of Saul, as a Jew, to find that unbelief and fleshliness had thus finally cut off the nation from the glad tidings, it was in the Holy Spirit, in Christ, that he sorrowed most for his brethren, having uninterrupted anguish in his heart for them, though, through it all, he rejoiced that the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. God's word fails not, and that a remnant was being, and would be, saved, and the nation, by-and-by.

(To he continued)

Chapter 112

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—12

Saul having been safely shipped away to a far-off place, the Jews recognize that they have nothing to fear from the rest, and consequently leave the assemblies throughout the whole of Judaea, Galilee, and Samaria in peace: but the time has come for the other sheep, not of the Jewish fold, to be brought also into the flock; for the children's bread to be cast to the dogs, for the middle wall of partition to be cleared off the ground, for it to be plainly shown that no man must be reckoned common or unclean, and the one chosen of the Holy Spirit to set his hand first to this work was one whose ministry, appointed him of God, was just in an opposite direction, even Peter, whose mission was to the circumcision, the one least Jewish of the apostles in birth, home, and education, being an unlearned Galilean, but just as the learned Hebrew of the Hebrews, Saul of the Pharisees, was sent to carry the gospel to the Gentiles, yet was used by the Holy Spirit to declare a final testimony—a testimony of that character—to the Jews; so to Peter, the apostle to the circumcision, was it given to be the first to open the door of faith to the Gentiles.

How strikingly is the wisdom and love of God manifested in this. For the Lord would have all His members in perfect rejoicing fellowship with Himself, and with one another, in their separate lines of work and service. How gently does the Lord lead His saints! Peter, who, when last heard of, was fixed at Jerusalem, is now passing through all quarters—Lydda and Joppa—but still confining his ministration of blessing exclusively to the children, leaving the Gentiles, the unclean outsiders, to starve. But the time had come for the hungry to be fed, because they were hungry, no matter whether Jew or Gentile, clean or unclean. The same Lord over all, who is rich unto all that call upon Him, had heard a hungry one crying continually to be fed; the time had come to feed him, and Peter's hand must do it. Cornelius, a man who had prayed and not fainted, and with whom delay had made him cry out so much the more, thus doing, has moved the hand—how willing to be moved—of Him who bowed Himself to the earth, and had died under the curse against sin, that He might feed with the bread of life all who should hunger for Him—to take of the holy bread, the bread of God, and feed this hungry one—no common bread, but hallowed bread, such as is lawful only for the priests to eat. The heavenly King, at the right hand of power, the very sight of whom casts the chiefest earthly man prostate, now claims, upon His own authority, from priest like Peter this holy food, to give to whomsoever He might choose, and He had chosen to knit up in that great sheet of grace all sorts and kinds of men. But a full portion is not committed to the hand of Peter, and a man can only give that which he has received, pure, fragrant, most holy, the sweet savor of an offering made by, fire, but only five loaves instead of twelve—a half completed testimony by a remnant to the sojourners of the dispersed of Israel—and this is the Gentile strangers first taste of the food of God, become already common, in a manner, since a fresh and full portion, a better thing, had that day been presented by the hand of Paul, namely, that this spotless Man that in the fire sent up such sweet odors unto God, was Son of God; this hallowed bread, that Jesus of Nazareth, the good-doer, slain by crucifixion, raised up of God, is by Him determinately appointed Judge of living and dead, that through His name every one that believes on Him will receive remission of sins—the Gentile boldly takes, the Holy Spirit owns the right and due authority of Him

who demanded it for them, setting His seal that they are children of God, therefore with right to eat the children's bread: “for to as many as received him, to them gave he right to take their place as children of God, even to them that believe on his name.” All is joy, and glory, and power; but amid it all the Holy Spirit lifts for a moment the veil that covers the designs of the adversary. One of the chiefest instruments by which the spirit of evil, working by the prejudices of system, sought to destroy the work of God, was the clinging to circumcision as a needful thing; and the Holy Spirit writes, that astonishment was the feeling in the heart of the faithful of the circumcision when they saw the grace and work of God.

May the Lord ever keep us subject to Him, knowing His mind, having no thoughts of our own. Timorous ones of the stock of Esau are thus selling their birthright for a mess of pottage, bartering the heavenly inheritance for an earthly portion, counting the heavenly bread, the word of God, as not sufficient for all their need, but must have some earthly ceremonies also, something for the flesh to glory in. They thought to have Christ was well, but to have Christ and Moses was to make assurance doubly sure, not knowing the grace of God, who, having spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, will with Him freely give us all things, not as bringing anything besides, or making up anything that is lacking, but that, with the gift of Him, all other good is given. Thus the man of earth, who loved his life, has lost forever the place and blessing he owned by birth; while the younger son, the supplanter, has taken away his blessing: so that the first is last, and the last first, for many are called, but few chosen. The Lord give us to find all our treasure in Christ, nothing—not a desire or thought—outside of Him, lest our souls should begin to loathe this light, this heavenly food, so that, having our heart's desire—meat for our lust—we should get leanness to our souls, and having preached to others, should be rejected ourselves as to our measure of blessing.

But great as is the work which is accomplished in the pouring out upon the Gentiles the gift of the Holy Spirit, something more is needed to complete it. The instrument used by the Lord to show forth the great deliverance He had wrought for Israel, even baptism must be used on this occasion also, and for all future time, until He shall come in power, having put His enemies under His feet. The man fed with this new food must now be armed. The church, the body of Christ, just come up from the wilderness—Himself as indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and in resurrection—had nothing but a sling and stone, the word of life, and therewith gained the victory, then uses Goliath's sword—baptism, the type of death—to let all Israel know. So now Peter, as representing the head of the body, the church, demands that it shall no longer be set apart for Jewish use alone, but for Gentile also.

Henceforth the church stands alone, absolutely distinct and separate from all else on the earth, claiming to be entitled, by a right in itself, to all that was good, for food or fight, life and service, whenever needed, and wherever found, though still covertly and in mystery: and for the moment we pass over the formal recital by Peter to the assembly of the manner in which God had granted to the nations repentance to life by his ministry, and also how at Antioch they were formally brought into the fellowship of the church, taking an identical place and name with the Jew, under the teaching of Paul and Barnabas; for these are the starting points of a new era in the history of the church, and one reason for which they are mentioned here, is to show that the old path, as well as the new start, were both according to God, and that it was a state of transition, in which he who had ministered in the line of things that was closing up, yet had perfect fellowship with those who

superseded him: and we pass on to the closing scene of Peter's ministry.

Chapter 113

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—13

The assembly at Jerusalem seems to have been brought at this time specially under the notice of Herod, perhaps in consequence of the character of their witness for Jesus as the Messiah of the Jews, which would excite his jealousy and enmity. The apostles seem also to have been still gathered as a distinct body in Jerusalem, at least the chief of them were certainly there at this time, which gave the assembly a Jewish tone, not in the mind of the Spirit, nor in the line of God's present actings, which were directed to the demolishing of any kind of classification, and the obliteration of everything which gave it an earthly character. They are slow to learn this lesson, and the sharp »hip of persecution must be used, and by the hand of him in whose power they placed themselves—a clear type of the Antichrist of the day yet future, who shall persecute the faithful remnant unto death. Herod the king lays hands on some of the assembly—slays James, and takes Peter. Here we find the king and people alike opposed to the remnant represented in Peter and the assembly, and this distinction and double character of persecution is prophesied of in Psa. 34 and lvi., where the experience, trouble, cry, and deliverance of the remnant of the latter day are brought out.

Psa. 34 shows the persecuting power of Antichrist; the confidence and path of faith amid all, and final deliverance, with the destruction of the oppressing usurper. “I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. They looked unto him, and were lightened, and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.....The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles. The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all.....Evil shall slay the wicked, and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate. The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servant, and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate."

Psa. 56—the other referred to—also written by David upon this occasion, prophesies of the persecution which the godly remnant will suffer at the hands of the people in unbelief. It is noteworthy that Peter, to whom Psa. 34 has an application individually, and finds a fulfillment in the circumstances attending his imprisonment by Herod, his subsequent escape, and Herod's dreadful death, quotes it several times in his first Epistle, namely: 1 Peter 2:8; Psa. 34:8 Peter 2:22; Psa. 34:18: 1 Peter 3:10 - 12; Psa. 34:12, 13, 14, 15, 16; also compare 1 Peter 4; 5 with Psa. 34:15 - 22; also compare Psa. 34:4 - 7 with Acts 12:5 - 18; also Psa. 34:15 - 22 with Acts 12:21 - 24. Now, that the Spirit of the Lord has thus used the hand of the persecutor to bring the Jewish believers in Jerusalem to a proper sense of their position, he is, in his turn, to be dealt with (see 2 Thess. 1:6-9; 2:3, 4): for, having first opposed, be now exalts, himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped (Acts 12:21 - 24); so that he, sitting in the temple, showing himself that he is God, is smitten by an angel of the Lord, and expires, eaten of worms; but the word of God grows

and spreads.

The church, which is the body of Christ, having thus escaped from these fleshly powers (Philistines in the land) Herod, and the people, is found in power at Antioch, where the current of the Lord's ways is at length fallen in with; for His glad tidings are preached unto the Gentiles, and His hand being with them, a great number believe, and turn to the Lord, and not only Jew, but Gentile— “everyone in debt, and everyone in distress, and everyone discontented, gathered themselves unto Him,” and He becomes Captain over them, for the disciples are first called Christians at Antioch (Acts 11:26), and the church is gathered upon ground according to His mind. Paul and Barnabas being among the prophets and teachers, there would be sufficient to quiet any prejudices and misgivings likely to arise in the minds of the Jewish believers; and these two now take up the work which Peter had let fall, after being taken to task about the matter of Cornelius. For the assembly is commanded by the Holy Spirit to separate Barnabas and Saul for the work whereto He had called them, which was the gathering out from Jew and Gentile into the church of God all who confessed and worshipped the one true God, and were willing to receive the gospel. Thus Sergius Paul, who is intelligent, doubtless, in the things of God, is delivered, though a Gentile, and also at Antioch of Pisidia Paul declares this salvation to his brethren, sons of Abraham's race, and also to those who among them feared God, the consequence being that many Jews and worshipping proselytes followed Paul, and the next sabbath almost the whole city was gathered together to hear the word of God; but when the Jews contradicted, Paul and Barnabas turned to the Gentiles, who, hearing that this salvation was sent for them, glorified the word of the Lord, and believed, as many as were ordained to eternal life, and the word of the Lord was carried through the whole country. Similar results followed the preaching at Lystra and Derbe; as a rule the Gentiles gladly receiving the word, until the Jews, being jealous, stirred up opposition and persecution. And having thus passed through the country, and returned through the cities they had evangelized, the apostles came back to Antioch, from whence they had been committed to the grace of God for the work which they had fulfilled.

Turning back to chapter xi., and connecting it with chapter xv., we find the spirit of evil working on the hearts of believers by means of the prejudices of system, in order to destroy, if possible, the work of God, seeking to bring the assembly into bondage to Judaism, and thereby to cut it off altogether. For the apostles and brethren having heard that the Gentiles had received the word of God, when Peter went up to Jerusalem the party of the circumcision contended with him, their eyes being fixed upon the earthly things instead of the heavenly, through not understanding their true position, their hearts being still captivated with the honor, glory, and profit attached to the earthly system, and, little conscious as they were of the terrible evil they were doing, they continued in their foolish and ignorant clinging to the carnal ordinances and rudiments of the world, until they brought destruction upon their people, even to the remnant of faith. Afraid they were to leave all for Christ, accounting that they must have some worldly thing to console themselves withal: what a moat solemn and deeply important lesson does this teach us! Christ cannot have any one or anything to share the heart's affections with Him; however commendable in men's eyes, or plausible in appearance—because all blessing is in Him alone, all without is cursing. It may be red in the cup, and move itself aright, but in the end it stings like a serpent; it may seem a savory mess, but there is death in the pot. He that gathereth not with Me scattereth; he that is not with Me is against Me. If a man come to Me, and shall not hate his own father, and mother, and

wife, and children, and brothers, and sisters, yea, his own life too, he cannot be My disciple.

This mistrust of God's love, this evil and fatal thought, that we should be happier by having our own way, than by doing God's will, has ever been the devil's instrument to destroy the life or peace of man, persuading us that, if we do but appropriate what the eye sees and the heart lusts after, we shall be enjoying something now, misdoubting the promise that they which do the will of God shall endure forever. “What profit shall this birthright do to me?” Thus for bread and pottage of lentils does Esau barter, despising, his birthright! In Psa. 3 the Holy Spirit gives God's estimate of the man who should be the devil's instrument in persuading others to choose the treasures of Egypt rather than the reproach of Christ. The antidote to all the deceitful offers of the world, and to him that wields the glory of it, is that the goodness of God endureth continually. The soul that trusts the love of God has a shield that quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one. But he comes with a very plausible tale, here in a religious guise, smoothly working, deeply wounding, covering the evil work with lying words; a tongue which deceives, while its words devour, like the vampire but fanning the sleeper while sucking his lifeblood. Therefore God shall destroy him and his fleshly religion forever. The Lord shall spew him out of His mouth, pluck him out of his dwelling-place, and root him out of the land of the living. But the feeble remnant of the righteous shall see, and fear, and laugh at him; for this is the rich man clothed in purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day, that made not God his strength, but pulled down his barns to build bigger, Baying to his soul, “Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;” trusting in the abundance of his riches, and strengthening himself in his substance. But the feeble ones are like a green olive tree in the house of God, and trust in His mercy forever and ever. (Psa. 53)

Chapter 114

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—14

Thus, first and last, from beginning unto everlasting, for all trials, temptations, times, and circumstances, the strength and victory of the believer is in trust in God, who so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, and commends His love to us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us. We, seeing that He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, are assured that with Him He will freely give us all things. Thus the cross of Christ is not only the cause, but the power, of our separation from the world, for we see in it the measure and power of the love of Him who met thus our need and us as sinners, and for His own love's sake brought us to Himself, that we might dwell with Him forever; therefore we praise Him forever, and wait upon His name.

In Acts 11 is seen the first deliberate opposition to the work of God from within the church; the spirit of evil, using the party of the circumcision for the purpose, who were believers, but not walking according to the Spirit. It is such instruments the devil delights to employ. They are sincere; what they do has a commendable appearance; they are utterly helpless for good, being cut off by self-will and unbelief from the only source of spiritual power, and therefore, but for the sovereign grace of God, would, like the herd of swine possessed by the demons, rush madly to destruction, with all that follow them. Hitherto the assembly had endured persecution from without, now it is opposition from within, but whether it be Saul persecuting outside in vehement rage, or the party of the circumcision within opposing the liberty of Christ, through slavish fear and timorous unbelief, it is the same flesh in each, and the same evil spirit working in it. On this first occasion, however, the intention of Satan is frustrated by the wise answer of Peter, and the ingenuousness of the believers; for he shows that all he did was by the positive command of the Lord and the guidance of the Spirit, that God had first acknowledged the Gentiles in giving them the Holy Ghost, and he could but allow them likewise: and when the brethren heard these things, faith revives, they refused to put forth their hand to do the bidding of the adversary (1 Sam. 22:11-17), but held their peace, and glorified God (Acts 11:18). On the second occasion, for a moment, as it were, the scene shifts from Jerusalem to Antioch, for so powerfully had the old leaven worked in the assembly at Jerusalem, that its influence spread as far as Antioch, and in a more corrupt form than before, for now it is not only that a Gentile is unclean, but that God cannot cleanse him unless he be made a Jew (Acts 15:1). But the flood of evil is met by those able by the Spirit to stem the tide, and is rolled back from whence it came, and once more Jerusalem is the place of strife. Here Peter and James take the work out of the hands of Barnabas and Paul, but are not so able for the conflict; for whereas on the former occasion Peter took God's side, now he simply refuses to take the enemy's, for, leaving the yoke upon the neck of the Jewish believer, he exhorts them only not to put it on the Gentile.

James does not even reach thus far, for, like Peter, not seeing the true distinct standing of the church, outside everything earthly, and seated in heavenly places in Christ, he does not even stand aside, and let God work unhindered, but must needs put a little obstacle in the path, no great burden, as it were a pebble only, but enough for some to stumble over. Necessary things,

doubtless, but laid upon a neck not made to bear a yoke. Thus the thin end of the wedge of law is introduced, which, if driven home, would separate from grace, and the first blow struck at the distinctively priestly place of the Jewish remnant of faith added to the church as law administrators, not as law keepers, a first success, followed up with such energy by the great enemy of souls, that we find Paul alone standing in the liberty wherewith Christ makes free, Peter,, James, Barnabas, and the rest of the Jews playing a dissembling part, which, if persevered is, was equivalent to Betting aside the grace of God, and saying that Christ had died for nothing (Gal. 2:11- 21). An evidence of how the poison had begun to work is seen in the chapter before us (Acts 15:36), in the dissension which arose between Paul and Barnabas respecting Mark. From this point Peter, Barnabas, and Mark drop altogether out of the history of the church as given in the Acts. Paul and the Gentile disciples almost entirely occupy the theater of action, the spirit of legality and Judaism having, as it were, cut them off from service: for what at the first, by the gracious action of the Spirit of God, the assembly at Jerusalem refuse to listen to (Acts 11:3), but hold their peace, and glorify God (Acts 11:18), they now give ear to (Acts 15:5, 7, 13); the result being that even the apostles are cut off from the truth (Gal. 2:11-21; 1 Sam. 22:18). The third and last occasion on which the evil crops up in the church is when Paul for the last time, recorded in Acts, arrives at Jerusalem, where, having related to James and all the elders the things which God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry, they, unheeding the leadings of the Spirit of God, tell Paul of the many myriads of the Jews who believe that they were all zealous of the law, and desire him to show that he also kept it.

But notwithstanding that Paul obeyed the desire of James and all the elders of the assembly at Jerusalem, yet, listening to the calumnious reports of the circumcision, the remnant of faith from among the Jews allow themselves to be led into the snare so artfully laid for them by the great enemy of souls, and from that time scripture records no instance of the conversion of a Jew, and history declares the fact that the gospel of God's grace has no more determined opposer than the Jew, that prejudice and unbelief have effectually cut him off from that which was ordained for his salvation, and refusing, in pride and hardness of heart, to bow to the lowly Nazarene who came, manifesting grace and truth, the perfect revelation of the mind, and nature, and being of God, and choosing rather the lofty things of flesh and sense, has been hardened and blinded in his unbelief, being left a monument of the terrible and righteous judgment of God, a mark for the finger of scorn, a hissing, and a reproach among all nations; while the younger son, who had been as a stranger, and afar off, starving amidst the unclean, is brought into the Father's house, where there is feasting and music, merriment and dancing.

Acts 16 shows us that the Lord's time has arrived for a further extension of the work of evangelization, and upon hitherto altogether untrodden ground, even among the intellectual and educated people of Greece. Barnabas and Mark would have proved hindrances, doubtless, from Jewish prejudices, to the work, stumble at the outset, and are shut out altogether from the work of God then proceeding. In their place the Spirit of God raises up two instruments fit for the work, prepared to follow fully wherever He should guide, though the path should take them outside the sympathies and cooperation of all, however dear: for this Paul and Silas were alone prepared in the condition of their souls, though quite unaware of the service to which the Holy Spirit was then calling them. How strongly this shows us the necessity of keeping our souls waiting upon the Lord, and instead of blindly running hither and thither, perhaps carried away by the ardor of natural

affection to run after our relatives, or through prejudice withholding our hand from the appointed work, as Barnabas and Mark, seeing to it that our souls are in such a state of obedience, faith, and communion, watching the eye and hand of the Master, be that, like Paul and Silas, we may be ready to go forth unhesitatingly whenever He calls, confident that He will guide us according to His will.

The Lord now brings another hand to the work, fitted by natural circumstances for the line it was then taking—Timothy, whose mother was a believing Jewess? but his father a Greek. He goes forth with Paul and Silas, and following the guidance of the Spirit, which was contrary to their intention and natural inclination, they pass from Asia into Greece. Whatever may have been their fear in announcing the glad tidings among the Jews, as shown in the circumcision of Timothy, how great must have been their trembling in venturing upon this unknown track; but faith always goes with a surrendered life, so that nothing comes amiss—surrendered because its trust is in God who raises the dead.

Soon they reach Philippi, and there the Lord shows that they are in His way, and His hand is with them; so Lydia's hungry soul is opened, and filled with the bread of life: the slave, famishing under the power of the devil, is delivered into that for which she cried. The gaoler at death's door, starved in the ignorance of nature, is fed with Salvation by faith in Christ, though it took the shattering of every earthly barrier to do it. But system soon becomes aware of the presence of the heavenly Man in His body, the church, for having come to Thessalonica, Paul reasons in the synagogue three sabbaths, which results in the deliverance of a multitude of starving souls into a place of plenty. Here, for the first time, the adversary, Satan, working by the earthly system, brings a new weapon against the church, even the civil authorities, bringing political prejudices to bear: but God delivers His servants, and the Holy Spirit sends them away to Berea, from whence Paul is sent to Athens, and here for a time the work of God goes on altogether unhindered by the enemy.

Note here, that for the first time in the history of the church the apostles stand their ground. Up to the end of Acts 14 those who witnessed for Christ kept up one continued flight from city to city; this was evidently not because they were afraid to die, but because the Jewish system from which they fled was still outwardly the owned thing of God, and under responsibility to Him, and also because the Spirit of Christ would not bring the Jews, as a nation and system, into such mortal conflict with Himself in His church, as to cut them off entirely from the gospel, by raising an insuperable barrier of prejudice. Passing to Acts 16:1-8, Paul, the acting member of the body, is still seen using every endeavor to avoid a collision with the Jewish system, and is warned by the Spirit of Jesus not to preach the word in Asia or Bithynia, doubtless because of the excited state of the Jews there (Acts 21:27), but at Troas his aid is solicited for the Lord's people shut up among the heathen Greeks of Macedonia; and now the witnesses of Christ go out, not to fly from, but to fight against, the world rulers of this present darkness: so that, though the magistrates rend off their clothes, beat them with many stripes, thrust them into an inner prison, and make their feet fast in the stocks, yet, by their spiritual weapons of faith, and prayer, and praise, the earth quakes, the foundations of the prison shake, all the doors are opened, and the bonds of all loosed; the keeper, who was the real prisoner, is set at liberty, and the apostles march in triumph out of prison, and out of the city, while their opposers, as it were, sue for mercy at their feet.

At Thessalonica the apostles come again into contact with the earthly professing thing, for the unbelieving Jews, stirred up to jealousy, treacherously seek to destroy them by means of the heathen rulers and magistrates: but no sooner does the religious foe appear upon the scene, than Paul and Silas immediately flee to another city (Berea), being sent away by the church. At Berea the same events take place. At length Paul comes to Athens and Corinth, cities of Achaia, where for a season the work of God proceeds without opposition. At Athens it deals prominently with Gentiles, declaring facts from God, and their consequent responsibility as His creatures: but when at Corinth the Lord by Paul seeks to bring the Jews into submission, and the acknowledgment of his claims, they only oppose themselves, and speak injuriously, their right to any further consideration is declared forfeited, though grace lingers over them, and leaves them not, so long as they are left. This step of judicially giving up the Jew, and going forth to the Gentile, was not taken without much anguish on the part of Paul, as we may judge from 1 Cor. 2:3; doubtless it was in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, but he had the sympathies and presence and comfort of his Lord amidst it all, for even as the sufferings of the Christ abounded towards them, so through the Christ did encouragement also abound. The church now stands forth in all its distinct character and separateness from every earthly thing—Jew or Gentile, religious or political.

Paul felt the momentous importance of the occasion, and much would he need to be comforted by the Lord's visit to him in a vision of the night, saying, “I am with thee;.... I have much people in this city;” thus showing that so long as He had a work for Paul to do, none could injure him, or frustrate His own purpose: and so has it been throughout the whole history of the church, and will be, until it be taken out of the way—an earthen vessel, but the power of God; afflicted, but not straitened; no apparent issue, but the way not entirely shut up; persecuted, but not abandoned; cast down, but not destroyed: her confidence through it all being the same as her Lord's, that there are twelve hours in the day, and if walking in the light of His will, none can injure or stumble her. The Lord, in this vision to Paul, reveals Himself in two aspects—as the exalted One, able to succor and deliver in every time of need, and as Jesus, the rejected One, in His people, still despised and persecuted. His people in Him in the glory, and He in His people under reproach. But after the word of God had been taught among them a year and six months, the deadly enmity of the Jews is aroused by the power of God displayed in the church, plainly perceiving that, if suffered to continue, they must surely be supplanted, and brought to naught, consequently, with one consent they rise against Paul, actuated, it would seem, by a fleshly zeal for the law, and perceiving him to be depositary of that which was about to supersede it.

On this occasion all the plans and powers of the adversary are brought to a focus in order to crush the truth; never had the peril been so imminent, and since the death of Stephen, the church, in him to whom the truth regarding it was committed, had never been so nearly gripped by its deadliest foe. Peter had been imprisoned by Herod from motives of policy; Paul had been stoned at Lystra, through the blind fury of the heathen multitude, but on this occasion the Jew and the church of God stand face to face, and demand that justice, occupying the judgment seat between them, shall decide which of the two is teaching the lawful way to worship God. But Gallio will not take cognizance of the case, and thus standing immovable between them, allows the church to escape; and the Greeks, stirred by a sense of the malevolence of the Jews, beat the ruler of the synagogue before the judgment seat. Thus mere human justice, though inert and oblivious, convicts the Jews of murderous malice, and though, as a rule, a convenient tool wielded by Satan

at his will, is here used of God to confound all his plans, and display His own power and glory, and fulfill His will.

At Corinth the Lord brings another kind of instrument to the work, not the bold proclaimed of the truth, the public preacher of the glad tidings, as Paul, nor the spiritual gifts and worker of miracles, as Peter or Stephen, but the quiet, homely, ministry of Christ in the household of Aquila and Priscilla brought out by the power of God from Rome, in order that Paul might find a place of rest amid the turmoil of the tumultuous scene around him; and not alone for this, but also that they might carry on the work of God, while Paul, urged by his ardent desire for the honor of Christ and the salvation of his brethren, was wandering in the wilderness of Judah—Caesarea, Jerusalem, Antioch, Galatia, and Phrygia. His desire in Christ is prophetically expressed in Psa. 63. He thirsted and longed to see the power and glory of God manifested amidst the Jewish nation, who were as a dry and weary land without water, as it was in the church, the sanctuary; and though he should not see this, yet, because he counted the loving kindness of God better than life, his lips, his hand, his soul, his mouth, should praise, and bless, and be satisfied. While Paul is thus engaged, system, in its most dangerous form, is brought into contact with the church—first, in the case of the Jewish synagogue at Ephesus, who receive the word with all readiness of mind, but do not permit it to have its due weight and authority over their hearts and conscience, for they still remained where they were and as they were. Their conduct seemed fair and plausible; but if in this condition they had been permitted to have fellowship with the church, a principle would have been allowed bringing in ruin: therefore Paul, acting in the Spirit, did not remain, but bids them farewell, leaving the word to work; the second occasion is in the case of Apollos, who is an eloquent man, mighty in the scriptures, instructed in the way of the Lord, speaking and teaching exactly the things concerning Jesus, but knowing only the baptism of John, therefore, as to his own conscience, but an upholder of system after all. Not knowing Christ as Head, but a follower of Saul, Aquila and Priscilla, being in the way of the Lord, take him to them, and unfold the way of God more exactly, thereby defeating the schemes of the enemy, who would have brought Apollos into the ministry of the word in his uninstructed state, thus introducing an element of confusion and schism into the church.

When Paul returns again to Ephesus, he discovers a third source of danger to the church in the disciples, twelve in number, received apparently in fellowship[?], but who had been baptized only into John's baptism. He immediately rectifies the error by causing them to be baptized to the name of the Lord Jesus, and to receive the Holy Ghost. In each of the three cases above noticed, however near to the ground of truth they might have appeared to men, and however plausibly they might have claimed fellowship with the church on their own footing, yet in fact they were on ground altogether apart from the truth, and were the choicest supporters of system, though covered up, and gone to sleep. But so easily and completely were they brought under the power of the word, that men would have thought every Jew might have been converted in the same way—that the church had the whole Jewish system in its power, and doubtless, in a measure, it might, by outwardly conforming itself to Jewish usages, and permitting an intellectual acknowledgment of the truth to be sufficient warranty for fellowship, have occupied the place of the Jewish system, but God's time had not arrived to cut off the earthly man, and the heavenly One had to keep the fugitive's place on earth; therefore the church, by an unlawful act, and one which it could scarcely take without some prickings of conscience, shows what it could have done had it chosen. For

instance, before preaching the word in the synagogue at Ephesus, Paul shaves his head, having taken a vow, and the Jews, seeing this sign of obedience to the law, unlawful for Paul as member of the body of Christ, receive the word readily, though apparently with unexercised consciences, the prejudices of system in them being lulled to sleep.

So also in the case of Apollos, having received the baptism of John, his mind was disabused of all prejudice, and receives the revelation of the way of God immediately it is communicated to him. The twelve disciples who had been baptized into John's baptism are likewise effectually cut off from all part in the Jewish system, and brought into the full privileges and powers of the church of God. And now that the covering of the nakedness of the earthly thing, even the man of faith, is cut off from it, its deformity is plainly seen, and this in direct contrast with the beauty and glory manifested in the church. For while the unbelieving Jews can only speak evil of the way by the mouth of Paul, all, both Jews and Greeks, who inhabited Asia heard the word of the Lord; and when by the hands of Paul great miracles were wrought, diseases healed, and wicked spirits sent out, the Jews, endeavoring to do the same, and they sons of the high priest, are leaped upon by the wicked spirits, mastered, prevailed against, and compelled to flee out of that house naked and wounded; and, lastly, while the books of charms are burned, to the value of fifty thousand pieces of silver, the word of the Lord with might increased and prevailed. [To some statements exception might be justly taken; but I leave them for others to judge. Ed.]

Chapter 115

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—15

Paul's method of action, in the case of the preaching at Ephesus, is stated in 1 Cor. 9:19-23. To the Jews he became as a Jew, in order that he might gain Jews: to those under law asunder law, that he might gain those who were under law: to those without law, as without law (not as without law to God, but as legitimately subject to Christ), in order to gain those without law: to the weak he became as weak, in order to gain the weak. To all he became all things, that at all events he might save some. And it is with these three classes of Jews the church deals here. The Jew in the synagogue, where Paul takes the place of a Jew, shaving his head. Apollos, still under law in its most searching form, gained for Christ, perhaps almost unconsciously to himself, by the unfolding of the way of God. Aquila and Priscilla, acting for Christ, taking a place, as it were, by his side; and, lastly, the twelve men who are disciples, in the place of utter weakness, Paul comes to them in their need, and delivers them for Christ; and so greatly is the power of God shown in the church, and that, though hunted and persecuted, there was neither evil nor transgression in her hand that fear fell upon all—Jews and Greeks—who inhabited Ephesus, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified. It is here the last recorded instance is met with of men owning the baptism of John; these are brought into the church, and the last link which might seem to have connected the earthly with the heavenly thing is finally snapped, and the testimony distinctly declared to the Jew which had been formally closed at Corinth, but which divine grace, lingering over them, had continued through Paul and Apollos at Ephesus, even through an apparently unjustifiable course, for Paul shaved his head, and Apollos at the time was not in the church, as to his own conscience and outward place, now ceases forever.

Paul, as we shall see, makes one more effort, at an apparently greater sacrifice of principle, without effect; but there is no further testimony of any kind to the Jews, except a witness of rejection and judgment. In conformity with this, it is at this period in the history of the church, namely, while Paul is at Corinth and Ephesus, that the Holy Spirit first brings to the work of building up the church that abiding and perfect instrument, “the written word.” The perfect revelation of the grace of God had been declared to the Jews during three successive periods; the first of these was during Saul's witness at Damascus and Jerusalem, that Jesus is Son of God. (Acts 9:21.) The Christ (Acts 9; 22); the Lord (Acts 9:29): the result being that the Hellenist Jews seek to kill him, and the Lord Jesus appears to him when praying in the temple, and says to him, he having become in ecstasy, “Make haste, and go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.” Coupled with this rejection of the Jew is the command,” Go, for I will send thee to the nations afar off.” Thus, at the outset, the casting out of the Jew, and the calling in of the Gentile, is distinctly set forth; though divine grace carries on the witness of fulfillment of promise and manifested love in the Son throughout the whole three periods. The result of the first witness clearly shows that the Jew and the church of God could not exist together on earth as the owned servant of God—that the one, when its measure had filled up, must give place to the other—that because of unbelief the Jew would be cut off, the vineyard taken from him, and given to others bringing forth the fruits thereof.

The epistles written by the hand of Paul at this time clearly bring out these truths, with the further revelation that though the Jew had fallen, and thereby salvation come to the nations, yet they should be gathered in and blessed again, to the great blessing of the world, that blindness, in part, had happened to Israel, until the fullness of the nations were come in. The Epistle to the Galatians deals, as its main subject, with the complete setting aside of Judaism, and everything connected with it—the law, the temple, the customs, and worship—the people and nation—just bringing in the new family, and showing its characteristics. Paul first exhibits himself as an example of what God was doing, for, having himself been foremost in Judaism, God had set him apart from the womb, called him by His grace, and was pleased to reveal His Son in him, that he might preach Him among the nations, and therefore it was impossible for him to go back to the old thing, since he had died to law, that he might live to God: he was crucified With Christ, and it was Christ that lived in him, and that in Christ all who believed in Him were delivered from the curse of the law, He having become a curse for them. In Him were brought into the possession of the promises a prior thing to the law, and are brought out of the place of bondage into the liberty of sons, and heirs through God.

Wherefore the bondmaid and her son, Hagar—the Jewish system—must be cast out, for the son of the bondmaid shall in nowise inherit with the son of the freewoman. The Epistles to the Thessalonians take up the next stage of truth regarding this new family, starting from the utter rejection of the old; wrath having come upon them to the uttermost, it shows the new thing to be wholly heavenly, with heavenly hopes only, to await God's Son from the heavens—the Lord Jesus—at His coming, and to be unblameable in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints—the catching up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air—to be always with the Lord—to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the same epistles the opportunity is taken to show the perfected manifestation and final destruction of that spirit of wickedness which had caused the setting aside of the old thing. The Epistle to the Romans covers the same ground, showing that God is just in dealing with Jew and Gentile upon the same footing; the Jew, as such, having failed, was set aside, and a new blessing brought in, which all, Jew or Gentile, characterized by faith were partakers, in even an utterly new race, the Head and source of which is Christ, wholly spiritual in character, conduct, and condition, flesh being obliterated. (Rom. 9; 10:11:1-10), reveal the Jew, except a remnant, refusing to enter in, and consequently broken out, and cast away (Rom. 11:16-36), and the Gentile grafted in, and occupying their place of witness for God on earth (Rom. 11:25, 26, 11-15). But the Epistle proceeds a step further, showing that the Jew is again to be restored to his own place in superabundant blessing, and in the overwhelming grace of God the whole world to be blessed through him.

Thus the Epistles to the Gal. 1 and 2 Thessalonians, and Romans, clearly bring out what marked the first period of witness regarding Christ in the glory, namely, the casting out justly the Jew, as a Jew, the bringing of all who believe into a new thing—not yet fully shown—and then proceeding a step further to show the gathering back again into more than former blessing of the Jew, when the new thing had been perfected. The second period commences from Acts 18. The first period of witness regarding Christ in the glory dealt more with the rejection of the Jew as God's earthly witness; the second with the place and portion of the new thing—the body of Christ, the church—the truth regarding which is brought out principally in the Epistles to the Corinthians; the

period commences with the sending forth of the gospel to the heathen Greeks of Macedonia and Achaia, but Paul uses the opportunity to announce it to the Jews wherever he can, the consequence being that, though some believe, yet the unbelieving Jews pursue him from city to city, until at Corinth he testifies to them in the Spirit, “Your blood be upon your own head; I am pure; from henceforth I will go to the nations.” At the commencement of Paul's first witness to the nations, he had said to the Jews, “Since ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, so we turn to the Gentiles,” leaving still an opportunity for repentance; but now the case is hopeless, the master of the house has, as it were, risen up, and shut-to the door, and he declares that their blood is upon their own head. Here the setting aside of the Jew is complete, and consequently, in 1 and 2 Corinthians, where the truth is revealed connected with this second period of witness to Christ in the glory, the church, in its character, objects, and condition, is the prime subject; but in 1 Corinthians there is an undercurrent of Jewish reference through it all, and the second epistle brings clearly out the old thing, in order to contrast it with the new, showing the abiding nature of the one, and the temporary character of the other.

The opening of the first epistle strikingly sets faith the perfectly opposite character of the new thing. It is the assembly of God set apart in Christ Jesus—the Man in heaven. Born by a heavenly means—foolish to them that perish—of God in Christ, standing in the power of God, endowed with the Spirit of God, taught by Him the things of God, having the mind of the Lord Christ. Not only having thus a heavenly character, but heavenly objects—bound to observe a heavenly conduct—not mixing with fornicators, avaricious, or idolaters, though they be called brethren—being washed, sanctified, justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God; as to the body, members of Christ, also one Spirit with the Lord. One loaf, one body, and that the Lord's body. Christ's body, and members in particular, having the same concern one for another; living in a condition of things in which love is the spring and course, the motive and guide.

Not only is the new thing, as a whole, thus heavenly, but each individual is heavenly, even as to his body which is down here for a time, and that after the nature of Christ's body, who died and rose again, through His Spirit that dwelleth in it, waiting to bear the image of the heavenly One, immortal, incorruptible. The second epistle brings out the further truth regarding this heavenly thing, the new creation, that in it God establishes us in Christ, has anointed us, has sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts; and where He is there is life, abiding glory, and liberty, the ministry of the letter to the old thing bringing darkness, bondage, and death.

In 1 Cor. 15:20-28, in a parenthesis, is given the condition of the old man, consequent upon its connection with Adam, its fountainhead, and the portion of the new in Christ, who is the firstfruits of those in Him. Death marks the one, life out of it the other: the one pledged in the resurrection of Christ, and proved at His coming to reign on earth; the other continuing so marked until the end, when He gives up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father, having put all enemies under His feet. Then shall death itself be brought to nothing. There is here a hint of an earthly kingdom in judgment and power, during the interval between His coming in His kingdom, and giving up the kingdom. Thus reigning in two circles of power over the heavenly thing, of which He is the firstfruits now, where all is characterized by life and righteousness, and also in an earthly kingdom, characterized by power and judgment, and where death is found. But death appears to have now power over those who are Christ's, yet, as even the first of the race became a living soul, the last a quickening Spirit, thus all His, having borne the image of the natural out of earth, shall as surely

bear also the image of the spiritual and heavenly One, the second Man. Besides, not all shall have part in the completed result of having borne the image of the one made of dust, since in the heavenly One law does not apply, consequently death is powerless as to its sting, and only waits to be swallowed up in a victory already achieved.

Therefore the second epistle begins with a life down here in the power of resurrection, the earnest of the Spirit being already possessed, which gives the confidence of being the work of God for the building from Him, the house eternal in the heavens. From this place of glory and blessing follow the solemn, weighty, holy exhortations to be agreeable to Him, He having done away, in its entireness, with the old thing, giving His Son to take it up as a whole, developed to perfection, and to obliterate it, bringing us reconciled to God, and in Himself God's righteousness. “Wherefore, as walkers down here, we must come out of the midst of, be separated from, touch not, the unclean thing.

The third period of witness to Christ in the glory is at Ephesus, where the Jew is shown out in all the malice and impotency of fleshly religion, in the presence of the full manifestation of all grace and power in the church, so that wicked spirits, which are cast out by means of handkerchiefs brought from Paul's body, leap upon Jewish exorcists when attempting to wield the same power, and overcome them.

The first period coincides with Saul's preaching at Damascus and Jerusalem, where the Lord says, “Make haste, and go quickly out of Jerusalem, for they will not receive thy testimony concerning me.....Go, for I will send thee to the nations afar off;” and deals principally with the total setting aside of the old thing, the earthly religious—system—and bringing in both Jew and Gentile into a new thing, a heavenly, upon an altogether different principle, truth developed in Galatians, Thessalonians, and Romans, which show what the death of Christ is to the believer.

The second period dates from Corinth, where Paul witnesses to the opposing, injurious Jews, “Your blood be upon your own head; I am pure; from henceforth I will go to the nations.” And the Lord says to him by vision in the night, “Fear not, but speak, and be not silent, because I am with thee, and no one shall set upon thee to injure thee; because I have much people in this city.” The truth characterizing this period is brought out in the Epistles to the Corinthians, and is occupied chiefly with the order and establishment of the new thing, its position and abiding character, contrasted with the temporary and inferior nature of that which it superseded, and dealing with the resurrection of Christ and its results to the believer.

The third period centers at Ephesus, where the Jew, having been given over judicially, is only introduced to show his utter impotence for good, and the rotten state of the religious system he belonged to, the revelation proper to this period deals, therefore, exclusively with the church, as seen in its ascended Head, showing the glory of Christ in the heavens, and the church in Him, and is communicated in the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, and Philippians. Thus we find in Acts 19 intimations that the Jewish system, as such, is finally deprived of all spiritual power and blessing, and given over unto the power of the spirit of evil. The church, on the contrary, from this time takes a distinct standing, existing not as by sufferance, but upon proof of superior power and authority, commanding the allegiance of all who owned the truth of God, and looked for the Messiah of Israel. The Epistle to the Ephesians reveals the sanctified in Christ in the heavenlies in Him, blessing God who had thus blessed; chosen before the world's foundation, marked out

beforehand, taken into favor in the Beloved in whom all things are to be headed up (the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth), having obtained inheritance in Him, being sealed thereto by the Holy Spirit, which is the earnest. The aim of the Holy Spirit is therefore to open their eyes to the things amidst which they are set, and that they might have the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Him in whom they became partakers in the calling, the glory, and the power which had wrought in the Christ, in raising Him from among the dead, and setting Him down at God's right hand in the heavenlies, above every principality, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name named, and that as head over all things to the assembly, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all; the members of which, Jew and Gentile, having been alike dead in trespasses and sins, sons of disobedience, children of wrath, are now created of God in Christ Jesus unto good works, formed in Him into one new man, reconciled to God by the cross—a thing hitherto hid, but now revealed and accomplished for God's glory. And this body—the body of Christ on earth—is perfected, and ministered to, and built up by means of gift direct from its Head in heaven, in order that it may arrive at the full-grown man, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, holding the truth in love, and growing up to Him in all things, from whom the whole body builds itself up in love.

(To be continued)

Chapter 116

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—16

The Epistle to Ephesians thus shows this new man complete, as seen in its Head in heaven, perfect after His perfection, and urges to corresponding walk down here. The Philippians takes it up here, and contemplates it going on to completeness in the day when the Head is revealed, though the connection is not seen, but the result only manifested. In Ephesians it is love from the Head working in the body, which is therefore complete in Him, according to the power working in it. In Philippians it is love in the members working out likeness to the Head, in fruit of righteousness, pledged to completeness in the day of Christ, since God had begun the work, and the power was of Him. The exhortation, therefore, proceeds from the fact that all have a mutual source of comfort, consolation, fellowship, and affection, and therefore should think the same thing, have the same love, be joined in soul, doing all things in lowliness of mind, after the example of their Head, who once took a bondsman form—the likeness of men—and became obedient unto the death of the cross, but now is highly exalted, with a name above every name—the name of Jesus—at which every knee of heavenly, earthly, or infernal beings shall bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to God the Father's glory. In chapter 3 is a man possessing perfectly all the outward qualifications of a Jew, counting all that, and everything else, loss and filth, that he might gain Christ, and be like Him; the measure and the power of separation from every earthly thing, whether religious or fleshly, being the cross of Christ, through which we are brought into the commonwealth in the heavens, from which we await the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior, who shall transform our body of humiliation into conformity to His body of glory. In Ephesians Christ in love delivers Himself up for us as an offering and sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savor. In Philippians, love working in the body presents an odor of sweet savor, an acceptable sacrifice, agreeable to God. In Ephesians the Head is seen in heaven, and the body perfected in Him. In Philippians the body is seen on earth, and the Head working out perfect results in it. In Colossians we see the body on earth linked to the Head in heaven, needing the full knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, in order to walk worthily of the Lord, unto all well pleasing; fruit bearing, and growing, being strengthened unto all endurance and longsuffering, giving thanks to the Father, who has delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love, who is image of the invisible God, firstborn of all creation, all things being created by Him and for Him; before all, upholding all, the Head of the body, the beginning, firstborn from among the dead, having first place in all things, since all things are reconciled by the blood of His cross, whether things on the earth or in the heavens.

In Ephesians the mystery is Christ Jesus in heaven, and Jew and Gentile made joint-heirs, and a joint body, and joint-partakers in Him. In Colossians it is this body on earth, the assembly, and Christ in them, the hope of glory. Therefore, as they have received Christ Jesus the Lord, the exhortation is to walk in Him, seeing that in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and they are filled full in Him. Therefore have no part in anything else, being buried with Him, raised with Him. Once dead in offenses and uncircumcision, now quickened, offenses being forgiven, and all ordinances taken out of the way. For them, therefore, all earthly connection is forever severed,

Christ, the Head in the glory, being the measure of the separation of the body on earth. From all earthly religion, from all fleshly sin, and every circumstance and relationship being now undertaken, in the power of a life in the glory. All resulting to the believer from the cession of Christ in the glory, as Head of His body, the assembly.

The first period of witness deals, therefore, with the death of Christ, and its results to the believer, obliterating every former thing, Himself the sole object of hope Romans, Galatians, Thessalonians.

The second period takes up the resurrection of Christ, who gives to His gathered ones down here a life raised from out of the dead; thus they belong to a new creation, old things having passed away, and all things become new, these new things being all of God. 1, and 2 Corinthians.

The third period shows Christ in the glory, working in the power of His glorified life, in His separated ones down here, livingly united to Him, and responsible as a body to the Head to walk here according to Him. Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians: the witness to the Jew having thus finally closed, and judgment waiting only until the cup of their iniquity was filled up, the Gentile now comes prominently upon the scene as the object of the testimony of God; and so long as the effect was only seen in the bringing of light, life, and peace, where darkness, death, and discord had formerly reigned, the word of the Lord increased and prevailed, but immediately it was found to touch the pocket, to threaten the loss of their idol making trade, then at once bursts forth the spirit of covetousness, which is idolatry, in railing against Paul and his doctrine. This is the first occasion recorded in which the issue is plainly put before men, as such, whether they will serve God or mammon. In every way the word of the glad tidings had commended itself to the consciences of men; it had been a word of peace and blessing; for not only did it declare the way of peace, a so great salvation, but God besides bore witness with signs and wonders, and acts of power and healings, so that all Asia heard the word of the Lord, and fear fell on all who inhabited Ephesus, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

(To be continued)

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—17

Yet when the trade of those who lived upon the folly, weakness, and credulity of their fellows is found to suffer, through the righteous energy of the word in those that believed, then the whole city is filled with the madness of rampant covetousness and selfishness; for the reason of their rage against Paul was not because he had said that they are no gods which are made with hands—for many of their wise men had said the like—but that he had persuaded and turned away a great crowd, not only of Ephesus, but almost of all Asia, so that their means of livelihood is threatened. They little knew the Judge was at the door, upon how slight a thread the sword of justice hung, for if Paul had entered into the theater, and suffered death through the blind rage of disappointed greed, the souls of men would have been effectually cut off from that blessed truth of God which He was revealing by the hand of Paul, that they might have fellowship with Himself. But where the mind was unbiased by the prejudice of avarice, and the conscience of right and wrong could exercise its sway, there was a deep recognition of the grace and truth which shone forth from the Christian, and these ingenuous few come forward, and, by the grace of God, are used at this critical juncture to preserve Paul and his companions from violence, and thus also the completed revelation of the mind of God.

Between the time of Paul's departure from Ephesus and his return to Troas, the scripture completing the revelation regarding the setting aside of the Jew is brought out, namely, Romans and 2 Corinthians, and at Troas the Holy Spirit significantly records for the first time that the assembly came together to break bread on the first day of the week, thus intimating how completely the new had occupied before God on earth the place of the old—a new day, a new house, a new power, a new purpose. The case of Eutychus may well illustrate to us the state into which the assembly gathered from among the Gentiles fell through unwatchfulness; becoming overcome of sleep, he falls to the earth, and is taken up dead, but is revived by means of Paul. Thus the church, as the professing one on earth, falls from its first estate (Rev. 2:5), becoming a thing of earth, is as dead (Rev. 3:1), but at the last is brought away alive with joy (Acts 20:12). Though Paul had been driven away forever from Ephesus by the violence of the covetous fools there, yet there were a few wise of heart, rejoiced over of the Father in the Beloved, who come to Paul at Miletus to receive his last counsels, to be committed to God, and to the word of His grace, and to have it committed to them for ministry to the assembly—Abigails of good understanding, linked by ties of nature and outward bonds with those who are fools in their covetousness, occupied with their buying and selling, building and planting, and not rich toward God; pulling down their barns, and building bigger, forgetting that He who gave the increase commanded that they should set their treasure in the heavens, since the night would come in which the Lord would shake terribly the earth, and they who had built for blessing in a shifting scene would find their wealth crumble into ruin: among whom are Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen, who count their worldly gain of greater value than the Christ of God—their daily wage of more importance than their soul's salvation. For the gospel was no new thing at this time, but its claims had been brought before every soul that inhabited Ephesus and Asia, both Jews and Greeks, in such power, that at

this crisis it had become a question of submission or opposition to the word, of serving God or mammon, Christ or Belial. The Nabals in Ephesus first had taken a stand in distinct opposition to the truth, with railing, confusion, and shouting; and now the Abigails, warned of the wrath to come, separate themselves from every outward circumstance to meet the David of their hearts by the mouth of His servant Paul. And what a feast had the Holy Spirit committed to their hand, wherewith to feed the assembly of God, purchased with the blood of His own! Bread and wine: the body broken, and the shed blood. Christ died for the ungodly, while we were yet sinners Christ died for us; made a curse for us, made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him; our Passover sacrificed for us, that we might, in the power of a saved and separated life, keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Feeding on that slain lamb, roast with lire, whole and perfect, under the shelter of the blood, but feeding on it in the land, encamped at Gilgal, and on the morrow eating of the old corn of the land, unleavened cakes, and parched corn; in the place of possession, though not yet possessed of the place; on resurrection ground, but not yet raised, eating of the fruits of resurrection in the place of circumcision; circumcised with the circumcision of Christ not done by hand, putting off the body of the flesh; buried with Him in baptism, in which raised also with Him, through faith, of the working of God who raised Him from among the dead; and not this only, but also the ample fruit—the hundred clusters of raisins, and two hundred cakes of figs, the perfect fruits, quickened with Christ, raised up together, but also sitting down together in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, in Him blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies; in Him chosen, marked out for adoption through Him, taken into favor in Him, having redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, and also obtaining an inheritance; having believed in Him, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the earnest of our inheritance to the redemption of the acquired possession.

And needful would it be, that they who fed the flock should watch, for grievous wolves should come, drunk with the blood of the saints, who, when morning light should come in and with the daystar, the morn of deliverance and rapture of the church arrive, would be smitten in the seat of all their strength with death, and grief, and famine; for woe, woe, shall be on the great city which was clothed with fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with ornaments of gold, and precious stones, and pearls, for in her is found the blood of prophets, and saints, and of all the slain upon the earth. But unto the bride, the assembly, what a glorious inheritance is hers, separated unto Himself, her Head, her Savior, her purifier, her nourisher—who loved her, delivered Himself up for her that she might be of His flesh and of His bones, to worship Him alone with body, soul, and spirit, not a fornicator, nor unclean person, nor person of unbridled lust, but the bride of the Lamb who commands all the homage of heaven, earth and hell. Thus while the sovereign grace of God provides and secures the portion for the bride, and seals with the Eternal Spirit, the Holy Spirit of promise, the bride for the bridegroom, the time has come for a last expostulation with that weak, obstinate and erring servant, now become willful, rebellious and murderous, His professed earthly witness, the Jew. The dreaded conflict cannot be put off any longer, the last witness must be delivered, and if rejected, complete casting off the consequence; for the spirit of legality and Worldly system has gathered strength and head until it has found a resting place, in the midst of the assembly, and the Spirit witnesses in every place that Saul has come in very deed determined to destroy the work of God; but this is past his power now, the vessel may be broken, the instrument made useless, but the precious water of the word is poured out; the wise master builder has finished the foundation, delivered up the plans, and the work now

goes apace. But though judgment slumbers not, and the time is come that it should begin at the house of God, yet longsuffering lingers still; accordingly the journey of Paul the holy servant of the Lord, that diligent member of His body ever foremost to do His bidding, to venture all liberty or life for His Name, is, as it were by fits and starts; at one time speeding quickly, anon staying many days, while the all seeing Omniscient One sent forth into all the earth, whose eyes go to and fro through all the earth, gives understanding that bonds and tribulations await him at Jerusalem, then not to go up thither, afterward that the Jews should bind him there and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. At length he comes to the place where Saul had pitched, for James and the elders bring him immediately to face the question of the law, taking Saul's badge upon them, owning themselves as Jews not only zealous of the law, but of circumcision which was given before and the customs which followed after, at the same time requiring no such thing of the nations that believed, but demanding that Paul the Christian should own obedience to the law: bringing distinctions wherein all is Christ, mingling seed where there was but one seed, bringing diverse animals under the yoke of Christ, one of which carried the trappings of his former master: and it would seem not in order that prejudice might be disarmed and destroyed, but in deference to and fear of it, and that in a place and matter where it had no right but was an intruder and an enemy, and this after Paul had recounted one by one the things which God had wrought by his ministry among the nations, and they glorified God; yet they at once brought in the subject of Law keeping, requiring a course of action entirely opposed to Paul's line of things and the truth committed to his ministry; for both to Jews and Greeks he had testified that all who were of the faith of Jesus Christ were placed beyond the reach, power, and sphere of law—have died to law to live to God.

The law being given only till the Seed should come, but, He having come, the law is passed for those in Him; wherefore the Jewish system—upholder of the law—Hagar and her son, must be cast out, for in Christ Jesus neither is circumcision nor uncircumcision, but new creation; righteousness being reckoned on the principle of faith; for the consequence of sin being upon all irrespective of law, be now the free gift in grace is irrespective of law, so that having been made dead to the law by the body of the Christ, the believer is knit to another raised from among the dead. James, through attachment to the old things, becomes a stone of stumbling, looking with Jewish eyes upon the gospel, rather than the heavenly place and portion of the seeming to connect it with the kingdom to be set up, church; Paul meekly bows to the requirements of James and all the elders actuated by motives altogether different. With them it was fear of the many thousands that believed, with him it was in love to the Lord Jesus and for the glory of His name; glad to avail himself of the cover afforded by these legal observances if by so doing the Lord should use him to witness once more for Him to the honest ones among the loved people of His race. Seven days he waits upon the Lord with closed mouth and unlifted hand; at last the command was given and in a way he could not have anticipated.

In the wisdom of the Lord the very act of obedience to the law, by one not under it, is the occasion of highhanded infraction of it by those who seemed to be its upholders; for the Jews from Asia set all the crowd in a tumult, cause the whole city to be moved by which there is a concourse of the people who lay hold of Paul, draw him out of the temple and seek to kill him, making five distinct charges against him, all of which are untrue. Thus the opposers of the truth, boasting in their law keeping and righteous deeds and in appearance not in heart, are proved to be breakers of the law, liars and murderers, the very appearance of righteousness and truth being taken from them and

given to the church as represented in Paul. But now the Gentile comes upon the scene in the due exercise of the governmental power, delivering Paul from the violence of the crowd and giving him a just liberty and opportunity, which frenzied prejudice would have denied, to make his defense to the people. And who could claim a better right than he to speak, a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin brought up in Jerusalem at Gamaliel's feet according to the exactness of the law of the fathers? Zealous for God who had persecuted what he now preached unto death, to which the high priest could bear witness: and what had taken him out of this path, which all were then pursuing, and in which he had so far outstripped them all? The revelation of a righteous Man in heaven, despised and persecuted upon earth, now shining in the light of heavenly glory, annulling every other glory; bowing, blinding, the proud instructed Pharisee, changing the persecutor to a witness, circumcision to baptism, a worker out of legal righteousness to a sinner washing away his sins, calling on the name of Jesus; and this same man who was God in heaven had said to him," Go, for I will send thee, to the nations afar off." This was his warrant for his deeds, and his answer to the charges brought against him, and that they might know, that, they having failed, God was no longer hedging men within law, or place, or temple. Lawful as was the way in which the zealous law keeping Jew had been brought out from under law, being chosen before of the God of his fathers appointed by Jesus the Nazarene whom he persecuted, instructed by means of Ananias, pious according to the law, and sent away from the temple out of Jerusalem, by the Lord saying, "Go, for I will send thee to the nations afar off," yet the curse of the Lord being on them, they drive him out from cleaving to the inheritance of the Lord, saying, Away with such a one as that from the earth, for it was not fit he should live.. The last drop which fills the cup of willful rejection of grace is thus added, and nothing remains but for it to overflow, and from this time the vessel which contains the heavenly treasure of the gospel is given over into the hands of the Gentiles. Is it lawful for you "to scourge a man that is a Roman uncondemned?" That justice denied by the people of God is demanded of and accorded by the powers of Heathendom, the nations that know not God.

Chapter 118

Thoughts on the Kingdom in Man's Hand and God's Purpose—18

THE requirements of truth and justice, trodden down of the people in the blind fury of religious zeal, are to be more willfully, deliberately and hypocritically set aside by their rulers, yet not without a witness from among themselves of what is due to the truth of God, to be known and read of all men, not from a sense of what was due to God but to that which was theirs as the responsible depositaries. For though Ananias the high priest commands Paul to be smitten contrary to the law; yet the part of the council who were Pharisees contended against the Sadducees, saying, We find nothing “evil in this man.” Whereupon a great tumult arises, showing that the orthodox Jew had begun to find out that the church of God was not an evil thing to be hunted to death, that he had played the fool and erred exceedingly in seeking to exterminate it as one would a flea; for while occupied in this he had let a more deadly enemy usurp power, even the spirit of denial and Atheism.

But a place of repentance cannot now be found, though it were sought with tears; the Master of the house has risen up and shut-to the door; it is useless now to stand without and cry, Lord, Lord. They had cried Lord, Lord, but had not done His will; if they now cry, Lord, Lord, they cannot enter in. Given over to strong delusions, they curse themselves with a curse to taste nothing until they had killed Paul; and fearfully has the curse clung to them after a spiritual manner, for from that day to this have they starved in a far-off country; refusing to enter into the house of blessing in company with the younger son; where there was music and feasting, the fatted calf and the Father's joy, they are cast into an outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. The very act by which they clench the curse upon themselves but binds a blessing on the church and frees it forever from that contact with the authority of Judaism which had hitherto been its chief stumblingblock; for, in the night that intervened between Paul's last witness and the purposed execution by the Jews of their deliberately murderous intent, the Lord stood by him, saying, Be of good courage; for, as thou hast testified the things concerning me at Jerusalem, so thou must bear witness also at Rome.

The light of God's glad tidings, which first had beamed from Bethlehem's manger, now had shone throughout the sphere appointed for its primal exercise; but men had loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil; and, no matter how gentle and beneficent its rays had been, the brighter they were, ever the more detested.

The sheaf of Life bound together by the Holy Ghost had arisen to stand in the house of prayer, commanding by word and deed the obedience of its brethren, the sons of Israel, and proclaiming that with it only was the bread of Life; but the reply had been, “shalt thou indeed reign over us?” and they hated it the more, for the vision of the glory of God and the Son of man sitting on the right hand of God, and for its words. Again, the morning star had claimed obeisance from every other light ordained of God: but his brethren envied him, and had carried away the flock from the portion of the Lord's inheritance—the priestly place of resurrection—to broken cisterns which could hold no water; but the man in glory had by His Church come down into their midst, and they had done

Him shame and were ready to slay or sell Him to the Gentiles. The time had therefore come for Him to shine in other spheres; the light must be shed upon the land of Egypt, the kings of the earth, and Israel's sons must search for it: never will it seek for them again. So Paul is delivered over into the hands of a company of soldiers, who bring him into Caesarea to Felix the governor who committed him to Herod's Pretorium. All was outer darkness where the light had been for Israel. In an instant, as it were the twinkling of an eye, it had set at mid-day.

It is true, thick clouds of unbelief had shrouded it from view, but it had been in the zenith and brightly beamed, but now it was gone: clouds might gather or roll away, it mattered not. Jerusalem was the abode of every unclean thing and bird of darkness; the Lord had smitten them, as He said, with madness, blindness, and astonishment of heart, they groped at noon-day as the blind gropeth in darkness: the yoke of iron was fastened upon their neck; the nation as an eagle flieth of a fierce countenance was come upon them, for they feared not this glorious and fearful Name, Jehovah thy God.

The light had left the land and was journeying to Rome from whence henceforth it should radiate its beams throughout the nations till their times should be fulfilled; but in its course the kings must be brought beneath its convicting power, therefore Caesarea is the first point upon which its beams arise. But the vessel, the light-bearer, the means by which the light shines forth must be shown to be pure and clean, if the purity and glory of the light is to be witnessed of. Paul himself must be clear from every imputation, if the gospel he preached is to be received of men as the word of God. He therefore readily seizes the opportunity of answering before Felix the charges against him, proving that he was not a pest but a worshipper; neither was he a mover of sedition, for neither in the temple did he discourse to anyone nor gather any tumultuous crowd either in the synagogue or in the city; but to the last portion of the charge he did confess, that in the way which his accusers called sect, so served he his father's God, the motive power being the hope toward God of a resurrection of just and unjust. Again his deeds proved their accusations false and cleared his conscience not only before God but man also: for instead of bringing evil he had brought alms to his nation, and offerings: a purified one was he found in the temple, no mover of sedition. Nay, the only crowd and tumult was caused by certain Jews from Asia; and also when before the council he had cried but this one voice, “I am judged this day by you touching the resurrection of the dead."

Here the Holy Spirit takes the first step in the witness to principalities and powers of the resurrection of Christ from among the dead, of whose resurrection and glory it was His purpose and mission to declare. And how unobtrusively, gently, as it were silently, is it done! in Paul's speech it comes in simply as a collateral thing, and first only as a statement of doctrinal fact that there is a resurrection of all men, just and unjust, subsequently confining it to a resurrection of the just only as the matter at issue between himself and his accusers, and by inference limiting the dispute to the fact of the resurrection of One just Alan whom they had crucified, but whom he affirmed to be alive: for Felix had perfect knowledge of the things concerning the way, and was well aware of the reason for the enmity of the Jews against him. But when the Holy Spirit witnesses to Felix as an individual rather than as a potentate, He deals with him after another fashion, convincing him of righteousness, temperance, and judgment about to come.

It is a time of trial for the Gentile powers to whom God had committed the sword of justice, and from first to last they prove unfaithful to the trust, though there are extenuating circumstances; for though justice is not done and Paul set at liberty, yet such leniency is shown as their policy permits. Thus Felix commands that Paul should in a measure have his freedom, and that none of his friends should be hindered in ministering to him; and, notwithstanding that the word fills him with fear, he yet often sends for Paul, hoping to make a profit out of him.

When Festus succeeds him, the same witness is continued but develops into more decided action. For when Paul, brought to his judgment-seat, clears himself of all charge of offense against the Jewish law, temple, or Caesar, and the Jews are unable to prove anything against him, of which Festus is very well aware, he yet purposes from political motives to deliver him up to them.

Upon such a failure of justice Paul appeals to the fountain-head of all heathen authority, thereby altogether denying the Jewish polity as the depositaries of judicial power. But before proceeding to Rome there is yet another principality to whom witness must be rendered, Agrippa uniting in himself ecclesiastical lore and temporal authority; and before him the apostle at once takes up his great theme, that of resurrection and Jesus as the raised One, and this as no new thing but the promise made of God to the fathers to which the whole twelve tribes, serving incessantly day and night, hope to arrive. Then with solemn emphasis he describes the fact upon which his whole life hinged, and not his only, but the eternal destinies of myriads of those of the nations hitherto in darkness, under the power of Satan, in their sins to whom he was sent an ambassador, an official appointed servant of his God.

Thus before this complete representative of earthly power (holding as he did the reins of ecclesiastical and political power), Paul testifies of his master the Lord of lords and King of kings, and of the mission to which he was accredited; that all men, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, king or commoner, should repent and turn to God, doing works worthy of repentance.

Chapter 119

The Lord's Supper: A Memorial of Christ

The Lord's supper is to be eaten as a memorial or remembrance of Christ.

This is His own interpretation of it. The bread was mystically His body, the cup His blood, accomplishing the remission of sins. To eat and to drink of this feast was to partake of the virtues of His sacrifice, or to express such participation (1 Cor. 10:18); and it was thus eaten in remembrance of Christ, in token of the soul's fellowship with what His sacrifice had accomplished for sinners. It was therefore to be eaten simply with thanksgiving. The remembrance of what the sacrifice of Christ had accomplished would properly be accompanied with nothing else. No supplication would be needed, because it is a finished work, a full remission which the table records.

To pray about the forgiveness of sins would be discordant with the voice of the table. It might be quite unintended, yet really a reproach upon the sacrifice of the Lamb of God. It would be building again the things which Christ had destroyed, and, in the language and sense of Gal. 2, making Him the minister of sin, making His blood like the blood of bulls and goats, only the remembrance and not the remission of sins.

But to surround the table with thanksgiving, to wait on the feast with praise for redemption, this would be knowing the work of the Lamb of God which the feast sets forth; and accordingly it is always as thus accomplished that the scripture presents it to us. Jesus, on taking the bread and the cup, gave thanks. (Matt. 20; Mark 14; Luke 22) He did nothing else.

The Lord's blessing and giving thanks are, to all moral intents, in the same sense; and in the like mind the apostle calls it the cup of blessing, which we bless, the cup at the taking of which we bless, or speak well of the Lord, because by that cup, or by the death and blood-shedding of Jesus which it sets forth, He has rightly entitled Himself to praise, or to hear Himself well spoken of; and again, speaking of it he says that, when the Lord parted the bread and cup among His disciples, He simply gave thanks. (1 Cor. 11:23-26.)

It may be accompanied with confession of sin, because it implies our utter death in trespasses and sins, and therefore that would not be in discordance with the supper.

But still we do not find this attended to in any of the passages that refer to the supper, but in them it takes the simple form of a eucharistic feast, or a season of thanksgiving for the remission of sins. It says, as another once observed (at least the Table has this voice in it), “Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto them that be heavy of heart: let him drink, and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more."

This is so indeed. It is this precious strong drink which reminds us that our misery is gone, and our heavy hearts are then lifted up. It tells us not, like the blood of bulls and goats, that sin is remembered, but it is remitted. This is its peculiar characteristic voice. To give thanks in company with it is harmony, to pray about our sin is discordant.

But the service of self-judgment or self-examination may well wait on this feast, because we are by the remission of our sins called to holiness; just as of old the feast of unleavened bread accompanied the Passover. And as the Israelites celebrated the redemption from Egypt, they also searched the house for leaven; that they might put away all that offended Him who had redeemed them. This is most fitting, and indeed without this the Passover was not kept.

So with us, if we do not walk in a self-judging spirit, we are really not the blood-redeemed people, we do not discern the Lord's body; in other words, I believe we do not keep the feast of the Lord aright, if we are not honestly and holily searching for, and removing, all that would grieve the Lord. (1 Cor. 5-6)

This is in as full harmony with the Table, as thanksgiving is; and the cleansing out of the leaven should be done both from the congregation (1 Cor. 5) and from our individual selves. (1 Cor. 11:28.) For we are one in our standing, an unleavened lump, and so should we be in our desires and diligence of soul. For the Lord's supper shows forth the Lord's death till He come.

The death of Jesus had this twofold sense. It published remission of sins, and all God's hatred of sin. It releases the sinner, and condemns the sin; and the supper eaten, both with thanksgiving and in the spirit of self-judgment, will be accordant with this. Eaten with prayer about our sins, or with a careless heart, in indifference to our sins, it will be utterly discordant.

It is to be a Passover in truth, with feast of unleavened bread, and therefore there is to be the expression of conscious redemption from Egypt, the place of death and scene of judgment; and this is thanksgiving. There is also to be the expression of renouncing that which has brought us into death and judgment; this is self-judgment. Such I believe to be the simple character which the scripture puts on the supper of the Lord.

Many indeed, and various, have been the additions which human religiousness has attached to it, but the word of God reproves them.

There is no warrant for consecrating the elements or separating them by process to the service of the Lord's table.

The bread and the wine are laid on the table as bread and wine; broken and poured out to figure the broken body and shed blood of Jesus; but no form or process is needful to give them title to lie on the table for this use.

Neither, do I judge, have we warrant for asking God to bless us in the observing of this service, simply because it is our worship, or setting forth of His praise, rather a waiting upon Him for some benefit to ourselves, either in soul or body. We bless Him in this act, rather than ask Him to bless us; we speak good of His name in it, by setting forth the memorial of what He has done, and do not supplicate Him to bless us or to speak good to us by conferring some fresh favor upon us.

I believe, if the word of God were very simply attended to in this matter, this beautiful service would be relieved of much that religiously encumbers it, and the table would give forth no uncertain sound.

Supplications about it, moreover, is utterly discordant with the service of this table; confession of sin might be made, but there would be no felt need of it; consecration of the elements would be

altogether refused; seeking a blessing would not be thought of by the worshippers, [but blessing because we are blessed].

These common things would be laid aside, and the service would be an act of worship, giving the Lord the honor due unto His name in this age, until He comes again to gather fresh honors from the lips of His countless redeemed ones.

And it is this service or worship that ought to gather us to His name every eighth or resurrection day; and then things may be there given us of the Lord, such as the word of exhortation or of teaching, or the voice and spirit of supplication.

But we should go there to give to the Lord His praise such as the Table (which publishes through the riches of His grace the remission of our sins) does give Him.

This is entering His house, duly entering it, with praise, because He has already blessed us, and not with supplication for a blessing; entering it in the spirit of conscious victory over our enemies; tearing asunder all bonds, and silencing every tongue that would charge or condemn us.

It would be entering His house in a way worthy of that house, where mercy has rejoiced against judgment, where the sword of the destroying angel has been gloriously staid; where, therefore, the spirit of the worshipper says as he enters, “In the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion, in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me. He shall set me upon a rock, and now shall my head he lifted up above my enemies round about me. Therefore will I offer in His tabernacle sacrifices of joy, I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord..” (Psa. 27)

May His courts be thus entered in spirit now! for the bread and cup are there, and the veil is gone.

J. G. B.

Chapter 120

Love of God and of Saints and Overcoming the World: 1 John 4, 5

God's love, in contrast with man's, is distinguished by this, that while man must have something to draw out his love, (as it is said, “For a good man some would even dare to die; but God commendeth his love to us-ward, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,") God's love is without motive, there being nothing attractive in the object that draws it out. “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” God's love sees no good in us—the brightest proof of God's love and man's enmity was seen in the cross; they met there, and thus showed the superiority of God's love; as Jethro says, in the strength wherein they dealt proudly He was above them. Verse 9 sets out the open manifestation of His love to us while we were yet sinners. We learn His purposes and counsels about us as saints, in the second place, in verse 17— “Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have boldness in the clay of judgment, because as he is so are we in this world.” This is a very different thing from His first visiting us in our Sins. “Herein is love with us made perfect.” The perfectness of God's love towards His saints is seen in the bringing them to be like Christ Himself. The sovereign grace of God puts the saint into the same place as Christ, that we may have the same kind of fellowship with the Father that Christ had. So in John 14 the Lord says, “My peace I give unto you” —that is, the peace He had with His Father— “not as the world giveth give I unto you."

The world has the character of a benefactor; and that it sometimes gives generously I do not deny. But then it is by helping a man as he is, out of the resources which it has, which may be all very well; yet, while helping him, it is only taking care of itself. But it is evidently a different thing here; for Christ takes us clean out of our condition, putting us into the same relationship with the Father as Himself. The world cannot give in this way. There is no guarding anything for self in Christ's unjealous love, but in us there is. Therefore He could say, “Not as the world giveth give I unto you.” His delight was to show that the Father loved them as He loved Him. “The glory thou hast given me I have given them, that the world may know thou host loved them as thou hast loved me.” Jesus not only loves them Himself, but He will have it known by the world that they are loved by the Father as He Himself is loved. Can there be anything more disinterested than this (although the word disinterested fails to give the full meaning)? Still all this is guarded, for Christ ever keeps His place as the eternal Son of God. At the mount of transfiguration, the moment there is the question of putting Moses and Elias on an equality with Jesus, they both disappear, for when Peter said, Let us make three tabernacles, one for Moses and one for Elias, as well as one for the Lord, while he thus spake there came a cloud and overshadowed them, and instantly the glorified men vanished; “And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him.” It is not said hear them, but hear Him. “And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone."

If Christ, in His wondrous grace, reveals Moses and Elias as His companions and associates in the glory, the moment Peter, in his foolishness, gives utterance to the thought that would place them on an equality with Christ, they must both vanish from the scene. It does not say, as the Father loved them, but as “he has loved Me” (as a man). For however Christ may bring us unto the same place with Himself, He abides the object of homage and honor, even as the Father. If we

elevate ourselves to an equality with Christ, immediately we set ourselves above aim. And it is ever the case thus with flesh. But the more a saint enters into his elevation, as being brought by grace into the same place with Christ, the more he adores Christ as God over all, blessed for evermore. This is ever to be borne in mind.

The thought in verse 17, “as he is, so are we in this world,” is that the saints are in the same place as Christ. If I have righteousness, it is a divine righteousness: “We are made the righteousness of God in him.” If I have life, it is a divine, eternal life: “when Christ who is our life shall appear.” If I have glory, it is the same glory: “the glory thou hast given me, I have given them.” If we have an inheritance, we are “joint-heirs with Christ;” if love, it is the same love wherewith the Father loves Christ: “Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me."

The love is the most difficult thing for us to. enter into, but the Lord would have our hearts enjoying it. All that we have in Christ is brought out in this passage, in the general expression, “as he is, so are we.” It is the thought and purpose of God's grace to bless us, not only by Christ, but with Christ. Christ could not be satisfied unless it was so, we being the fruit and travail of His soul. “Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me:” again, “I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also.” The Father's love is seen in giving His Son for us, and the Son's love in His giving Himself for us, and thus bringing us into His perfect place.

Some Christians do not give this verse 17 all its power; they refer it simply to our position before God respecting the day of judgment. Whatever judgment may come, the saint has nothing to do with it, for where there is a question about judgment there can be no boldness. There is nothing more comforting than the perfect confidence of having God as my Father. I cannot get the affections in full play if I think God is going to judge me; but I have the Spirit of adoption, and if I sin or do wrong, I run to my Father directly, because I know my Father is not going to judge me for it: for God is my Father, and will not judge, (save as a Father, now for my connection, by the way.) Therefore boldness is needed for the exercise of the spiritual affections in me; and we ought to remember this, for Christians often shrink from it; but it is evident that, if I am hesitating whether God is going to bless me or to judge me, I cannot love Him.

Then observe another thing—there is a great difference between spiritual desires and spiritual affections, although they both have the same root. The spiritual desires, if the relationship which would meet them be not known, only produce sorrow. Take an orphan, for instance, in a family where the parent's love to the children is witnessed every day, the sorrowful experience would be, O, that I too had a father! The child who has its parent has the same desires; the relationship existing of parent and child, it knows the joy and gladness which flows from such relationship. So also that we may have joy and gladness as the children of God, we must have the consciousness of the relationship in which we stand to God. It is not merely that we have a divine nature which gives us spiritual desires, but we must also have the consciousness of the relationship into which we are brought by the power of what Christ has done. It is clear there never could be a question between Christ and His Father as to the daily and hourly enjoyment of the consciousness of His Father's love: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” So also He says, “My peace I give unto you.” Again he says, “that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.” The Father's delight was in Christ, and He knew it in the daily enjoyment of it. And now, “as he is, so are we in

this world."

While Christ lays the ground of our relationship by being the propitiation for our sins and the source of our life, yet it is not by Christ's righteousness that I get “boldness.” I must be righteous, of course; I cannot have boldness without it; but besides this there is another character God has towards me—that of a Father—and I have another character towards God, as a child. I have not only righteousness, but I am a son. And here I should notice the defectiveness of some of our hymns which call Christ our brother. We never find in scripture that Christ is called our Elder Brother. In the fullness of His grace He is not ashamed to own and call us His brethren. My father is a man, but I do not call him a man; it would show a want of filial reverence in me if I did. In nothing is the power of the Spirit of God more shown in the child of God than the suitableness of his expressions and feelings towards God. If we are really enjoying our place of infinite privilege, the source and giver of our privilege will maintain His own proper place in our hearts.

When we are in the mount of God, it always humbles; although when a saint gets down again, he may be proud of having been there: he is never so when there. Paul was not puffed up when he was caught up into the third heavens; but after he had been there, he needed the thorn in the flesh to keep him humble.

"As he is, so are we in this world,” not only in the same standing as to acceptance with God in Christ, but we are brought by the communication of His life into the same relationship as Himself. While in the beginning of the epistle the foundation is laid deep and wide in the blood which cleanses fully, still the grand subject of the epistle is the place into which we are brought. “Herein is love with us made perfect.” If my heart has seized the truth that God as a Father is acting in grace towards me, there is no place for fear. If I have fear I fly to Him, instead of being afraid of Him. If I sin, I fly to Him to pardon it. I could not in my sin fly to my judge, but I have confidence in my Father's love, and I fly to Him because “perfect love casteth out fear.” The proof of God's love is that He has given His Son; the perfection of His presence (ver. 19), “We love him because he first loved us.", There we are brought back to the simplest principles: we love God because He first loved us. We did not come to God because of His loveliness; “we love him because he first loved us.” We do not come in by loving God (this we do after), but we come in as sinners, as debtors to His grace; and then, having come in, so finding God to be what He is—love meeting us in our every need—then we love Him.

Verse 20. Here is a check upon man's deceitful heart: if a man does not love his brother, he cannot love God. Wherever the divine nature is, it is attractive to one born of God.

Verse 21. We have another important principle in this verse: whatever the energy of the divine life in me, it always will have the character of obedience. Whilst there was in Christ the devotedness of love, there was also obedience. We are to love the brethren as being led by the energy of the Spirit, but I am to love them in the path of holy obedience. There is nothing so humble as obedience, and love never takes us out of the place of obedience. The Lord Jesus said, “As the Father gave me commandment, even so I do.” When Lazarus was sick, and they sent to Jesus, he abode two days in the same place where He was, because He had no word from His Father; and so, if I have any little service to do for my brother, it must be as in the path of obedience to the word of God. This is what Satan tried to get the Lord out of in the wilderness. Oh, says Satan, have your own will, if it is only in ever so little a bit, by making these stones into bread now you are

hungry. No, the Lord says, it is written, “Man shall not live by bread alone; but,” &c. —here we get a counter-check even to the workings of the divine nature, for it is not a command, it is not of God, and we are here to obey.

Chapter v. 1. “Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ.” Here we get the link between God and the family. When any one is born of God, he is my brother. If the question is asked, Who is my brother? How am I to know my brother? Every one that is born of God is my brother. I may have to sorrow over him sometimes, but still he is my brother, because I am related to him by the same divine nature. It is of great importance to remember this in the present day, because, when the Holy Ghost really acts, there will be a constant tendency to follow different courses. There has been an awaking from, the dead mass around by the power of the Spirit. There are glimmerings of light: mere stones would be motionless, but there is life; therefore the moving power would lead in different directions, because of what we are. If we were all subject to the Spirit of God, we should all go one way. There is another thing also to be observed—we are not at the beginning of Christianity, but at the dark end, and escaping as it were by different roads. The very fact of the operation of the. Spirit would be to produce perfect unity if we were subject, but we are not so.

The remedy for this is for the heart to be in close fellowship with Christ; and in proportion as this is the case, will love for all saints be there. So the same extent as Christ is valued will the saint be valued. In proportion as Christ's thoughts about His saints are known to me, will all saints be in my thoughts. I do not know Christ's love aright if one saint is left out. As it is said in Eph. 3:18, “may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the height, and depth, and breadth, and length, and to know the love of Christ.” Only can I enter into this in any measure when I embrace all saints. If I should leave one out, I leave out part of Christ's heart. In Colossians we have,” your love to all saints;” and in that epistle we have, the fullness of the Head; in Ephesians, the fullness of the body. Gad's grace working in me makes every one born of God the object of my affections. cannot go every way at once, and a real difficulty arises how to walk in fidelity to Christ, and in love to the brethren, so as not to let the affections get in a loose and general way. I cannot be loving God without loving all the children of God. “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.” (Ver. 2.) Now men would say that is reasoning in a circle, but there it in it a deeply practical cheek against the evil of my own heart. If I love the Father, I shall love the children for the Father's take, and not lead them into wrong paths, because that would displease and grieve the Father. If I should lead them into anything wrong, I should prove that I do not love them for the Father's sake, but for my own pleasure and comfort. If you truly love them, you at the same time love God and keep His commandments. If I knew that a member of Christ's body is going wrong, does that make me cease to love him? No; but because he is going wrong my soul is more deeply in affection, going out after him, as being one with Christ. To be able to love the brethren faithfully we most keep close to Christ.

Again, we have another counter-check: if one comes to me with a vast amount of truth without holiness, or if there be a great show of holiness, and truth be absent, neither is of the Spirit. He is the Spirit of truth. Satan never touches that which is born of God; he cannot touch it.

Worldliness is a terrible hindrance to the saint. The world is opposed to the Father, as the flesh opposes the Spirit, and the devil opposes Christ.

The difficulty lies in not maintaining nearness to Christ, which the world would come in and hinder. Then I am open to all sorts of error, for I shall not like the trouble to be right if I am not near Christ. It is very troublesome and disagreeable sometimes to have to do with saints: one will not give up this thing, and another that; and if we are at a distance from Christ, we shall be ready to give them up, and shall not take the pains to get them right when they are wrong. So Moses said, when in a wrong spirit, “Have I conceived all this people?” have I begotten them, that they should say onto me, “Carry them in thy bosom?"

So Paul says, “My little children, for whom I travail in birth,” &c. You have got off the right ground, and I must have you, as it were, born again. I am travailing over again for you, that you may be right, because you belong to Christ. When Paul looked at them in confusion, as they were, away from Christ, he could only say, “I stand in doubt of you;” but when he looks at them as in Christ, he can say, “I have confidence in you through the Lord."

Faith not only sees Christ in the glory, but sees also the connection between the glory of Christ and the saints, and it is that which enables one to get on. So Moses said of Israel, not only God was their God, but they are “thy people.” The real hindrance is the world. See Gehazi in the king's court, his heart had drawn in the spirit of the world, and he was able to entertain the world with the mighty actings of the Spirit. The world will be entertained, and it will be entertained with religion if it cannot get anything else. All that I know of the world's path, spirit, affections, and conduct, is that it has crucified my Lord; not in its affections and lusts merely, but by wicked hands it has crucified my Master. Suppose it was but yesterday that you had seen Pontius Pilate the governor, the chief priests, and elders, putting Christ to death, would you feel happy to day in holding communion with them?

The stain of Christ's blood is as fresh in God's sight as if it had been done but yesterday; the time which has elapsed since makes no difference in its moral guilt.

The question then is, Am I to get under the power of this world, or am I to overcome it (in my heart I mean)? When Christ was down here, in all the beauty and attractive grace in which God the Father could delight, there was not found in the world one thought or sentiment of common interest or feeling drawing them to Him. The world in all its classes—rulers, priests, Pharisees, and the multitude—have all been associated in hanging the Son of God upon a gibbet. Such is the world's heart. If I have seen the glory of Christ's person, and see that He is the very Son of God who came down and was turned out by the world, can I be happy with it? The link between the natural thoughts and affections and the world exists in every heart, so that in all kinds of things, even in walking through the streets, I constantly find that which attracts my eye, and my eye affects my heart.

Nothing will overcome the world in my heart but the deep consciousness of how it has treated Christ. Take my children, for instance: do I want them to get on well in the world? must I have good places for them in it? Nothing but knowing the place Christ had in it will overcome the world in my heart. There is no possibility of getting on with God unless the world is given up, and the heart is satisfied with Christ. Christ must be everything. Look at Abraham's history: he sojourned in a strange country where he had not a place to much as to set his foot on. So we are not of the world; and this is the test of our affections, for as we are not at once taken out of the evil, we must have our hearts exercised to godliness. It is very easy to overcome the world when the love of Christ

has made it distasteful. Satan is the god of this world. Perhaps you will say, That is true of the heathen world. Yes, but it is not true of the heathen world only. Although it was not till after the rejection of Christ that it was brought out, it was true before. God had spoken by His servants the prophets, and the world had beaten one, and stoned another, and killed another; then He said, I will send my beloved Son—maybe they will reverence. Him when they see Him. But Him they crucified, thus proving that Satan was the master of man. So the Lord said, “O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee.” You will not have spiritual discernment or power of motive unless the heart be kept near to Christ. I shall not want the world if Christ is in the heart. If my delight is in that in which God delights, that is Christ, then I can overcome. Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God the Father.

What I must I do everything to Christ? Oh, that very question proves a heart away from Christ, stewing it bondage for you to do all to the glory of God. It is not that we are to scorn the world in the least, for God's grace is for every poor sinner that will receive it. It in the spirit of the world in my own heart which I have to overcome—that which my heart is in danger of being led by.

The three points we have looked to, then, have been—first, perfect love with us. There is not merely the manifestation of God's love to the saint, but association with Christ's life, putting us into relationship with God. Secondly, love to every saint; but we are to love them as God's children, and keep ourselves in the exercise of love to GO and keeping His commandments. Thirdly, we are to overcome the world. The heart, resting on, looking to, eating, feeding on, Christ, gets the consciousness of what the world is, and it overcomes. The Lord keep us in humble dependence on Himself. His grace is sufficient for us; His strength is made perfect in our weakness.

Notes on Matthew 13

In these parables we have the character and importance of the word shown, and its effects. The object of revealing truth in this manner is made known to us by the Lord in His answer to the disciples, saying, “Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.” Parables then, we find, unfold the word to those who already know Jesus, and they are spoken consequent upon the unbelief of the Jewish people, amongst whom the Lord had previously ministered and cast out devils and healed the sick, and who then in the very principle of apostasy had asked a sign. The character of this evil and adulterous generation is spoken of as having corrupted themselves; their spot is not the spot of God's children; they are a froward generation, children in whom is no faith; and here it is as though He were just declaring, I will hide my face from them, and see what their end will be. And this is the reason He speaks in parables. The spirit of unbelief was clearly developed in the Jews after His taking the utmost possible pains with them, and then He hides His face from them, telling them their condition is this, that “When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.” (Matt. 12:34, 43-45.) Having seen this, then, we see that the parables are the unfolding of mysteries to those who believe.

The Lord, as the apostle of our profession at His first coming, spoke the word of God, and when He returns to judge the world, He will judge by the word which He has spoken, as He says, “The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge you."

The Lord's testimony was of grace, expressive of all that God was in grace to sinners. And when He comes again, He will come judging by it; having given the mind of God, He returns to heaven, and then He returns as king to judge by the word which He had spoken. In the first of these parables we find the Lord going forth to sow the seed. I would speak of the effect and operation of this.

The last six parables have a very different character.

The three first unfold what goes on in the world consequent upon the sowing of the seed; and the three last, the mind of Christ internally as regards the effect.

First, we have the seed sown in the field; and parallel to this is the field bought for the sake of the prize which He knew to be in it.

The grain of mustard seed becoming a tree in which the birds of the air lodge is the indiscriminate place of shelter afforded by the organization of professed doctrine; on the other hand we have the pearl of great price, and understood in its value by a merchantman; here we find the spiritual understanding of Christ, and what every Christian has in his measure.

The leaven, which is a corrupt and a hidden thing, leavens the whole three measures of meal; that is, a given part is filled with it. The whole from the field is gathered, and the whole of the net is drawn to shore; and then comes the separation.

We always find in the interpretation of parables and symbols more is included than the parable or symbol states.

So here the explanation states what the Son of man should do when the angels are sent forth. And here we get the Lord's judgment consequent upon the effects of the seed sown, and that which follows, even that all things that offend and do iniquity shall be gathered out of His kingdom, and cast into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth; and then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The interpretation here embraces more, and carries us farther, than the parable itself. So in Dan. 7 we have first a vision declaring the power of four beasts, and of a little horn which should come out of them; then their destruction, and the setting up of another kingdom; but it is in the interpretation, in verses 18 and 22, that we learn that the saints of the Most High shall possess that kingdom.

These interpretations carry out the child of God into the next dispensation.

In the parable of the tares the servant asks if they shall gather them out (that is, now—at this present time; but the interpretation shows us what takes place consequent upon the time which the parable describes. Christ came into the world, and sowed wheat; the devil sowed tares; this is not simply unconverted men, but the operation of Satan to injure and mar the work of God; there were unconverted men before Christ came, and Satan presented adequate temptation to man's pride, covetousness, and self-esteem, to guide them to his principles, and this is the wise man of the world. But there is another thing now; Satan comes to introduce mischief where God had introduced good. The world is not now in its natural state; Jesus, as the apostle of our profession, has come and sown good seed; but while men slept, the enemy has come in upon this, and sown tares, to injure and to corrupt the profession of the church. It may be great and flourishing in appearance as the tree—it may fill the three measures of meal as the leaven—but it is a corrupt thing.

But to confine myself to the parable of the tares. It is not only the weeds of the field, that is, natural evil, but the subtle evil of the tares growing up to a harvest of judgment, that is, the church nominally; but where were they to be let grow together with the wheat? In the world; there is not to be the judicial process of excision here. The Son of man sows; the Son of man, as king, gathers out of His kingdom all things that offend and do iniquity; but what is this but the condemnation of a judicial process of excision in the world now by the saints? This is not to be executed until He comes.

I take notice, in passing that this has nothing to do with discipline, because this is exercised in the church on the children, or on those we hope to be such; while the proposed excision was to be exercised on the tares, those known to be tares, that is, discerned iniquity.

The parable of the net cast into the sea comes within the class which is the subject of the spiritual apprehension of disciples only, and is addressed only to them, its very subject being within the scope of their understanding only; while, on the other side, it presents the gathering of a company out of the world, in which good and bad are alike found; the process on which is the subject of their

occupation and apprehension, and which the fishermen who draw the net carry on, and not the angels.

Note here, the servants or the fishermen are not occupied with the bad; extermination from the world was not their business; here the dealing with the good is the subject of the parable, the explanation determines the portion of the bad.

So the tares are gathered into bundles to be burned, and before they are cast into the furnace of fire, the wheat is gathered into His barn. We find in this the separation of the saints from the evil, and not the carrying into effect the judgment of the wicked; the good are gathered previous to the judgment upon the ungodly. In the parable we find they are told to gather together the tares in bundles ready for the burning, but they are not told to burn them; then the wheat is to be gathered into a barn, a place of security. But in the explanation there is the gathering out of all things that offend and do iniquity, and they are cast into the furnace of fire, and then the righteous (before gathered into the barn) shall shine forth in the kingdom of their Father.

The principles of iniquity and the providence of God now go on together. First the tares are gathered, and then the wheat; then the tares are judged, and the good shine forth—that is, first of all we have the practical separation, the providential gathering of the wheat out of the way of judgment into the barn, and then the actual judgment of the tares, and consequent upon that the wheat shines forth. When the fish are separated we have, not the good shining forth in glory, but the good gathered into vessels, and then the had destroyed.

In this parable of the tares we find Satan was waking and men were sleeping, and the effect produced is the mixture of the evil and the good, and this is now the work of the devil, mixing evil with good in this world; and we can still say “an enemy hath done this.” Competence to remedy it is another thing; but let us settle this as a first principle, that if we see evil and good mixed in the profession of Christianity, this is the work of Satan, and remember the tares are not simply unconverted men, (there were plenty before the Lord came,) but the tares are the work of Satan consequent upon His coming.

Is the thing the Lord proposes in sowing the seed to set the world right? No; for the servants ask, Are we to root out the tares? and the answer is, No, they are to grow till the harvest; in the world the process of mixture will go on till then, when the Lord will interfere Himself. Here, then, we have the express revelation that the idea of setting the world right by the word comes not from a spiritual understanding; but the Lord's answer to, Whence came these things? and Whither should they be? is, I have bought the world for the sake of the treasure that is in it; and the saints learn to their comfort that the good are gathered into vessels while on the shore, that is, while they are practically together, and, of course, while they have to contend with open and subtle evil, and this we must expect in the world, until He gathers out of His kingdom all things that offend and do iniquity.

In the practical application of this it is of great importance to see that the mixing anything with God's wheat is sanctioning the iniquity of the world. If I see anything with the spirit of the world, or the power of it, stamped upon it, I see a plant which is not of the Lord's planting; and if I see this mixed with Christianity, that which is of Christ, and that which is not of Christ, I say, “an enemy hath done this.” We have been slumbering, but the enemy was awake. The spirit of a believer

necessarily involves total separation from the world, for where there is a spirit to join the world, there is not the Spirit of God, but the spirit of the world. But this state of things will not go on forever.

I would ask you, dear friends, whether there be in you this recognition of the total separation in spirit which these things mark out to us? If this is not the case, we are either the natural weeds of the field, or what Satan has sown to do mischief; you may be those God will convert, but you are one of these, or you have the principle in your hearts, that the love of the world is enmity against God.

The thing of price to my soul is that Christ is coming. The beauty and glory of Christ is clearly opposed to the things of the world. Are your hearts under the control of the spirit of disobedience? or, if the Lord were manifested, is it the thing you delight in? Because He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation. And you who love Christ, cannot you discriminate between Christ and this heartless evil world? Have you given up its interests and its intercourse, save in doing good? Can it be that the things by which Satan governs our hearts are topics of mutual interest to Christians and to the world? No. All that is of the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. The world is alienated from God, and if mixed up with the saints, it is “an enemy hath done this” —the saints of God taught of Christ by the Spirit know that it is an enemy. May the Lord press its truth, dear friends, on your hearts, that you may be separated from the world; may He show you it is impossible to mix these things, and keep you from the wish to do so!

Chapter 122

The Most High

I have been looking into the force of [Hebrew word]. That it ultimately refers to God in the millennium as the supreme God then manifested, to the exclusion of what is false, is evident. This is the force of the word—One who, to the exclusion of, and superiority over, all others, holds the place of the one true God, but exalted as supreme in government. Jehovah is, as we know, the God who is in relationship with Israel, but He is the supreme God, the Most High. The full statement of the title, and the time of taking it, is in Gen. 14:19, 20, 22. Israel's enemies are entirely discomfited, and delivered into his hand, and the heir of promise blessed of Him who possesses heaven and earth. He is supreme, and has taken all things into His possession.

Still God is, of course, always such, and referred to in trial as the One who will set all right. When the Lord is just coming into the world to set all in order, the question is raised, Where is the secret place of the Most High? Where is He to be found as a protection? Whoever finds Him will have, the protection of Abraham's God, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the place of promise. Jehovah is it, the God of Israel. And in fact the full divine care of the supreme God, the God of promise, is found, possessor of heaven and earth, revealed in connection with the Melchizedek priest.

Hence, too, when Nebuchadnezzar is restored from a state that represents the character of the empires which began in him, he owns the Most High. (Dan. 4:25-34.)

In the Psalms the use of it is frequent. In Psa. 20 it is connected with the royalty of Christ as the glorified Man and King. His hand will find out all His enemies, and by the favor of the Most High He will not be moved. (Psa. 46) God is again in the midst of His people on Messiah's triumph. (Chap. 45) The tabernacles are those of the Most, High. His power is fully displayed in the earth, Jehovah being with Jacob. So more fully as to the world in Psa. 47. In Psa. 50 Most High is connected with the judgment of God in power. In Psa. 9; 10; 55, and 57, it is calling upon Him in this character by the remnant when in distress, the first of the two latter speaking of the distress, the second of the delivering supremacy over all the earth. Psa. 73 is the first of the third book, and the power of the Most High despised by the adversaries, but going into the sanctuary, their judgment is discovered. The years of the Most High are remembered in Psa. 77, His way is in the sanctuary, and in the sea; not looking to heart-failing in man, but to Jehovah, the Supreme, who accomplishes His good pleasure. In this and the next it is Jehovah's right to this name, as in all the history of Israel. For this is all Israel. Psa. 82 and 83 are both judgment at the close, and in the fullest way to recognize that Jehovah is the Most High over all the earth. Psa. 91 has been spoken of. Psa. 92 is the same perishing of the enemies, and exalting the true David. Psa. 97 is expressly as Jehovah reigning, and as Most High over all the earth, and exalted above the gods when He comes to judgment. In Psa. 107 it is Israel re-gathered, who celebrates God's government, and His chastisement for their rebellion against Jehovah, who is the Most High.

We have the Most High in Dan. 7, though in most of the occurrences it is in the plural for high or heavenly places. There its connection with God's title, and making good His dominion, and this

connected with Israel, is evident. Thus, though Jehovah is looked back to in self-judgment in the history of Israel, as Psa. 56; 57; 73; 77, yet the force of the title is evident.

Chapter 123

Natural and Supernatural

"Natural" is that system or κ■σμος in which we are placed, and which follows constant natural laws; and therewith man's agency, placed in that system, and in power over the lower part of it, according to his measure—a sphere whose laws are the subject of man's will, and in which he disposes of their agencies in this lower world. "Supernatural" is a power which in its activity is above and beyond that system. It may use the ordinary powers of nature: miracle does not consist in acting without them; but if it use them, they are not set in activity by the sequence of natural law, but by the will of the supernatural power, and by it directly. I light a fire, and produce steam from water; but here it is not the simple fiat of power that heat should be of itself; I produce it by natural laws on which I am dependent. God may by an east wind blow and drive back the Red Sea, or bring quails; but He causes the wind to blow where He will: this I cannot do. If Satan can do it as permitted, it may be supernatural also, but this is limited. God may order things so that we may fall under the effect of natural causes; but this, though divine ordering, is not a miracle, though equally divine power; it belongs to another sphere, the relationship between man and God. It is not in the sphere of natural causes, acting above or beyond them, to produce effects in that sphere. But then, as to miracles, and the idea of making them the result of natural causes, in a sphere of which much is yet unknown to us, Christianity rests on the truth of resurrection, which is certainly not according to the coarse of nature. And of this the Duke of Argyle can only say, Why should it seem incredible to you that God can raise the dead? No doubt God can, and He has raised Christ Himself. But that is shirking the question.

But besides, to a man lame or blind from his birth a word heals or gives sight. This is not the unknown course of nature, unless you make God's power, which is to Him the course of nature and will, in which He does what pleases Him in heaven and earth, to be the course of nature. But a word, and the word of a man, doing this is not the course of nature, save what is natural to God. To talk of it as such is to make the course of nature and fixed laws mean nothing. It is God's nature in goodness and power, if you will, but acting in sovereign goodness; for love, though His nature, is in its operation sovereign, and if it acts according to laws, they are moral laws, the laws of His own nature. That word commands the agencies of the physical laws as in the lame or blind, and they then produce their natural effect. But in that word of command is the power of the miracle, according to the centurion's faith; "Speak the word, λ■γω, and my servant shall be healed." Natural action was restored, but by direct power.

But this thought of God's acting according to laws involves a great fallacy from using the term in a double sense. God does act according to His nature, or, if you please, according to the laws of His nature, that is, its uniform unchangeable principles when He acts, and the manifestations of which constitute His glory. He is righteous and holy; He cannot lie, and He cannot be not Himself. His acts manifest Himself. Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father; but this was no physical effect of a cause operating without will in itself. God has ordered a system of cause and effect, but there is no will in it. We call its laws, established fixed laws, because the effect is uniform, regularly and always produced, though I doubt not the causa causans is always

operative, and necessary to the effects. But in the acting of God, though all such acts are consistent with His nature, and must be so, it is not the Cause of acting. God's will is the cause, though we readily understand His will cannot act contrary to His nature; nay, His nature may set His will in activity. “God so loved the world, that he gave,” &c. It is not a material necessity imposed apart from will in what acts; it is moral, displaying a nature by a will. “Without holiness no man shall see the Lord;” but this does not make holiness something necessarily producing an effect, as gravity acts universally in matter. There is nothing to do with cause and effect in it. So miracles of goodness prove God's nature when wrought because He works them, but they are not always wrought as a natural consequence attached to anything. God acts. These, when they are wrought, are according to, and display, His nature; but they are not the necessary and constant effects of that nature as a producing cause. God is always such, and, if He acts, so acts as not to deny Himself—it were impossible; but He does all things according to the counsels of His own will. To confound the physical laws of the creature, always operating as constituted by the Creator, with the sovereign power of the Creator who constituted that order, to whom none can say, What doest Thou? is a great moral blunder.

Law is a uniform course prescribed by adequate authority.

The Duke of Argyle's book is useful in the main, but as in the case of miracles, so in creation, stops short of Christian ground and truth. The things which were seen were not made of the things which do appear. In the beginning God created. That there may be proofs of progress and developed design, and of laws, and of uniformity in it, may be all true; but this does not hinder that they exist, and the law too, by the fiat of reator.

Chapter 124

Not Ashamed of the Gospel

Rom. 1:16

The apostle had met with many trials and difficulties; “in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft!” &c. He had known privations more than most for the gospel's sake; yet he says, “I am not ashamed of the gospel.” There was an energy and a power in his own soul that brought home to his conscience the truth of what he was about, that amidst disagreeables made him bold to persevere, as he says, “I was bold at Philippi to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.” There is nothing more shameful in man's sense than to be beaten and flogged, but he says,” I am not ashamed.” The reason is that “it is the power of God."

The message that he carried about is what souls want—to be forgiven their sins and to be delivered from sin. It is a bitter and evil thing to forsake the living and true God; and this is what man has done and is doing. He is hewing out to himself broken cisterns that can hold no water; he seeks happiness, and, if he gets any signs, puts all into a broken pitcher. But sin stings like a viper in the end. This may be found out with sorrow and regret. Power against it is wanting. It is a sorrowful thing to see sin mastering a soul. Man is a slave of his own lusts, as well as of Satan. Sin is degrading, and for all that there is no power. Man is lying under it. A child may have been carefully guarded by a loving parent from the indulgence of its natural propensities; but what sorrow for the parent, when the guard is removed, to see them break out in full energy, the will at work and no power against sin! Unconverted persons know they love the things that are not of God. Whence does it all come? From a heart that is contrary to God—a nature at enmity with God. The heart loves the things that suit its own lusts. We all by nature turn away from God; and all are alike in this, those who have been most restrained by natural checks, and the most vicious; there may be least care about it in the least vicious, because a very vicious man would be glad to be out of the scrape.

When the prodigal left his father's house, he was as wicked as afterward; he was glad to get away from his father and to do his own will. There may be a desire to please the father from natural affection; but there is the wish to have the opportunity to do one's own will, and that was all the prodigal wished. What can we say of such a heart as that? The prodigal son was as guilty, though not so degraded, when he crossed his father's threshold as when eating husks in the far country.

Then there is another thing brought out in testifying of Christ to the sinner. Present Christ to the heart, is there any inclination for it? No; the mere absence from God makes a man set up for something in himself. When in His presence, man shrinks and would get behind a tree if he could, as Adam did. To get mercy from the grace of a Savior does not suit him. “I never transgressed.” There is the natural self-righteous man, whose pride makes him reject the presence of the father, and so puts him farther off than the vicious man, though both alike would be right glad to have nothing to say to God. And is there never to be any remedy? It is plainly shown now. Now there may be an end put to sin. There is a remedy given in the cross of Christ. The time is hastening

when He will come as it were to see, and then execute judgment. When God left man to himself, in a sense, there must come the deluge. So afterward the land spews out the inhabitants thereof. Do you say the law of God is broken and it is no matter? God's authority is no matter? His power in government is no matter? His wrath must come. Is sin to go on and no wrath on God's part? The law to be broken and no wrath? The Son of man to be smitten and slain and no wrath? Impossible! Wrath must come against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of man. All had been done to try man when Christ died. “Now is the judgment of this world.” The very fact of the cross closes up the scene towards man as a sinner. The wrath is revealed from heaven (not as under the law, for He is not now come out of His place to punish): the very speaking of wrath thus beforehand is grace. It is not come, but plainly revealed that it will come. Are you then despising the warning of that wrath which is coming? Do you not know that you are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, not by committing the sin, but by rejecting the testimony of God's Son?

You all know (I speak to the unconverted) whether you have peace with God, whether you are in the state of the prodigal or the elder son, whether you are within or outside. God will not take your thoughts of yourself, but He will judge you by His thoughts of you—by the word Christ has spoken. You may think yourself all right as the elder son did; but God does not unless you have come within and are at peace with Him. See the activity of love to those to whom wrath is revealed. They are children of wrath, natural heirs of it; yet though the wrath is fully proved to be due and the vineyard given up, He sends His Son and shows grace to the sinner; He gives up seeking fruit and provides a marriage supper for His son, furnishing Himself everything that is needed. The prodigal was perishing. It is not only that there was a famine—the man feels and would get what he can; but he is perishing and nothing is to be got. Satan has not life to give in his country, though he may sell things to keep from dying. The world may get pleasures and vanities to feed its lusts, but nothing more.

You who are not converted, you who have not eternal life and are indifferent about it, you are totally away from God. You must be either indifferent or miserable, because you do not know that you have it. Whichever state you may be in, you are talking about something that we have and you have not. Yet the gospel of God is sent for you. The activity of God's own love was shown you when you cared nothing about it. If you struggle to get it, you will find it hard. Conscience cannot master itself. Conscience talks a good deal, and it talks to itself. When conscience is at work it feels that one ought to confess the evil, to judge oneself, not only the sin but the guilt. Conscience will say, I cannot get rid of this; and more, I do not wish to get rid of this. Conscience knows it should be in the presence of God, though the more it gets there the more terrible.

The gospel that is preached is what God has Himself done for you. A person may say, I must get power over my sin; but he cannot. He may seek the power, but he cannot do it himself. What can you do then? You must be brought to this—I can do nothing. The truth brings out what you are, and what you cannot do. In Rom. 7, it is not, How shall I get strength against myself—this “wretched man,” but, I want a Deliverer; not strength for tomorrow, but pardon for today (though I shall want that). You need mercy; and if you want anything else, you are not yet brought to own what you are. The gospel will give power, but first of all what is wanted is God's righteousness, and it is this which is revealed in it. Are you going to add to His righteousness? Has God only half met your need? He puts the soul as a sinner into His own presence, but reveals His own righteousness in the gospel to him that believes. He has met the poor prodigal all in his rags and

He Himself has clothed him in Christ. I have nothing short of the righteousness of God. In learning this I have found God for me.

Thus another precious fact in Christ is come in—God must be and is love to have done this. I am accepted in the Beloved. There is abundant help given for living the life of the Christian; but we are now speaking of standing in the presence of God, with no sin to disturb His eye, and therefore I can stand in perfect rest before Him. His eye rests on Christ, who has perfectly glorified Him, and He is perfectly satisfied: His glory can ask nothing more. God is now glorifying Christ, and as a believer I can rest in conscience in His presence. It is all a settled and accepted work; and it is thus revealed on the principle of faith. So from Abel downwards all born of God have believed; and I too believe. Then can I add anything to Christ? No; I bow before Him. I believe in Him, and rest in Him. I cannot believe the gospel if the righteousness of God is not revealed in it. But as the gospel is true, so God's righteousness is perfect, and faith takes it as He gives it in full grace. Therefore the just shall live by faith.

Then God is for me; and what shall separate me from His love? I want spiritual strength; I need temporal mercies; hew shall I get them all? Because God is for me. He seals me by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Ghost cannot seal the fruits without having produced them. We are sealed when we have believed. Those are sealed whose souls have bowed to Christ in God's presence, and to whom this righteousness has been revealed. Do you say that you are striving? Your striving will do nothing for you, unless it be to discover your powerlessness to you. You are one foot in and one out all the time, until you find yourself utterly needy and helpless. It is only God can attract the heart to receive that which the activity of His own love has provided.

Notes on Greek Tenses, Moods, and Prepositions

In 1 Peter 2:23, 24, ■ν■νεγκεν is an aorist, the three preceding verbs imperfects, these referring to what Christ was during His life, that to what He did once for all on the cross.

But the imperfect is not simply a continuous doing. In English we have really more accuracy as to this than the Greek. “He read,” “did read,” “was reading,” are all different, yet all used for the imperfect; only “read” is also aorist, the historic fact, and really an aorist, though used for Greek imperfect when the fact or “what” is denoted without specific note of time. But it is so far imperfect as” ein abgeschlossenes,” doing, not done. “Was” is need while present continuous time is going on, that is, present doing of something else, then going on though now past; as What was John doing when I came in? He was writing. So even in Greek ■ν διδ■σκων, more positively continuous in Greek than in English, where it may be only that the act was doing. But, where the fact, rather than its continuity is to be noted, I say, “read,” not “was reading.” Then if I introduce time, I must have the time at which specified by another word to give it a time, as He read the scriptures to us of an evening. Aorist in Greek is only historic or moral (the latter in English with “has"), a single act. Angels came (προσ■λθον) and ministered (imperfect): this was not a single act, but what they did; in English not “were ministering” but “ministered,” because, “were ministering” being a continuous act in past time, the time when must be specified. It was present when the time alluded to in “were” was so. But in “ministered” there is the simple fact of what they were doing, the what. In Greek it is the imperfect. For this “was” or “were” does not suit in English, but the imperfect when only a fact characterizing what they did without specified time, is in English the same as the aorist, or is one; “was,” affirms present existence at a past time, but the time must be specified or understood. But in Greek it is not a simple act as aorist, but what characterized the action at a given time. This is in English the simple imperfect or aorist, not present participle and perfect auxiliary: that fixes the mind on time, so far as the tense goes; “did do” marks the thing to be over. “Came and ministered” —after coming they did that: continuance here is only from the sense of the word. I would say, Came in, and fell down dead: it is a true historic aorist. Imperfect is properly a present continuing fact in past time.

But the imperfect in Greek constantly is rightly represented in English, not by “was,” &c., but by what is an aorist, if you please to call it so: “taught in their cities,” “angels ministered to him,” when the act is meant, or what is in the mind, not the continuance of time, marked by another word involving “while.” It is only rightly used in English where time is not the special point, but what he did. “Was” is always at a specific time: “as I came in, he was,” &c. The Greek aorist is one specific point of past time: “he came;” the imperfect is what he was doing at a certain period. “Did” emphasizes; the act may, or may not, last. But “was,” &c., does not habitually represent the imperfect in Greek; it is never a past abgeschlossenes thing, but, I repeat, what the person did as ode looked at as present in a past time or continuous, so that it is really characteristic. “Angels ministered” may have been in one act; but it is looked as doing, not done; not abgeschlossenes when spoken of “came” is. “The virgins grew drowsy,” an abgeschlossenes thing, and “slept” their state, here continuous, but what state they were in; imperfect in Greek if continuous; and in

English aorist, because it only states “what” with no specific note of when. What is imperfect in Greek, is in such case preterit or aorist in English, still imperfect as not a closed act. The ■ν■στα ξ is evidently passed, nodding drowsy, for they then were actually asleep; they grew drowsy and slept. So 1 Cor. 3:6: the acts of Paul and Apollos, aorist; God gave, imperfect, not “was giving” as a period of time; but characteristic. The increase was from God, not from Paul or Apollos. It was when or at least that occasion. Here therefore there may be a question in English, because the mind may rest on who gave it as a fact or on the occasion when. On the whole I prefer “gave,” though there is partially a when, because the fact who gave is the main point of the passage. If I say, “We read, while we worked,” it is a characteristic fact, what he did an aoristic imperfect, perhaps habitual. “He was reading while we were working” is a specified time as to which this is asserted. He was doing that at a given time. In result the simple or aoristic imperfect is characteristic, what was done; the compound imperfect, a fact at a given time. In 1 Peter 2:23, 24, imperfects are clearly characteristic (what He did), the aorist one actual finished fact. In English the present is an unabgeschlossenes aorist, the same as imperfect, only of course not past time: he eats, does eat, is eating. The difference is the same as in the imperfect. “Is eating” is specific as to time, and so on; “eats,” what he does; and “does eat” is emphatic.

Thus the aorist expresses an act, the imperfect characterizes it, and indeed so in English. What was he doing? Writing. “He wrote” is the fact. Hence it, the imperfect, may be continuous, because it is the character which abides while the act abides; but constantly it simply characterizes. Thus “angels came,” which is the simple fact, “and were ministering to him.” This characterizes what they did when they had come, and hence implies continuance as characterizing. Hence one may often use either: Matt. 19; 13 (aorist), His disciples rebuked them. This was the fact that happened, ■πετ■μησαν. In Mark 10:13 it is ■πετ■μων. This is the character of what they did. In fact the duration is just the same, the conception of the writer is different. But when we reflect on it, character supposes something abiding. Again, Heb. 11:17, in the same verse Abraham offered, it is the fact, and what is peculiar, the perfect; then προσ■θερεν, here not the fact but the character of it. He who had the promise and this only-begotten Son in whom they were, did that. I suspect that προσθ■ρω is used because he was not in fact sacrificed (■ναθ■ρω); but in Abraham's mind by faith he had wholly offered and given him up to God (προσεν■νοχεν), and in this case never withdrawn. It was a complete surrender.

But I think the aorist has also this characterizing sense, of course the fact being stated. “He has written the letter,” gives a more moral effect than, “He wrote the letter.” “He brought Greeks into the temple” is not as just as “he hath brought Greeks into the temple.” The last implies more moral character in the act. The fact was suggested in the participle (διδ■σκων) as a questionable fact, and then he was affirmed to be guilty of it, or to have done what was wicked. “1-19 brought” is merely the fact.

So, in Rom. 3:23, the historical tense (or preterit) in English would not do at all, that is, all sinned. “All have sinned” gives the fact with its moral character; it is what all have done. The affirmation is in “have,” the fact. Then I say, “have” what? Sinned, if I say, “all sinned,” I am relating a history. So 1 Cor. 7:28.

On the whole I am fully convinced that the English tenses do not correspond. The aorist is peculiar; it states the fact to have occurred; the various uses of it are because no one tense

answers to it. It is perfect, or historical tense, or pluperfect; but all this is only because other elements in the sentence give it this force, to which in another language the time of the verb must be adapted. Thus, “when they had accomplished all things [aorist], they returned” [also aorist]; but in English I must say “had,” because the relative time of “returned” requires it. In Greek both are mere facts; in English I must have historical order to make sense. In Matt. 14:3, 4, 5, the preterit would be just as good as the pluperfect, as historically relating the fact. So John 6:22; 11:30: either “met him,” quite as good, the aoristic fact, not the relative time. Chapter 18:4 is history only; ■ξελθ■ν, supposes the act done, which we may express by the present aorist, “going forth spake,” for that expresses the past as regards ε■πεν. Unless emphasis is to be laid on it, the present aorist is never in English, because it has no time, but a fact on which the verb is dependent, hence morally antecedent. I have shown elsewhere there are no proper tenses in English: only an abgeschlossenes and an unabgesehlossenes aorist. η■δ■κησα is the fact of having found His good pleasure in the object spoken of with τινι, ■ν, ε■ς. All the fullness was pleased to dwell in Him. (Compare Col. 2:9.) It may be delight or sovereign good pleasure, or even human satisfaction, as 2 Cor. 5:6. But as to the tense it is the simple fact affirmed that He has found His good pleasure. See Matt. 3:17; 12:18 Peter 1:17; Heb. 10:6; Luke 12:32; 1 Corinthians 1:21.

I doubt the reference of 2 Peter 1:14, to John 21:18, 10, though often thought of on account of ταχιν■, and then “has showed me” is the right English, not the historic preterit. The imperfect is anything doing at a given point of time, but here, save in rare cases, we have not the accuracy of the English. “Was doing” is it present, act going on, doing, at a past time, “was,” which the rest of the sentence states. “Was” is an historical preterit. He was, but he is not. He wrote a letter—a past historical fact. “Was writing,” is the historical preterit, with a present act in activity. But in English we often have to use the preterit which gives the fact, its time appearing from the sentence. “John forbade Him.” “John was forbidding Him” would in English put the forbidding before Christ's coming to the baptism: that gives the point of time when John was already forbidding Him: be forbidding was going on when Jesus came up. Here in Greek the imperfect is the moral attitude of John when Christ came to be baptized. Rom. 8:30 puts itself at the close of God's ways and dealings to give the whole and security of them, and then gives all as fact and history, His plan laid out as facts, sure in every case, and so viewed as accomplished.

John 13:31 is the single fact of the cross looked at as accomplished, as just exactly from the beginning of the chapter, the Lord does. He had been Son of God, Son of David, to take the place of Son of Man. He must die. (John 11; 12) In this the hour was come that He should depart out of the world to the Father who had now put all things into His hand. Then, when Judas went out, it all was settled: he was to do it quickly; and now the Son of man's true glory began in the cross. God was glorified in Him, and all Christ's glory as man came about by the cross where He glorified God, and which was the Son of man's glory, as indeed it was. Comparing in English “he wrote,” “he has written,” in themselves, the first is history of a past fact, and, as it is a past fact, may be set aside, but says nothing about it. “Has taken” is a past fact “taken,” a present one in “has;” that is, it affirms at the present time the past fact. But in English it is often necessary to employ it for the aorist, because the aorist does not say, that the thing is past and gone, only affirms the fact; whereas English, having so accurate an expression as the auxiliary verb gives the preterit, being historical in English contrasted with this, implies in general, though it does not say, that it does not

still continue, at least it often does. I admit that this is not always and necessarily the case, but often it would mislead.

Still in English we have a positively accurate way of putting a by gone past act or thing, that is, the past participle and auxiliary. “He was pleased.” Here I state it only of the past fact formally. I avoid the present time, and fix the statement on the past. Only occasionally the past participle implies an abiding state. Thus if I say, “This is my beloved Son in abiding I found my pleasure,” it is a by-gone thing, a historical preterit. “I have found my pleasure” is the fact simply. “He has found His pleasure in Him.” “This is my beloved Son,” makes me know that it is a constant and subsisting thing, but “found” would make it a bygone thing. “Have found” is of no time: only it was already true.

In Mark 3:26, “Rose up,” will not do therefore; it is a past by-gone thing, too much of an historical past. It takes the fact as an aorist does regularly as a happened fact, not as a past history, which tends to put it out of present time. The preterit is essentially an historical tense in English of a by-gone fact, and very commonly implies that the thing is not true now. “He wrote the history.” It results in this that the English preterit is more preterit past (abgeschlossene Sache) than the aorist, which is past, present, and, in spite of Winer, future in sense as governed in sense by the phrase. The pretense of translating the aorist uniformly by an English tense which answers to it is absurd. There are cases where the verb substantive and past participle best express it, or the auxiliary “have” with it. “If Satan rose up..."(Mark 3:26) is pretty nearly nonsense. He is mixing up historical fact and moral bearing, “has risen,” or “be risen,” for the Lord is occupied with a present fact, whose moral bearing He is discussing. So in passive: “if once (Luke 13:25) the master of the house be risen, (have risen up) and have shut to the door, and ye begin ■στ■ναι (perfect present)... ■νοιξον, “have it open.” So often, where the aorist and present imperative go together, and the first must be done for the other to take place. The very name, “aorist” shows the time is not determined, the fact is affirmed, the context if needed, shows the time and whether supposed still to exist. “Many took in hand,” Luke 1:11, would be absurd. “It hath seemed good:” he had not changed his mind, but that was not the question. The treatise was then the proof he had had that mind and involves the present effect, But “it seemed good” would be just as good sense and grammar; one is historic “seemed;” “has” brings it down to present thought about it. And that is the real difference. Preterit states the fact historically, the auxiliary and participle give the speaker's present estimate of or acquaintance with it. “He wrote a letter” is historical fact; “he has written a letter” is my present acquaintance with, and recognition of, the fact; for “has” is present, my present affirmative. In 2, “have seated 'themselves' is alone right.

It seems to me that the different moods and tenses with μ■, ■να, &c. are, by reason of the transient shade of thought, in the writer's mind; or the character of the thing spoken of is in question, not the purpose it should be. Thus π■τε with future makes it a present when the time of π■τε is arrived; with the present, the thing spoken of being there, it is character, not purpose of or the contrary. Luke 11:35: take heed that the light that is in thee be not of that character; and Gal. 4:11, lest as a present fact the labor should be in vain. There is no future purpose. He fears as to the character of labor already bestowed.

The perfect is the present of past labor. The subj. by itself is always, I think, the idea of how, if a question as usually (perhaps always), thus represented by “should” (so there). Quere as to its

force with ο■ μ■, where it takes clearly a future force? If we examine the use of the subj. aorist with ο■ μ■, we shall find I think, (though “will in no wise, never,” is practically the sense in English because we speak from the present time), yet its real force is “will have,” “never have,” “shall not, have;” and it is constantly a long period looked at. “I shall not have drunk at an of it, till.” So with ε■ς τ■ν α■■να often. “There shall not have been left one stone upon another which shall not have been cast down.” It is a future perfect or past in thought. With the future indicative it is not so, it is intention as to anything at the time of speaking. The aorist always supposes a past period to which the negated word refers, and denies the subject of the verb during that period: ο■ μ■ ■ξ■λθης ■ως ■ν till. Thou wilt have stood in all that time. ο■ μ■ π■ω ■ως ■ταν. Future indicative: ■λε■ς σοι, κ■ριε ο■ μ■ ■σται σοι το■το. There is no period. It is simply a thing that, as Peter trusted, would never happen.

Such a passage as ■ν α■τ■ ■κτ■σθη brings the operative power into the person himself, that which created was in Christ, so He casteth out devils, ■ν τ■ ■ρχοντι τ■ν δαιμον■ων. The power that operated was inherent in Beelzebub. It is more intimate and immediate, as πειρασμ■ν ■ν τα■ς ■πρβο■λαις. Were it δι■ τ■ν, the πειρασμ■ς might be some things else than the lying in wait, whereas the temptation and trial was in the lying in wait itself. It is not the means by which, but that in which, the power of the thing resides. δι■ is the means or instrument, and ε■ς the intention. Thus God created δι■ α■το■ by Him as an instrument, and ε■ς as an end. (John 1:3, 10; Heb. 1:3; 1 Cor. 8:6)

Note here, by the bye, πρ■ς with acc., supposes the thing to be “arrived at,” (but the accusative supposes direction towards). ε■ς is only the objective direction it may reach, of course. πρ■ς is not going towards the thing spoken of, but is at that which is governed by it. The Word was πρ■ς τ■ν θε■ν, He did not go towards. ε■ς would not do, being in the mind of the agent as an object; πρ■ς, with or at, but distinct from the object it governs. (See Mark 11:1.) Hence the gifts were πρ■ς τ■ν καταρτισμ■ν, they operated to that. While they were working, this effect was being produced—was there. But they were given with a view to (ε■ς) the work of the ministry, and to the edifying of the body of Christ.

As to ■ν, further, ■γετο ■ν τ■ πνε■ματι, ■λθεν ■ν τ■ πνε■ματι, it was the working in which He went, not an instrument which led Him, as a means distinct from Himself. ■γ■ασται ■ ■ν■ρ ■ν τ■ γυναικ■, δι■ would be actual sanctification, an effect produced. Here, as we have seen, it characterizes things in the nature and spirit of them, ■ν πνε■ματι, ■ν ■ληθε■α, ■ν δ■λψ, &c. It is never the means, but the power and state of the agent, or what characterizes the subject.

This is fully confirmed in πρ■ς (with acc.), the action of that which is πρ■ς, always reaches to that which πρ■ς governs. You speak πρ■ς, this is the object of what is πρ■ς. It is not motion to, but something which reaches to, and an often is” with” or “by.” In cases of time, πρ■ς ■σπ■ραν, the force, to my mind, is the time they were in reached to the evening; so James 4:14, our life, is πρ■ς ■λιγ■ν, reaches only to the end of a very short period. In other cases it is simpler, prayer πρ■ς τ■ν θε■ν, sickness πρ■ς θ■νατον. Various derivative meanings are found, but all having this as the literal and material. So πρ■σωπον πρ■ς πρ■σωπον, στ■μα πρ■ς οτ■μα, λαλε■ν πρ■ς τ■ ο■ς. The action is at, or reaches to the word governed. It is used for the ground thing or cause, but, still having the same etymological force—πρ■ς τ■ν σκληροκαρδ■αν ■μ■ν. It was addressed to that; that hardness being there, such permission was given, “in the case of;” so πρ■ς το■ς

■γγ■λους, in the case of the angels. The word addressed itself to the case they were in; it was adapted to, reached, their state and circumstances, as we say, touching them, or such or such a thing. In Luke 18:1. His parable reached to, or touched, this point. It was its object, and applied to it as the result, short of which it did not stop.

So we have seen Eph. 4:12. It was for that, and dealt with it. The secret of ε■ς and πρ■ς, I suspect to be: ε■ς has the mind and intention of the moving person in view; πρ■ς the goal or object which anything is to (πρ■ς). ε■ς is the object or aim of what moves; πρ■ς carries the mind with what is to or πρ■ς τ■ν καταρτισμ■ν, the present proper effect, but with a view to the two other things: only ε■ς is not the object of καταρτισμ■ν, but of the gifts. So Luke 14, in the matter or case of these things He spoke of, so as to meet them. This is common, as Rom. 8:31, so as be really up to them; the answer reached to, comprehends, touches this matter. So πρ■ς, according to; that was what one reached to, it was its measure. (Cf. Gal. 2:19.) So the sufferings do not reach to the coming glory. This explains James 4:5: ■πιποθε■ πρ■ς, reaches to this. This, however, suffices to show its force. With a dative it does not reach to, but is actually at, πρ■ς τ■ ■ρει. ε■ς does suppose motion towards, while it consequently, if not hindered, gets there, or if it be that which has capacity, into. We say in English, What are you at, or about? This is πρ■ς. We have πρ■ς and ε■ς in Rom. 14:2, ε■ς τ■ ■γαθ■ν πρ■ς ο■κοδομ■ν, the present effect reached, the characteristic effect of the seeking to please him. It was not to please him, to get his good-will, but for his edification, the effect being that which was good.

Chapter 126

The Olive, the Vine, and the Fig Tree

I trust, dear brethren, that our souls may be directed to the importance of speaking as before the Lord. What we are speaking of is not merely like man's thoughts and circumstances, but the things of the Lord. May we all keep this in mind. I would take up in connection with Rom. 11 the wild olive tree. It is the expression of the character of the Gentiles, who are told in the Epistle to the Ephesians, to remember that they were “strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.” It is of great importance to understand the exceeding wideness of that expression, “Gentiles in the flesh” — “the wild olive tree.” What we want is “to have no confidence in the flesh.” We see what the flesh is in Phil. 3 “We are the circumcision,” says the apostle, “who worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh. All the character which, he gives to the flesh is the “concision,” strictness of ordinances, legitimacy of descent, works of our own: these three things are marked as repudiated flesh, though of a religious claim. They are also of great importance as marking the character of the flesh under all circumstances. The resurrection cuts off all boasting in natural descent. My descent is that I am born of God. (John 1:18.) We are “sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty.” When we come to look at the fairest character of the flesh in the world, what is it when it is compared with being sons and daughters of the Lord God Almighty? If there were any title to anything in the flesh, the Jew had it; for the Gentile to talk of ordinances, descent, &c, is indeed folly.

When God has settled anything, it is settled. In the, flesh we are Gentiles; in the new man we are born of God. If I get out of this, I get out of the Spirit into the flesh. In this Phil. 3 we have very severe names—dogs, evil workers, the concision. It is too bad for the Gentiles to come in and attempt to bring in that which has been set aside in the Jew by our Lord. Judaism had proper glory in the flesh; as concerning the flesh, Christ was a Jew. Here would have been the crowning of the flesh, if there had been anything good in our flesh. But He was rejected. There was no good thing in man, and therefore death intervenes.

We have the two principles of descent and works brought before us in this chapter. Works never satisfy the conscience, for it appeals to something that is not in itself. This is all set aside, and therefore the apostle says, “What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.” The character of the flesh is that it is “without God in the world.” This leads us to see the character of the “wild olive tree” —the Gentiles. When the commonwealth of Israel is spoken of, it is not that they are strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope, but the contrary. (See Rom. 9:4-6.)

The point of distinction between the wild olive tree, and the good one, is this: the last was an election of grace and promise; the first, the nation itself which failed. From the days of the fall there has been a remnant according to the election of grace. Abel, in this sense, was a remnant and a suffering one; but there was no interfering in judgment till the flood; then the world refused the Lord, and the remnant was preserved.

Here was interference in judgment, God's acting in the world; thereon Satan came in, and pretended to be the agent in the good and evil that was going on in the world. Then came in idolatry. Satan, having reduced man to misery, set himself up as God over him. Next Abram was specially called out as the remnant, as one connected with God. The church comes on in the accomplishment of its own redemption, though its glory is still held in hope, a remnant according to the election of grace, made the deposit of promise. And this is the olive tree. It is true that it becomes afterward Israel nationally, and “the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” God never repents of His calling, neither of Abraham, nor of Israel. All our hopes would be shaken if that purpose were not infallible, but (before this) faith is spoken of as accounted for righteousness.

Faith is never spoken of in the scriptures as brought out before the time of Abraham. Abraham believed in Him who was to raise up Jesus from the dead. The character of his faith was, that it was faith in the resurrection. Resurrection alone takes man ruined in sin and brings in something beyond the reach of evil in a new scene—the risen man. We get the promises made to Abram (that are alluded to in the Galatians) in Gen. 12, when he is first called out. There was the first breaking of the whole link of flesh as regarded Abram, and then the promise was confirmed to his seed after being risen from the dead. The promise was given to Abram, as the remnant called out, then confirmed to Isaac consequently on the resurrection (in figure). The reasoning out of this we have in the Epistle to the Romans. The apostle there shows that the ground on which the promise comes is justification by faith.

The Jews chose to take the promises, not on the ground of the faith of Abraham, but on that of their own obedience conditionally; and the moment they got on this ground they failed. They tried to do some good thing, like the young man in the Gospels, who, wrong in principle, knew not that “none is good, save one, that is God.” Israel took the law, not on the ground of promise, but of law, The law rests on the stability of another party; the promise rests on the stability of the Promiser. The prophets always take Israel off the ground of law on that of promise. In taking the law they must rest on descent and ordinances; and this is what the apostle combats in Rom. 3; 4 Up to chapter 3 he proves the universality of the guilt of the world, and the necessity of the blood of Christ to cleanse from sin. In chapter 4 we have the principle of the resurrection. He leads us out of natural life, out of the law, into the Spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus. Chapter 8 plants the Christian in his own proper place in the grace of God.

Then the apostle turns to the question of what becomes of the Jew. Has God cast them off? No; their bringing in again rests on the promise of God in resurrection, as we read in the Acts: “And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he saith on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.” The apostle's argument in chapter 9 is just this: he asserts God's title (the election of the nation of the Jews still subsisting) to elect whom He pleases. How come believers to have all these privileges mentioned in chapter 8? Because they are God's election; the principle is in God, not in the circumstance only of the election of Israel. Christ while necessarily the root of blessing is also the object of the promises.

Then there is another principle brought in, God's enduring with great longsuffering the vessels of wrath. God's dealings are suited to the bountifulness of His grace. The Lord brings out the remnant associated with Himself in entirely a new character; as we read, “the kingdom of heaven

suffereth violence, and the violent taketh it by force." "If by any means," says the apostle, "I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead," and it cost him a great deal of suffering. This is the character which the Lord attaches to His ministry. He came to the lost sheep of the house of Israel till John 9; 10. Then He puts forth His own sheep, taking them out of the fold, to be one flock, one shepherd.

What the church has to do now is to pitch its tabernacle outside the camp. We read in Ex. 33 that every one which sought Jehovah went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation that was without the camp. Israel had failed, and then there was this seeking Jehovah, and Moses talking to Jehovah face to face. Christ's character is that He went without the camp, and in Heb. 13 we are told to go forth also unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Israel's camp was not properly the world. If you look at it in its moral character, it was the world, but still it was called the holy city. But the believer is now called to go without the camp.

The children of the flesh, or Israel, (the apostle shows in Rom. 11:7) reckon on what the flesh could reckon on, and are cut off; and if the Gentile branch continue or have faith in God's goodness, well. If I am bringing in anything between me and God's goodness, I am not continuing in God's goodness, though this may be only failure for a moment. He who has the Spirit, seeing what the apostasy of the flesh in him may lead to, watches against that power of the flesh that would separate him from God; and this is the right use to make of the lists of the evils of the flesh that we have in the word of God. Continuance is not of the flesh; it does not depend on ordinances, but on living faith: "otherwise thou shalt be cut off."

Thus the remnant is clearly brought out. Inasmuch as the first remnant was amongst the Jews, the flesh in them turned back to ordinances. Will the remnant make progress? Undoubtedly, though it will always be comparatively a little flock. The majority will turn back to the flesh, and we shall have to say in humbleness of soul, "my work is with my God." The aspect of the work is towards all—the end towards God. Our strength in the way should be drawn from God only. Nothing may seem to be produced here sometimes in the way of results, but this should not cast us down. Our temptation is to look to the blessing that is produced and not to the source that produces it, and this is the cause of much weakness. In the Galatians and other parts of scripture we have this most important and clear testimony that it is mere fleshly unbelief to go back to descent and ordinances—to the weak and beggarly elements. The moment we rest in them, we go on the ground of Judaism. "Ye observe days, and months, and years, and times. I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed labor on you in vain." This was Judaizing clearly, and Peter himself was ensnared by it. (See Gal. 2)

The flesh is not opposed to religion, but to Christ who brings the flesh to nothing. The Christian's character is not to be respected in the devil's kingdom. When God came into the world, where was He found? Go to the manger, and there you see Him; but there was no room for Him in the inn. If the Christian take the place of rank and honor in the world, it is not of the Father but of the world.

All this being settled as not being of the Father, that is quite enough to settle what is of man, and the Lord's answer to Peter on the point was, "Get thee behind me, Satan, for thou art an offense unto me; for thou savourest not the things which be of God, but those which be of men." This turning back again to Judaism, to the weak and beggarly elements of the world, is in the judgment of the Spirit of God exactly identical with the worshipping of Juggernaut, and of stocks, and stones,

and demons; it is contrary to the fundamental principle of justification by faith. That is the reason why the, apostle says, “I desire to be present with you now, and to change my voice, for I stand in doubt of you” —you have gone off the ground of Christian principles. There he changes his voice, and talks of the old law to those who wish to be under, the law.

The remnant running all through from Abel downward were a poor remnant, not having its life here; it had no continuance here, for death must come in, and their hope must therefore be in the morning of the resurrection, for the sentence on the nation was, “they shall never see life."

I would say that I believe the vine is more ecclesiastical in its character, the fig tree national. We have the fig character in Luke, where the nations too,” the fig tree, and all the trees,” are brought in. (Luke 21:29.) We read of the vine in Psa. 80: “Thou hast brought a vine out of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen, and planted it.” The vineyard was the circumcision, the nation generally. It was planted to produce fruit, but it failed. The distinctive character of the true vine is that it is judged by its fruits; it is not a question of ordinances.

Matt. 12 is clearly judicial judgment on the nation. The parable of the sower (13) clearly, to my mind, presents an external operation after the nation had been found to be without fruit. There was no tree in human nature that produced fruit, and then it is said, “Behold a sower went out to sow.” The three first parables are addressed to the multitude; the four last are the Lord's own mind about things addressed solely to His disciples.

In the first place the Jews rejected John the Baptist, next they rejected the Son of man. Then there was the testimony of the Holy Ghost that the atonement had been really made, and that, if they repented, Jesus would come back again: all this closed with Stephen's rejection, whose spirit goes to be with Christ in heaven. Then Paul is called out to carry the testimony of grace to the Gentiles; but Israel, having rejected grace themselves, became the deliberate opposers of grace to others, as it is said, “forbidding us to preach to the Gentiles that they might be saved, to fill up their sin alway, for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.” They would not allow grace to go to the Gentiles any more than they would receive it themselves.

Still, dear friends, it is a blessed testimony to the patience of God that, after the church had been established from its Gentile center—Antioch, Paul is found at Rome, a prisoner, testifying of Jesus still to Jews, the Lord standing with him and strengthening him in the very lion's mouth in Caesar's household. When brought? before the Emperor, there was no dimness of light in the apostle, no hiding that all which is not of the Father is of the world, but the expression of this plainly to Caesar's household. God does not depart from His principles, nor dim His light that men may bear with it.

After David's house had failed, the sentence of blinding passed on Israel. It hung over them through this long period, and was not fully executed until they had rejected the testimony of the Holy Ghost, and resisted the grace of God to the Gentile.

As to the word “mystery,” I believe, in principle, the mystery is just this. There is such a thing as loving righteousness and hating iniquity acting on the conscience. “Thou shalt not kill,” for instance. There is no mystery in this. God could not deal in righteousness with the world. We know how it failed in this. Then the secret came in. Anything that was above and beyond the principle of the law of righteousness were the secret things. “The secret of Jehovah is with them that fear him,”

and here comes in faith. The bringing in of the Gentiles, for instance, to be one body was known only by fresh revelation.

All, of course, that is consequent upon man's sin is “the mystery of iniquity.” The mystery of iniquity is Satan's taking the form of God's goodness, and claiming the worship that belongs to Him; and the apostle calls the worshipping of angels (referring to something that was not of God), will-worship, and the satisfying of the flesh. Paul was, when he came to be the object of worship, a more dangerous demon than Theseus or Apollo. (See Acts 14) The way to judge of a thing is by the way in which it acts on the conscience, and the tendency of it is to draw away the soul from God and His worship. The Athenians worshipping the “unknown God” show the very extremity of evil—the confession that in utter iniquity they did not know God.

Then as to 41 apostasy,” it is simply the departure from the principle of faith on which the dispensation is based, to the law for instance, the very taking of which was an evidence of the Jewish apostasy. God had borne them on eagles' wings on their way, given them manna for their food, held them up in blessed dependence on the constant exercise of His grace; but they chose conditions of their own, and then departed from the first principle of obedience. “Thou shalt have none other gods but me,” Man's doing was making the calf. When it was made, Providence, they said, did it; as Aaron told Moses, “I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.” Then they worshipped it. When Moses saw it, he had it ground to powder, and made them drink it with water. This was faith.

The church is set on the ground of faith, on the discovery that the flesh has utterly failed, and that the risen Savior has to be looked to; but it has departed in principle from being in the favor of God in grace as united to Jesus, and the apostasy is coming in. The record of the apostasy is in Jade and John especially. The spirit of Antichrist is not merely natural enmity to God, but “they went out from us because they were not of us.” There is no hope at all then of restoration. There is unbelief; and is this continuing in God's goodness? “That day shall not come except there come a falling away first.” The flesh always fails in the deposit entrusted to it. This is apostasy, darkening God's light. The flesh may have the form and keep up the form, but it will end in apostasy. What does Stephen say as to the rejection of the Holy Ghost by the Jews in that dispensation? He does not refer so much to the rejection of Christ or of the intermediate prophets, but he goes back to their original departure from God in the wilderness.

Church history is just the progressive history of what the church has done when it has ceased to lean on God and has leaned on itself. This is a most solemn, thing. We have indeed “seen the end of all perfection,” but God has given us one thing on which the soul can rest, the Lord Jesus Himself. “He is precious,” not only because He has redeemed us, but if “we have tasted that the Lord is gracious” in the consciousness of failure, how blessed to have something that the eye can rest on and be satisfied with! And God the Father is satisfied there. There our hearts are sure to get rest, and we can get it nowhere else. When the eye of Jesus passed over the wide field of His labor, and He could see no answer to it and could do nothing but pray to the Father, He was able to say, “I rest in the Father, and the Father rests in Me, and here you may find rest.” We find rest in the One in whom God the Father finds rest—in Jesus. What rest there is to our souls, in the sense of their feebleness in glorifying the Father, to know that in Jesus He has been perfectly glorified, and that now there has been fresh glory brought to Him by what Jesus has done for the church,

and here the church is united with the glory of the Father.

As to the remnant, I believe it is properly Jewish. They are those who, in the midst of apostasy, are leaning only on God.

What is the duty of the saint as to those relations in which the word does not recognize him? I would leave a great deal to the individual's own conscience. Unless the principle were there, I do not see any good in enforcing effects. Many who are most faithful in pressing things on the consciences of others did act for a long time in those things they now condemn, when in principle they were just as faithful as they are now. We must have patience very often with those who do not understand. I like never to sanction the principle that is evil, but to stretch out my hand to help out the person who is in the evil. When Moses had been talking to God, and returned to the people, did he sanction their evil? No, not a bit, though he pleaded with God for them.

As to the fact of what the world is, when we say of a person, “He is getting on in the world,” that is well understood. God does not own those relations which constitute the world. All natural and personal dependence can be owned by God. In these we have given directions how to act; in none else. The moment this is departed from, you must get another principle to act on than simple fidelity to the service of Christ.

The place of the Christian is that of implicit obedience to “the powers that be,” even supposing that Nero were king; for he could not touch my portion which is heavenly, and therefore whatever the question be, unless it interfered with my obedience to God, I would not mind, for he could only bring me into the lion's mouth, and this might turn to a testimony; but he could not touch my resurrection life. Unless it were a question concerning God's honor, I would not come down from this principle and judge of what is right or wrong as to the things of the world. We are told to submit to the king as supreme, and unto governors as them that are sent by Him, &c. Whoever is king, he is “supreme;” for there can be no power but of God, or we deny the omnipotence of God. I have nothing to do but to own what God owns. I get my example in Christ, who appealed to none but God, but still in the darkest hour of iniquity, when God's priests were interceding with Gentile power for the crucifixion of His Son, the Lord says, “Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.” The power from God was submitted to by our blessed Lord, who committed His cause “to him that judgeth righteously,” and this is our example.

I could not be a magistrate while Satan is the god of this world, for I cannot serve two masters; and if I cannot say on the bench that what Christ says is true, I must be dishonoring Him and serving the world. In the millennium it will not be so. Then we shall rule; but I cannot now, because the principle on which power is exercised is not the honor of God. The magistrate is the resister of evil, but His word is,” If you do well and suffer for it, this is acceptable with God.” I would rather have what is acceptable to God than all the civil rights in the world.

The duty then of the saints is submission. I know no other, or I must act on the principles which the flesh recognizes. I cannot seek a good object in a bad way. The object must be God's, and the way God's.

The Christian, having a new nature, is entitled to judge all things, and to ask, Does this come from the Spirit, or from the flesh? What is the standard of the new man? “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Christ's example and the Father's perfectness are

the principles on which the Christian ought to act, as it is said, “Love your enemies,” &c. How have I drunk into the understanding of God's love? In His having brought salvation to my own soul? And I am therefore called to be the personal witness to the world that “none is good” but God, and that He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil, &c. It is not now, “be perfect with Jehovah.” This has been settled in Christ, but the Father sends me now to present His perfectness to the world.

The world is withered in the activity of disappointed selfishness, and wants the beneficence of God. If a Christian gets his heart sunk in the listlessness and vanity of the world, a pretty witness will he be of God's character to it.

I see the Lord going “about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him;” seeking not “his own,” satisfied with the Father, and we ought to be satisfied with Him, and not to be seeking our own, but to be seeking grace from the fountain of grace. How can a Christian broil and travail his soul in the things of the world? If the Lord said that there was no rest to be found in the world, it is a foolish thing to seek. There is only rest in Him, who said, “Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Fellowship with Christ in the expression of God's goodness is the place of the Christian.

Strange to have to discuss whether the honor or power of the world belongs to the saint! As it is said, “that no flesh shall glory in his presence.” What is honor in the world? There is one good in it, that it can be given up for the Lord's sake; this is the only good that I know of. Let me spend every shilling that I have in the service of the Lord, still it will be the mammon of unrighteousness; but the Christian has the privilege of even turning the mammon of unrighteousness into the expression of grace. There would be no money or rank at all if there were not sin in the world. The person of rank is the receiver of respect, &c, and others are the givers. As a Christian I give willingly, but he is the beggar in the world. I do not say this in the spirit of disrespect: that would be quite wrong; for the spirit of disrespect is ruinous in Christianity. Still the secret of the Lord is that what passes current in the world is given by those who, having heavenly riches, can give freely, because they have nothing to hinder them. Am I in principle to take what Christ did not? Never. If heaven rejoiced over the Son of God and the King of Israel placed in a manger, what should our feelings as to the honor of this world be? And yet we know how we should feel under similar circumstances in this world, where everything is measured by the standard of selfishness.

Let us remember those words, dear friends, “though he were rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.” J. N. D.

Chapter 127

Neil's Palestine Re-Peopled: Review

PALESTINE RE-PEOPLED; OR SCATTERED ISRAEL'S GATHERING. By the REV. J. NEIL, B.A., formerly Incumbent of Christ Church, Jerusalem. Third [now Fifth] Edition, revised. London J. NISBET & CO., 21, Berners Street, W. 1877.

This little book, which is running rapidly through several editions, consists of four chapters, with more than twice as many appendices, a general Index, and one of Texts. The chapters are entitled, I., “The Gathering of the Flock;” II., “The Way Prepared;” III., “The Shepherd's Purpose in the Gathering;” and IV., “The Fold Complete.” The appendices are, A., “Signs of the Time of the End;” B., “Farming in Palestine;” C., “The Scenery of Palestine;” D., “The Seven-hilled City;” E., “War against the Witnesses;” F., “The Greek Little Horn;” G., “A Papal Railway in Palestine;” H., “The State of Europe;” and I., “The Russian Scourge.”

Our readers may gather, even from this brief sketch of its 200 pages, that there is some interesting information, a little truth not generally known, with which they themselves are familiar, but also too much speculation that has involved the author in mistakes, which, if seen to be such, may be rectified in future.

Thus, in the very first chapter, Mr. N. assumes that Rev. 7:9-17 answers Luke 13:28, and that Rev. 11, 12 answers Acts 1:6. More light would show him that the first is certainly an error, and the second far from certainly a truth. As to the first, he ought to know that in the twenty-four elders is seen the symbol of the heavenly redeemed (comprising both Old Testament saints, and the church, distinctively so called), while Rev. 7 shows us two contrasted companies preserved by grace from the destructive deceits and judgments of the Apocalyptic crisis—one out of Israel, the other out of the Gentiles, the latter countless, but expressly coming out of the great tribulation (ver. 14, ■κ τ■ς θλ. τπης μ. ■, B P and every known cursive, &c, A alone reading ■π■ θλ μ). No doubt, then, these many Gentiles will be saved, but they are a special class, limited carefully in time and circumstances, and contradistinguished from the sealed of Israel specified just before them. The popular notion, therefore, that they are all the saved is an error. So, again, as to the second, it is impossible to allow on any scheme that the 1,260 days of Rev. 11 can be viewed as an intended answer to the disciples' question before our Lord ascended. They were not ignorant that the substantially same period had been revealed in Dan. 7; 12 Some of them had heard quite recently the Lord's great prophecy drawing attention to that special season of affliction, and all of them had their understandings opened to understand the scriptures. Yet this did not hinder their asking, Lord, is it at this time that Thou restorest the kingdom to Israel? What is in Daniel is still more fully elucidated in the Revelation; but one may fairly rest satisfied that the true answer still is, It is not yours to know times and seasons which the Father placed in His own authority.

Nevertheless it is of interest to learn from the author's testimony that the Hebrew population is now probably double what it was some ten years ago, their true numbers over the land far exceeding what appears; that they are fast increasing, even in Galilee, besides in Syria; that they are recently acquiring land in Palestine, and that they are no longer confined to their old and worst quarter of

Jerusalem, but building and dwelling all over it. Hence land in the neighborhood of several towns is enormously increasing in value. And as the doomed Turk has been relaxing since 1867 so as to allow conditions of tenure much more favorable to the Jew, on the other hand the Russian, in view of his aggressive policy, presses with increasing severity his Jewish population for military service. Mr. N. adds to these providential steps a vast body of what may be called civilizing influences, chiefly from the West, which conduce to the same end of facilitating the return of the Jews, while still unbelieving, to their own land. He rightly holds that a terrible, but final, judgment is to be inflicted in the land, but that they are to be converted as a nation, and completely and gloriously restored to the land of promise. But while thus vindicating the word of prophecy, he is in error when he supposes that Peter means prophecy to be a confirmation stronger even than the vision of the transfiguration. The apostle really means that that word is more firm, or confirmed by the vision, which was a bright, but a partial, display of the kingdom whereof prophecy is fall.

He correctly states that the last week of Daniel's seventy remains to be fulfilled with Israel, or rather the Jews, in the land, when they return by political influence, before their divine deliverance. Only there is no need for confounding “the prince that shall come” with the Roman empire, or “beast,” although he will be, no doubt, its last head. Mr. N. is more seriously wrong when he says that this same power will be “Antichrist,” who is really “the king” (Dan. 11:36-39; 2 Thess. 2:4), in the land, the object of attack to “the king of the north” (Dan. 11:40-45), as of defense to the beast, or revived Roman empire. It is not doubted that “the woman” of Rev. 17 is Rome, but therefore not “the beast” which, with the ten horns, will destroy her. It is mere prejudice surely which can identify “the woman” and “the beast,” for the plain reason that, however closely associated once, not the horns only but “the beast,” according to the true critical reading of verse 16, must in the end be her destruction. Romanism is heterodox, unholy, and idolatrous, but can scarcely be said with truth to deny the Father and the Son, or Jesus Christ come in the flesh, as daringly as the Gnostics, Unitarians, or others. No! the future Antichrist will outstrip the many antichrists, and will have his seat in the temple of Jerusalem. It will be “the second beast” or false prophet there, in league (Rev. 13; 19), but not identical, with “the beast” of Rome, the revived Western empire.

Failure in seeing this involves our author in no small confusion and wrong expectation in pages 51-90. Thus who, without a system unconsciously blinding him, could take Rev. 12:3-17 as a just picture of undivided imperialism? Seven heads and ten horns scarcely convey that. Still less could one allow that Rev. 13:1, 2 depicts the same empire emerging from the Gothic waves. And to intercalate Dan. 7:7-27 as the Papacy is hard of digestion, save for the most intrepid of controversialists, gifted with an uncurbed fancy, and without subjection to scripture. Equally strange is the resumption of Rev. 13:8-8, as if it could be thus dislocated from its early verses 1 and 2, and apply to a new and thoroughly democratic form, in which the commonwealths of Europe will be again ten, and will be remarkably united, probably under two emperors or presidents of the East and West. On the contrary, the chapter shows us the revived empire of the West only, with its wounded imperial head healed, and its horns crowned, not democratic, the power of all directed by one, to the astonishment of all the world, and this for forty-two months, evidently the same term of 1260 days, and as evidently the future crisis, whatever may be the analogy during the protracted history of the past.

But our author further imagines that the “second beast” of the same chapter means a future ecclesiastical power, that will include the Papacy and the Greek church, under its two horns, oddly

dating it from the Council of Florence in 1486-9, and conceiving that they will make an “image of the beast,” that is, summon an (Ecumenical Council! to be held at Jerusalem, and last for three and a half days or years, during which evangelicalism will die, and the last and worst persecution proceed, after which will be a revival, but also the fall of England (= “the tenth part of the city"), and the second woe, or Turkey, cease. No argument is needed for the readers of our pages to disprove a scheme so purely imaginative, and entirely apart from the true scope of these scriptures. It is certain that Babylon is destroyed under the seventh vial, and that the beast (or emperor of the West), and the false prophet (or Antichrist of Judea), are cast together into the lake of fire, after which a similar doom befalls the Assyrian, or king of the North. (Isa. 30:27-33; Dan. 8:25; 11:45) The little horn of Dan. 8 is distinct from that of chapter vii., but it is a king to arise where the Turk now rules, not the Greek church, but a king of the North, supported by Russia. It is not true that the little horn of Dan. 7 will be destroyed by man, any more than he of Dan. 8 It is to confound the Roman emperor with the great whore, Babylon; nor will the Roman beast be destroyed before, but by Christ's appearing (Rev. 19), though no doubt the king of the North will be dealt with subsequently.

Another thing we may notice in the author is, the idea that the fearful tribulation of the last days is to fall on the church (pages 86, 87); whereas Rev. 7 is plain that the heavenly saints now on earth will have been translated ere the last crisis begins, and that in this will be involved godly Jews and blessed Gentiles, but no longer the members of that body which differs essentially from both. (1 Cor. 10:32) Hence, throughout the Apocalyptic visions, we nevermore hear of churches, but of Jews or Gentiles only. Compare also Jer. 30:7 (Jacob's trouble); Dan. 12:1 (Daniel's people), with Matt. 24:21, and Mark 13:19 (Jerusalem, its temple, sabbath, &c.); as, on the other hand, Rev. 7:9-17 (Gentiles expressly, not the church, but an object of explanation by one of the elders who represent those translated to heaven before the great tribulation). There will be “elect” on earth after the Lord takes us to heaven, and Luke 21:36 refers to those on earth, not caught up. The tribulation of those days is a judicial infliction, and the Lord expressly instructs His own then on earth to escape. It is a mistake about the martyr's crown, though those who may be slain in that day will not be denied it. But the trouble then is quite distinct from that which is truly an honor now, which the true-hearted are the last to wish to escape. The truth is, that some talk, others suffer now. But the tribulation at the end will be penal.

Chapter 128

Peace: John 20:19

“Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in their midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you."

It is a great thing to say with authority “peace,” and a great thing for the heart to feel the power of these words.

The Lord had said before, “My peace I give unto you;” and this too is the portion of believers now. But the disciples had not peace without: witness the door shut on account of the Jews. They thought it had been He who should have redeemed Israel; and so they were in much confusion of heart, and great fear of those without.

They still trusted in the Savior, in a sort, though He was not returned, and therefore they were in dismay as regarded their hopes, and they feared because of the Jews. God might sustain their hearts, but there was nothing to rest on as a present thing.

Now to this point the soul must be brought—to see no hope but in Christ, even though at the same time Christ may not be found.

The Spirit of grace speaking to the sinner convince him of his lost condition; but the power of grace alone can give peace in the knowledge of sine forgiven.

It is to be remarked here that the disciples had leant on Jesus as the Messiah, their thoughts had been that He should have redeemed Israel, that is, lead them on to comfort and blessing; there was this character of trust in Messiah, through whom, while with them, they lacked nothing, for He gave them power and blessing; but to the disciples at that time all this was gone. Jesus on whom they rested, to whom they looked for support and strength, was not there; and to them that knew Him not as risen, everything was gone.

So we may hear of Jesus' name, and His love; and this may please and attract the mind, when the Lord is working in grace. But at the same time it is like the disciples resting on a living Savior, yet with no knowledge that we are lost. Jesus may have so attracted our minds, that the world may appear to us but lost, and nothing but Jesus valuable, and we may say even as the disciples, in Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life;” but this is not seeing that we are lost, or knowing the power of the resurrection.

The convincing of sin is a time of most special distress, the world gone, Jesus lost as to sense and appearance, and not found again; but it is when in this state and condition, Jesus reveals Himself, and how? Saying “Peace be unto you.” And this is not simply blessing and strength to the weak, it is not supply to need that suits the lost: there must be a Savior for the lost. A man in want may go to the world for supply, and will do so undoubtedly if he be unregenerate; but if a soul feels itself lost, nothing will satisfy him until he finds a Savior, and here the value of the cross comes in. The cross is not only the image of our lost condition, but all that belongs to us is there expressed, as

borne by another, and here the case of a sinner is met. We may have been before looking for supplies from Jesus to meet our supposed need, but the discovery of our being lost is only met in the cross. The natural man can see it a happy thing to be saved, a happy thing to have his sins forgiven. But to see the power and the effect of the cross, the wrath borne, the cup drunk, to see the curse laid upon Jesus, meets the need of those who have a sense of what is due to sin; the heart that knows what it is to be lost responds to this, a new light breaks in on the soul in the perception in Jesus of what sin has done; had we to learn it in ourselves, it could only be in everlasting destruction. And what is the sense of a curse passing on the head of that blessed one, if it was net for us? It does not merely draw our affections, but the knowledge that we are lost is forced upon us, in the death of Jesus. What sense is there in the Son of God in the grave, if not for us? A sinless person in life and conduct, the brightness of God's subsistence, and perfect as man; what relation has this to us? What bearing has it on our souls? I speak not now of grace or supply to the believer, but what meaning is there of oar souls in the cross of Christ? what sense is there in the death of Christ, if you are not lost? Lost by all the evil, the sin, the vileness, the transgression that required nothing less than the blood of Christ to blot it out; if your condition is not that to which the blood alone is the answer, let it alone; but if it be, there is One on whom the judgment of God came for sin, One in whom all is accomplished for us, and there it ends. The knowledge of this by the Holy Spirit brings the complete sense of ruin, but with it the perception of being saved; for the knowledge of our being lost, when fully known in Jesus, brings with it the knowledge that we are saved, and then come those blessed words, “Peace be unto you.” But the poor disciples with the power of Satan round them, and Jesus gone, show the state of those who do not fully understand the power of deliverance in the cross.

The Lord said of Job, “Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him?” The candle of the Lord shone upon him, but in the character of Job it is revealed to us that none can stand in the presence of the adversary. The comforts of the Lord are first of all withdrawn from Job, and then an evil disease cleaves to him; yet in this he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. But afterward we see him entirely broken down in the presence of the adversary; he was a man whom God could point out then as having none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man; yet could he not, with Satan as his adversary, stand before God; and this causes him to make himself more righteous than God, and to curse the day on which he was born. But what is the result, but the opening of the lips of Job to say, “I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes?” Not so Christ; He was one who stood before the adversary in the presence of the Lord. And the resurrection proved how unfailing His service was; and we learn in the sorrow and the suffering of His righteous soul, and in His death what sin is. The Lord coming under the title of death which Satan had against u8, bearing our sins—this is what the cross is. It was anticipated by the soul of Jesus, when sore amazed in the garden. It went on in the soul of Jesus when He said, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” In the weight of the wrath upon Him we learn what the cross was; and if you feel that you are lost, you will know the meaning and the value of it.

It is not a crucified Savior now, but a risen One who speaks to us, the giver of all victory to us over all that was against us, having delivered us from suffering under it. And consequently the word “peace be unto you” is the authoritative expression of One who knew the ruin, and yet could say “peace,” because in the full knowledge that everything was done that could bring peace to the

soul; for He had risen from the power of sin and death, having met the adversary to the face; and what could a risen Savior say but “peace?” Could He speak of wrath when He had borne the sin and the curse, and He risen over it all? What could He say but this? And it is a risen Savior who does say “peace” to those who have no peace; to those who know the meaning of the cross, what the cross showed the requirement of, is finished forever, and therefore to those that believe, it is “Peace,” “Peace."

The first person whom the Lord addresses after His resurrection is one out of whom He had cast seven demons; but grace had won her affections. She was drawn to Jesus, though looking indeed for the living among the dead, but still she was looking for Jesus; and the Mary He singled out to reveal Himself to was the one in whom the full energy of evil had been shown out; and to her the blessed Lord spoke that one word which revealed at once to her, that He who had died was alive again—Mary—giving her a hope that was beyond destruction, because Jesus was beyond the grave. Jesus, He whom her thoughts and affections were set on, was alive for evermore, and all her hopes rested in the endless life of Him who died for her. What could be darkness to her if Jesus was alive? The darkness had been gone through, for in Jesus' death she had tasted it for a time; but He was risen for evermore, and the riches of God's grace through the power of Christ, we find, was first revealed to one who had been possessed with seven demons.

And if the Lord speaks “peace” to the soul, what is the meaning of it? This gives it power, that it is not a mere passing word of kindness, but peace, eternal peace, because peace is made by His having borne our sins, by virtue of what He accomplished on the cross. It is on this ground He says “peace;” and if you see that in this sense He never speaks “peace” till He is risen, you see that “being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” “Much more then being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.” (Rom. 5:19.)

Have your souls known this peace? and have you known what it is to be lost? Not merely acknowledging the need of a Savior or looking for supplies from Jesus; but knowing that what was due to you was borne by Jesus?

It presses too keenly on the heart and conscience to look at the cross unless you can say, It is peace.

The careless heart of man cannot bear to look at the cross, except he be at the foot of it, acknowledging his need of it; for he has to measure himself by the wrath poured out on Jesus. But if your back is turned on the cross, there is none to give peace. The cross may cause us shame when it leads us to see what sin is, but itself it is the power of God unto salvation.

Haste then to God who beseeches you to be reconciled; and may the Lord in the riches of His grace show you the vileness of sin, and that Jesus has drunk the bitter cup of wrath; that Jesus is the risen Savior; that you may enter that life of peace, through Him, who, in that He died, died unto sin once, that he who liveth might live unto God.

Chapter 129

On Power in the Church, Not Imitation but Obedience in the Sense of Present Ruin

I feel a little difficulty, my dear friends, in taking up a subject in which my mind is exercised with you all. There is exceeding grace of expression in that word in Nehemiah, “The joy of Jehovah is your strength.” The mere principle of imitation, as regards power, is very mischievous. When the church has become awakened to the discovery of what she has lost, the very probable tendency will be to seek to imitate that power. Such is never the condition of faith. What the church has to do is to know its actual condition, and to turn to God in the condition that it is in. Many have gone astray in trying to be like the state of the early church. The place of faith is to be cast on God, and not to assume what we have not. This dispensation is one in which the kingdom of God is not in word only but in power, and this must be had from God. All imitation of it is worthless. This leads us to a point of great comfort. While we are guilty as to what is lost, yet God in no sense hindered by the resources which He had given; He has yet all fullness to bestow on us. The church is cast on God's own resources. I believe, as our brother has said, the church may find a blessed excellency of grace which they had not at first. This was the case in the days of Nehemiah with regard to Israel; the joy of Jehovah was to be their strength, and therefore he stopped the weeping. Though they were in great distress, and in subjection to evil, yet we read, “Since the days of Joshua, the son of Nun, unto that day had not the children of Israel kept such a feast, and there was very great gladness."

I find that this was one of their gladdest feasts, they had never had it till the day of their sorrow. Being cast, then, on the resources of God, “the joy of Jehovah was their strength,” not the joy of Moses in bringing them out of the land of Egypt. I feel very strongly that this principle is of great practical importance. Though there is the discovery of sin, in comparing the state of the church with what it once was, yet we have the fullness of God in giving blessing suited to our own present condition brought out. The children of Israel did anything but pretend that they were not in sorrow. The next chapter shows this; they were in great distress, they had no glory, but they had the joy of Jehovah, and they kept the feast. The secret of this confidence is direct reference to the Lord. I am as much entitled to have confidence in God as anybody since the foundation of the world. I can never qualify the resources of God, am limited by nothing but His own holy grace, which does all that I want now. Imitation of the early church is not faith, but reference to the word of God, as applying itself to my condition, is. You cannot imitate power, it is folly—you must have power.

As regards the first part of the question. The source of power is the same in the church now as it was in the days of the apostles, but its exercise manifestly is not the same. “Our word,” says the apostle, “was in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power.” I believe that the demonstration was the external witness of the power, the exhibition of the deposit that was in the church to the world. As it regards the question of the power in the church being the same as in the days of the apostles, it does not exist; there can be no question as to that. If we come to discipline in the church, there is no limit to its power but the extent of its existence. We have not, in fact, the same

power in exercise as the apostles had. I see two distinct divisions in the apostolic office: the one antecedent altogether to the church as gathered by testimony; the other did not exist till the Holy Ghost was poured out on the day of Pentecost. Then we have apostolic power for the church in the inspiration of the scriptures. This is evidently closed, for Peter says, “Moreover I will endeavor that ye may be able, after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.” (2 Peter 1:15.) This would have been most monstrous presumption in Peter if any other apostles were to have followed him. Paul, in like manner, commends the believers at Ephesus to God, and to the word of His grace, which was able to build them up, &c. (Acts 20:32.) Why did he do this? Knowing that after his departure grievous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock, therefore he commended them to the word of God's grace, and not to the apostles who should follow him. In 2 Tim. 3 we read that in the last days perilous times shall come (not wonderfully blessed times, but perilous ones); but, says the apostle, continue thou in the things which thou hast learned. The holy scriptures were what the apostle referred Timothy to when the perilous times should come.

We read in 1 John 2, “Ye have an unction from the holy one, and ye know all things; I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it.” When the apostle was present even, he did not teach the saints without reference to their competency to prove all things. On that I see the church of God is cast. Then, as regards anything that is called for now, we have not apostolic power to meet it, but we have God's resources, and there is no limit to them but the faithfulness of God, which cannot fail. I feel bound to exercise all the power with which God has entrusted me, not minding anything in the wide world; there is no limit to our responsibility of using what God has given us. God deals invariably on this principle. He gives to man a deposit, with the responsibility of using it aright. I believe the responsibility of the apostles was to give the deposit, and that of the church to keep it, but it has failed, as man always has. Moses gave the people of Israel the law; they had the responsibility of keeping it, and failed. In the different characters of deposits man failed in each. God could never propose man's sin, though He might give prophecies, and show what He would do when they did fail; so that the apostle could say, “All seek their own, not the things which are Christ Jesus.” Even before the apostle died, he saw the departure from their high privileges of those who were not their own, but bought with a price.

“God is faithful” in whatever state we are to minister the supply that is needed. Our proper place is to present ourselves before God as we are, and this will always humble us. In reference to the passage which has been quoted in Mark 16:17, if the question be asked, wherefore is the power in the church now not the same as in the days of the apostles? Clearly because of man's unfaithfulness. The promise in Mark is not made to the apostles, but to those who believed in the apostles' ministry. It did follow those who believed, and that promise was accomplished; it is left in a vague manner, because it was to be the proof of the faithfulness of the church in the deposit that was given to it, and it failed. Paul and Jude describe the very persons who crept in unawares as the object of Christ's coming with ten thousand of His saints to judge.....In the word of God I get the positive testimony that the church has apostatized, and thus, as to wherefore there is a difference between its state now and in the days of the apostles, there is no difficulty in deciding it (though the cause of the difference should deeply humble us). We have failed in our responsibility as to that which they deposited with us, and that is reason enough.

John's falling down at the feet of the angel to worship him was the very thing which Paul speaks of as the sign of apostasy, though of course in him it was only a momentary error; but it shows the tendency of the flesh, even in the holiest man. The spiritual discovery of the condition in which we are, and the casting ourselves on the resources of God as those who have failed, is perfectly humbling and sorrowful, but “the joy of Jehovah will then be our strength.‟ What was the lesson God was teaching His church when He suffered Paul to be cast into prison? Satan thus appeared to have gained a great advantage, but God's meaning in depriving the church of the presence of the apostle was, that we might get His judgment as to the duty and state of the church without an apostle. The first great duty of the saints now is to humble themselves. (See Phil. 2) The first Adam exalted himself, and soon got humbled; the Second Adam humbled Himself, wherefore God hath highly exalted Him. We read too, “Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God,” &c. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you,” &c. In the distinct consciousness that it was God, and not Paul, who wrought in them, He shows them where they are cast in the absence of an apostle—on God. I do see a distinct difference between what we find in Luke, and the Acts, and that which is opened out to us in John 20 The first was testimony to the Jews respecting Christ, as the anointed Man led of the Spirit, having been rejected by the Jews in that character. He is presented by Peter as the exalted Man, and it is clear to me that He was presented as such to the nation, not to a remnant, as we read in Acts 3:26: “Unto you first God, having raised up his Son, Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.” But the rejection of the message delivered to them by Stephen, and his death, close this ministry.

Saul was converted by a testimony to the union of the saints with Christ, who appears to him from the glory, saying, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” There was in this the direct discovery that, in touching the saints, he was touching the Lord Himself. I do not find anywhere the union of the church with Christ, and of the Jew and Gentile being “fellowheirs of the same body,” &c, except in Paul's epistles. Saul was the willing, active, apostle of Israel's rejection of the Holy Ghost's testimony to Jesus; he is met on this very errand by the Lord in glory, and made the witness of Christ and His saints being one, and he was the instrument of communicating this mystery to the Gentiles. John 14; 15, and 16, I believe, treat of the Spirit quite differently, though they have been all classed together. In chapter 14 the Lord was putting His disciples on the ground of privilege on what had been given them, and not on what they had apprehended, and the condition in the latter part of the chapter I would say has been fulfilled, although I deny not that it should have a practical effect over us; but in the Comforter the church has its own peculiar blessing. And then comes another thing, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit.” The old vine had been proved to be degenerate, it was one dependent on ordinances. Christ, the true Vine, was the power of fruit bearing, and therefore this is the necessary character of the Christian vine; if it were not to bear fruit, it must be cut off.

Immediately consequent on this we have the promise, “I will send the Comforter,” and now it is as the Spirit of testimony to the world sent by Christ from the Father, and not merely the Spirit of communion sent by the Father in Christ's name. One part of this Paul was incapable of: “Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning;” but Paul says, “Yea, if I have known Christ after the flesh, henceforth know I him no more.” He does not call himself a witness of the things which happened to Jesus in Jerusalem. I see the same thing in the Hebrews,

“which was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;” As a Jew he was the object of testimony, not himself a witness.

I find in 1 Cor. 12, where the various gifts are spoken of, the Lord is spoken of as sending the Spirit, to make us servants of the Lord, and that He is not given as the promise of the Father to children—this was for the perfecting of the saints. Eph. 4 speaks of the same thing. The apostle, having developed the fullness that is in Christ, unfolds the operations of that fullness in those gifts which are for the maturing of the body. The gifts spoken of here are to continue, because the body can never cease to be the object of the care and love of Christ, let it fail ever so much in witness to the world. The question may be asked, had not the church at Corinth failed, and yet the gifts remained amongst them? No; not in the sense in which the church has now failed. Apostolic power could restore them, as it is said, “Ye have perfectly cleared yourselves in this matter.” We there see the exercise of apostolic ministry, not in judging the church when it had failed, but in sustaining the church when it was failing. People sometimes speak of gifts as though they were the instruments of restoring the church. But this is a most mistaken idea. For the Corinthian church came behind in no gift, when it was in a most disorderly state, but still this church was not then put out of its place of testimony to the world through these gifts. The Lord had not then said, “I will remove thy candlestick out of its place."

In the Epistle to the Ephesians we see the blessed source of the church's own fullness, and that it is the habitation of God, where He dwells; and what we want to comprehend is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know that love which ministers to the church, to make it grow up into the fullness of its Head. If God were to exhibit His power now in the church, by giving it the gifts it once had, He would be acting inconsistently with His own righteousness, in identifying Himself with that which has lost its moral character; for surely it is not now the exhibition of what Christ was in the world. But, on the other hand, if the Lord did not now minister the gifts mentioned in the Ephesians, He would fail in maintaining the blessedness of His character, and. the steadfastness of His love to the church.

As to there being positive gifts for ministry in the church now, no doubt there are pastors, teachers, evangelists, as distinctly as possible. One great cause of the confusion and disorder in which the church is now, is the want of wisdom in recognizing these gifts, so that we often find evangelists teaching old saints, and pastors going out to preach to sinners. This shows the confusion which man has produced by his own arrangements.

I could not exactly say that gifts necessarily accompany the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. It is not merely that God has set in the body all these things. If I were asked in what state God made man, I should say, “upright;” but this would not be true of him now. Has every man necessarily a gift now? No there are many services now that cannot be called gifts: the giving a cup of cold water in the name of Christ is a service to Christ and to a saint, but it is not the exercise of a gift, though of more importance than a gift, because it is the proof of love. Whilst the gift is God's and supreme, yet He forms the vessel, and suits it for the distinct gift which He gives to it.

Paul was a highly educated man; Peter was a poor fisherman. He glorified Himself in them both. God chooses the vessel as well as gives the gift. God will be supreme—He uses what vessel He pleases. Paul never went to the feet of Gamaliel for wisdom after he was a saint; he was a prepared vessel in providence, filled in grace. How may any gift be ascertained, &c.? There is not

a more important principle than that every gift ascertains itself in its exercise, as says the apostle Paul, “the seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord.” In the exercise of any gift, nothing can remove us from individual responsibility to the Lord. The Lord gave the gift, and the Lord requires the service. Do not mind the whole church (they are but “chaff") when they interfere with our responsibility to the Lord. Exercise the gift in subjection to God's word, and those who will judge, let them judge. I could not give up my personal responsibility to Christ (miserably as I may fail in it) for all the church ten times told over. The mark of the wicked and unfaithful servant was, that he was waiting for some other warrant than grace to use the talent which had been committed to him. People may say, but many false prophets may go forth thus. Yes, surely they may; and what control can you have over an evil spirit? In John's epistle to the elect lady, we find him saying, even to a woman, “If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not,” &c. She even was made a judge of the truth. The remedy he had to secure the little ones against the snares of the devil was the truth.

The first thing we want is faithfulness, and real humbleness of mind, and then each one will find his proper niche.

As regards the prayers of the saints for the Spirit, I could not pray for the Holy Ghost, though I could pray to be filled with it, that He might so take possession of my soul, that the power of outward things might be taken away, and that thus He might be able to work in me with unhindered power. While recognizing the Holy Ghost as having been given to the church, and that therefore He cannot be given again, it is very important to remember that the Holy Ghost is God, and therefore the church has to look for fullness which is infinite, and I could most earnestly pray that the Holy Ghost would put forth His energy (I know not how) in the church of God; and this is not stirring up the gift that is in us individually.

On the other hand as to God's dealing with His children in discipline, I do not believe that there is such a thing as God's hiding His face from a Christian; his standing is in God's faithfulness, and God looks on His people in Christ; but I do know that His people get out of communion themselves. I believe that, as to fact, communion may exist, and people think, because of it, that they have none. The feeling of finding out that you have been far from God is because you have found out His presence, which discovers to you the evil of the state you have been in, which was the lesson you wanted to learn. If a child had been slighting his Father's commands, when he was in his Father's presence, it would make him feel very uncomfortable, because it would bring to his mind his disobedience.

When chastening comes to the soul, it is out of communion with God as the Father, and consequently it is as from the Lord, but when I find out the meaning of the discipline, there is distinct apprehension that it is the Father's doing—the Father purging the branch; when the soul is restored to communion, there is the discernment of the parental feeling. It is “the Lord” who judges the church. If as an individual child I look to the Father, when the church is concerned I look to the Lord.

The use of dispensations is to nurture our minds into the knowledge of what God is, from whence all dispensations flow, and to lead them to look on to that time when “God will be all in all."

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Chapter 131

Elements of Prophecy: 10. The General Design of the Apocalypse

From early times scarce any consent has been more general than to view the Revelation as a comprehensive prophecy which extends from the days of the apostle to the end of time. A few, chiefly since the Reformation, would confine most of it to the fall of Jerusalem; a few more began to apply it to the end of the age, as the early fathers did. It seems desirable however to examine the question afresh with all brevity. There can be no doubt that faith in the future application has spread much of late years. It is the more incumbent therefore to examine what is urged by such as plead for the more extensive range of the prophecy throughout the times of the Gentiles since the days of the apostle. The objections usually pressed against historicalism appear to me of little weight.

I. The variety and even discordance of the popular expositors, I have already allowed to be a feeble disproof. The truth might be in a few without being apprehended by most or even by all true Christians. Spirituality of mind is needed to discern truth, nor is it difficult to muster objections to that which is most certain. How many saints are cloudy in their views even of grace as well as righteousness! How many fail to see intelligently the return and the kingdom of our Lord Jesus! Besides, the variety is not small among the futurists themselves. To be distracted by such clashing of opinions on either side is really to give up certainty as to all truth.

II. The adherence to a literal interpretation is necessarily absurd where the language of the book is beyond doubt figurative or symbolic. Now of all books of scripture, certainly in the New Testament, none so abounds in symbols as the Revelation. To insist upon a rigid literalism here must end in continual straining, disappointment, and error.

III. The same exaggeration is apt to appear in looking for events of a character wholly transcending the past. That such wonders do appear in certain parts of the Revelation is clear. It is unfounded to expect them everywhere.

IV. The attempt, not to run merely a parallel, but to assume identity between the prophecy on the mount and the seals, &c, of the Revelation, is unfounded. An analogy may be allowed, but no more. Such reasoning altogether fails to fix the time when the Revelation will be fulfilled.

But there are weightier grounds of a wholly different nature which may be now advanced. The Lord Himself in opening the book to John distinguishes “the things which are” from “those which must be hereafter” (or “after these things"). “The things which are” comprise the messages to the seven churches. It is the church period. “The things which shall be after these” are the visions of God's dealings and judgments on man's ways in the world which follow that period till the end of all things. But “the things which are” maybe viewed in two ways. They are either the churches viewed exclusively in John's time, and hence now past—after which would begin to apply the prophetic visions of the rest of the book. In this point of view the historical school of interpretation ought not to be discarded as untrue or unprofitable. On the contrary I believe that God was pleased to use the book for the comfort of His saints both in their early trials from the hostility of heathen Rome

and in mediaeval as well as later times from the persecutions of Babylon, the meretricious antichurch of the Apocalypse. But in this point of view the prophetic vision must be allowed to be vague; and no wonder should be felt that discord abounds among the interpreters.

But there is a second point from which we may view “the things that are,” or the messages to the seven churches. They have a prolonged and successive application whilst God owns anything of a church condition on earth. This He clearly does as yet; and according to this view chapters 2, 3, of the Revelation give the things that are still, and are not passed but rather fulfilling before our eyes. Till they are past, “the things which must be after these” cannot even begin to be accomplished. Then only will commence the accomplishment of the prophetic visions in their full sense and application to the crisis which closes this age and introduces the kingdom. Of these seven, the first indicates the declension from first love which characterized the day when John saw the visions of the book; the second, the outbreak of heathen persecution which followed not long after; the third, the exaltation of the church in the empire under Constantine and his successors. Thyatira is marked by more tokens than one which prove that this state, which was fully out in mediaeval times, is the first of those which thenceforward go on not merely successively but contemporaneously from their rise to the Lord's coming. As Popery, though far from Popery alone, was therein found, so Sardis presents Protestantism; as Philadelphia, the reviving not only of the brotherhood with its love but of separateness to Christ's name and word, while waiting for Him, so Laodicea concludes the seven with the self-complacent latitudinarianism of our day which takes shape and position more and more as time goes on.

But after these it is all-important to the understanding of the general scope and design of the Revelation to see that there is nothing of a church character recognized in the book. “The things that are” will be then terminated. An entirely new state of things follows, visions chiefly of judgments on earth, saints in suffering, with testimonies and warnings from God, but never in any instance assemblies or churches here below.

Indeed the case is far stronger than this. For “the things which must be after these things” (that is, after the church-state) open with a prefatory scene of the deepest interest in heaven, wherein is seen round the throne of God (which is neither that of grace as now, nor that of millennial glory, but of a judicial character suited to a transitional space between the two, the end of the age) the symbolic circle of the crowned elders in heaven, and this in their full complement, which is never added to till the heavenly hosts follow Christ from heaven when the day of Jehovah dawns on the earth and the reign for a thousand years is begun. That is, the elders thus seen above show us the heavenly saints translated and enthroned round the throne of God, evidently corroborating and following up the previous fact that the church-state was done with and a new condition entered on preparatorily to the kingdom of God in power and glory.

Entirely in keeping with this we hear henceforth of thousands sealed from the tribes of Israel, and, separately from these, of countless Gentiles brought out of the great tribulation (for so it is, not out of great tribulation as a general fact or principle, but out of that special time of trouble which we know from many scriptures will be at the close of the age). There is no gathering more from among Jews and Gentiles into the church where these distinctions vanish. The seven churches in their protracted application had given that condition up to their last seen on earth. God thenceforward works among Jews or Gentiles as distinct and with a view to putting the habitable earth under the

rule of the glorified Son of man, the risen saints being on high, and from Israel and the nations spared ones to enjoy the blessings of that day on earth; as He executes judgments first preparatorily though with increasing intensity under the seals, trumpets, and vials, till Christ with the translated saints appears in glory and reigns of judging the quick first, then the dead, after which is the eternal scene. Such is the general outline of the Revelation. In anything like a clear and comprehensive view of the book the futurists seem to be scarcely better than the historicalists. Neither party know what to make of the vision in chapters 4, 5, which follows the seven churches and introduces the strictly prophetic unfoldings of coming dealings with the world. Hence their views are almost equally uncertain and foggy. The key to the intelligence of the book lies in a right apprehension of this vision.

Chapter 132

Elements of Prophecy: 11. The General Design of the Apocalypse

It must be owned that the actual state of Apocalyptic interpretation is humiliating. The book has been treated with silent slight or turned into an arena for busy conjecture rather than found to be a rich source of blessing according to the promise of the Lord. Not that God's grace or truth have failed, but that most have lost the blessing through misreading it. In the midst of unbelief, however, God has vindicated the value of His own word for those who have clung to it, eschewing either historicalism or mere futurism. They have read it in faith, using not only the lamp of prophecy but the still brighter light to which the Christian is entitled as blessed in heavenly places in Christ. It is well then to bring to the test what men allege as to its character, and to examine fairly and fully whatever evidence scripture affords for a decisive judgment. It will be found impossible to have either a comprehensive view of its scope or a correct application of its parts, without a solid establishment in the gospel and an adequate understanding of our own special relationship as Christians individually or as the church of God. As being the closing book of the New Testament canon it naturally supposes acquaintance with the rest of revealed truth. None can truly appreciate the Apocalypse who has been used to misapply the Old Testament prophecies of Zion and Israel to Christian subjects, any more than such as fail to see the entirely new character of the body of Christ, now that redemption is accomplished and the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. Every one knows that the Fathers, so-called, entirely broke down, and most of them in this way, both in the mass of the older catholic bodies and in those which followed in their wake. No less have Protestants in general failed to recover the true character of the church, in consequence of confining their attention for the most part, even when orthodox, to truth for the individual, such as justification by faith and ordinary Christian practice.

Let us turn then to certain arguments which are supposed to determine the true direction of the book. Does it spread over the entire period since the apostles in its prophetic visions? or does it also bear strictly and fully on the closing crisis before the Lord appears in power and glory, though embracing this too and carrying us forward even into the eternal state?

I. The title of the prophecy, it is thought, points to the right conclusion— “The Revelation of Jesus Christ.” Some have imagined that these words denote simply the second coming of Christ, and would therefore limit the book to that great event, its antecedents and consequences. But this view is not more erroneous than to interpret the words as a removal, for the instruction of the church, of the veil which conceals the Lord now that He is ascended to heaven. Nay, of the two, the latter is much the most misleading; for the characteristic truth of the apostle Paul even as a part of God's righteousness is that the Christian sees His glory with unveiled face. It was no insignificant fact that at His death on the cross the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. The Christian walks in the light even as God is in the light. He is brought nigh by the blood of the cross; and God looks for the fruits of light in all goodness and righteousness and truth. To make the Revelation therefore to be the unveiling of Jesus Christ in person would really be to deny that the veil was completely gone and known to be so ever since the cross and His ascension to heaven. The title then does not mean the removing of the veil from His person, but rather that unveiling of what is

coming which God gave to Him, and which He communicated to His servant John and through him to us. But this leaves the question of the time still to be solved, save indeed that the closing words of the preface declare that “the time is at hand” and not in course of fulfillment. The examination of the prophetic visions too confirms this; for each of them presents to us some distinct view of our Lord in heaven, and some fresh aspect of God's providential dealings here below, but wholly different from what is found in the rest of the New Testament which directly applies to the church in its passage through the world. Further, we have already seen that Rev. 2; 3, does not suppose a chasm between the apostle's day and the future crisis of the world, but rather bridges it over by a most instructive transition which furnishes light increasingly as God lengthens out “the things which are” —that is, the seven churches or the epistles to them. They are not yet past.

II. The analogy of Old Testament prophecy tends rather to mislead than to fix the true character of the Apocalypse, for the people of God then had to do with times and seasons in a way wholly different from us. There is contrast therefore really, rather than analogy, though one would not deny, as often remarked, the bearing of principles and help from them for Christian sufferers from the Apocalypse. But the fact that the Lord has accomplished redemption, sent down the Spirit, and is ready to judge the quick and the dead, shows the total difference from the state of things before His first advent. The analogy therefore wholly fails instead of being full or complete.

It is easy to assert that the church has derived such light from the Apocalypse as the early triumphs of the gospel, the downfall of Rome, the troubles and temptations which intervened to the church, and the final triumph of Christ's kingdom. But such instances as these rather disprove than demonstrate the assertion. He who could apply to gospel triumphs the first seal, for instance (the white horse with its rider going forth conquering and to conquer), has certainly derived little true light from the Apocalypse. And as to Rome, though Babylon be unquestionably its symbol, there is much to try and exercise the heart for those who are occupied with outward circumstances; for that “great city” is far from fallen yet, though fall it must in due time. One has no wish to doubt that more or less may have been gathered from the book as to intervening troubles and temptation in principle at least; but I fear that those who drew from it the final triumph of Christ's kingdom have fallen into interpretations as unworthy as those of Eusebius, and this as time advanced, no less than in earlier ages. It would be easy, in fact, to show that the effort to apply the book, in its prophetic visions, to the course of the church on earth has led to little more than mistake in detail as well as wholesale. The church of God was meant to be from day to day expecting Christ. “Known to God are all his works from the beginning;” but He has carefully abstained from revealing to us that which might set aside the constancy of our hope. This was not at all the case before redemption. Even the rejection of the Messiah was a matter of prophetic date. Those who overcome during the various stages of the church on earth are seen translated to heaven and glorified there in Rev. 4; 5, before the properly prophetic visions begin to apply.

III. The special analogy of the visions of Daniel breaks down when examined closely. For though there be in his visions a scarcely broken succession from his day to the first advent, it does not follow that the visions of John must reach from the apostolic age, without break. In none is a break more conspicuous than in the seventy weeks, where we have continuity up to the death of Christ, but a distinct gap after it. The destruction of the city and sanctuary no doubt is recorded as subsequent, and a vista of desolation and war follows to the end; but otherwise this is all vague and unconnected with any date whatever. That it is after the sixty-nine weeks, and before the

seventieth, is all one can learn from Dan. 9 There is no hint of time between; the last week remains to be fulfilled. Eighteen hundred years have already elapsed within that gap. So it is with the Apocalypse. Its prophetic visions converge on the great future crisis, the accomplishment of the seventieth week, within which fall also “the time, times, and half a time” of Daniel. The resemblance between the Revelation and Daniel is found here only. That is, they do not resemble where the visions of Daniel are continuous, but coalesce after the gap for the end of the age! The analogy is that while Daniel only gave succession up to Christ, both converge on “the time of the end."

IV. The prophecy of our Lord must be perverted in order to apply the Apocalypse continuously from the apostles' day on to His coming. For in Matt. 24 the grand question is as to the consummation of the age and not the sequence of events before it. And in Luke 21 where alone we hear of the “times of the Gentiles” we have no more information than the general fact of Jerusalem being trodden down by the Gentiles till then. We are next plunged into the signs external and moral which mark the end of the age— “signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” It is after revealing all these events that our Lord solemnly declares, “This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.” This generation therefore lasts till after the second advent no less than the fall of the temple. It is a mistake that there is a twofold affirmation with regard to the times: the first, that all the events predicted concerning the fall of the temple should certainly be fulfilled in that very generation; and the other, that the day and hour of the second advent was at that time purposely concealed. One has only to read carefully our Lord's own words in order to see that there is no such distinction and that the Christ rejecting generation of the Jews was not to pass till all was fulfilled, including the second advent—not merely till the temple fell. Scripture teaches nowhere that that day and hour are now revealed.

1. Hence there is no continuity in the Lord's prophecy, any more than in the vision of Daniel, which justifies the name of a “law” and affords a presumption that the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse must stretch over the last 1800 years.

2. The Lord's prophecy in Matt. 24; 25 consists of three main divisions: first, the Jewish part in chapter 24:4-44; secondly, the Christian part in chapter 24:45 to 25:30; and, thirdly, the Gentile part in chapter 25:31-46. The disciples who were then instructed by the Lord could fittingly represent the future Jewish remnant, as this they were at that time themselves before they were brought into church standing by known redemption and the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Hence the argument founded on their Christian character to insinuate the propriety of prophecy about Christians and their circumstances all through entirely fails.

3. The mention of the “times of the Gentiles” in Luke 21 seems a slender ground for assigning to the Apocalypse an application to so many centuries instead of to the last week of Daniel.

4. Nor does the resemblance between Rev. 11:2 and Luke 21:24 blot out their differences, still less warrant the conclusion that the Apocalyptic visions are the expansion of the earlier prophecy.

V. The presumption from the prophetic notices in the Epistles is equally Blight. Thus, though the mystery of lawlessness already wrought, there was nothing in 2 Thessalonians 2 to indicate that either the apostasy or the manifestation of the lawless one will be before the time of the end; other scriptures prove that they will be then exclusively; with which the notices of this chapter quite agree. Still less force is there in 1 Cor. 10:1-10, where we have Old Testament facts used as types, which no doubt might apply then or at anytime. But this is moral admonition, not continuous prophecy. Again, 1 Tim. 4 speaks only of “some” and “in latter times.” It is no more the end of the age than a prediction ranging over all the times of the gospel. Solemnly true and needed as is the warning of 2 Peter 2:1-12, there is nothing here to decide the application of the Apocalypse all through.

VI. The distinctive character of John's writings is alleged to point to the wider application rather than to the crisis. Undoubtedly the choice of the penman was in the fullest harmony with the message to be conveyed; but there is also variety as well as a common principle. The Gospel, the Epistles, and the Revelation do not only come from the same writer, but manifest a character of truth peculiar to themselves. To call his the spiritual Gospel (as by the Greek Christians of old τ■ ε■αγγ■λιον τ■ κατ■ πνε■μα), as contradistinguished from Luke's, Mark's, or Matthew's, seems far from precision and rather derogatory to the others; quite as much so to contrast his Epistles with those of Paul. The Gospel of John shows us really eternal life in the Son of God, the glory of the Only begotten who reveals the Father; the Epistles show us the effect of this revelation where faith received Him,” which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness passeth and the true light already shineth;” the Revelation, the results not only in the overcoming and glory of those who are His but in the iniquity, lawlessness, and judgment of those who believe not, that all may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. Hence it is that, while He is God and man in one person. throughout all John's writings, He is more prominent as Son of God in the Gospels and Epistles, as Son of man in the Revelation. Authority to execute judgment is therefore given to Him on those who would not come to Him that they might have fife; and thus there are two resurrections, of life for those that practiced good, of judgment for those that did evil, the turning point being faith or unbelief in His person who is the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. The crisis therefore falls in far more with this, the evident object of the Revelation, than any mere course of providential judgments spread over the continuous history of Christendom.

The opening verses of the book correspond with this; for if John is said to bear “witness of the word of God and the witness of Jesus Christ,” it is qualified by “whatsoever things he saw.” That is, it is not the person of the Son as in the Gospel nor our possession and manifestation of the life that is in Him as in the Epistles, but visions. And when in the course of the prophecy Christ is named The Word of God (Rev. 19), it is evidently in destructive judgment whilst in the Gospel we see Him in the fullness of grace. With such marked distinctness does the Spirit guard us against wrong inference from the rest of John's writings, and condemn those who would foist in the miscalled spiritualizing of the Revelation. Details only confirm this, if we bring each distinctive mark of the Gospels and Epistles to test the prophecy.

1. To argue that, because the Gospel and Epistles dwell not on the external and transient and earthly but on eternal truth, therefore the Apocalypse cannot disclose outward signs and wonders from the end of the age onwards till eternity, is to fly in the face of the evident scope and contents

of the book. It has been already pointed out that its character is judicial (not the revelation of life in Christ), and this also enjoyed by and manifested in the saints. In. the Revelation we have first the churches judged by the Son of man; and this state of things being closed, the world judged first preparatorily and with increasing intensity till (with the risen saints) Christ appears to judge in person, first the quick in the reign for a thousand years, then the wicked dead at the end before the new heavens and earth in the final and fullest sense. It is admitted however that, as in 1 John 2 we hear of many antichrists even now, the forerunners of the Antichrist of the close, so the Apocalypse may afford light in a general way now, while it shines most distinctly on the great future crisis; and thus it is larger, as well as more exact, than either historicalists or futurists can see.

2. If both Gospel and Revelation open with the Lamb, each strikingly employs a different word, though it be about the same person: the Gospel, ■μν■ς as expressive of God's grace in all its extent and in relation to sacrifice; the Revelation, ■ρν■ον as the holy earth rejected Sufferer, whose blood indeed has bought believers to God, but whose wrath is about to fall on a guilty world and the still guiltier apostates at His appearing till Satan himself perishes forever.

8. The Gospel and the Epistles do suppose the Jews disowned for a new work of God; but even so not without distinct pledges both in type (John 1:45 to 2:21; 21:24-29) and in direct terms of mercy reserved for them. (Chap. xi. 51, 52.) The Revelation unveils the fresh working of God on their behalf when the church state is done with; and this both in Israel (chap, 7) and in Jews. (Chap, 14) It is as false to restrict it with the futurists to the narrow limits of Judaea as to efface the Jews from a distinct and precious portion in its predictions, as most historicalists do.

Chapter 133

Elements of Prophecy: 12. The General Scope of the Apocalypse

VII. The date and place of the prophecy are supposed to yield further and very distinct signs of its true meaning. It was revealed to the last of the twelve apostles, as the fullest evidence shows, under the last of the twelve Caesars. The first century was closing, the temple and city of Jerusalem destroyed, the Jews dispersed. The gospel was in all the world, bringing forth fruit, and growing. The church gave its testimony to Christ in the various lands and tongues of the known habitable world. The Old Testament had borne witness to the rebellious iniquity of Israel and Judah, not merely in the worship of idols, but in the rejection of the Anointed of Jehovah, and had pointed out sufficiently the consequences, not only to the chosen people in judgment, but to the Gentiles in grace. The time was now come for a final revelation, which, first of all showing that Christendom would be equally faithless to its responsibility, next hides not the dealings of God which should succeed, whether preliminary and partial before Christ appears, or completed when He executes judgment in person; and this, not only on the quick throughout the thousand years' reign, but on the dead who had not shared the holy and blessed “first resurrection,” the wicked dead raised after it. That John stood in a relation toward the church similar to that of Daniel toward the Jews is plain, the latter having been a captive of the first Gentile empire, as the former of the fourth, neither of them occupied himself with the details of providence, both with the end of the age, as ushering in the rule of the heavens wielded by the glorious Son of man. Only as Daniel was given to predict the ways of God consequent on the ruin of the Jew, so John what was to follow Christ's spewing out of His mouth the last of the seven churches. As the privileges of the church far transcended Israel's, and the testimony for which the Christian is responsible was limited to no race, land, or tongue, instead of being cooped up in one narrow country and people, so doubtless the issues from God's hand are incomparably graver, and proportionably extended; and these, therefore, it fell to John's lot to have unrolled before his wondering and aggrieved gaze.

If all the circumstances indicate a reference to the new economy rather than to those special Jewish relations which had been suspended, no less do they suppose that God is judging the failure of man under the gospel, and disclosing how He will take up all under Him, the second Man, who never failed. The prophecy therefore no more shows us Christendom the direct object of God's dealing, than its Jewish prototype did the Jews. It points out what will follow, and as the future crisis was the main aim of Daniel, so it is yet more effectually and fully of John; only John expands, as Daniel does not, not only into an incomparably vaster sphere, but also into the endless ages which follow the Lord's return. Such in fact was the uniform character of prophecy in the Old Testament. There was a series undoubtedly, and each wrote from his own time as the starting point; but not one of them was limited in his predictions either to events which occurred during his lifetime, or to the next main event of Jewish history. They all looked onward to the coming of Messiah, and most fully indeed to His coming in power and glory. So did our Lord at the close of His own ministry. It is a total mistake that He merely took up the end of their thread, and prolonged it to the fall of Jerusalem, leaving it for John to carry it on continuously throughout the centuries which have elapsed since. One can understand such theories where the heart is in the

world as it is, and man therefore as he is possesses our admiration and our interest. Doubtless there is light for the faithful at all times, and especially in an hour of ruin, through the Spirit of prophecy; but being the witness of Jesus, that Spirit hastens on to the grand consummation when evil shall be judged righteously, according to the light given but despised, and the Lord Himself shall take the reins. If Christianity superseded the finally proved antagonism of the Jews to their Messiah, the corruption of Christianity gives occasion for God to indicate how He will replace the apostasy and man of sin by His kingdom at Christ's coming, and the eternal state, when God shall be all in all. This widely differs from the Protestant scheme of the Apocalypse.

VIII. A guide or mark to determine the general scope of the Revelation has been drawn from the parties to whom it was first sent. It was given to John, and through him the seven churches of Asia were addressed. It has been argued therefore that, if the Apocalypse records the history of the church, the address to the Asiatic churches is most suitable, and in full harmony with the precedents of scripture; but it is equally incongruous if the main reference of the work be to a Jewish remnant alone, during a few years at the end of this dispensation. The truth is, however, that the epistles to the seven churches are but introductory to the strictly prophetic part of the book, or in the things which shall be after" the things which are; and "the things which are" exhibit the churches coming under the judgment of the Son of man. Thenceforward we have visions of the world judged, and the most conspicuous absence of a church; nay, more, the presence of Jews and Gentiles objects of divine grace, and this separately, instead of being united in one body. That is, the book, as a whole, in its predictions contemplates an entirely new state of things, as the result of the faithlessness of Christendom, and the removal of the faithful to heaven, paving the way for the reign of the Lord and the glorified saints. That state, however, is no return to a mere Jewish remnant, though such a remnant be one of its elements; but on the proved ruin of Christendom, as of Judaism, the visions show us God's measures for investing the Lord with the world as His inheritance. We hear the first church threatened with the removal of its candlestick, we see in the last its setting aside with abhorrence as the Lord's resolve; and this in order to make way for the visions of woe, not without testimonies of mercy, the process which introduces the Firstborn in judgment of the whole earth. Clearly it was meant that those in the churches, or a church position, should profit by all the communications of the book; but the book itself is the strongest proof that churches, or even Christians properly so-called, are nowhere contemplated in the scenes of its predictions. Its object is to reveal what follows in the world when those that overcame in the church state are no longer on earth.

IX. The direct statements with regard to the time which begin and close the prophecy are another evidence of its true application. It was sent to show God's servants "things that must shortly come to pass." "Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand." The motive is neither that the things are in course of fulfillment, nor that they are about the church. Compare Rev. 22:10. And this last is the more striking, because Daniel was told to seal his book even to the time of the end; whereas John, receiving still further and deeper details, was told not to seal the sayings of the prophecy of his book. The true inference is, not that there was a merely human or ordinary scale of time applied to either, but that since redemption and Christ's session at God's right hand, ready to judge the quick and the dead, the end of all things is at hand to John and the Christian, as it was not to Daniel and the Jew. Having the Spirit meanwhile, the Christian has divine capacity to

understand all that the word, prophetic or not, reveals. It is no question of comparative distance or nearness merely, but of the immense change effected by Christ, who has brought all things to a point before God; so that the same apostle, John, could say, “it is the last time,” or “hour.” This was neither manifest nor true when Daniel lived. A revealed series of events necessarily intervened. It was otherwise when John wrote. In both prophecies the Spirit had the crisis in view. None can conceive that the earlier events predicted by Daniel belong to the time of the end, or were for many days. “The last end of the indignation” has no reference to the siege of Titus, nor will it fall within the limits of the so-called Christian dispensation. “The indignation,” it appears from Isa. 10, &c, is evidently God's anger against idolatrous Israel; and “the abomination of desolation,” in Matt. 24 and Dan. 12, will not be till the end of the age in the sanctuary of Jerusalem. These allusions are demonstrably outside the times of the gospel; but the Christian is entitled to comprehend what the Jew must wait for. To us, therefore, it is always morally “the time of the end;” and nothing, accordingly, is sealed or shut up from us. It is an evident mistake that 1 Peter 1:10-12 refers to these texts in Daniel, but rather to such as Dan. 2:34, 35; 7:18; 9:26, “the sufferings respecting Christ, and the glories after these,” which are now reported more fully still in the gospel, as some of them will be fulfilled only at the revelation of our Lord. Thus the contrast of the words in Revelation with Daniel's lends no support to the hypothesis that even the seals apply to gospel times from John's day.

X. The character of the opening benediction bespeaks the true references. It is not from God, as such, or from the Father, as such, His special revelation in grace and relationship which we know as Christians. It is rather His name of Jehovah, hitherto made known to the children of Israel, now for the first time translated from the Old Testament idiom into Greek, but Hebraistically. This surely suits a prophetic book which was intended to unfold, not Christian privilege or duty, but judgment on a world guilty of rejecting as well as corrupting Christianity, where God begins to prepare an earthly nucleus for the returning Lord, and this from Israel, as well as all nations, but expressly distinct from each other. There is a difference between the form of the name in Rev. 1 and in Rev. 4; but on this we need not enter, as being beside the present argument and purpose. It is undeniable, however, that He is not in either revealed in Christian or church relationship, but in a form and character suited to One who is to act thenceforward as governor, not merely of Israel, but of the nations. In accordance with this, we do not hear of the “one Spirit,” as in 1 Corinthians or Ephesians, nor yet as the Spirit of God, or the Holy Spirit, but with a difference no less striking, “the seven Spirits which are before the throne” —a phrase which suggests His fullness governmentally, and refers to Isa. 11, but is never used when Christian standing is in question. So the characters of Christ Himself pointedly leave out what is heavenly and in church connection. It is neither priesthood nor headship; but what He was on earth, and in resurrection, and will be when He returns. What He is displaying now on high is left out. Continuity is not in the least expressed; but rather a break from His resurrection, till He takes His great power and reigns. So with the associated title, “I am Alpha and Omega;” it may be of Gentile source, joined with one familiar to Jewish ears, and thus together most suitable to a prophecy which lifts the veil from the future crisis, when it is no longer that body wherein is neither Jew nor Gentile, but Christ is all and in all.

As to Rev. 1:7, it is in no way to be limited to Jews, whatever the resemblance to the Septuagint version of the words in Zech. 12. Indeed, this is but one case of the general principle, that the

Revelation, like the New Testament as a whole (save in application of fulfilled prophecy) enlarges the sphere, and deepens the character, of what is borrowed from the older oracles of God. But allowing that “all the tribes of the earth” should be here meant, rather than “of the land” merely, and as distinguished from “those who pierced Him,” it seems strange that the bearing of “every eye shall see Him” should be overlooked. For if the object had been to guard the reader from the vague providential line of interpretation, and to fix our attention on the Lord's coming again to the earth, it could hardly be secured more plainly than by such a text. There is a larger and more comprehensive scope than in Old Testament prophecy; but it is in relation to the world, not to the church, and to the visible display of glory, not to the kingdom of God viewed spiritually. We walk by faith, not by sight. The book is for, but not all about, the church.

XI. The special occasion when these visions were revealed is supposed to be very significant of their bearing on the church rather than the Jews. For the apostle “was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Domitian was persecuting; the conflict was begun between the witnesses of Christ and the idolatrous power of Rome; John's exile exemplified the warfare and suffering which was to continue for ages; as Rome is seen, near the close of the prophecy, drunk with the blood of the witnesses of Jesus. Thus the book traces the moral war, from first to last, without token of any abrupt transition. Such is the reasoning. If the extremes are fixed, and the intermediate links many and various, what reasonable doubt of the continuity of the whole?

The truth, however, is that John is seen throughout as “a servant,” rather than a son or.” child,” as in his Gospel and Epistles; and the word of God and testimony of Jesus are narrowed to visions ("all that he saw,” Rev. 1:2) to prepare the way for taking in as servants those saints who could not be placed on the same ground as the members of Christ's body. They will follow us on the earth, and will be His servants, having the word of God and the testimony of Jesus, when the Lord will have taken us to heaven. The Christian, like John himself, should seek to read the Revelation from his own standpoint of association with Christ risen; but the book clearly makes known other saints on a quite different footing throughout the prophetic periods. The inference drawn is therefore unsound. Rev. 4; 5 show us the church as a whole, glorified; and Rev. 6-18 others on earth who, though saints, are quite distinct from the church.

Doubtless, the attempt to interpret “the Lord's day” as the day of the Lord is mere ignorance, though men of learning have so argued. The force of that day really is, that, though John was speaking as a prophet of what is coming on the world, he did not forfeit his proper portion as a Christian. He was in the Spirit, and saw the visions “on the Lord's day,” as the first day of the week was now called in virtue of Christ's resurrection. But is it not almost equal ignorance to apply the sabbath in Matt. 24 to the past? It clearly refers to the future crisis, when Jewish saints must pray that their flight be not on that day nor in the winter. At that time the abomination of desolation will be their signal to escape from Jerusalem, according to the Lord's warning.

XII. The emblems of the opening vision are supposed to be a further key to the nature of the prophecy. The first, expounded by our Lord Himself, is the seven golden candlesticks, denoting the seven churches of Asia: a type borrowed from the Jewish sanctuary, but without a local center or a visible head, so as to suit the wider character and greater liberty of the church. If the candlesticks be symbolic, why restrain the ark, altar, and temple, with its outer and inner courts, to

an outward sense? And so with the stars in Rev. 1. If used to denote living intelligent persons, why should the star of the third trumpet, for instance, denote merely a meteoric stone? Why not those spiritual realities which belong to the whole church of God?

The answer is plain and decisive. The Lord Himself draws, in Rev. 1:19, the line of demarcation between the opening vision, with the connected “things that are,” and the “things which are about to be after these.” Hence it is a rash assumption, at the very least, to say that the symbols abide the same in parts of the book so distinguished. If churches and their angels are found only in Rev. 1-3, disappearing absolutely from the prophetic visions which follow, it is natural that so vast a change must modify in a corresponding way the application of the symbols, though of course the essential idea remains. They cannot describe these spiritual realities which belong to the church of God, when it, as a whole is no longer seen on earth. And, confessedly, quite different symbols denote the church in heaven. But we are not driven to the pseudo-literal alternative of two Levitical candlesticks in Rev. 11, any more than to one meteor in Rev. 8. We must interpret them in congruity with their context, not therefore in reference to the church, which is gone, out to the world, with which God is then dealing, whether among Gentiles or Jews. The star here means a fallen ruler, and in the western Roman earth, not supreme, like the sun, but subordinate; as the two candlesticks may be an adequate testimony to Christ's priesthood and royalty among the Jews. But one need not dwell on details.

XIII. A similar remark is true of the allusion to the “Jews” in the first chapters when used to govern the application in the rest of the Revelation. Certainly the seven churches (viewed either literally as the past assemblies in proconsular Asia or as foreshadowing so many phases of Christendom till the faithful are caught and the Lord utterly disowns the last outward state) suppose the title of Jews ("those that say they are Jews but do lie") misused by those in Christendom who boast of antiquity and. not present power in the Spirit, succession and not grace, and of ordinances and not Christ; and just as certainly such a phrase could only be used during the Loammi time of Israel's rejection. But it is a hasty inference thence to argue to the prophetic visions when God begins to seal a people out of the twelve tribes of Israel and the church is withdrawn from the earth.

XIV. It is in vain for the same reason to argue from the general character of the Epistles to the seven churches, for they stand in evident contrast as “the things that are” or church state with the succeeding visions of the future, though no doubt a moral preparative of the highest value for them. Thus the season of trial in the epistle to Smyrna might be blessed to the saints similarly tried during the prophetic periods later on; but there is the strongest possible internal cause why we should not apply these as the true meaning of prophecies which suppose the church no longer existing on earth, and new witnesses, Jews or Gentiles, succeeding who are expressly in a different relationship. 2. As little does the reference first to “the doctrine of Balaam” in Rev. 2., compared with the false prophet in Rev. 13:14-17; 16:13; 19:20, warrant the conclusion that the marks of a regular connection and sequence are herein given. Similar evil, though modified in form, is all that can be fairly drawn from the earliest and later passages. So it is with the types of the wilderness. It applies to us now; it will be as true, though in greatly altered circumstances, of others after we join the Lord above, before the kingdom be established in power and glory. 8. The mention of Jezebel in Rev. 2 and of her great counterpart in the prophetic vision (Rev. 14; 16:17; 18) stands on just the same ground. 4. So does the local fulfillment of the opening predictions. They may be of profit at all times; but we cannot intelligently apply to the church what God

predicted of His government of the world, or of witnesses raised up for that state of things.

XV. The nature of the prophetic scenery as described in the following chapters (Rev. 4; 5) yields abundant and irrefutable disproof of the notion that the prophetic visions of the Apocalypse contemplate the church or its history on earth. For the purpose in hand there is no need of entering into the details of specific interpretation; but a few broad features may be briefly pointed out which are decisive against the notion in question—a notion entertained by not a few futurists as well as by the Protestant school generally.

1. It is perfectly true that the opening of the visions is eminently symbolical. The living creatures, the lamps of fire, the elders, the Lamb and the sealed book, the vials and the odors, all have this character, not to speak of the voice of thunder, the four horsemen, &c, in what follows. But it is a mistake that either the heavenly calling of the Christian claims especially Such a veiled or emblematic mode of instruction, or that the end of the age must through all its extent see the cessation of silent mystery and the commencement of visible and material wonders. It is plainly enough revealed that it will merge gradually into a brief period in which the western powers will adopt a peculiar political order and partition with its suited chief, the northeastern will advance for a final struggle, the Jews in their land and under their king be a main object of defense and attack, and Satan avail himself of the apostasy he has effected to reveal the lawless one in all power and signs and wonders of lying, God Himself sending those who believed not the truth a working of error that they should believe the lie. But these horrors do not begin at once, and the worst of them will steal over men by degrees. There is no such abrupt change as is conceived by such as oppose. On the one hand Jerusalem and the temple will be the scene not only of renewed and strange idolatry but of man arrogating the glory of God. On the other God will not leave man throughout the world without suited testimony and solemn judgment, increasing in intensity till the Lord appears in glory.

Let the reader remark the total change of scenery at this point. It is no longer the Son of man in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, nor the successive messages to the angels of these churches, but a throne in heaven, the prophet being called up to see and hear. The actual or church state exists no more, giving place to “things which must be after these.” It is a question of government in heaven, and the throne one of judicial glory, not of grace as we know now, and hence out of it lightnings and voices and thunders, not the message of peace and salvation; and the saints now glorified surround it as the heads of the royal priesthood, no longer on earth as in Rev. 1:5, 6. It is a company, be it noted, complete from first to last (Rev. 4 - 19), so that for this as well as other reasons it cannot be separate spirits but glorified men. The seven Spirits of God, or the fullness of the Spirit in attributive power, are seen as seven lamps or torches of fire burning before the throne. There is no altar, as it is no longer a question of coming to God; and, instead of a laver with water to cleanse the defilements contracted by the way, there is a sea of glass in witness of perfect and fixed purity. The cherubim, or living creatures, are no longer two but four, and seraphic as well as cherubic, characterizing the throne in executory judgment according to the holiness of God. If the aim were to reveal a new state wholly distinct from the present, and a transitional relationship, before Christ and the risen saints come out of heaven to reign over the millennial earth, it would be hard to say how it could be made more apparent or unquestionable. In full keeping with this Christ is seen after a new sort as the Lamb in the midst of the throne, yet the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David: the holy earth rejected sufferer, slain for God's glory, who had bought a people

to God by His blood, who alone could and does open the otherwise sealed book of divine purposes and plans for the deliverance of the world and reign of God; and the elders fall before the Lamb with vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints, clearly not their own but of others on earth in a different position from themselves in glory, as the visions that follow will confirm.

2. Equally true is it that the action of the prophecy is derived from the opening of the sealed book; and that the taking and opening of it is grounded on the personal power, worth, and victory of the slain Lamb. But on the face of the scripture the scene does not follow His ascension. It rather awaits the close of the church state and our translation to heaven, when the present work of gathering the heavenly coheirs with Christ is finished. This in no way treats the atonement of our Lord as for eighteen centuries idle and powerless, unless the forming of the bride of the Lamb be nothing; it shows on the contrary, that, so far from exhausting the virtues of His blood, fresh counsels of God, to us long revealed, are all in His hand and for His glory who will take the earth as well as heavens under His headship, and who, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believed, will take all peoples and nations and tongues as well as Israel in chief under His sway. No Christian doubts the truth and importance of Matt. 28:18 or Phil. 2:8, 9; but the character or time of application is another question. And we may well doubt that these or any other texts determine that the Revelation sets forth in its visions the triumphs of the cross while the church is on earth, called as she is now to be the follower of Christ in His earthly shame and suffering.

3. Further, it is said that there is no event between the ascension of our Lord with His solemn inauguration in heaven and His visible return in glory, and especially now in the last days, which can claim to be the true commencement. But this leaves out the vision of Rev. 4; 5 in its evident import, especially as following up the sevenfold message to the angels of the Asiatic churches or the mystery of the seven golden candlesticks, and as introducing the predicted dealings of God with the world in the rest of the book. The throne of God assumes a relation notably distinct from that of grace as we know it, and even from that of glory as in the millennial day; it is clothed with a judicial character akin to that which Ezekiel beheld when Israel was judged and carried into captivity, but with special features as must be in view of Christendom's πμη and God's judgment of the earth generally, and in particular what had been faithless after such unexampled favors. And the absolutely new object seen on high is neither God's throne with the cherubim or seraphim nor yet the Son of man long before ascended, but the twenty-four crowned and enthroned elders. It is strange that men should have all but universally overlooked so patent and grave a fact corroborated by circumstances already pointed out, which furnish a very defined starting point from which the succeeding visions begin. To neglect this is to act the part of a voyager who should take his departure not from the main shore but from a floating bank of mist into uninterrupted fog.

For what worthy point of departure follows the seven churches of John's day? It is wholly incorrect, as is thought, that till the return of our Lord (that is, to reign) all is one continuous dispensation—one ceaseless progression of Divine providence. The translation of the saints to meet the Lord and be presented to the Father in His house before they appear with Him in glory for the government of the world is assuredly a fact and change of amazing interest. It had been not only disclosed by our Lord, but fully opened out by the apostle of the Gentiles in his earliest Epistles; and it is now put into its relative place by John in the grand systematic prophecy which winds up the New Testament.

The peculiar mode in which the Spirit here records it is worthy of all note as flowing from His own consummate wisdom; for there is no vision of the actual rapture of the saints to heaven when the Bridegroom meets them, as if it were one of many prophetic events like those under the seals, trumpets, or vials. It is the accomplishment of the Christian's hopes, and in no way confounded with the subject matter of prophecy, such as the appearing or return is, when every eye shall see the Lord and them in glory. It is a preliminary vision of the saints already in heaven after the church state on earth is ended, and before the special judgments and transitional testimonies begin which terminate in the Lord's coming out of heaven followed by the saints (Rev. 17:14; 19:14) already there since the end of chapter 3 as proved by chapter iv. His “coming” or presence (παρουσ■α) thus embraces and overlaps the day of the Lord, as it leaves room for the gathering of the saints risen or changed to Him with an interval in heaven, which the Apocalypse shows to be filled up by solemn dealings of God on earth mainly judicial but not without special mercy to saints on earth, both Jewish and Gentile, some of whom suffer to death as others are preserved for the kingdom when Christ and the glorified ones appear in His “day” to execute judgment and reign over the earth for a thousand years.

If “the second advent” be restricted, as it commonly is by almost all schools, to the day of the Lord, it leaves the fact of our seeing the heavenly redeemed under the complete symbol of the twenty-four royal priests from Rev. 4 entirely unaccounted for. Distinguish His coming for His saints and His coming with them, and all is so far plain, though it is easy to see difficulties and conjure up objections to the surest truth of revelation, or even of our being, and of the world around us. But the word of the Lord abides forever.

One may add too that the prophecy nowhere describes near its close (that is, in chap. 19 or 20) the removal of the saints to heaven; they follow Christ to the judgment of earth, but how they got there so as to be in His suite in His day is not described.

It is evident then that the translation to heaven of the coheirs, witnessed as a fact from the beginning of Rev. 4 is a fixed and clear point of departure, which the ordinary schemes of Apocalyptic students, Protestant or futurist alike, have failed to observe. It becomes then not only possible but easy to test the alleged fulfillment of the book. Before the seals or trumpets which prepare for the investiture of Christ with the inheritance, there must be in heaven an adequate answer to the plain facts, that churches are thenceforward seen no more on earth, and that a new company appear in heaven, never before seen there, under the symbol of the twenty-four elders. If men explain away or pass over so important an introduction as Rev. 4; 5 to the strictly prophetic portion of the book, they naturally confound our gathering to the Lord on high with the day of the Lord on the earth, and a moral or partial application of its contents with its proper meaning, to the utter lowering of the church's calling, place, and walk, as well as hope.

XVI. The oath of the mighty angel is imagined to furnish another not less decisive mark of the historical acceptation of the prophecy: “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel the mystery of God shall be finished.” What it really says is that there should be no more delay, but under the last trumpet, which ushers in the end of man's day, God would bear with evil no longer in the grace which works meanwhile for higher purposes. He would bring in the manifested kingdom of the Lord forthwith. Israel's rejection and the times of the Gentiles may fall within “the mystery of God,” as well as the calling of the church; but not a word implies that the church was still on earth during the

trumpets. Doubtless the trumpets are accomplished before Israel's restoration, but not before Jews return to their land in unbelief, set up their king, and other awful scenes of the latter-day wickedness ensue. Nor is there anything to intimate that the seals and trumpets measure the mystery of God, but simply that it closes with the seventh trumpet, as one sees in the latter part of Rev. 11. The world kingdom of our Lord of His Christ is come. It is no question of secret providence then, as it was during, and had been before, the Apocalyptic period.

XVII. Concurrence for sixteen centuries, even if universal, is but human opinion; and what is this worth in divine things? It is but the recent tradition of the multitude; and in these ages of declension, what can the maximum of such agreement yield but the minimum of truth? It is the refuge of unbelief at all times, and can never be right since Christendom went wrong. One need not wonder at lack of intelligence during many a century when even saints had lost the sense of eternal life, of accomplished redemption, of standing in Christ, and the varied energy of the Holy Ghost, not to speak of the church as the body of Christ and the house of God. The notion of a continued advance, slow at first but afterward steady and discernible, is a dream, more worthy of a mere humanitarian progressionist than of one who looks for Christ to receive the saints and judge the world and above all favored but guilty Christendom. A symbolical history of the church on earth might be founded with some show of truth on Rev. 2; 3, not on what follows, which is expressly not “the things that are” or church state, but what must be after these things, when the overcomers are all and “ever with the Lord."

If people only saw the special calling and heavenly character of the church, the Apocalypse from chapter 6 (and indeed 4, 5) to chapter 19 never could have been supposed to predict its course or circumstances on earth. Men have not distinguished the various dealings of God, and hence as some scrupled not to apply Israel and Judah, Zion and Jerusalem, in the Old Testament prophets to Christianity or the church, so still more fell into the kindred error of tracing it here below throughout the prophetic visions of John. But it is hard to conceive a fuller combination of evidence than that which the book itself has just afforded us against the common hypothesis, and in confirmation of our being on high while the providential judgments of the seals, trumpets, and vials intervene, till we follow the Lord from heaven to reign with Him over the earth. Its preface and its conclusion; the analogy of former prophecy and, most of all, of that book which it resembles so closely; the season and the place and the writer; the churches to whose angels messages were sent; the repeated declaration of the nearness of the time; the whole character of its introduction repeated often and in the most various forms; the plain contrast between the churches as “the things that are” with those “which must be after these things;” and the intermediate vision of the elders in Rev. 4; 5, respecting the heavenly redeemed in their complete and glorified state around the throne above, seem to leave little question as to its scope to the believer, unless he sacrifice the authority of scripture to the general consent of Christendom during the very centuries when it had lost even a clear and full gospel for the world and forgotten its own privileges as well as responsibility to the grief of the Holy Spirit. In truth no one is fit to form a sound and spiritually intelligent judgment of the bearing of the Apocalypse who is not clear as to salvation and the church, as well as prophecy; and where were such to be found since the second century remains disclosed the early and utter ruin of the Christian profession? Neither antiquity nor consent, if universal, can sanctify error, though they may expose to the charge of rashness or even innovation such as go back to the once revealed truth. But wisdom is justified of her children. Far

from being self-evident, the mind of God in His word cannot be severed from our practical state in fellowship with Him. “If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light,” is as true in scripture study as in walk; nor could one wish it otherwise.

Chapter 134

Elements of Prophecy: 13. On the Year-Day Theory

It has now been shown that, though there may be special characteristics in the symbolical visions of Daniel and the Revelation, there is no ground for the notion that they relate to gospel times, still less that they present the church's predicted history on earth from the close of the Jewish dispensation to the second coming of our Lord. There is a transition of the greatest importance on which the details of these visions converge—an interval which has for its main object to disclose the consequences, on the one hand, of Israel's evil and ruin, and on the other of Christendom's. God has taken care that the church should not be without divine light on its path, but He has done so with perfect wisdom so as not to interfere with its own proper and peculiar privileges; whereas the interpreters of almost every school have sacrificed them to their theories, overlooking the true scope of the book.

It is quite true then that the difficulty is due, not so much to the various and complex nature of the symbols themselves, as to the spiritual condition of the readers and the moral character of scripture itself, judging as it does the degeneracy and corruption of Christendom. It carries the war at once into the strongest fortresses of ecclesiastical pride and Christian worldliness. The scriptures, predictive or not, which reveal Christ rejected on earth and glorified in heaven, are as obnoxious to professing Gentiles as those of His humiliation and cross were to the unbelieving Jews. In either case faith in God is called for; in the gospel especially unsparing judgment of self and separateness from the world. This is so distasteful to flesh that one need not wonder if souls shrink back from the truth which exposes their unfaithfulness, and either neglect the Apocalypse or take up schemes which allow more room, for human energy and distinction on the one hand, or for earthly ease on the other. If Christ's glory were the one object, there would be more simple subjection to the truth; and it would soon be seen that, as Daniel unfolds the times of the Gentiles on the proved downfall of the Jews, so John gives us the judgment first of Christendom, next of the world, though not without dealings of rich mercy to the faithful at all times to His glory who was cast out from the earth.

I. Let us proceed however to ascertain the truth or falsehood of the hypothesis called popularly the year-day theory, as one not only long held by Protestants but claiming of late to have its basis made sure and simple by scripture proof. It is supposed to rest on these maxims:—

1. That the church was intended to be kept in the lively expectation that Christ who had ascended would speedily come again.

2. That in the divine counsels a long period of near 2000 years was to intervene between the first and second advents and to be marked by a dispensation of grace to the Gentiles.

3. That, in order to strengthen the faith and hope of the church under the long delay, a large part of the whole interval was prophetically announced, but in such a manner that its true length might not be understood till its own close seemed to be drawing near.

4. That in the symbolical prophecies of Daniel and John other times were revealed along with this, and included under one common maxim of interpretation.

5. That the periods thus figuratively revealed are exclusively those in Daniel and John, which relate to the general history of the church between the time of the prophet and the second advent.

6. That in these predictions each day represents a natural year, as in the vision of Ezekiel; that a month denotes 30, and a time 860 years.

Such is the general nature of the theory and of its foundations. Its statement is supposed to remove at once the main difficulties that have been felt; as for example concealing the length of the delay when the knowledge might have been injurious, and revealing it when once it became a help to the church that it should be known.

The answer however is that, as Daniel contemplates manifestly only the Gentile powers of the world and Jewish saints with the mass of the people apostate, so the Revelation does provide for the church's direct instruction as such in the seven epistles of Rev. 2; 3—epistles which applied at once to the seven literally addressed assemblies of John's day in proconsular Asia, but surely also meant in a mystery to embrace the successive need of saints on earth as long as the Lord has any here below possessed of similar privileges and with like responsibilities. It is only when these seven states could be looked back on as fairly developed that God permitted the evidence to be at all distinct and complete; that is, when the light derived from the messages would strengthen rather than weaken our waiting for Christ day by day. In this point of view we see that the direct bearing of the prophetic visions is on the same elements as in Daniel, Israel and the nations, with the aggravated guilt of having despised the grace proclaimed in the gospel as well as exemplified in Christ and even in the church while here below. The times and the seasons are or ought to be well known to us, but about the earth and the earthly people. Those who belong to heaven are not so regulated. The prophetic dates therefore are about suffering Jewish or their Gentile oppressors. Those who apply them to the church ignore its heavenly title and the fact that, when they apply, the heavenly redeemed are demonstratively on high, not here below. We may dismiss the clashing of swords between Mr. Mede or Dr. Maitland, their defenders or their assailants. Protestant or Romanizer, neither of them really understood the nature of the church as distinct from the Jew and the Gentile, and consequently they are almost equally dark as to the prophetic word.

II. On the nature of the evidence to be expected we need not dwell. It is freely granted that there may be a literality in interpreting no less spurious than the so-called spiritualizing. We have to weigh on the one hand whether the form be simple or symbolic; but we have to discern on the other whether a particular part belong to the vision or its divinely given interpretation, bearing in mind the fundamental fallacy of expecting no more from the words of God than from the writings of any man as such. Whatever is conveyed in a specially mysterious form should be weighed proportionately. The least change in scripture intimates an adequate design.

III. The general character of the passages themselves has next to be considered. Do they occur in the explanation or in the vision to be explained? Are they worded in the most simple, equal, and natural terms, or do they bear plain marks of a singular, uncommon, and peculiar phraseology, perhaps even prefaced by words importing concealment?

The following are all the passages in Daniel and St. John to which the year-day principle has usually been applied:—

(1.) Dan. 7:24-26. (2.) Dan. 8:13, 14, 26. (3.) Dan. 9:24-27. (4.) Dan. 12:5-9. (5.) Dan. 12:10-13. (6.) Rev. 2:10. (7.) Rev. 9:5, 10. (8.) Rev. 9:15. (9.) Rev. 11:2, 3. (10.) Rev. 11:9-11.) Rev. 12:6. (12.) Rev. 12:14. (18.) Rev. 13:6.

That a mysterious character attaches to all or almost all these expressions of time naturally insinuates something more than the barely literal dates. The general application then of the longer computation may be allowed; but one must not thereby set aside the brief and definite periods of the closing crisis.

IV. The general symmetry of the sacred prophecies is supposed to yield a presumption as strong against the shorter acceptation of these numbers as in favor of the longer view. It is urged that, when a declaration of future events is attended also with one of definite seasons, one expects some degree of correspondence between the two parts of the revelation; and that scripture precedent confirms this; as in the one hundred and twenty years delay of the flood, the four hundred years and four generations of sojourn in Egypt, the forty years in the wilderness, the sixty-five years before Ephraim's captivity, the seventy years captivity of Judah, the forty years of Egypt's desolation, the seventy weeks before Messiah's kingdom with its minor terms, the three days of our Lord's burial, and the seven years to follow on Israel's restoration. (Ezek. 39) In these an evident proportion is held to exist between the time predicted and the event announced; whereas it is argued that in the twelve or more specified seasons which extend from Cyrus to the second advent, on the shorter reckoning all proportion is lost between the range of the events and the periods entering into the predictions: especially as features even on the surface suggest more than the letter. The answer is that, besides the principle of the break or interruption which we have seen to obtain in Daniel regularly, which leaves us free to take the times in their strictest force at the end of the age, there is no need to deny the Christian's title to gather help from the great prophecies of Daniel and John which contain them all through.

V. The presumption drawn from the symbolical nature of the books is of a similar kind. Since the prophetic dates are found exclusively in those two books which possess, also exclusively, a symbolical and mysterious character, it is a natural inference that those dates have or may have themselves a covert meaning. This may be allowed if one do not get rid of the short reckoning which finds its limits within the last or seventieth week of Daniel. The reserve of that period (seven years) is surely significant.

VI. Again the dispensation as being one of mystery is pleaded. But the comparison of Dan. 12 with 1 Peter 1:10-12 conveys no thought of the peculiar reference of the times to us. Prophets that prophesied of the grace toward us sought out and searched out concerning salvation, searching what or what manner of season the Spirit of Christ which was in them was declaring, while testifying beforehand the sufferings as to Christ and the glories after these; to whom it was revealed that not to themselves but to you they were ministering the things which now have been announced to you by those who preached the gospel to you in the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven. Here is no distinct assertion whatever that the times fall within our lines. As often noticed, there are three things: the predictions of old; the gospel now preached in the power of the Spirit; and the future manifestation of the Lord Jesus, when the promises shall be accomplished. It was

revealed to them, not that the prophetic dates belong to our day, but that to us, Christians, they were ministering the things now announced by the gospel, not yet the glory in which Christ and we shall be manifested together. To confound the mystery of God in Rev. 10 with Eph. 3 or even Rom. 11 is singular lack of discrimination; and this confusion is the reason for the hasty conclusion that the six trumpets and all the numbers connected with them must be contained within the limits of this dispensation.

VII. Their mysterious introduction is the last of the presumptions that they are not designed for the shorter periods, but in some analogical meaning which may restore their harmony with the wider range of the prophecies they belong to. But we have already conceded that a larger reference may be admitted if the distinct application to the future crisis be kept intact.

Chapter 135

Elements of Prophecy: 14. The Year-Day Theory Continued

The Year-Day Theory Continued Chapter 13

The general indications of a figurative meaning having been briefly discussed, let us now as briefly notice the special evidence for the year-day system

I. The prophecy of “the Seventy Weeks” has always held the foremost place in the direct arguments for that view. It is clear that the Weeks in this case are not of days, but of years; and it is hence inferred that, since all such predictions of time bear one common character, occur in the same prophets, and have the same general object, they ought to be explained by one common rule. But theoretic consistency has its snares as much as the inordinate love of variety; and it is dangerous in the revelations of God to reason from a special prophecy to others before and after wholly distinct from it. Were the supposed key given in the first of Daniel's prophecies where dates occur, there might seem reason for it; or if it were given at the close, where dates abound, as an appendix of instruction. Whereas it is plain, on the face of the visions, that Dan. 9 has a remarkable isolation in its nature, and might therefore have a special form in this respect, as it certainly has in others. Were the time, times, and half a time, expressed in that way, the argument would be more plausible. It is rash to draw an analogy of sameness, from a single instance differently situated and characterized, to all that precede or follow. There are grounds in the prophecy of the Seventy Weeks, which forbid the shorter reckoning; but this is not at all the case in any of the others. Hence the resemblance fails, and the reasons which determine in the case of Dan. 9 do not appear elsewhere.

Π. The sentence of Israel in the wilderness is habitually cited as another testimony. (Num. 13:25; 14:33, 34.) It is plain that a retributive dealing with Israel in the desert is a slender ground for interpreting symbolic prophecies given many centuries after.

III. The typical siege of Ezekiel is another witness called to sustain the system. (Ezek. 4:4-9.) Here again we have to note that an argument is based on this, not for the dates in Ezekiel's prophecy, where it is recorded, but for Daniel and John, where it is not. From such special instances, so carefully explained, it would seem safe to conclude that a day not so applied was to be taken literally, especially if given in the explanation, and not in the symbolic form only.

IV. Another argument has been drawn from the words of our Lord, given in Luke 13:31-33. But it must be owned that the color for giving this the definite meaning of three years is slight indeed.

Let us turn to the prophetic dates themselves which are in question.

V. The “time, times, and dividing of time” (Dan. 7:25), may be first considered, as it is thought to contain many distinct proofs to confirm the year-day theory, and to refute the shorter reckoning. The peculiarity of form is due to the prophetic style, which loves to arrest the attention of the reader, and to suggest matter for reflection, instead of limiting itself to the phrases customary in common life. The comparison of the different phrases for the same period in Revelation makes it

perfectly certain that three years and a half were meant, even if there could have been a doubt before, which there was not: Jews and Christians alike accepted the phrase as comprehending that space. It has been already intimated, however, that there is no objection to allow of a protracted application in a general way, provided that the crisis be not set aside, as is done almost always by the historical school. And it may be that such a twofold reference accounts for the enigmatic appearance of this date.

VI. The dream of Nebuchadnezzar stands on exactly similar grounds. The seven times were assuredly accomplished in the seven years' humiliation of the great Babylonian chief. It is possible that there may be a prolonged application figuratively to the times of the Gentiles, from the beginning to the end of the four great empires.

VII. Without doubt the phraseology is unusual; but Mr. Mede, the greatest advocate of the year-day system, here allows that the vision applies to Antiochus Ep., and consequently views the date as a brief period only. It seems scarcely worth while to dwell on such assumptions as that the vision is of the restored sacrifice! before a fresh desolation!! including several centuries!!! not only without scripture, but against the text commented on. Such proofs might be multiplied, but where is their worth? I believe myself that the “many days” are not before, but after, the numeral period, and that here, as elsewhere, the vision concentrates on the close, though not without the accomplishment of grave facts comparatively close at hand.

VIII. The oath of the angel in the last vision, and all the attendant circumstances, are supposed to be in favor of the mystic view of the historical school, and against the brief crisis at the end of the age.

But why the solemnity of the oath should require the lengthy application to the past, and not the awful lawlessness of the future, seems hard to understand. That the deepest interest should converge on the outburst of evil which brings the Lord judicially and in glory into the scene is most intelligible, and the desire be expressed to know how long such horrors are to last before the end come. To the prophet, intensely feeling for the Jews in their sorrow, and wholly ignorant of the present calling from among the Gentiles, not to speak of the one body wherein is neither Jew nor Greek but Christ is all, can anything be conceived more suitable? We may rest assured that 1 Peter 1:12 does not refer to this passage, for the apostle speaks about inquiry among the prophets, not, as here, the celestial beings whom Daniel saw and heard. Nothing can be clearer or more certain than the convergence of the thought here on the end. It is of this only Daniel inquires, and learns that the words are sealed till then. The point is not the immediate history.

IX. The supplementary dates have been pressed into the same service, and with as little result in favor of application to the past. For, however sorrowful it is to see men so occupied with the world's doings and sayings as to overlook the abyss that is opening, not only for the Jews, but for Christendom, the Lord Himself directed attention to this part of Daniel in such a way as to make argument of small moment to the believer. Compare Matt. 24:15, &c., with Dan. 12:11. Whatever Antiochus Ep. may have done similarly (Dan. 11:31), it is certain that there is to be a future abomination of desolation set up in Jerusalem's sanctuary, that a brief but unexampled tribulation will ensue, and that the Son of man will immediately after appear to the deliverance of His elect. The Lord does thus supply the amplest proof that the theory which shuts out the crisis is false, and that the end of the age is precisely the era when these things are to be fulfilled.

X. Of the cyclical character of the prophetic times I would rather avoid speaking. The truth needs no support from science. To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Even the sturdiest advocates of the protracted and intervening application have to own here the literality of the specified times, where explanation too had been sought. The mention of so many days does not convey any necessary thought of a prolonged period, but of God's gracious counting up the daily sorrow that must befall those who bore His name, and of the dishonor put on His own sanctuary and sacrifice, after they had too hastily assumed that He could own them as they will be then. The wicked will not care for this, but hail the abominations then to follow; the wise will understand and confide in the word of God which deigns to reckon up the time before deliverance comes day by day. An immense series of years would be cold comfort at such a time. No doubt the two periods of thirty days, and of forty-five added to the thirty, are a supplement to the times already mentioned, but they are really connected directly with the date in Dan. 7, without any reference to Dan. 9 (though less obviously, I presume there is a bond between all, namely, the last half week of the seventieth, which is identical with the time, times, and an half, overlapped doubly by the supplemented twelve hundred and ninety and three hundred and thirty-five days, as we have seen). But there is no hint of a long period when these dates proceed, whatever the interval before they begin. Indeed our Lord appears to intimate the express contrary, when He says, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened;” and it is in reference to the same period that, in the Revelation, the devil is represented as come down in great wrath, knowing that he hath but a short time. Does this look like more than a thousand years? Finally, the assurance that the prophet should stand in his lot in the end of those days does not imply that those days are themselves of a longer continuance than might appear from the letter of the prophecy. The long delay was before the days commence, not in their long continuance. The prophet knew well that he lived (then a very old man) at the beginning of the second of those four empires, though he might have no knowledge of the strange vicissitudes of the fourth, and of the mysteries which the New Testament would reveal in due season during its continuance and disappearance, before its revival, and the portentous crisis, terminating in its judgment, when these days have run their course, after which the prophet should stand in his lot.

Thus, even in the symbolic prophecies of Daniel and the Revelation, the point is not at all the course of secret providence in history of which men love to weave systems, but the announcement of divine judgment, when the overt unrestrained blasphemy of the powers makes it morally imperative on God's part. This is the reason why scripture passes so curtly over the long periods of which the natural mind is so boastful, in order to fix attention on the closing scene when the responsible holders of authority come into collision with the God who originally delegated the authority. No one doubts the importance of what God works secretly; yet it is not of this that prophecy treats, but of His public inflictions when man's evil becomes intolerable by openly denying God and setting up himself instead. And as secret providence is thus excluded from prophecy, still more is the church, whereby God now displays His manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in heavenly places. (Eph. 3:10.) Even when He does deign to furnish light as to His working in the church during a day of decay, till the spewing out of its last form, He chooses seven existing assemblies, “the things that are” as the means of it, so as not to falsify His own principles in the Christian's constant waiting for Christ, and in our having a heavenly position in Him, instead of being an object of prophecy on earth. When the properly prophetic part of the

Revelation commences, “the things which must be after these,” those who had enjoyed the church's relationship with Christ are seen already glorified on high, and we return to Jews or Gentiles, unjust or righteous, filthy or holy, on earth. The bride is above during the visions of judgment, or at least their execution.

It is no question then of speculating about God's ways, but of submission in thankfulness, to His word who tells us the end from the beginning, and dwells not on the mere intervening stages which are noticed—if at all—in the most passing way, but concentrates our gaze on the closing conflict between good and evil, when Satan fights out his last campaign against the Lord and His Anointed, and we can the better discern by such an issue the frightful character of wiles which looked specious at an earlier day. The real difficulty to a spiritual mind would be to conceive the Spirit of God occupied, not merely the Christian now, but even the godly Jew of old or by-and-by, with Gentile politics and the details of their godless history. It is quite simple to understand that all the blessing is not introduced, when judgment intervenes first to destroy the beast and the false prophet, other enemies needing to be put down, other measures necessary to clear away evil and its effects, and that two or three months more beyond the three and a half years are added in this way. But that so seventy-five, or even thirty, years should follow the destruction of the beast and the antichrist, before the full blessing of the millennium comes in, is a most unnatural supposition; yet it seems inseparable from, and therefore destructive of, the system which interprets these days as so many years.

Chapter 136

Elements of Prophecy: 15. The Year-Day Theory Concluded

The direct arguments for the denial of the future crisis, in order to make out the protracted historical reckoning of prophetic times as the true meaning of scripture, have now been briefly met; and many of the usual pleas have been shown to be groundless. But there are a few others, differing from those we have just noticed, which call for a short examination, especially as one cannot but reject the pseudo-literal narrowness of the futurists quite as much as the vagueness of their adversaries.

There is no need to dwell minutely on the conflicting theories on either side, which owe their rise to ignorance of scripture and of the power of God. A few remarks may suffice for the review of what remains to be noticed.

I. The uncertainty about the ten kingdoms does not seem so small a matter as the historicalists like to think, but the allegation against it of their adversaries is not an objection of much weight. It is plain and has been pointed out, that the prophecy itself points to temporary changes by marriage or alliances in Dan. 2, and by uprooting of no less than three horns before the little horn which came up among the ten in chapter 7.

There is a far graver obstacle to the providential scheme in the fact that, in the prophecy, the ten horns compose the instruments of the power of the fourth beast in its last phase; whereas, in the history which some regard as its fulfillment, they are the separate kingdoms which the barbarians, enemies, and destroyers of the Roman empire erected on the rains. This is strengthened by the intimation of Rev. 17:12, that the ten horns of the close receive authority as kings one hour with the beast—not especially at, or merely so, which would require the dative, but the accusative, for one hour (μ■αν ■ραν). They have received no kingdom as yet: when the beast, or Roman empire, revives, they will. When the beast originally had its way, there was no such division. The Caesars governed an undivided empire. When the Germanic and other kindred hordes broke up the empire, they may have formed some ten kingdoms, less or more, in the West; but the empire was gone, save in name. There was no such thing as the co-existence of an imperial system with its head, and of these ten kings animated with the one policy and purpose of giving their kingdom to the beast. It will be so when “the beast that was and is not” “shall be present,” before he goes to destruction, God putting it into the heart of the no longer jealous Western powers to do His mind, and to do one mind, till His words shall finished.

But this future condition is as far from the present or mediaeval division into separate kingdoms as the old undivided Roman empire differs from both. Now the Spirit of God in Daniel clearly contemplates as the full meaning of the prophecy the same state of things as John does in the Revelation, where there is an imperial chief directing the united energies of the ten kingdoms of the West, which, in any proper or full sense, is in neither the pagan times nor the papal, but in the future only. The utmost which can be allowed is, that the papacy may have shadowed in part the enormities of the little horn in Daniel, and of the beast in John; but assuredly the complete fulfillment awaits the final crisis, when that empire, which smote the Lord Jesus of old in

humiliation, will rise again from the abyss to oppose Him as He comes again in glory, but must go into perdition. This is a far more serious objection to the system which sees only an immense web of providence in past history, and it is riveted, not removed, by the most exact review of the prophetic word. Nothing that has already been exhausts the vision.

II. Much has been said of late for and against the true terminus a quo of the twelve hundred and sixty years. But some, who reasoned from its uncertainty to overthrow the historical school, seem to have misunderstood the meaning of the prediction. Thus, if the saints have been for ages given over to the blasphemous little horn of Dan. 7, it was thought incredible that the church should be at a loss when and how the change happened. Many, it was urged, assert that it is; others are as fully convinced that it is not; and nine tenths stand silent, avowedly unable to give any opinion on the subject. “They may, or may not, be in the hands of the little horn, and he may, or may not, be wearing them out, for anything they know. They hope and believe that they are the saints, but whether the beast is making war with, and has overcome, them, they cannot tell; it is a deep, curious, and litigated question, and one on which, among so many conflicting opinions, they never pretended to form a judgment for themselves.” Dr. Maitland's retort has embarrassed not a few. The fact, however, is, that the prophet means that not the saints, but the times and laws, were to be given into the hand of the little horn. God does not let His people out of His own hand. On the other hand, the giving of the times and laws into the hand of the little horn is a very different thing from the pope's perversion of the prophecies, and wresting the promises of the future glory of the kingdom to the present grandeur and dominion of Romanism. And, whatever be the guilt of forbidding marriage to the clergy, or, yet more, of annulling the rebellious sin of idolatry by what we may call christening images, of heterodoxy and lying pretension in the Mass, of refusing the cup to or shutting up the Bible from the laity, and of sanctioning troops of false mediators in the worship of saints and angels and Virgin, it is not true, that every feature of the prophecy finds its counterpart in the Roman papacy. It is in vain to say that the little horn claims the office of a seer, who has full insight into divine mysteries; and of a prophet, as infallible interpreter of the divine will. This is a true description of the pope, not of the little horn, which symbolizes a king, or rather emperor, not a bishop—a king, small at first, but not always, before whom three of the ten fell, and who wields the force of all the rest, rising up to the greatest height of his power, before he is cast down forever by divine judgment, and the beast given to the burning flame. “Eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things,” in this horn, do not warrant the notion of an episcopal any more than of a prophetic dignitary. The symbol attributes high intelligence to this Roman chief, as well as audacity of speech, which takes the character of blasphemous pride, against the Most High. (Cf. Dan. 7:11, 25.) He assumes the power of changing times and laws, like Jeroboam. (1 Kings 12) Only this will be done by the emperor of Rome dictating to the Jews in Jerusalem, and changing the divinely-enjoined feasts and institutions given to that people. One may compare with this the last verse of Dan. 9, where he is said to cause sacrifice and oblation to cease “in the midst of the week,” which would coalesce with the beginning of “a time, and times, and the dividing of time."

Nor is it faith to plead the superior reasonableness of giving these predictions for many generations, rather than for one only. This is to make the actual circumstance outweigh the communication and enjoyment of God's mind, and is opposed to all that is really spiritual. Our notion of utility is apt to mislead, guided as it even is by mere reason. The question for a believer is

the true meaning of the word, the intention of God Himself, which the Holy Spirit will surely unfold to those whose eye is, by grace, single to the glory of Christ. It does not commend itself to the ear of faith, when the effort is not to vindicate the prophecies from the guesses of men, but to reduce them to the same uncertainty as the twelve hundred and sixty days among historical commentators. Such reasoning ought to warn souls that it is the spirit of man which is at work, and not the Holy Ghost.

III. Of the repeated failures in the predicted close of the twelve hundred and sixty year-day system others have said enough. They are notorious. Yet they have found an apologist, who argues that these successive interpretations, mistaken as they were, are just what it was reasonable to expect. This might be, if prophecy were no such thing as God's word, or if we had not the Holy Spirit of God to give us the truth of it. In human things man progresses gradually, and the sense of past failure stimulates to future success: is it so in divine things? Is it true that, only by such failure and men's gradual approach to a correct view of the times and seasons, could the two main purposes have been fulfilled—growing knowledge of the prophecy, with a constant and unbroken expectation of the Lord's coming? To the Christian who repudiates the jarring schools of men it does seem no light instance of the irony observable here below, that Protestants should boast of a year-day theory, as applied to the time, times, and a half, which confessedly appeared about the year 1200; that they should avow the uncertainty of the ten kingdoms; and that they should cry up a few apparent successes, spite of a thousand mistakes, in their application.

The effort to retort failure on those who, from apostolic times, have been awaiting the Son of God from heaven, is as unworthy as it is baseless. For, while the apostle Paul, for instance, taught the saints to be with himself ever looking for Christ, there was the most complete care never to connect Christ's coming for us with a single date. The times and seasons are, without exception, bound up with the trials and deliverance of the Jews, never with the church.

This, it will be seen and felt, goes to the root of the year-day system, when it takes the place of being the true and full aim of the Spirit in the prophetic visions. Hence, the more closely Daniel is searched, the more it will appear certain that the church is never contemplated as the object directly concerned in the scenes there disclosed to the view of faith. Again, the Apocalypse affords still more positive instruction, because therein we have a protracted scheme of the churches here below as “the things which are;” after which no such state is known any more, but a new company is seen for the first time in heaven, and the old distinction of only Jews and Gentiles follows on earth, with the most marked absence of the churches. Yet, singular to say, total failure in apprehending this, the broadest and weightiest lesson of the Revelation, pervades the opposing parties of futurists and historicalists alike.

Nor is it here only that they are almost equally mistaken, but also in confounding the Christian hope with the prophetic word, a distinction which runs through the New Testament, from John's Gospel, and before it, to the Revelation, but formally distinguished in 2 Peter 1, as in fact the apostle Paul does in 2 Thess. 2:1, 2; for he beseeches the Thessalonians by the coming of our Lord, which is to gather the saints on high, not to be soon troubled, as though the day of the Lord were present—that day of solemn judgment for the earth and men on it, of which the prophets had so fully spoken. So the apostle of the circumcision reminds brethren that we have the prophetic word more firm (that is, confirmed) by the scene witnessed on the holy mount of transfiguration; to

which they were doing well in paying heed, as to a lamp or candle shining in a dusky place, till day dawn and the day-star rise in their hearts. Those who knew Old Testament prophecy were thus encouraged in holding it fast; but it was at best a light for this scene, now wrapped up in gloom, but soon to enjoy the reign of Him whose right it is; and they should desire another light, as much brighter as that of day exceeds a lamp however excellent, and that too shining from, and centering in, Christ above, the day-star, whom we look for from heaven before the terrible day of the Lord come upon the world. The heavenly hope rising in the heart is thus wholly distinct from prophecy which tells us of the judgments which usher in the day of Jehovah on the earth. But of this most sure distinction, momentous as it is, not only for the affections but also for true intelligence, it would be hard to say which of the two contending schools is farthest from the truth. In general they are on the same ground of confusion in this respect, though most evidently wrong are they who are the boldest in saying, My Lord delayeth His coming. May neither of them say it in the heart, whatever be the faultiness of their systems!

Where is the scriptural intimation of gradually increasing light from prophecy to sustain the lively expectation of the Bridegroom's coming for us? The analogy of providence has nothing to do with what is a matter of His word addressed to hearts animated with divine love and hope. To unbelief, no doubt, this may seem general and vague; not so to those who, with bridal affections, have the Spirit prompting the cry, Come. If it is a mere question of reasoning from a literal sense of the words, hope must wane away, and each succeeding generation feel less and less warrant for inferring the nearness of the advent. Hence the theory is that prophetic dates must dawn with a gradually increasing light in order to quicken the church's hope, which had otherwise lapsed into more and more indifference; and it is confidently affirmed as a fact, that ever since the Reformation those who have most studied the prophetic dates, as an actual chronology of sacred times, have been the main instruments in awakening the church to a lively expectation of the coming of Christ.

Very different is our Lord's own representation, The virgins who at first went out with their lamps to meet the Bridegroom, while He tarried, all slumber and sleep. Surely this condition of slumber, as regards the hope of our Lord's return, characterized Christendom long after the Reformation, and down till our own times. However this may be, at length follows, not prophetic research, but a cry at midnight, Behold the Bridegroom go ye out to meet Him. It is this really which accounts for the present activity of wise, and even foolish, virgins. The cry is gone forth, but it is at midnight, not the flattering notion of a time of increased light generally bringing in the day.

Certainly the prophetic word, when studied in faith, gives one to judge principles now at work, it may be hiddenly, by God's revelation of their full fruit and of His public dealings at the end. The effect is to separate one to Himself from the scene ripening for judgment. But the coming of the Lord for His own is associated with His love, and the highest enjoyment of His glory with Him in the Father's house, with moral feelings and practical effects of another character, higher and more intimate, far above the prophetic word and its solemn announcements, however right and glorious. To confound the Christian's hope with prophecy, to supplement the state of the apostolic church with the fuller light of the present, to assert that the history of the year-day expositions accords in the closest way with these truths, like successive steps towards the just apprehension of the course of divine Providence, seems as distressing in its ignorance ah in its presumption. It was a false alarm as to the day of the Lord, not excitement about His coming, which shook the

Thessalonians. There is in scripture no protraction of His coming, always and only a lively anticipation of it contemplated, and this up to the last chapter of the Revelation, though we have there plenty of times and seasons revealed before His day. It is the year-day theory which tries to conciliate errors and simply misses the truth.

The supposed successes of Protestant interpreters call for few remarks here, though open to not a little. assuredly. Suffice it then to say, that the chosen anticipations drawn from prophecy, which have proved so singularly correct in their main features, are these:

First, about the year A.D. 1600 Brightman calculated in his commentary that the overthrow of the Turkish power would occur A.D. 1696. In the year 1687 Dr. Cressener renewed the prediction, placing the time a year but restricting it to the close of the year of the “Turkish encroachments,” or the last end of their “hostilities.” This is caught up as in almost exact accordance with history, because the year 1697 was marked by that most signal victory of Prince Eugene over the Turks, which has proved the final limit to their aggressions upon western Europe. Bengel and Fleming are brought in to swell the train.

Here are the words of Brightman (p. 171, ed. Amst. 1611): “The execution of the commandment lighting upon the year 1300, by due consent of all history-writers; when their domesticall dissentious being appeased, and all consenting to the empire of the Ottomans, they might freely bende themselves with all their power to enlarge their borders, and some time at length creape out of their narrow straightes. How long time this power given to the Turks should continue is declared in the next words, prepared at an hour, and a day, and a month, and a yeere, which so exact description perteineth to the comforting of the godly whom the Spirit would have to know, that this most grievous calamity hath her set bounden, even to the last moment, beyond which it shall not be continued. Which indeed seemeth to be the space of three hundred ninety and six yeeres, every several day being taken for a yeere, after that manner which was interpreted the monthee before.” Thus he makes it out: from A.D. 1300+396 A.D. 1696 or as he says on Rev. 20 B (p. 650), “if we follow the reckoning of the Julian yeeres, the impious kingdom shall not be prolonged beyond seven yeeres; then utterly to be abolished without so much as the footsteps of his name after him.” It will be judged hence how far it is candid to say that Brightman's anticipation was verified? Was there indeed such an extirpation of the Turkish name (not to speak of 1696, but) in 1697? Was it “singularly correct in its main features?"

The fact is that Brightman taught that the thousand years' reign began in the year A.D. 180, and that the first resurrection belonged to the nations of Europe (p. 656); that three hundred years had then passed since that resurrection (p. 657). “We must also yet tarry some short space before that our brethren the Jews shall come to the faith. But after that they are come, and Christ shal have rigned some ages most gloriously on earth by His servants in advancing His church to most high honor abov all empire, then also all nations shall embrace true godliness,” &c. (ib.) Hence Brightman was expecting the papacy and the Turk to be utterly abolished shortly. “Until this victory be gotten, the church yet is in warer, liveth in tents, and sigheth with many adversaries. But after this warer is finished, she shal keep a most joyful triumph, and shall rejoice with perpetual mirth.... The truth shall yet raigne among the Gentiles for seven hundred yeeres: how long afterward among the Jews no declaration doth declare” (p. 658). Is this the Protestant way of keeping the expectation of Christ's coming lively? It may be added in illustration of this chosen expositor's skill

in prophecy, that he interprets the destruction of Gog and Magog in Rev. 20 of the overthrow spoken of in Dan. 11:45; 12:12; Ezek. 38:8, “when the houre, day, motithe, and yeere of the Turks' tyranny shal come out, to west, at the yeere a thousand sixe hundred ninetith more or less.” Finally, Brightman held that the rising of the dead small and great for judgment before the great white throne means “the full restoring of the Jewish nation” (p. 664).

But the strangest thing of all is that the very advocate who cites Brightman's deduction from Rev. 9:15, as a conclusive answer to such as have declaimed on the total failure of these prophetic times, had himself rejected the reading, and of course the translation of the text on which this anticipation was based. Thus while Brightman adopted the common text in that verse, which is essential to his calculations, his advocate, at the time when he commended this calculation as an instance of a distinct and accurate insight into what was coming on the earth, adopted as preferable Matthζi’s reading. This ought to have made no small difference if it was a date. But we have already shown that it is not, Brightman and his advocate being alike wrong.

Further, Dr. Cressener, like Brightman, looked not merely for a grave check or severe defeat of the Turks, but their then total overthrow, or as Cressener says in the preface to his Demonstration (p. xx., London, 1690), “the last end of all Turkish wars.” Was this a just estimate of the battle of Zenta?

Secondly, Cressener in 1687 anticipated “that the true religion will revive again in some very considerable kingdom before the general peace with the Turks or eight years at furthest.” “The next year seems in all probability to be a year of wonders for the recovery of the church.” Will the Christian reader believe that all this is thought to have proved singularly correct in the revolution of England, A.D. 1688, and the peace of Carlowitz, 1698? Again, Cressener conjectured that before 1800 Rome would be destroyed, and soon after its chief supports, ecclesiastical and civil? Is this correct too?

Further, R. Fleming, jun., in 1700 predicted that the French monarchy, after having scorched others, would itself consume before 1794; as Bengal thought that the papacy would close its chief dominance in 1809. But surely, whatever the coincidence in appearance, our minds must feel that the grounds were as weak as the fulfillment was imperfect.

His Apocalyptical Key, or “Extraordinary Discourse on the Rise and Fall of the Papacy” (my copy is the reprint in 1793 of the original published in 1701) pretends to no more than “some conjectural thoughts on this head; for I am far from the presumption of some men to give them any higher character.” It may be added that in the same work the author conjectured that a divine judgment to be poured on the dominions belonging to the Roman See would begin probably about 1794, and expire about 1848, which has been regarded as no less strikingly verified than the former thought. But what is the ground of these anticipations? His view of the which, according to him, suppose a struggle and war between. the papist and reformed parties, every vial being regarded as the event of some new periodical attack of the former on the latter, but the issue proving at length favorable to the latter against the former.

Hence Fleming considers that the first vial began with the Reformation, and continued about forty years (that is, 1516-1566); that the second ran on thence about fifty years (1566-1617) to the confuSion of Spain and partially of France; that the third closed with the peace of Munster in 1648

after Germany was humbled; and that the fourth expired with 1794. “The reason of which conjecture is this; that I find the pope got a new foundation of exaltation when Justinian, upon his conquest of Italy, left it in a great measure. to the pope's management, being willing to eclipse his own authority, to advance that of this haughty prelate. Now this being in the year 552; this by the addition of the 1620 [really 1260] years, reaches down to the year 1811, which according to prophetical account is the year 1794.” And this involves his idea that the state of Protestantism is what is set out in Rev. 16:10, namely, “Atheism, Deism, Socinianism, irreligion, profaneness, skepticism, formality, hatred of godliness, and a bitter persecuting spirit continue and increase among us.” But is it really the fact that the French monarchy, after scorching others, did itself consume by doing so, till it exhausted itself towards the end of the eighteenth century, as the Spanish towards the end of the sixteenth?

For my own part I cannot but agree with the more weighty commentators of recent times, that, if we are to apply the vials historically, the scheme of Fleming is a mistake, and that the vials, in a partial way at least, begin with the French Revolution instead of the fourth ending there and then. Napoleon answers thus to the scorching agent, and the blaspheming sufferers who repented not are chiefly the papal nations of the European continent. Further, it seems superficial to cry up his applying the fifth vial to the years 1794-1848; for unquestionably it is rather since than before that the pope has been so signally ruined in his temporalities, and this by Italy spite of France, of which the conjecturer had not the most distant notion. He had pitched on 1848, reckoning the 1260 years prophetically from 606 when the pope received, the title of Supreme Bishop. Then would follow the sixth vial on Mahometanism or the Turks up to 1900, as the seventh up to 2000 by Christ's appearance though not personally bringing in the total judgment of Rome, &c., with the millennium afterward. The first and inevitable result of his system is to set aside the waiting for Christ and to make death the necessary expectation of the Christian. “Though we are not to live to see the great and final destruction of the papacy, the blessed millennium, or Christ's last coming to judge the world, yet seeing death is the equivalent of all these to us,” &c. (p. 82.) Is it not strange to hear such a conjecture cited as a witness of the value of the Protestant system by one who avowedly rejects his basis?

Is it right again, to notice the last instance, that one who was perfectly aware of Bengel’s chimerical system of Apocalyptic chronology, to which it may be doubted that he converted a single individual of sobriety, should deign to use an example which had no more solid basis than the prognostication of an astrologer?

Pious and learned as the prelate may have been, no one will think that such remarks are too stringent on his prophetic dates, when it is remembered that he started with the assumption that the famous number of the beast 666 in years=his allotted term of forty-two months. Hence a καιρ■ς=222 and two ninths years, and of course 31/2=777 and seven ninths; the little time of Rev. 12:12 (■λ■γος χρ■νος)=888 and eight ninths; what he oddly calls the non-chronus (or as he thinks in better Latin—which may be doubted—the ne chronus) of Rev. 10:6=1111 and one ninth; the μικρ■ς χρ■νος of Rev. 20:3=half a καιρ■ς, strange to say, or 111 and one ninth; the millennium, or χιλια ■τη(though Brightman indeed makes two, the first of Satan bound, the second of the saints reigning)=999 and nine ninths (sic); the χρ■νος=1111 and one ninth; the α■■ν=2222 and two ninths, of which he gives 31/2 to the world, 7777 and seven ninths or 490 of his prophetic months. As the result, Bengel in his eagerness for dates finds a chronus in Rev. 6:11

(that is, 1111 and one ninth years) from A.D. 98 (a rather early beginning) to 1289 or Innocent III.'s crusade against the Waldenses. The first woe, with its five prophetic months=79 common years, dated from A.D. 510 to 589; the second, with its hour, day, month, and year =nearly 207, from A.D. 634 to 840; the non-chronus from A.D. 800 to 1886, within which are placed the interval after the second woe (84-947) the 1260 days of the woman after the birth of the man-child (8641521), the third woe (947-1836), the time, times, and half a time, with the beast and his number (1058-1836), the everlasting gospel, 1614, the end of the 42 months 1810, the beast from the pit or abyss 1832, the general dates closing with 1836 when the mystery of God is finished, the beast destroyed, and Satan bound.

Apology is due for presenting such a mass of crude and unfounded or rather ill-founded speculation; yet this is the expositor whose opinion that the chief period of papal dominance would close in 1809 is, not only cited for the censure of those who objected to the historical system, but said to have distinct grounds. The charge of delusion and falsehood brought against these estimates of the prophetic dates, unless advanced with important limitations, is said to be itself false and delusive. This is bold; when it is known that he who thus dogmatizes did not differ from but agreed with his adversaries that Bengel's entire system of apocalyptic dates has not an atom of truth in it. The Christian will judge from such specimens, which are no doubt the best that could be produced to commend the popular scheme of prophetic chronology, that, if there is little to attract or reward in the expositions of futurists, there is nothing to trust for candor or correctness in the defense of historicalism. One may not look for depth or breadth of truth where the heavenly headship of Christ and the distinctive association with Him of the church are ignored if not denied; but it is painfully instructive to see how special pleading destroys common honesty, and not least in the things of God.

Chapter 137

Elements of Prophecy: 16. Concluding Observations

We have now briefly examined the leading assumptions of the historical school; we have tested what is peculiar to the system, and have given sufficient evidence to show its lack of spiritual intelligence, even when, as of late, reasserted with considerable confidence to oppose further light which God has caused to shine afresh from His word. The objections urged by the futurist party may not be always well founded; but a really close search into scripture will prove that they both err by their narrowness: futurism by slighting the prophetic light cast on the past; historicalism by still more serious oversight of what is coming; both by overlooking the heavenly glory of Christ and the church's union with Him in it; as distinct from the past or the future ways of God on the earth. The extreme advocates on both sides lead equally to unbelief through their one-sidedness. We have seen that the crisis at the end of the age, closed by the Lord's appearing in glory, is the grand point in Daniel and the Apocalypse, as well as our Lord's own prophecy; though there is also a passing notice of the older Gentile empires, to which the world-power was successively assigned by God, when the Jews had proved themselves unworthy by idolatry, as at length by the rejection of Jesus, the Messiah and Son of God. Finally, the year-day theory, when applied definitely and in detail now, we have seen to be as superficial as might he expected from its source in the dark ages.

It is in first or fundamental principles that these schools betray their character. Not only are they narrow, and thus short of the full sphere, but they ignore the divine center, and fail to distinguish the heavenly circle from the earthly one, the body and bride of Christ on high, from His people and kingdom under the whole heavens, though embracing all peoples and kindreds and tongues. No prophecy of scripture is of its own interpretation; isolate it, as the historical system in general does, from the future coming and kingdom of our Lord, the gathering point of the prophetic word in Old and New Testament, and the Holy Spirit's object is missed, the key lost. You are no longer in harmony with His line and aim who inspired all. Judged by this divine criterion (furnished by the apostle Peter) historicalism is most faulty, though its rival is blamable enough for denying the use of the lamp throughout the night. The spirit of the world, ever magnifying man and the present course of the age, is the main hindrance; as the Spirit of God, who searches all, even the depths of God, alone gives us to know, by and in and with Christ, what has been freely given us of God, and this spoken in words taught, not by human wisdom, but by the Spirit, spiritual things being communicated in spiritual words. Now Christ and His glory are ever before the revealing Spirit; and as His kingdom over (not Israel only, but) all the earth is what all the prophets attest, so the apostles point to His heavenly exaltation and His bride's along with Him.

The obstacle to the truth, then, is far wider and deeper than any party question of polemical divinity; though no doubt, as some few of the futurists have been swayed by the (perhaps unconscious) desire of palliating popery, so many of the historicalists no less by their strong and just abhorrence of that soul-enslaving and idolatrous system. They seem both to have forgotten the maxim which the apostle John impresses on the little children, on the very babes of God's family: “As ye heard that antichrist cometh, even now are there arisen many antichrists, whence

we know that it is the last hour." The futurists think only of the coming antichrist, the historical school are absorbed with the many antichrists. The Christian should not forget, on the one hand, that even now there are many antichrists in being (antiquity being the worst possible disproof of opposition to Christ); on the other, that a great personal antagonist of the Lord is surely coming, of which the many that have been and are should be regarded as signs and precursors, rather than as the fulfillment.

It is confessed, even by the apologist of ordinary views, that there was in the mind of. many Christians an exceeding jealousy of all discussion on unfulfilled prophecy. It was thought to be speculative and uncertain, adapted to produce and foster a vain curiosity, and to divert the mind from the duty of practical religion. Hence arose a tendency to dwell only on unfulfilled predictions, to consider evidence as the main benefit to be derived from the study, and to proscribe all investigation of the future as unlawful and pernicious. It is owned that these notions were too defective, and too plainly opposed to the statements of scripture, to endure the test of a prolonged inquiry; and that thoughtful minds, however cautious and devout, could not fail to see that other purposes of equal or greater importance were to be answered by these sacred predictions, warning to the careless, instruction to the faithful, instruction in the nature and outline of coming events, spiritual preparedness, &c., being real objects recognized by scripture itself, and only to be answered by unfulfilled prophecy. Thus evidence was seen to be only a secondary use for the conviction of the incredulous, while the purpose was the help of the believer enjoying the confidence of Him who revealed all.

Hence, as has been supposed, a natural recoil from the prevalent doctrine which had proscribed the study of unfulfilled prophecy as useless and dangerous, to the opposite extreme, which treated fulfilled prediction as powerless for instruction or profit; and hence also a tendency to transfer as many predictions as possible into the class of unaccomplished prophecies, which might thus be still available for the guidance of the church.

Far from any believer be the thought that the prophetic word has not a decided bearing on the divine side, as revealing God's glory and ways, besides its reference to, or use for, the personal wants of man. All scripture has this twofold character, and prophecy among the rest. But it is not in general seen, whether by futurist or historicalist, that the prophetic word treats of judgments and earthly blessing by God's power and goodness, but does not as such unveil the depths of God now revealed by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. (See 1 Cor. 2; 1 Peter 1) It was the prerogative of Christ the Son thus to communicate to His own, in contrast with a prophet, or even the greatest born of women, who could not rise above the earth wherein he had his origin, while the Lord Jesus, coming from above, is above all, and testified what He has seen and heard, and the Holy Ghost taught all things about the truth which they could not then bear, besides bringing to remembrance all that Jesus had said. In the communion of this precious and special intimacy stands the Christian and the church; and hence their exceptional place in relation to the prophetic word, as we have seen in the end of 2 Peter 1, where the apostle shows that the believers addressed should heed that word for this dark squalid scene, till daylight dawn and the daystar arise in their heart. Prophecy is an excellent lamp, but there is something yet brighter, the daylight of our heavenly association with Christ Himself on high, source and center of all (daystar as He is here called), which is far better.

It is this which exempts the Christian from the system of times and seasons, though he is entitled to know them, but to know them as bearing on the earthly people, not on those whose portion is with Him whose light is brighter than the sun at noon. With this accords the fact, that when we look into the saints contemplated in the details of Daniel, they are found to be Jews, and so are those in the Savior's prophecy of the dealings with Jerusalem in the end of the age; only that we hear then of Jews and Gentiles now on earth, but at that crisis not of the church or heavenly saints, who are previously seen in the Apocalyptic visions glorified, and with Christ above, whence they come with Him in the day of His appearing.

No thoughtful Christian then denies the value of fulfilled prophecy as evidence of revelation. It was really in no small measure the forcing of prophecy to bear on what was not its object, and the popular effort to make it speak of the past and present in gospel times, which largely led to the reaction expressed in Dr. S. R. Maitland's words: “We point the infidel to the captive Jew and the wandering Arab, but who challenges him with the slain witnesses? We set before him the predicted triumphs of Cyrus; but do we expect his conversion from the French Revolution and the conquests of Napoleon? We send him to muse on the ruined city of David, and to search for the desolated site of Babylon; but who builds his arguments on the opened seals of the Apocalypse? And why is this? I do not speak hastily, and I would not speak un-charitably, but I cannot suppress my conviction that it is because the necessity of filling up a period of twelve hundred and sixty years has led to such forced interpretation of language, and to such a constrained acquiescence in what is unsatisfactory to sound judgment, that we should be afraid, not only of incurring his ridicule, but of his claiming the same license which we have ourselves been obliged to assume. I firmly believe that the error lies in adopting an interpretation which requires us to spread the events predicted respecting three years and a half over more than twelve centuries, and which thus sends us to search the page of history for the accomplishment, of prophecies still unfulfilled.” (Inquiry, pp. 84, 85. 1826.) It is not that one cites this futurist leader as laying down principles of sterling value; for his work was much more negative than positive, and he was as much as his adversaries under the idea that the main end of prophecy is to convict unbelievers. The root of which error lies in two things chiefly first, unbelief of the authority of God's word; and, secondly, ignorance of our privileges as Christians in the perfect favor of God, and unwillingness to accept the truth that the world is awaiting the suspended judgment of God at Christ's return. Those who, justified by faith and in peace with God, stand in His grace, and rejoice in hope of His glory, do not need evidence that the word of their God and Father is true, or that the providence of God orders all the varying plans and thoughts of men to the fulfillment of its own deep and wonderful counsels. And for him who knows what it is to walk in the light as He is in the light (the place of every Christian), it is strange doctrine to hear that fulfilled prophecies lend a great help to our thoughts in seeking to attain this holy and divine elevation. It is really by faith of Christ, as possessed of His life and cleansed by His blood. What a descent from His presence thus to history, or the account of all the events of time under the light of the prophetic vision, good as it is! and how painful the effort thus to christen, if one may so say, all the main subjects of classical study and pursuit!

Again, to talk of the sure progress of all history towards its consummation in the kingdom of Christ, is very apt to blind men to the fact, that “the times of the Gentiles,” under which we live, are really an interruption in God's ways with men on the earth, a parenthesis rather than the orderly course of things, though a parenthesis since redemption during which a mystery of the deepest grace and

richest glory is revealed, a mystery great indeed as to Christ, and as to the church. When our Lord returns, the world will pass under the direct government of God, when Israel and the nations shall be blessed under the glorious Son of man, as of old all fell to ruin which stood on man's responsibility. To blend in such prospects of glory with the whole range of history, to make all the events recorded by profane historians, and by the orators and poets of Greece and Rome, so many pledges to us of the everlasting kingdom, is to confound clean and unclean, and to verge on profanity itself, if it have any definite meaning.

In all this reasoning it is plain that the Protestant is no less dark than the Catholic in seizing the true and special nature of the church. This misleads both the conflicting parties; and it is hard to say which errs most from the truth. Thus we are told by the historicalist that there is in the full provision of divine truth in these fulfilled prophecies an unspeakable exhibition of God's wisdom and love, who, knowing the weakness of our faith as to all the great blessings He has promised, by these connected and continual visions converts every event of providence when fulfilled into a new and fuller pledge of the mercies still only in. prospect; and Babylon and Persia, Greece and Rome, Cyrus and Alexander, Antiochus and Titus, the powers that have oppressed or the conquerors that have wasted (not Israel or even saints among the ancient people of God, but) the church! become tokens of the approach of Messiah's triumphant kingdom. None can be surprised if there be the widest divergence in general doctrine, in worship and walk, in communion and hope, seeing that there is such total ignorance of the church in fact and character. The effect is disastrous in the extreme. As our special relationship to Christ at God's right hand is unknown, so perpetual interest in all the events of past history takes the place avowedly of setting our minds on things above; so too boasting of the whole deposit of revealed wisdom successionally unfolded from age to age forbids the sense and confession of our actual fallen estate, and the foreboding of the troubles (not of the Jews and Gentiles at the end of the age, but) of the church eclipses the continual looking for the Bridegroom as our proximate hope.

It is indeed solemnly true that there will be a judgment of the quick as well as of the dead, and that the kingdom over the earth covers the space between for a thousand years; that the past is not something extinct and perished forever, but that every actor shall give account, and every work be manifested before the Lord; but how this teaches us the perpetual interest of the church of God in all the events of past history, seems an inference very wide of the premises. The value of Old Testament facts, as well as testimonies, we are best taught in the application of them by the Holy Ghost in the New; but this is a thing very different from our busying ourselves with all the events of past history, or the records of bygone days, as such.

We may notice too that, where the church of God is relegated to history for its moral lessons, the whole of revealed truth is classed under the law, the gospel, and the word of prophecy, ignoring those writings of the apostles which make known the mystery hidden from ages and from generations. Promises and law, gospel and church, might each and all be distinguished from the displayed kingdom of which the prophetic word speaks so fully. The Old Testament gives us the promises and the law; the New Testament, consequent on the work of the on and the mission of the Spirit, gives us the gospel and the church; while prophecy is found in both, more largely in the Old Testament, when all blessing was future, more profoundly and completely in the New, where what is coming is treated systematically till the eternal day.

As in the New Testament we have the truth in Christ for the individual and the body, so we have not merely this evil or that, but all that opposes itself against the will of God, and this from the first to the last. Hence, whatever be the iniquity of the popish system, the Spirit testifies against all the forms of departure from God and His grace. Thus, in the seven Apocalyptic churches, not to speak of the apostolic epistles, there is a word from the Lord bearing on all which He judged it of special moment to notice; and the prophecy, strictly so-called, discloses the second beast as distinct from the first, and Babylon so different from the beasts, that she becomes at last the object of destructive hatred to one, if not both. There the varying and opposed evils of men are seen successively, or together, falling under the righteous wrath of God and the Lamb; while the saints are seen as variously blessed according to the Father's gracious wisdom, of whom every family in the heavens and on earth is named.

Yet will it be found in practice that no one will be found intelligently to profit in any full measure by the Apocalyptic visions as a whole, who is not established in the riches of grace and the counsels of glory, and, above all, in that present sense of association with Christ in heavenly places, which is the central truth of the Pauline testimony. To those who by grace are thus fitted to weigh the book of Revelation, its visions are invaluable, and as instructive as they give solemnity to the spirit and joy to the heart. If the visions were fulfilled, they would be no more effete and worthless than the books of Moses or of the prophetic Judges that followed, which, if read in the Spirit, repay quite as richly, or more so, than the predictions of Isaiah or Ezekiel which remain to be accomplished. But they are, as we have seen, “at hand” in any full sense, not yet accomplished, and so in every way invite and will reward the reader with a double blessing from Him who promised it to such as read, hear, and keep the sayings of that book. To His name be all the praise and glory.

Chapter 138

Elements of Prophecy: Appendix A

The prophecies of holy writ may be divided broadly into these two classes: those like Isaiah's, which were addressed to the people of Israel while standing in recognized relation with Jehovah as His people; and those like Daniel's, which suppose the Jews disowned for a season till grace restore them in the latter day, placing them under Messiah's reign and the new covenant. Of old God had governed Israel as His people, and the pavilion of His presence in their midst was its sign. The present interval, humbling to conscience and solemn to faith, is marked by the departure of the Shekinah till its final return never more to leave the city and sanctuary where the eyes of Jehovah rest continually; and during that space imperial authority is confided to four successive and well-known world-powers, the great Gentile empires. This is “the parenthesis,” as it has been justly designated; and the term is so suited to maintain a true sense of the peculiarity of the interval, and to hinder forgetfulness of its total difference from the ordinary course of God's direct government of the earth according to the great and regular scheme of prophecy, that it would be most unwise to forego its use because some do not, and others will not, understand it. The “times of the Gentiles” span this remarkable interval, begun by the captivity of Judah under the head of gold, and closed by the destructive blow which the returning Lord, the Little Stone cut without hands, will inflict on the iron-clay feet, reducing the entire image to powder, before the stone itself expands into a great mountain and fills the whole earth. Then and not before will have come the world-kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ. (Rev. 11:15-18; 19; 20)

It is very intelligible that the professing Gentile should revolt at the fact, plainly as scripture reveals it, that whatever the deep ways and heavenly counsels of grace revealed since Christ came (the whole New Testament indeed), the Gentile empires have merely and precisely the function, under God's sovereign will, of filling up the gap between Israel's fall and their rising again. It is offensive to such as glory in the arts and letters of Greece and Rome, in the sciences and discoveries of modern civilization. Hence wounded feeling proceeds to worse daring, and profanely mocks at this view of the parenthesis, which is the sure representation of God's word, as if it were no more reasonable than a dream of Arabian or Hindu mythology. But it is foolish to kick against the goad: the fact, humiliating to Gentile conceit and call it as we may, is written indelibly in letters of light.

It is alleged however, in order to reduce the sharpness of the truth and its moral lesson, that, in a sense exactly similar, the whole Mosaic dispensation is itself a parenthesis between the times of the patriarchs and of the Christian church; while the millennium is another parenthesis between the dispensation of the Spirit (the reader must overlook so unintelligent a phrase) and the final glory, when the redemption is complete. Now, while in a limited sense this may be allowed of all economic or mediatorial dealings as compared with the boundless infinitude of eternity, the parenthesis was spoken of as such in respect of God's government of the earth, whether partial or complete, past or future; which government all the faithful surely believe to be the only normal condition for the world since God deigned to make it His plan. Not only before the deluge but after it, till the call of Israel out of Egypt, God did not govern the earth in this way. Men previously had only to maintain His honor, as we see in Job 31:27, 28; but this was soon lost through idolatry, and

Abram was called out, the nations being abandoned to walk in their own ways. Hence evidently the patriarch's call was not God's government of the world. On the contrary God, though He left Himself not without witness, as we see in the destruction of the guilty cities of the plain, would not then interfere because the iniquity of the Amorites was not yet full; and the wandering patriarchs, so far as they were faithful, had in the land of promise not so much as to set their foot on, though we cannot but discern also, how God suffered no man to do His prophets harm, rebuking kings for their sakes.

But at the Exodus, as is known to all, God judged the nation that oppressed the sons of Israel and brought themselves out of the house of bondage as His people, in whom His government was to be exercised and His ways displayed. And so they were (not merely that secret and ceaseless providence of His which never fails), till by their persistent hopeless apostasy from Himself for idols, subsequently fixed yet more by their rejection of Himself in the person of His Messiah, they were in the just dealing of God, after unwearied patience, set aside as no longer His people, though still providentially kept apart, until He resumes at length His immediate government of the earth, as He will in Christ returning to reign in the last days.

The gap then, since Israel became Lo-Ammi, till they are restored again and forever as His people to His land, as the central sphere of His earthly government, is filled up by the four successive beasts or imperial Gentile powers. The regular course of earthly dispensations supposes the throne of Jehovah in Jerusalem; the removal of it when power was committed to the Gentiles is exactly a parenthesis as to His earthly government, which is true of Israel's history neither before nor after these “times of the Gentiles;” for Israel is the exhibition, in the past of failure under law, in the future of power under the Messiah, in respect (if God's proper and immediate government of the earth, whereas the intervening Gentile period is its interruption, whatever the wonderful works of God in His grace meanwhile. Yet God has not lost sight of these parenthetical times, abnormal as they are, but inspired Daniel particularly in the Old Testament, and John in the New Testament, to write of them, though in view of the blessing at last of the people still under rejection, as well as of the higher and larger things for which that rejection furnishes occasion. It is our Lord too, who in Luke 21 vouchsafed to us that very term “times of the Gentiles,” which is only another way of describing the parenthesis; though Christians, like the heathen, turn it into pride, overlooking its real nature and denying its importance. Nothing but this can account for their designating this period “the sacred calendar and great almanac of prophecy,” wholly slighting the fact that far the greater part of the prophetic word bears on the time when God governs the earth immediately from within His people restored and blessed, instead of merely confiding authority meanwhile to powers which from first to last He calls “beasts.” The ax may boast against Him that heweth therewith; but saintly minds ought to know better than encourage it.

But it is not true that Dan. 2, any more than chapter 7., contemplates, as the learned J. Mede fancied, a regnum lapidie, as well as a regnum montis. (Works, iv. 743, 744, ed. 1677, folio.) It would be strange indeed if the dream of the heathen monarch had a spiritual view presented which was not vouchsafed to the holy prophet. The idea however is quite unfounded. The first action of the Stone (or in the kingdom of God in Christ) was not to accomplish redemption or to found a spiritual kingdom, but to crush to atoms the imperial Gentile system, especially dealing with the Roman empire in its last shape, after which itself spread and filled the whole earth. Not the gospel but divine judgment effects it. See also Isa. 2; 11; 25; 65; 66, and a crowd of other scriptures. Does

it not seem odd, by the way, to find Tobit quoted here as an authority, and at yet greater length in iii. 579, 580 ?

Within this parenthesis, and inside the bounds of its last clause (the fourth empire of Rome), the gospel or Christianity and the church come in. And just as the ruin of the Jews gave the signal for Daniel's prophecy, so did the failure of the church here below, for the book of Revelation, which, after its seven epistles and the heavenly episode that follows immediately, shows us judgments on the world summed up at-length, in its two chiefs, the apostate first and second beasts, the Roman empire in its last phase, and the false prophet power in the land, with Babylon the great harlot of Christendom.

It is here that men, and even the pious if committed to things as they are, find no little difficulty. Men's will can resist stubbornly, their mind easily raising objections to the truth which condemns them. It is this much more than the symbolical style of the predictions which made Daniel's visions unpalatable to the Jew, and the true scope of the Apocalypse unwelcome to many a Christian. They would like to think present circumstances and that history with which they are most familiar the direct object of God's prophetic survey; they fail to see that its real fulfillment is in the great but brief crisis, after the overcomers (Rev. 2; 3) are taken to heaven, till Christ and they appear in glory to reign, whatever be the light thence derivable for discerning the principles at work all through our earthly pilgrimage before their full manifestation at the close when judgment comes.

The case was complicated too by a few more or less disposed to palliate Rome, who could detect error in the popular view, and facts as to the future not generally recognized, but who availed themselves of all to undermine truths still more important for their moral bearing on souls as well as on the Lord's glory. With the evil principles of Drs. Maitland, Todd, Burgh, &c., one has far less sympathy than with the honest but imperfect and, to say the truth, far from intelligent testimony of Mode or Daubuz or their representatives to this day, able and learned as some of them were in other respects. It is forgotten perhaps equally on both sides, that the church, since apostolic days till the Reformation at least, was not in a condition to use the Revelation in general. Certainly the earliest Fathers applied it substantially, as the futurists do.

The great pre-requisite for a safe and wholesome study of the prophetic word is a clear apprehension of the difference between the church called by sovereign grace for heavenly places in Christ and the immediate divine government of the world of which the Jews form the nearest circle on earth round the Messiah, according to the purpose and ways of God. (Deut. 32:8.) God has set aside the Jews for their rebellious idolatry and at last their rejection of the Messiah; but He will resume His government of them again, an immediate rule on the earth wholly different in nature, character, and results from the powers that be now, entitled though they are to our submission and honor, however little able to deal with the misery and corruptions of mankind.

Adversaries may talk of wiredrawn abstractions and baseless hypothetical systems; but they are themselves blinded by tradition and self-confidence to a change of the profoundest interest and of incalculable moment, against which no sophistry can prevail for those who bow to scripture. It is the more apt to deceive themselves and others where such unbelief works in men who deny not but hold Christ's future reign over the earth in personal presence and power and glory. For this is the government of the earth or “the kingdom,” of which both Testaments speak, as distinct as possible from the calling of saints from among Jews and Gentiles to be the body of Christ, not of

the world even now as He was not, while the anomalous bestial rule still goes on here below.

The truth of the Gentile parenthesis does not make the scheme of God's moral government a piecemeal and fragmentary thing; but a mass of confusion at issue with all scripture they make it who do not discriminate God's calling of the church to heaven from His government by law on earth. Nor can any sentence be worse both in ill construction and violation of truth, than that which assumes one uninterrupted chain of divine government, and ignores the revealed facts of God's rapture of His regular earthly government, of an immense interregnum while the beasts rule, and of God's final resumption of that government at the return of our Lord.

But if we limit ourselves to considering God's moral government, its scheme is perfect. Part of it was to blind Israel, while another work proceeds in the richest mercy to the Gentiles. And prophecy reveals the judgments by which the whole result will be brought about according to God. Meanwhile His providential wisdom and power order all, whatever be the anomalies in the phases of the world's history for nearly 2500 years; and we by His word and Spirit make good His will in the measure of our faith, while evil is not yet put down by the intervention of that power which will bring in the sabbatism that remains for the people of God. The confusion of thought, generally prevalent as to this, arises from the supposition that God's government has its results now, which it never can have till the manifestation of Christ, in view of whom and for whose glory all has been carried on. To look for its accomplishment in the absence of Christ is a fatal mistake. God's people are not the sun in the solar system of His truth, or of His government; but Christ is. To substitute the first man for the Second is the constant effort and error of the natural mind. It is to prefer guesswork founded on first appearances to demonstrated truth, and to conceive the church to be the center of movement, instead of knowing it in the true Sun, Christ the Lord.

Undoubtedly the work which God has now at heart in the calling of the church, founded on the accomplished redemption of the Son, and accompanied, nay, effectuated, by the presence of the Holy Spirit, while the gospel goes out to every land and in every tongue, transcends all that ever preceded in His ways. But this in no way interferes with the fact that, as the calling of the church is a heavenly parenthesis, so also are “the times of the Gentiles” a still wider earthly one, which fills the blank in the earth's history since God governed in the midst of His people under law, as He will by-and-by when they are under the new covenant.

This is so true, that we hear of the mystery as to Christ and as to the church, hid from ages and generations—hid in God, not in scripture—not made known to the sons of men as it has now been revealed to His holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit. It is also said to be made known by prophetic scriptures (Rom. 16:25, 26), but these are of the New Testament, and not of the Old—a notion obscured by the English version— “the scriptures of the prophets,” which is unequivocally incorrect, and naturally points to the well-known Old Testament writings and writers, contrary to the express drift of the context. The apostle constantly cites the Old Testament prophets to vindicate what was not made known there, but what illustrated the truth when the mystery was revealed. Thus proofs of Israel blinded, and of Gentiles called, he does cite as accomplished in the mystery, but in no way as the revelation of it. How do they reveal Christ as the heavenly Head of all creation, and the church, Jews or Gentiles alike, as the one body, His body? But reasoning is needless; scripture is express that the mystery has now been manifested.

But it is no slight error that the church is connected with earthly arrangements as Israel was, and self-delusion to confound this, with trials, helps, hindrances, and temptations here below, on the one hand, and on the other hand with preaching the gospel, going out to the heathen, social ties and unties, &c. When and how did God connect His church with the earth? Education and habit may account for such a statement; to faith the word of God never gave it. That historically the church thus fell is true; that Satin so sought, and succeeded in doing so, is plain; that in a measure of accomplishment it was predicted as the fornication of Babylon with the kings of the earth is not denied; but is the sufferance of such corruption to be regarded as His sanction? Is it the form of things produced by His will as that which He would thus make to answer His mind? The connection of Israel with the earth is God's institution; is Babylon His institution?

Nor is our hope the second advent of the Lord to the earth, as Israel's was His first coming; it is going up to meet the Lord in the air, and so being ever with Him: To be with Him in the Father's house is no question of dates or prophetic messages. How anyone could mistake the character of Rev. 1:7, for instance, would be a marvel if one did not know the power of prejudice. It is beyond a doubt the coming again of Christ in judgment, His appearing to the world, to the Jews that pierced Him, and to every eye, in contrast with chosen witnesses and the day of faith now; so that all the tribes of the earth (or land) mourn because of Him. Is it not strange to hear so solemn a warning styled the main object and desire; and that the apostle contemplates His coming as a whole but with especial reference to his own hope and that of his fellow-Christians?

It is an ineffectual effort to reason from an assumed similarity where there is a real contrast. The heavenly character of the Christian and the church is unknown, yet the ascension of Christ and the descent of the Spirit do surely now make that character good to faith. God's providence, though a very different thing from guidance in the Spirit, is most real now, as of old; but that secret control of all circumstances, so that all things work together for good, is quite distinct from the public display of His power of which prophecy treats.

Some may have blundered as to the true bearing of 1 Peter 1:10-13; but it is well to heed the distinction there drawn between the predictions of the prophets, the gospel meanwhile declared in virtue of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and the full accomplishment at the appearing of Jesus. Receiving soul-salvation now, we await salvation for our bodies and the fulfillment of the glories predicted when He appears.

And this helps to the right understanding of Luke 2:32, as little understood by the Protestant as the futurist. It is a question, not of the church, but of the Gentiles, who were of old in the dark, as Israel now are, while Gentiles are brought to light. They have Christ now a light for their revelation, as by-and-by He will be the glory of God's people Israel. He had overlooked the times of ignorance hitherto, but now enjoins men that they should all everywhere repent.

But it is urged that the church has come into the place of Israel, and that as an election was taken out of them, so now from among the nations of Christendom. This idea, however, in both its parts is erroneous. Secretly there was an election, not only from Israel, but from the Gentiles, as Heber, Rahab, Jonadab, &c.; but Israel was an elect nation governed and owned by God as His people. “My people” never means hidden election; it is the nation in speaking of Israel. But Christendom is not a nation elect or otherwise; in the greatest part of it it is Babylon, even for Protestant opinion. Is Babylon elect as Israel was? Whatever might be the stranger spirit of pious Israelites, the elect

people had their home on earth. It is a mischievous error, lowering to all Christian life in worship and service, to confound our calling with theirs.

Nor is it the church, but the Gentiles, which are grafted into the tree of promise with the true of Israel. For, first, the church is not the “own olive-tree” of Israel; and, secondly, the believing Jews entered the church (see Eph. 2; 1 Cor. 12), as did the believing Gentiles, whereas they abode in their own olive-tree. See Rom. 11, a chapter which proves continuance in promise, but parenthesis in government, and quite distinct from the revelation of Christ's body, where all is alike of grace and heaven, and above nature—one new man as new to the Jew as to the Gentile. Blindness in part is happened to Israel until there the parenthesis ends; and so all Israel shall be saved. For there shall come forth a Deliverer out of Zion. We look for God's Son from heaven, who will receive us to Himself where He is. For our blessing characteristically is in heavenly places, as we are told in Eph. 1:3.

Indeed it is vain to reason on prophecy when it is taken as a basis that Christendom is God's covenant people, and therefore that, as the earlier prophecies all centered around Israel, so do the later ones round the visible church among the Gentiles. Israel were then the covenant people, and so long as they thus remained, all divine prophecy clustered around them, from Moses to Malachi; but it is urged that ever since the days of John this privilege has been transferred from them to the visible Gentile church. The kingdom of God, as our Lord assured the Jews, has been taken from than and given to others. Hence the very same principle, which made all Old Testament prophecy center in the Jewish nation, requires that all New Testament prophecy should center around the Gentile church, the actual people of the covenant, who have been ingrafted in their stead, and the appeal to the Old Testament prophets to support an opposite conclusion must be utterly vain. Setting aside a main principle of God's moral government, and destroying a law of His revelation, to sustain a mere circumstance, it infers that God will leave His covenant people for near two thousand years without any distinct light of prophecy, because they always enjoyed that privilege in a dispensation of dimmer light and less abundant grace. Such is the argument in its most plausible shape.

But what proof, what sign, what appearance of truth, is there in such an hypothesis, traditional though it may be? When did God enter into covenant with the Gentiles? God has given Christ, the rejected Christ, for a light to the Gentiles, that He may be His salvation to the ends of the earth (Isa. 49:6); but He is (ver. 8) a covenant of the people, not peoples. Hence the Gentiles are never said to be grafted instead of the Jews. Generically they are grafted in with the Jews left there in the inheritance of promises, of which Abraham was the stock planted by God in the earth; and they are responsible for the maintenance of blessing. But no covenant was made with them. Even if Matt. 21:43 be certainly applicable, it is only to fruit-bearing, not to covenant, that it applies. And how can this be said of Christendom, unless Rev. 17; 18 be such fruit? But the fact is, that neither it, nor Deut. 31:21, nor Rom. 2:21-25, nor Rom. 11:11-15, say a word about the church coming into the place of Israel, nor of the church as such at all.

Again, it is beyond controversy that the church-state in the Revelation does not go farther than “the things which are,” in contrast with the future visions, or “the things which shall be after these,” and that its prophecies therefore do not center round any church or people of God whatsoever, but are occupied with judgments on the world, whatever may be the pledges of mercy to the sealed of

Israel, or to an innumerable crowd out of all nations and tongues. There is no judgment (and the Apocalypse treats of judgment) on a covenant people of God; nor does a people of God on earth, in any case or way, form a center there. It is absurd to contend that the twelve tribes of Israel in chapter vii. are Gentile, contrasted as they are with a great crowd out of every nation; and it is inadmissible that Christendom is God's covenant people, unless Babylon be such. Further, not only do Christians possess all the prophetic word, but they have ample and clear and direct light in the Gospels and Epistles (especially 2 Thess. 1 and 2 Timothy, and Jude) supposing the Revelation did not at all apply (which is not affirmed) beyond the wonderful messages of the Lord Himself in the seven Apocalyptic epistles. No one doubts for a moment the sovereign and moral government of God: but to identify this with His ways in Israel, as the popular argument already cited does, is just confusion and ignorance, whatever be the confidence of such as put it forward. “You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.” (Amos 3:2.) All agree that Old Testament prophecies not only left room for the parenthetic interval or blank for Israel when they were Lo-ammi and Gentiles are called, but used pregnant phrases, whereby God's ways might be confirmed when this state of things arrived; but they never revealed the mystery, which Paul did, while it was made known to all God's holy apostles and prophets.

And here let me say, though it be only in passing, that the grave point in Eph. 2:20; 3:5, is, not only the apostles and prophets were necessarily the same individuals, but that they are here viewed as one common company, though distinguished in Eph. 4:11 and 1 Cor. 12:28, 29. The criticism that would separate them here is as erroneous as the interpretation that makes the prophets to be of the Old Testament and the apostles of the New, the one article expressly forbidding the notion of two distinct classes. So far is the church of God from being anterior to redemption, that its foundation is of the New Testament apostles and prophets. The mystery was hid from ages and generations previously. No prophet in Old Testament times revealed it. A blank was left for Paul to fill. (Col. 1)

As to the utilitarian argument which has been applied to decide the bearing of the Apocalypse on history since John's day, as against the crisis, it hardly deserves the notice of serious men. But as some may be influenced by what appeals to natural feeling, without an atom of spiritual weight, one may reply that, in pleading for a more exact fulfillment in the latter day, it is not denied that the book has been accomplished partially all through.

It is in vain to deny that in Protestant hands prophecy was valued chiefly as evidence by its fulfillment to convict the unbeliever, and that this disposed men to enlarge as much as possible the field of fulfilled prediction, in order to increase their arms against infidelity. Now no sober Christian denies this to be an use of prophecy, or its importance for its own end. The reasoning directed against the use of prophecy after its accomplishment was only against this use exclusively. People used very generally to say, as some do still, that prophecy was mainly, not to say only, useful as proof when fulfilled. This was false ground, injurious to saints, and dishonoring to God. “The design of God was (to cite Sir Isaac Newton's applauded sentence), when He gave this book and the prophecies of the Old Testament, not to gratify men's curiosities by enabling them to foreknow things, but to the end that, after they were fulfilled, they might be interpreted by the event."

Alas! how foolish in the things of God are the wise. The vast mass of prophecy warns of God's final judgments as ushering in the reign of the Lord. The event will prove their truth, no doubt; but it will be to the rain of those who did not foreknow and heed the warning. Thus the antediluvians may have argued, and perished in their unbelief. Not so Noah; by faith he, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house. Not so did Jehovah deal when He said, “Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?” And if he was the friend of God, what are we? and why has Jesus called us His friends? (See John 15) Did this include the apostles only, or has not one of these “friends” of Jesus, when treating expressly of the coming of the Lord, of the destruction of the world that now is, and of the new heavens and earth, said to us, “Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware...?"

The man of those days, who had precious faith, did not wait for the events before believing; they did not use the prophecy as a mere confirmation of Christianity; they read, understood, and profited by its warning. The Spirit of truth, according to the Lord's promise, showed them things to come; and they found the blessing of that sure word which shines as a lamp in a dark place. Sir Isaac Newton was not the least sagacious or sober of Protestant interpreters; yet even he asks us to abandon the gracious purpose for which God gave prophecy to His children, for the lowest application for which human incredulity can require it. Unquestionably prophecy is a weapon of divine temper to confound and, if grace work, to convince the skeptic (though we may question such an effect from the jarring notes heard on the seals, trumpets, and vials); but surely it is its humblest office, instead of being the only wise and all-absorbing one. May we not ask, “Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?"

Again, when we find Tertullian applying the fifth seal to martyrs, as then in course of slaughter under pagan Rome, surely we may think that he did not understand its full bearing, without saying that such an interpretation was a delusion, destitute of one particle of real truth. Nor would one question that God honored the German reformer's testimony against Babylon, founded on a later portion of the Revelation. Does this prove that Luther knew, or that we ought not to learn, a fuller development of the great whore, for which no room is left in the ordinary interpretation?

Singular to say, some who narrow to a single line the Revelation (the deepest and most comprehensive of all prophecies) think it certain that elsewhere, as in Isa. 2, for instance, the Spirit of God intended one reference as well as the other—first, an incomplete and figurative, then a complete and literal fulfillment; and yet they would repeat for the Apocalypse the error of the Futurists, though in an opposite direction. Thus the soundness of the principle is admitted by some on both sides. Apply it to the Apocalypse, and not only are men, who stand for the future crisis, without denying the protracted accomplishment, justified by their censors, but the mere Protestant interpretation is, condemned by the very reasoning meant to establish it on the ruins of futurism.

Doubtless it is a canon with some whom Mr. G. S. Faber represented, that no single link of a chronological chain of prophecy is capable of receiving its accomplishment in more than a single event or period. But this is not true even of Daniel, who, as almost all antiquity saw clearly, makes Antiochus Epiphanes the type of a still worse personage at the end. And it would be strange indeed to contend that the final prophecy and profoundest of all should have a scope more confined than a Jewish one. Mr. Mode saw at length that the seven “churches” had a double reference; he might have learned to his profit that the prophetic portion is not less significant.

Nor is this the only inconsistency in such special pleading. For if the principal use in all cases is the manifestation of the divine glory in the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God, whether before or after the fulfillment, if the use, whether of warning before, or of evidence after, fulfillment, is always secondary and subordinate, the utilitarian argument sinks into little. On this showing its grand object was as much attained during the seventeen centuries the book did not apply (if that ground be taken) as when it did. And is it not strange that the manifestation of the divine glory should be lowered to the foreknowledge, wisdom, and providence of God? One might have looked for some regard to His government in such a question, if righteousness and grace were too much to expect. Yet the reason of their absence is evident: they would suppose contrast of dispensation in principle, and intervention in power; and the wisdom of this age likes and bows to neither.

But, granting the divine glory, in an infinitely richer way than has been before alleged, to be the end, as of all God's word and ways, so of prophecy which reveals the result of all and the judgment by which it will be effected, still it is so evident as to need no reasoning for the spiritual mind, that God's direct practical aim in prophecy was the warning, instruction, and comfort of His own before fulfillment; and all Christians should be thankful to be recalled to this precious privilege, of which they had been long deprived. And assuredly the Futurists, spite of defects and one-sidedness and even errors, contributed to this end incomparably more than the Protestant school, engrossed as it used to be and even now is almost entirely with fulfilled prophecy.

It is plain that, if the early Christians had regarded the twelve hundred and sixty days as so many years, they must have anticipated such a lengthening out of the ages as the Protestant scheme contends for, which it is certain not one did, so far as we know. Does this, as far as it goes, tell in favor of futurism or historicalism? It is no less plain that the times of Daniel in chapters vii. and xii. (taken up in the Revelation) suppose the Jews in their land and carrying on their worship, but hindered by the little horn, that is, not the long ages of their scattering, but when they return, though not yet owned as a nation by God. Confessedly the early writers on prophecy expected two actual witnesses, and a personal Antichrist, an infidel domination and a fiery persecution of at least three and a half years, and this in Jerusalem at the end of the age whenever it might be. The soundness of all this may be questioned; but it is absurd to argue, as some do, that in these points (wherein, more than any others, they agree) the Fathers substantially approximate to the protracted view of the prophecy. The earlier and central chapters, not to speak of the closing ones, they applied in general as the Futurists do. Even if we confine ourselves to the future literal application, one cannot allow that it was useless. Was the blessed hope put before the Philippians, “The Lord is at hand,” of no use because it is still unfulfilled? Did the Christians then expect it not to occur till after so long a time? Has it been wholly useless? or is the imputation deplorably unbelieving?

Assuredly it is a mere reverie that the Apocalypse announced to every age of the church, and to each generation of believers, events that were really near at hand, or that in every later age it also contains many predictions already fulfilled, the fulfillment of which has been more or less clearly discerned by thoughtful Christians. The early writers, we have seen, applied the prophecy to a brief and terrible tribulation at the end. Then the whole mass fell into deep and deepening darkness. In the middle ages, when the Apocalypse was used, it was never an intelligent application of earlier parts of it, but, conscience being shocked and alarmed, an imaginative apprehension prevailed that Antichrist was come and the end imminent. It was the dread of being

at the consummation which appalled men. That the church used it suitably from age to age, as it was developed into history, is a mere chimera, which can deceive no one acquainted with facts but only those who accept just what they like. If it be meant that the church ought to have so discerned the prophecy, it is a circular argument which amounts to something of this sort: If the church had held my view (which is demonstrably untrue), they would have profited by it as warning from age to age, and as evidence of things past and fulfilled. Since my view is right, it has been at least possible, and indeed highly probable, that many believers in every age should have been warned by it of imminent changes, and have had their faith in God's word confirmed by many glimpses of its actual fulfillment. Is this serious either as history or as logic?

Test the facts. If any part of the visions is fulfilled, the seals must have been according to the historic view. Is there a tittle of evidence that the seals announced to any age of the church any one imminent change therein supposed to be predicted? What single individual correctly interpreted a single seal beforehand? To this day the utmost variety of thought exists among the leading Protestants themselves, not in detail merely but as to their general bearing. Can none gainsay the conclusions of Mede or Vitrifiga, of Faber or Cuninghame, of Elliott or Keith? Can it be said that these men were captious and speculative like the Futurists, who rejected evidence, real and sufficient, if not of that sort which compels assent? Are they not all among the most trusty and familiar of the historical school, and as notoriously discordant in their views at the threshold? Yet of all parts of the book one might, on their principles, expect here the most of agreement, if not unanimity.

But enough. The grand fault of the considerations here examined is that, whilst God is at work to help on His children, they are an effort to lead back believers from that knowledge of the church's true relation, as united by the Spirit, to Christ on high, which is the key to real intelligence in the Christian. It is not merely human reasoning to support what is partial at best, and often erroneous; it is decided antagonism to truth of the deepest moment for God's glory, as well as the blessing of His saints. It is also ignorance of what scripture treats as the proper government of God in the midst of His people on earth when He will arise and inherit all nations. The importance of such prophecies as those of Daniel and John is great; but they must treat for the most part, even the latter, of the times of the Gentiles, not of the “kingdom” in any sense. To lose sight of this as Fathers and Protestants alike have done is fetal to spiritual intelligence on this subject.

The question here, as everywhere, is to whom the prophetic revelations apply, not to whom they are given. The revelation of what happened to Lot was given to Abraham, whilst the communication was made to Lot in time to deliver him out of the judgment, and this with precision as to the execution of it. So the Revelation says, “Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear, the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein; for the time is at hand.” The book was given, as all the scriptures, to the church of God, without distinction of Jew or Gentile—there was none such in the body of Christ; and it could be given to none else.

On the other hand, there is this observation to be made respecting Daniel and the Revelation: that they are the revelation of the consequences, the former of Israel's failure, the latter of the church's failure, as witnesses of God here below. Hence we have a far more direct interest and more solemn responsibility, as to the contents of the Apocalypse than as to Old Testament prophecy in general, or even as to Daniel; while, as to times, scenes, and personages, there is doubtless much

in common between the two books. But the Babylon on the seven hills, which the apostle saw drunken with the blood of saints, is to us a thing of nearer and graver import than the great city which Nebuchadnezzar built on the plain of Shiner.

Furthermore, the time is said, and said repeatedly (Rev. 1; 22.), to be at hand; and this as a reason why its sayings were not sealed to John as they were to Daniel. The work of redemption being done, Christ gone on high, and the Spirit sent down to be in the Christian and the church, the time of the end is always near to us, as the Lord is ready to judge the quick and the dead. Still the ground taken from first to last is, not that we are in the scenes of the prophecy, but that “the time is at hand,” not present. It is very possible that the prophetic warning it contains may be the divine preservative against the sins which at length draw down the closing strokes of God's wrath on the apostasy of Christendom Into this worst, this rebellions, corruption the professing mass sink during, if not before, the hour of temptation which is to try them that dwell on the earth. Out of this hour the Lord has pledged Himself to preserve such as keep the word of His patience. The faithful, His church, will not be in that hour or scene. The Lord keep this promise, full of comfort, before our souls!

Chapter 139

Elements of Prophecy: Appendix B

As further evidence of the immense importance of rightly seizing the Christian hope, not only for the soul's fellowship with the Lord but for the due intelligence of prophecy, I present to the reader two letters I had from the late Mr. E. B. Elliott in 1851. From them it is plain enough how very defective were his views, not merely in detail but fundamentally; yet was he the acknowledged leader of the Protestant school in our day.

LETTER I.

Sept. 1, 1851.

DEAR MR. KELLY,

I have read your paper on 2 Thess. 2 I cannot but think that it would be advisable to express your views more simply and plainly for uninitiated readers like myself. If I rightly understand you, the sum and substance of your view and argument is to the effect following:—

The Thessalonian Christians could not be distressed or affrighted at the thought of their Lord's coming being at hand. It was the chief object of their hope. Nor does the passage in question imply anything of the kind. First, "the day of the Lord," spoken of in it as ■νεστως, is not identical in sense with the παρουσ■α, or coming of the Lord, spoken of in the verse preceding, being only that part of the era of His coming which is devoted to judgment; a previous epoch and act of it being that of His gathering of His saints to Himself. Secondly, ■νεστηκεν does not mean, and may not be explained in the sense of being near, or at hand, but only in the sense it bears elsewhere, of being actually present. Hence, and from these two premises, it is to be inferred that the trouble of the Thessalonian Christians arose out of the idea of the latter part of the era of His coming, that of judgment, having come, and consequently of their having not had part in the previous gathering of His saints to Him.

Supposing this to be your meaning, it of course follows that they thought Paul, as well as themselves, to have been similarly overlooked by Christ, and left to the trials of the judgment-day. Is this credible? Is it not enough of itself to set aside the interpretation?

But what, then, of the ■νεστηκεν? Is not its proper meaning, "is present?" No doubt, just as παρεστι, and such similar words, mean "is present." But they are words which, in every language that I am acquainted with, are susceptible, if the context requires it, of the meaning, close at hand. I have little doubt that my friend, Mr. Kelly, when looking out from some height in Guernsey [where we both of us were at the time of the correspondence] for the steamer, in which he was expecting a friend, has sometimes, when he saw her steering into port, made use of the common exclamation, "Here she is!" And what would he have thought, had a friend who heard him looked carefully at every part of the ground within twenty yards of the speaker, and said, "She is not here?" "The Master is here" (παρεστιν), said Martha to Mary, in John 11:28; and yet, adds verse 30, "Now Jesus had not yet come into the village," that is, the village where Martha spoke to Mary.

Thus our translators seem to me to have been perfectly right in translating the word ■νεστηκεν as they have in 2 Thess. 2:2, the day of the Lord there spoken of being clearly that epoch of time which would be marked by two grand events—one of mercy, one of judgment, the gathering of saints to Himself, and the destruction of the man of sin—as may undoubtingly be inferred from comparison of verses 8 and I.

As to the words, σαλευθηναι ■πο του νοος and θποεισθαι, they are surely most naturally to be explained, not as meaning “frightened,” but of that agitation of mind and feeling which would indispose them to the calm and proper discharge of the common duties of life. Compare, in Matt. 24:6, the μη θροεισθε. I see nothing whatsoever in this inconsistent with the looking unto the coming of the Son of God. And I am sure I should feel somewhat of its indisposing effect to the common routine of daily duty, had I the fixed persuasion that the Lord had appointed to take me to Himself on the morrow of the present day, whether by the stroke of death, or by His own personal advent.

Yours very faithfully,

E. B. ELLIOTT.

Is it not singular that a paper which many comparatively unlettered Christians have found clear and helpful, should have been unintelligible to, and misunderstood by, a man of Mr. E.'s caliber and attainments? Why was this? In my opinion his own erroneous system of thought, along with the lack of the habit of expecting in the word of God perfect accuracy and nice shades of difference, apparently made not the style only but the subject and the evidence difficult to his mind. It is well to note this, the blinding effect of error, even on a saint, as I do not doubt my friend was. How many suffer thus, as little as he suspecting the true cause!

If the words of the apostle in the text most under examination are to be accepted simply and fully, it is certain that the source of agitation and trouble for the Thessalonian brethren, alleged by the Holy Spirit, was the statement, imputed to the apostle himself, not that the Lord's coming was at hand, but that His day was actually there. This is as unequivocally the sense of the apostle's very precise language, as it is the certain truth of God. He is not conjuring them by that concerning which he was about to teach them, but, on the contrary, he entreats them, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto Him (which he presents, not as two distinct objects, but as a united idea before the mind by the one article, τ■ς), that they should not be soon shaken in mind (“from their mind” may be literal, but is not idiomatic English), nor yet troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as by us [that is, as if it were by us], as [or to the effect] that the day of the Lord is present. That is, he entreats them, by or for the sake of our blessed hope in Christ, who will gather us to Himself on high, that they should not be soon disturbed, or thrown off their balance, nor yet alarmed by the report, falsely attributed to him and a higher than him, that the day of the Lord, the day of judgment for man and the earth, was actually come.

This I believe to be the only possible sense of the verses, which also maintains the force of each clause and word as precisely as it exhibits a wise and worthy aim in the sentence as a whole. Mr. Elliott's view confounds that hope by which Paul is beseeching the brethren with the dread scene of judgment, which had been misrepresented and misunderstood as already arrived. The true view sustains the Authorized Version of ■π■ρ, “by,” which is not only grammatically tenable but

exegetically demanded here, if not elsewhere, in the New Testament. It was not the παρουσ■α but the ■μ■ρα το■ κυρ■ου, which had been misused; and the comfort of the Lord's coming is employed as a motive and means for counteracting the uneasiness created by the false representation that the day was there.

No doubt the preposition may, and does often, mean “in regard to,” or “on behalf of,” a little stronger than περ■. But the question is the meaning of ■π■ρ, neither in itself, nor in other constructions, but with such words of entreaty as ■ρωτ■ω, as distinguished from ■ρωτ■ω; where the sense of “in the place of,” or “instead of,” is excluded, as here. To me it appears that the precise meaning of ■ρ. ■π■ρ, in such a ease as the present, can only be “by reason of,” or briefly “by,” and, if motive be made more prominent, “for the sake of,” or briefly “for."

Now the apostle had been setting out in 2 Thess. 1 that retributive hour of God's righteous judgment, when He will render tribulation to those that trouble the saints, and to the troubled saints repose at the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of His powers in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those that know not God, and on those that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus. It is His coming, not to receive the saints, and present them to the Father in His house above, but to be glorified in His saints and to be admired in all them that believed in that day. It is, beyond question, that day of everlasting destruction from the Lord's presence and the glory of His might, the day of the Lord, which was said (on the. Spirit's warrant, and not a revelation only but a pretended Pauline epistle) to have even then set in, so that the saints in Thessalonica were shaken in mind (which is the true English idiom, as ■π■ το■ νοος is the Greek), and troubled. Clearly therefore the contradistinction comes out more and more plainly. It was not the excitement of a premature hope, but the agitation and fear produced by the rumor, and on quasi-apostolic authority too, that that terrible day had really begun. The apostle beseeches them, by the comfortable hope of the one, not to be soon shaken and troubled by the false cry that the other, the day of judgment on the quick, was come.

Mr. E. reasons against his supposed necessary but inadmissible consequence, that the Thessalonians must in such a case have thought that they, and Paul too, had been left behind by Christ at the first act of His coming, and exposed to the horrors of the second. But it is entirely a mistake, and his own solely. The Thessalonians had no adequate light up to this second epistle on the relative order of these events. From 1 Thessalonians they knew of Christ's coming (chap. 4.), and of the day (chap. 5); but they may, till they got the second epistle, have thought, as so many Christians do even in our day, and did in all ages, that the tribulation of the last times precedes the translation of the saints, and that His day therefore accompanies, if it too does not precede, His coming. Even Bengel affirms the whimsical idea, refuted by this very chapter, that the appearing of our Lord's coming may happen before His coming itself. Now the nature of the thing, as well as its accompaniments, bear a testimony exactly opposed. For the Lord might come without appearing to every eye, but He could not appear without coming. Just so we read in the first verse of this chapter that He will come and gather unto Himself the saints; whereas it is not His coming, but the revelation or appearing of His coming, which is to destroy the lawless one or man of sin. Such is the true moral order, and proved by other scriptures also, as Rev. 17:14; 19:14. He first receives His own, His friends, to Himself by His coming or παρομσ■α; He afterward executes judgment on His enemies by the appearance of His coming, τ■ ■πιφανε■■ π■ς παρουσ■ας α■το■. The glorified saints are with Him when He brings in the day, following Him out of heaven as His hosts

or armies (Rev. 19:14), before the judgment of the beast and the false prophet, instead of being caught up coincidently with it or after it. pence, when Christ our life is manifested, it is written that then shall we also be manifested with Him in glory (not translated to heaven then or subsequently).

Plainly then the Thessalonians had not the least suspicion that. Christ had come and taken up the apostle or any one else, nor is this at all the delusion which the apostle is refuting, but what was not at all unnatural for any like them ignorant of the mutual relation of His coming and His day. They feared that that day of darkness and clouds had dawned; and the agitating influence of this the false teachers sought to bring on their souls, availing themselves of a pretended communication of the apostle. We can readily understand that the Christians then were troubled by a panic which has often repeated itself since, even to our own day. One sees in the Old Testament the judgment of a city or land (as in Isa. 13 or xix.) called the day of the Lord on Babylon or Egypt. So might these unscrupulous teachers seek to use the afflictions of the Thessalonians, which even in his former epistle the apostle feared might furnish an occasion to the tempter. And this apparently they did. See (they might have said) what troubles overwhelm us! It is the day of the Lord already begun. The apostle corrects this—first, by the motive of our hope, the Lord's coming to gather us unto Himself; and, secondly, by elaborate proof, not that His “coming” may not be at any time, but that “the day or appearance of His coming cannot be till the apostasy (for it is much more than “a falling away") and the man of sin be revealed, which that day is to judge. It was now for the first time to be inferred that the coming precedes the appearance of His coming, as it was afterward still more manifestly shown in Rev. 4 compared with chapters 19., 20.

And this is corroborated by every word in detail, as well as by the general issue. See the violent but ineffectual effort to get rid of the force of ■ν■στηκεν, the word so unfaithfully rendered “is at hand” by our translators, and even so inconsistently with their own rendering of it in every other occurrence of the same form. Indeed Mr. E. is obliged to own its proper meaning to be “is present.” But, argues he, so it is with π■ρεστιν, and such similar words. “They are words which in every language that I am acquainted with are susceptible if the context requires it, of the meaning, close at hand.” And then he illustrates the case, with his usual ingenuity, from the language of common life, which he endeavors to confirm by John 11:28-30.

But it is not true that the meaning of “presence” is interchangeable with mere “nearness” in any language; they are different ideas, and are expressed by distinct words. We have seen that the New Testament occurrences of the word ■ν■στηκεν do not sustain this notion; nor do any in the LXX, any more than the instances in Liddell and Scott's Lexicon, as the Dean of Rochester has allowed to me. It is wrong therefore to give pending, save in the sense of present, begun, if “pending” will bear it. It is time present, not instant. And so of all exact versions now, German or of English, as of Meyer, Dean Alford, Bishop Ellicott, &c.

But what strikes one as peculiar is, that Mr. E.'s illustration and use of John 11 proves nothing, save against his argument. For, according to his own showing, the person or thing had actually removed from the place where either had been, had traversed the space that separated, and had arrived at the place where the person was whom it was proposed to reach, though not to the precise spot on which he stood. To take the case used, my friend would have really steamed from England (or France, as it might be), crossed the sea, and entered Guernsey roads, when one might exclaim of the packet, Here she is! So in the scripture cited: our blessed Lord had left where

He staid two days after receiving the message, had traversed the way which constituted the distance thence to Bethany, and had reached the locality or district, though not yet in the village.

Now it was precisely the error of those who were then misleading the Thessalonians to say that the day of the Lord had thus come, ■ν■στηκεν. Mr. E. wishes to show that they taught it would soon be coming, or was impending, a sense in which neither παρεστιν nor ■ν■στηκεν is ever used in any correct writing, sacred or profane. A vast change is supposed to have taken place in both eases, which it is his thought and aim to deny. There is therefore not the least ground for his reasoning in the text or the illustration. They destroy his own argument, and leave our translators wholly unjustified in rendering ■ν■στηκεν, “is at hand.” Even if the laxity of common life allowed of our saying, Here he is when he had not begun to move from a distant land (which is the true way of stating the question, not when he had come to the immediate neighborhood though not the exact spot), how strange that such looseness of language should be transferred to an apostle's inspired repudiation of an error!

Nor is there, so far as I am acquainted with the subject, the smallest ground from scripture to affirm that the day of the Lord includes the gathering of the saints to Christ, though Mr. E. ventured to say that clearly it is thus marked. Not so; the day of the Lord brings judgment on man's evil on earth, and is never said to gather saints to Christ in heaven; and the comparison of verses 1 and 8 proves the difference of “the coming” from “the manifestation of the coming” or day of the Lord. Where are the scriptures which connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord! I know of none. It is assumption and error.

Again, it is unfounded that σαλευθ■ναι ■π■ το■ νο■ς and θροε■σθαι have the most distant reference to the excitement of hope, as the ordinary misinterpretation implies; they mean just such disturbance of mind as in Matt. 24:6; Mark 13:7. Mr. E. says “not as meaning frightened;” but far better scholars than he say the express contrary. “The verb θρο■ω, derived from ΘΡΕΟΜΑΙ, and connected with τρ■ω; compare Donalds. [Cratyl. sec. 272] properly implies clamorem tumultuantem edere (Schott), and thence by a natural transition that terrified state (ταραχ■ζεσθαι Zonara), which is associated with, and gives rise to, such kind of outward manifestations.” (Bp. Ellicott's Comm. in loc.) To suppose the Christian's joy in the anticipation of meeting the Son of God, the Bridegroom of the bride, to be expressible by the same terms as those of perturbation or alarm which might be produced by hearing of wars and rumors of wars, affliction, tribulation, &c., is not to me the evidence of a sound judgment in divine things, but of the reverse. And I trust the Lord was better to my late friend ere he was called away them to leave him under that lack of peace and happy expectation and rest in His love, which his last sentence discloses. Indeed it is the conviction that this confusion of the day with the coming of the Lord is as destructive to the soul's enjoyment of the Lord, as it is to real intelligence in scripture and notably in the prophetic word, which makes one feel the importance of showing how it wrought even in so pious a soul as the late Mr. E. B. Elliott. Need there be any delicacy now in using his words for the profit of the living?

LETTER II.

Sept. 5.

DEAR FRIEND,

You ask, with the emphasis of italics to the question, where are “the scriptures which connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord?” I should suppose 1 Cor. 1:8 Cor. 1:14; Phil. 1:6, 10; 2:16, may be regarded as obvious examples in point. It is to the day of our Lord Jesus Christ that the Corinthians are to be preserved blameless. It is at the day of Christ that the Philippian converts are to be the boast of the apostle Paul. And soon.

Thus I see nothing in your remarks to alter my opinion as to the παρουσ■α of Christ, the day of Christ or day of the Lord being used with reference to the same era in 2 Thessalonians.

Nor, again, do I see reason from your remarks to doubt of the parallelism of the παρεστι and the ενεστηκεν, or of the θροεισθε in Matt. 24 with the same word in 2 Thess. 2:2. And the argument you urge, from the fact of unstable men having been drawn by heretical teachers into heresy, to the fact of faithful believing men, like the Thessalonian Christians, being seduced into grievous heresy, seems to me unmaintainable.

Thus, on the whole, I remain in the clear conviction that the usual view of the apostle's meaning in 2 Thess. 2:2 is the correct one.

But, dear friend, I like to dwell on the points in which we agree rather than on those on which we differ. I trust I may be found united with you in “the day of Christ.” And in that hope I beg you to believe me

Yours very sincerely,

E. B. ELLIOTT..

We leave to-morrow morning. I write this, as I may not find you at home when I call to take leave. I return the books you were so kind as to lend me, with my thanks, retaining what I think you kindly allowed me to retain.

My remarks on the second letter need not be long. Not a single word in a single text referred to by Mr. E. connects the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord. We have in 1 and 2 Cor. 1 their manifestation as unimpeachable in that day, and the apostle's joy in them then, whatever the exercises and need of patient grace now. Still less does Phil. 1:6, 10 touch the question, which is rather Paul's confidence in God's completing in them the good work begun unto (or, as we say, for, and even against) that day; but not a hint of “gathering” them to Christ then. Again, Phil. 2:16 is the earnest desire of the devoted servant of Christ that the saints at Philippi should be a boast for him in Christ's day that he had not run nor labored in vain. In short, the manifestation of our responsible walk and services, and hence the joy and reward of faithfulness will be in that day; but of our gathering to Christ in these texts (no doubt the most apt Mr. E. could find) not a whisper. To my mind the serious thing is the insensibility of such a man to their force. For the same confusion which made him imagine that these texts connect the gathering of the saints to Christ with the day of the Lord prevented him from even comprehending, the bearing of 2 Thess. 2:1, as distinguished from verses 2 and 8.

The argument I urged on Mr. E. from 2 Tim. 2 must have been somewhat to this effect. It is evident that later on Hymenaeus and Philetus, and the like, had, as to the truth, so far missed the mark as to say that the resurrection had taken place already. They probably resolved it into resurrection with Christ (or possibly “higher life") as a present state, denying the true and blessed hope, and so

had settled down into a life of ease, a millennium now, instead of awaiting Christ from and for heaven in suffering and testimony meanwhile. Thus was the faith of some overthrown. And so, in all likelihood, it may have been in Thessalonica. The misleaders were really bolder there, since they alleged the Spirit, nay, a word, and even apostolic letter, for the alarming impression that the day of the Lord had arrived. But it is as easy to conceive a quasi-spiritual or figurative force given to that day as to the resurrection, and real believers being upset by either. I can only suppose that Mr. E. did not, take in the idea; else he must surely have admitted that the analogy is plain, and not maintainable only but rather irresistible, unless I greatly deceive myself.

One thing is certain, that, even among real scholars, not to speak of enlightened Christians, “the usual view” of the last clause of 2 Thess. 2:2 is now abandoned generally as incorrect and untenable in every point of view, Mr. E. being one of its latest defenders among men of any weight. The “usual view” had so filled my friend's mind, that he never could get a clear apprehension of the overwhelming weight of proof against it. Another “usual view,” endorsed even by Hammond, Bishop Newton, Paley, and others, that the clause before the last means that the Thessalonians were misled through a misconstruction of the first epistle of the apostle, is of less consequence but equally mistaken. It was a supposititious epistle, forged to convey the error that the day of the Lord was present. Such is the only meaning fairly deducible from the words, ■πιστολ■ς ■ς δ■ ■μ■ν: and so even Chrysostom, πεπλασμ■νην [not πρ■την] ■πιστολ■ν ■πιδε■κνυον ■ς ■π■ το■ (Comment. in Epp. Pauli, Hom. iii., v. 485, ed. Field.) As to this point the late Mr. G. S. Faber is quite right, I see, in his “Sacred Calendar,” iii. 486, 487.

Our proper hope is the Lord's coming to receive us to Himself, and to be with Him in the Father's house. We shall also appear with Him in glory, and reign with Him over the earth. But, in order to appear with Him when He appears in glory, scripture shows that we shall be caught up to join Him above. Then that a very grave work in judgment, but not without mercy, for Jews and Gentiles, proceeds on earth, while we are with Him there, is taught in Rev. 4-19, before He appears, and we with Him, in glory and to judgment.

Published

THE PENTATEUCH AND ITS CRITICS.

BY W. KELLY.

London: W. H. Broom, Paternoster Square.

Quotations

Passages of the Old Testament cited, as they are, in all parts of the New, with many and many a glance, or tacit unexpressed reference, link all the parts of the Volume together, and give it a character of unity and completeness. The contents themselves of the Volume do the same. They also give unity and completeness to it; for they are a series of events which stretch front the beginning to the end, from the creation to the kingdom. And prophecies in the Old Testament of events in the New are as quotations in the New of passages in the Old. And thus, in the mouth of several witnesses of the highest dignity, we have the oneness and the consistency of the divine Volume from first to last fully set forth and established.

This would tell us, that it is all the breathing of one and the same Spirit. Scripture itself announces the same; and, again, the contents themselves speak also in this case. “Their self-evidencing light and power,” the moral glories, in which they so brightly, so abundantly, and so variously shine, witness that God is their source. And thus the divine original of the book, as well as its unity and consistency, is established. And we hold to these truths in the face of all the insult which is put upon them by unreasonable and wicked men. Oppositions of criticism, falsely so called, only spend themselves in vain, like angry waves upon the sea-shore. God Himself has set the bounds; and these things only return upon themselves, foaming out their own shame.

In the progress of the New Testament scriptures, the Lord and the Holy Ghost, in their several way and season, use the scriptures of the Old. This is a sealing of them, if they needed that. But it is so. It is God putting His seal on them after they come forth, as it was He who breathed them before they came forth.

As to the Lord, we shall find that He uses Old Testament scriptures in several different ways.

He observes them obediently, ordering His life, and forming His character, as I may speak, according to them.

He uses them as weapons of war, or shield of defense, when assailed by the tempter or by the world.

He treats them as authority, when teaching or reasoning.

He avows and avers their divine original, and their indestructible character, and that too in every jot and tittle of them.

He fulfills them, not withdrawing Himself from His place of service and of suffering, till He could survey the whole of them (as far as that service and suffering had respect to them) as realized, verified, and accomplished.

In such ways as these, and it may be in others, the Lord honors the scriptures. What a sight! What a precious fact! How blessed to see Him in such relationships to the word of God, that word which is the ground and witness of all the confidence and liberty and peace we know before God! We

read Psa. 119 thus tracing a worshipper's relation to scripture, and we find it edifying to mark the breathings of a saint under the teachings, and drawings, and inspirings of the Holy Ghost. But it is still a more affecting thing to mark and trace the relations into which the Lord Jesus puts Himself to the same scripture.

Then, when the ministry of the Lord is over, when the Son has returned to heaven, and the Spirit comes down, He appears (as in the apostles whom He fills to write the epistles) doing the like service for us. For in all epistles we get quotations from the writings of the Old Testament.

And there is no limit to this. These quotations are found in every part of the New Testament, and are taken from every part of the Old from Genesis to Malachi—and that very largely: So that we have, in the structure of the divine Volume, nothing less than the closest, fullest, and most intricate interweaving of all parts of it together, the end too returning to the beginning, and the beginning anticipating the end. In a certain sense, we are in all parts of the Volume when we are in any part of it; though the variety of communications, in disclosing the dispensations of God, is infinite.

And surely we say, these qualities of the holy Book are in the highest sense divine; as its contents or material have in them a comprehension and display of moral glories in all unsullied excellency, which in the clearest manner speak of God unmistakably to heart and conscience.

But, further, scripture links itself with eternity.

If we have foretellings in the Old Testament of events in the New, so have we, in both Old and New, foretellings of the eternity that is to come.

If we have quotations in the New Testament of passages in the Old, so have we in both the Old and New references to the eternity that is past. Scripture passes beyond its borders, as I may say, and is in the scenes and glories of the coming eternity. Scripture also retires behind its borders, and is in the secrets and counsels of the eternity that is past, unsealing “the volume of the book,” and disclosing predestinations which were formed and settled in Christ ere worlds were.

Surely it is marvelous! But the Spirit of Him who knows the end from the beginning accounts to us for it, but nothing less can. And the book, as has been said is a greater miracle than any which it records.

And blessed for us to know and to prove, that it prepares us for everything, for all that which surrounds us at this moment. Confusion and corruption may be infinite; but we have it all anticipated in and by the book, to which we listen as the witness of everything to us in the name and truth of God. We need not be afraid with any amazement, since we have it. We may (if that be a holy action of the soul) “deride,” and not “dread,” the insolent infidelity of the day; and, if we have grace, pray for those wicked men, that God would give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.

And I would add this, that these citations out of His own writings by God Himself, first in the person of the Son, and then in the person of the Holy Ghost, are beautiful in this character to which I before alluded—that, as He sent forth these writings as from Himself, at the beginning, being the source of them, so after they have come forth, and been embodied in human forms, and accepted of men, as in all languages of the nations, and seated in the midst of the human family, He Himself comes to accredit them there. He has inspired them and sealed them—and we receive them thus

introduced to us by Himself—and we ask no more.

And we may say of the scriptures from beginning to end, that one part of them cannot be touched without. all being affected. To use inspired language, “whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it,” God has so tempered all of it together. And I may go farther in the same analogy, and say, the uncomely parts have been given more abundant honor—as for instance, in the book of Proverbs we get as rich and blessed a witness of the Christ of God in His mysterious glories, as we find anywhere.

Yea, and I will take on me to add, if all other parts, like the members of the one body, resent trespass and wrong done to any part, so the Spirit will say of God and scripture, as He does of God and His saints, “He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye.” I am sure of it. God will make the quarrel of scripture His own quarrel. “He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words,” says the Lord Jesus, “hath One that judgeth him."

(The late) J. G. B.

Chapter 142

Receiving the Holy Ghost

Till the advent of the Lord Jesus in humiliation none had ever received the Holy Ghost, though in all ages the Spirit had worked, and at times had made use of men as instruments for the display of His power. Γη apostolic days believers did receive the Holy Ghost. Do they still? Such a question, one would have thought, could have been answered but in one way by any believer who studied the word. The contrary, however, it would appear, is the case, judging by the following extracts from a pamphlet, entitled, “Are ‘the Brethren’ right?” recently written by Mr. R. Govett, who introduces the subject, he tells us, not “as an enemy, but as a brother in Christ” (p. 2), and who desires the profit of his brethren, “whom, as I suppose,” are his concluding words, “I have led to consider the scriptures bearing on these solemn questions, so important to our present welfare. The Lord and my brethren in Christ accept what is according to scripture.” (Page 65.)

Accepting the scriptures as the only standard to which we can appeal, and by which all that may be written on such a subject must be measured and weighed, what position does the author of that pamphlet take up on this subject, that constrained him to ask the question which he has put on the forefront of his brochure? “In short,” he writes, “since we have neither apostles, nor the falling of the Holy Ghost upon any, we have not the gift, or the gifts, of the Holy Ghost.” (Page 16.) “Was the laying on of an apostle's hands the ordinary way of procuring the Spirit of sonship? O, then! apostles are as much needed now as then. [The italics in these quotations are the author's.] They were not merely workers of signs, they were agents of sanctification, and. edification. Do we not need edification and sanctification still? Do we not need power to witness for Christ still? Then we need either the Holy Ghost's falling on us still, or apostles to bestow that power.” (page 17.)

“As then, we have no falling of the Holy Ghost on any, and no apostles, we have not the baptism of the Holy Ghost; which is the great promise of our dispensation.” (Page 21.)

“In like manner it may be proved that we have not received the Spirit. This appears on the face of the record concerning Samaria. Those in our day who have advanced the farthest have believed, and been baptized. But as yet the Spirit has not fallen on us; and no apostles have arisen to pray for us, and to bestow the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands. (Acts 8) In the sense which 'Brethren' put on the words 'receiving the Spirit,' He is received. But not in the scripture sense; Nor have we ‘the sealing of the Spirit.'“ (Page 22.) “Believers now have no sealing.” (Page 23.)

These and kindred statements are not wanting in clearness; but surely the reader, as he perused them, must have opened his eyes in astonishment. The possession now of the Spirit of sonship is denied. Let the child of God, who cries Abba Father, witness if the author's teaching on this point is to be accepted. Are all Christians in the condition to which Mr. Govett would by his words reduce them? The great promise too, as the author calls it, of the dispensation we have not. Has God then failed to perform His word? Baptism of the Spirit, the author tells us, was only by the falling of the Holy Ghost on any, or by imposition of apostolic hands. How then could Paul write? “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.” (1 Cor. 12:13.) Paul owed nothing to other apostles (2 Cor. 12:11; Gal. 2:6), yet he shared in the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Hands were laid on him, but they

were those of Ananias at Damascus, and subsequently those of the prophets and teachers at Antioch. On his head we may feel pretty certain that no apostolic hands were laid to impart to him the Holy Ghost. Of an illapse of the Spirit on Paul the word is silent. The last illapse of the Spirit, by which believers were baptized with the Holy Ghost, took place, our author tells us, at Caesarea, in the house of Cornelius. (Page 51.) Paul clearly was not there present. Yet he shared in the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

Again, the sealing by the Spirit now is denied. The gift of the Holy Ghost we have not, nor any of His gifts. Of edification we are deprived, and the Spirit in the present state of matters we cannot obtain. And yet the author admits the need of edification. Christian reader, can you endorse the character thus drawn of your God? Not such was the character that the Son gave of the Father. (Matt. 7:11.) Have saints since apostolic days been deprived of that which they really needed? And must we continue thus lacking, till fresh apostles are raised up? For these the author looks, basing his expectation on Luke 11:49, 50; Matt. 23:34-36; 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-46: passages surely, a reference to which is enough to demonstrate the instability of his ground. Luke 11:49, 50; Matt. 23:34-36; refer to the Jews, not to the church. Matt. 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-46 treat of the Lord's servants, and not of any company of apostles as such. Peter's question and the Lord's answer make this pretty plain. “Lord speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?” was the son of Simon's interrogation. “Who then is that faithful and wise steward,” &c, was the Lord's immediate rejoinder.

On this point, however, we have not to pit the opinion of one man in the nineteenth century of our era against that of another. The valedictory address of Paul to the Ephesian elders at Miletus (Acts 20), the exhortation given by Jude (ver. 20), and last, but not least, the strain of Peter's Second Epistle, the very apostle who put that question, and received that answer, all make it evident, that they knew nothing of a second twelve to arise. And Peter surely, by what he wrote (2 Peter 1:15), had not received the Lord's answer to him in the seven churches, delivered when most, if not all the same light as Mr. Govett regards it. (Page 52.) Apostolic teaching, then, lends no countenance to the supposition of the rise of new apostles, by whom the gift of the Spirit, or His gifts, would be conferred on believers.

Nor is there so much as a hint in the Lord's addresses to apostles, but John, had departed to be with Christ, that the saints would lack anything as from God, which was needful for faithfulness and service upon earth. Hear the Lord addressing the godly company in Thyatira: “That which ye have, hold fast till I come.” In what terms does He address the angel in Sardis? “Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast and repent.” But, says Mr. Govett, if we have not apostles we have not the baptism of the Spirit. (Page 52.) Did apostles, it may be asked, ever baptize with the Holy Ghost? One alone do we read was to do that—the Lord Jesus Christ. (John 1:33.) Apostles in common with all believers shared in that baptism (Acts 1:5; 11:16 Cor. 12:13); but we never read that they are needful now to bestow it.

Dismissing, then, as unsupported by scripture, any expectation of the rise of fresh apostles whilst the church is on earth, let us endeavor to find from the written word the answer to a question put by our author (p. 13): “What is the meaning of receiving the Holy Ghost?"'

Of this John in his Gospel (chap, vii, 39) has made mention, where we first meet with that term. Now, to receive the Holy Ghost is to be indwelt by Him (Rom. 8:9), and hence such are no longer

in the flesh but in the Spirit, and their bodies become His temples. (1 Cor. 6:19.) Was it then simply divine power coming on individuals that is meant by the term, receiving the Holy Ghost? Old Testament saints had known that, but of none of them do we read that they received the Holy Ghost. Was it an endowment of spiritual gifts, as tongues, miracles, &c.? These might he, and were at times shared in by some who had received the Spirit. But in truth it was far more. It was the Holy Ghost that was received. And nothing less than this is the common privilege of believers since the day of Pentecost. To the multitude, who were pricked to the heart that day, Peter announced that, on certain and specified conditions, they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38.) For this same gift Peter and John prayed on behalf of believers in Samaria. (Acts 8:15, 20.) The company in the house of Cornelius received it. (Chap. 10:47) The twelve disciples at Ephesus were asked if they had been recipients of it. (Chap. 19:2) And this gift was shared in by all who obeyed God, as Peter asserted before the rulers assembled in council at Jerusalem. (Chap. 5:32) The Galatians too had received the Holy Ghost. (Gal. 3:2) To the Romans God had given the same gift (Rom. 5:5); and the Spirit had been given to the saints at Corinth (1 Cor. 2:12), and at Thessalonica (1 Thess. 4:8), as well as to those to whom James (chap. iv. 5), John (1 John 3:24), and Jude (ver. 19) severally wrote.

In short, apostolic testimony on this point is uniform, clear, and decided, that believers received nothing less than the Holy Ghost, which was the gift of God. (Acts 8:20; 11:17.) Hence they received all that the Spirit could be to them, and might, if He pleased, share in all that with which He could endow them. Receiving the Holy Ghost they had the earnest of the inheritance, for the Spirit is the earnest. (2 Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13, 14.) They were sealed too, for He is the seal. (Eph. 1:13; 4:30.) They were anointed also, for He is the unction. (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 27.) Again, receiving the Holy Ghost, the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts (Rom. 5:5), and they could know the things that were freely given to them of God. (1 Cor. 2:12.) The Spirit of sonship too was theirs, for He is the Spirit of God's Son; hence they could cry 'Abba, Father.' (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6.) Moral likeness to Christ they could seek after, for they had the Spirit of Christ. (Rom. 8:9, 10.) Members of Christ they each and all were (1 Cor. 6:15-17; 12:12, 27); and their mortal bodies would be quickened, they were taught, for they were indwelt by His Spirit, who had raised up Jesus from the dead. (Rom. 8:11.) All this was theirs through receiving the Holy Ghost.

Here it may be well to point out the distinction between the gift of the Holy Ghost, the gifts of the Spirit (1 Cor. 12), and the gifts bestowed on men by the ascended Christ. (Eph. 4:8.)

The first of these called δωρε■, intimating that it is freely bestowed, is the gift of God. The second, termed χαρ■σματα “favors” the Holy Ghost divides to every man severally as He will. The third, spoken of as δ■ματα gifts, are from Christ in glory. The two former were given only to Christians, the third is bestowed on men. The first, δωρε■, is given by God, and is common to all believers. The second, χαρ■σματα, are various, and were divided to different individuals. Thus, as believers, some might have one of these gifts, some another. Some more than one. But probably it was a rare thing to meet with one Christian endowed with them all. Perhaps, we may rightly question the existence at any time of such an individual. At Corinth some had the gift of tongues, others that of interpreting tongues. A man might have both (1 Cor. 14:13), but it is clear, that at Corinth all who were endowed with the former, did not possess the latter. (1 Cor. 14:28.) All however had the gift of the Holy Ghost, δωρε■ (1 Cor. 6:19), but His gifts, χαρ■σματα, were

divided amongst them. So, whilst of some it was true that they had a gift of tongues, others that of prophecy, others the power of working miracles, we never read that one had the earnest, and another the unction. A believer could not have the earnest without the unction also, for the Holy Ghost is both; so having the Spirit he had both. All such then were sealed, all such had the earnest, all such had the unction, all such had the Spirit of sonship, whereby to cry 'Abba, Father.'

The third, the gifts of Christ are quite distinct from the gift of God, which is the Holy Ghost, and the gifts of the Spirit, for they are individuals, apostles, prophets, &c, given by the Lord to men for the furtherance of His work here below. So an apostle, or an evangelist was a gift of Christ to men. That same servant might have the gift of tongues, or some one or more manifestations of the Spirit, to enable him to labor effectively amongst men. But, though himself a gift of Christ to men, and partaking of the gifts of the Spirit, he had also received the gift of the Holy Ghost. In one laborer then as Paul, Apollos, Cephas, or others, we could have traced out these three, the gift of God, the gifts of the Spirit, and the gift of Christ, and distinguished them.

Leaving aside however the gifts of Christ as foreign to our subject, we would direct special attention to the difference between the gift of God, which is the Holy Ghost, and the gifts of the Spirit, for where this is not seen, confusion is apt to be engendered. But scripture makes things clear; and, from the language uniformly used, it is evident, that receiving the Spirit must be something different from having divided to us of His gifts. Into this confusion however Mr. Govett has fallen, as he tells us, “The gift δωρε■ is a general term, including all varieties of the gifts.” (Page 16.) Again he writes, “What was received (that is, in the house of Cornelius)? The gift of tongues? Do we receive them? Did any one ever know an assembly called to hear the Gospel, which broke forth in foreign languages?” (Page 8.) “Apostles then ask for this gift of God and bestow it, that is, the gifts of tongues, prophecy, &c.” (Page 18.)

Now scripture says, that what was received in Samaria, and in the house of Cornelius, was the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:17; 10:47; 11:17.) How the reception of the Spirit at Samaria was manifested, the sacred historian does not inform us. On such a point we then may well be silent. What, however, took place in the house of Cornelius Luke has recorded, and the manner of its manifestation he has carefully noted. While Peter was speaking to them (having just mentioned the universal testimony of the prophets, regarding forgiveness of sins through the name of Jesus Christ for all who believed on Him), the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word, and they spake with tongues and magnified God. By the illapse of the Spirit they were empowered to speak with tongues. But of what was that gift, χ■ρισμα, a witness? Let the historian tell us: “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost; for they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.” (Acts 10:45, 46.) What then had taken place? An illapse of the Spirit? Granted. But there Was more. On these believers the Spirit had been poured. They had also just received the Holy Ghost, of which the manifestation through His falling on them, so that they spake with tongues, and magnified God, was on the present occasion the outward demonstration. Concerning them four things are affirmed. The Holy Ghost was poured on them, they were baptized with the Spirit, they received the Holy Ghost, and He fell on them.

At Pentecost cloven tongues of fire had appeared, which sat upon each one in the house, besides which they spake with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. At Ephesus the Spirit

came upon the twelve disciples, on whom Paul had laid his hands, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. The manifestations, therefore, of the Spirit were not exactly the same on each occasion; one manifestation was common to all these three, and the reason of it the word makes apparent. They all spake with tongues, which was a sign that would commend itself even to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22); for there were, as the apostle tells us, what may be called sign-gifts and edification-gifts. Of these, speaking with tongues is an example of the first, and prophecy an illustration of the last. There was a propriety, then, on these occasions in marking the Spirit's power in a way every one could understand, so those who received the Holy Ghost also spake with tongues. But at Pentecost, besides that, cloven tongues as of fire appeared, and sat upon each of them. Of the like of this we never read again. At Caesarea they magnified God; at Ephesus they prophesied.

Here, then, naturally arises the question, on the right answer to which a great deal depends, is the term, receiving the Holy Ghost, identical in meaning with the Spirit falling, or coming upon, saints? Can we have the first without participating in the second? Is the latter a needful prelude to the former? We must answer the former of these questions in the affirmative, and the latter in the negative. Receiving the Spirit, and the falling of the Spirit on any one are very different. The Spirit is given by God. He is never said to give Himself. The Spirit is given to believers—that is an act on God's part. The Spirit might fall on the same believers—that would he an act on His own part. In apostolic days both actions could, and did, at times take place, yet they are not to be confounded. We say at times, because Paul's question to the disciples at Ephesus would surely have been superfluous if the Spirit had fallen on them, or had come on them. Why ask them whether they had received the Holy Ghost, if they could not have the former without the latter? For, wherever the Spirit fell on souls, or came on them, those around them, in some way or other, were made sensible of it. (Acts 2; 8:16-18; 10:46.) But if, as indeed is the case, receiving the Spirit is one thing, and His falling on people quite another, we can well understand the question put, and its propriety likewise. For the fact that the apostle put it suggests this very forcibly, that souls in apostolic days could receive the Holy Ghost without sharing in any illapse of the Spirit. The former is the common privilege of all true believers on the Lord Jesus Christ, and is treated of, where no falling of the Spirit on individuals is so much as hinted at. Witness the Romans, the Thessalonians, and those to whom John wrote. All these had received the Spirit, yet we have no authority for supposing that on any of them had He fallen.

But was there not more in that question than some may perhaps have surmised? On those to whom it was addressed the Spirit did subsequently come; in order, however, for Him to come on them they had first to receive the Holy Ghost. This seems pretty evident from the evangelist's statement about those in Samaria to whom Peter and John went down, and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost “for as yet,” Luke adds, “he was fallen upon none of them.” Had He already fallen on them, it would have been evident that they had received the Spirit. But He had not. How, then, were they to share in all the fullness of blessing, and manifestation of it, in common with their brethren in Judea? They must receive the Holy Ghost before becoming instruments for the display of His power. The apostles therefore prayed, not that He should fall on them, but that they might receive the Holy Ghost. To uninstructed minds it might have seemed, that what was wanted, was an illapse of the Spirit. Peter and John, taught of the Spirit, prayed for something else, namely, that they might receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Thus the narrative of

events in Samaria throws light on the fitness of the apostle Paul's question at Ephesus. That question suggests that there may be the receiving of the Spirit without His coming on the individuals; and Peter and John's procedure at Samaria intimates, that no illapse could be looked for, till believers had been made partakers of the gift. Believers might receive the Holy Ghost without sharing in any illapse of the Spirit. To share, however, in the latter it was necessary for them to be recipients of the gift of the Holy Ghost.

How, then, can we receive the Holy Ghost? Our author tells us that it cannot take place unless the Spirit falls on us, or apostolic hands are laid on us. We trust it is made sufficiently clear that it was not by an illapse of the Spirit that souls received the gift of God in apostolic times. By the imposition of apostolic hands we cannot receive the gift—on this point we are agreed. Can we not, then, receive the Spirit? Must we be, and continue to be, deprived of this gift unless new apostles are vouchsafed us? To this Mr. Govett answers, Yes. We answer, No. There was a way by which the Spirit was received in the earliest days of Christianity; that way is available still. At Jerusalem Peter indicated it. At Caesarea it was exemplified. Isaiah Galatia it was found to be sufficient. The obedience of faith, submission to God's word and truth about His Son, is the available way to which we refer. To the multitude, pricked to the heart, Peter declared that if they repented, and were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 2:38.) No hint is there here of the need of laying on of hands, nor of any illapse of the Spirit being requisite. Their part was to believe God's announcement, and submit to it, and they would receive the Holy Ghost. The company at Caesarea heard the word, and believed it (Acts 10:44; 15:7), and received the Holy Ghost. By the hearing of faith the Galatians had received it. (Chap. 3:2) To those, in short, who obey God this gift is given. (Acts 5:32.) By the laying on of an apostle's hands the Spirit, it is true, was on two occasions given, but were not these exceptional cases, and for special reasons, as has been pointed out by another? The Samaritans had to see they were not independent of Jerusalem, as they and their fathers had so long pretended, so from two who came from Jerusalem they received the Holy Ghost. Paul's apostleship was evidenced at Ephesus to be in nothing inferior to that of any of the twelve, for by him believers could receive the Holy Ghost. But neither Paul nor Peter, both of whom were used in that remarkable way, ever bade disciples to look to such a channel in order to receive it. As far as light is cast on the subject from the written word, and there only can we learn about it, the conferring the gift of the Holy Ghost by the imposition of apostolic hands was an exceptional manner of bestowing it. The conferring of a gift (χ■ρισμα) seems to have been part of the ordinary apostolic service. (Rom. 1:11; 1 Tim. 4:14; 2 Tim. 1:6); the communication of the gift (δωρε■) of the Holy Ghost was an unusual act.

But Mr. Govett joins issue on this point, and adduces, as he thinks, scripture warranty for the supposition, that the normal way of receiving the Holy Ghost was by the imposition of an apostle's hands. For scripture warranty he turns us to Heb. 6:1, 2. For scripture examples he points to 1 Tim. 4:14 Tim. 1:6; Rom. 1:11. Now the reference, to Heb. 6:1, 2, assuming that his translation, “baptisms of instruction” could stand, is quite beside the point. The apostle is here writing of truths common to Jews and to Christians, called by him “the word of the beginning of Christ,” that is, doctrines known and accepted when the Lord was upon earth. On these he would not then dwell, his object being to get those believers on to full and distinctive Christian ground. So he tells them he would then leave aside such truths as they held in common with Jews. But was the gift of the

Holy Ghost a truth known and shared in by Jews? It never was enjoyed till after the Lord had risen. So that scripture, it is clear, cannot apply to the matter in hand. A reference to it, to substantiate Mr. Govett's position, is clearly inadmissible. Besides this, the word βαπτισμ■ς, baptism, found in this passage is never elsewhere used for baptism, either of water or of the Holy Ghost. When that which we understand by baptism is treated of, we meet uniformly with the word, β■πτισμα. βαπτισμ■ς, wherever else it occurs, is applied to the washing of cups, &c. (Mark 7:4, 8); and to ceremonial cleansings (Heb. 9:10), carnal ordinances with which all Jews were familiar. Hence, on exegetical and etymological grounds, we must demur to our author's use of that passage in Heb. 6. Similarly, for reasons already stated, we cannot accept as pertinent the illustrations to which he would turn us.

Many other points in his pamphlet might be remarked on; but we must forbear, and will conclude with noticing just two, which Mr. Govett presses strongly on the attention of his readers. The first is the use of a hymnbook; the second is the scriptural meaning of prophesying.

As regards the hymnbook, he asks, “Is the Spirit grieved at being thus confined to these five hundred hymns, and these two hundred tunes? Is it scriptural to come prepared with hymnbooks and tunebooks? or is it not?” (p. 38.) Again, “Why, then, must God's free Spirit be tied to the letter? Were not the hymns of Zacharias, of Mary, and of Elizabeth, inspired and extemporaneous? How is it the church has none? How is it she is confined to the same printed selection?” (p. 40.) Again, “We want to know, if singing by book is right, why praying by book, and preaching by book, are not right also?” (p. 88.)

In these remarks there is a fallacy, and there is a confounding of things that surely differ. It is assumed that the assembly is restricted to the hymnbook. And hymn singing is here treated of as if it were similar to prayer or preaching, from both of which it is very different. To sing together, we must acquaint one another with that in which all are to join. We listen to one who preaches; we follow one who leads in prayer, so as to say Amen to that which he rightly utters. But we sing together. The exercises, then, are distinct, and that of singing most markedly different from the other two. Need we also point out the incongruity of calling attention to the song of Zacharias, and the utterances of Elizabeth and Mary, when writing on such a subject as congregational singing? Zacharias, we read, filled with the Holy Ghost, prophesied; his was an inspired communication. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, gave vent to her thoughts by addressing Mary the virgin. Mary, in the fullness of her heart, poured forth her praise alone. It is difficult to understand anyone seriously referring to these three when writing on such a subject. Zacharias was uttering inspired predictions. Is that congregational singing? Elizabeth addressed Mary, whose visit formed the theme of her communication. Is that the character of congregational psalmody? Mary, in the presence of Elizabeth, poured forth alone the Magnificent. Is that, we ask, an instance or illustration of congregational singing? But further. As all sing together, it is necessary to communicate to all the words about to be sung. Hence we must know before we utter it what it is we are to sing. Does this, then, necessitate an assembly being restricted to a certain selection of hymns? By no means. If any one was led to give outwards to be sung not in the collection—and such a thing has been done—there is nothing to hinder it, provided the scripture rule is observed, “Let all things be done unto edifying.” (1 Cor. 14:26.) This rule, and the other,” Let all things be done decently and in order,” are to be observed when the church comes together.

That they did sing psalms in the assembly is clear. There was room for singing, and that exercise is regarded as suited to the assembly. The apostle does not forbid it, nor does he say it was wrong to have a psalm; he only lays down principles to direct those who would teach or lead the rest. It is clear, moreover, from his notice of the practice, that the psalms commonly sung were not inspired communications, for he writes of each one having a psalm, &c, the pressing of which on the attention of the assembly, without reference to the edification of all, induced a state of confusion, against which for the future they were to watch, as well as to correct the bad habit into which they had fallen. But was God the author of confusion? Paul distinctly asserts He was not. And surely Mr. Govett would cordially agree in this. Then He could not have inspired each one to have a psalm, and sing it, for that was productive of great confusion. Nay, more, as there is but one Holy Ghost, we know that He does not, and would not, so act on different people at once as to produce discord instead of harmony, confusion instead of order, strife and contention instead of peace. The edification of saints is that which He aims at and provides for. Psalms might then be sung, and prophesying be in exercise, subject to the rules already referred to, and the only allowed interruption was on the occasion of a revelation then and there vouchsafed. That was to take precedence of all regular prophesying. If therefore the psalms were inspired, it was right, according to this direction, to bring them out as they did; Paul, however, blamed them for their practice, because, he knew, and they knew, they were not singing by inspiration.

But this leads naturally to the consideration of the question, what is the prophesying of which the apostle here treats? Mr. Govett affirms “that it always supposes God's inspiration, whether spoken of Old or New Testament prophets.” (Page 53.) Here again we are compelled to differ from him. Prophesying might be the utterance of an inspired communication—of course it often was. But nothing can be more certain from the tenor of the word than this, that a prophet was not of necessity inspired of God. For, first, the apostle distinguishes in this chapter (1 Cor. 14) between prophecy and revelation. The prophet was to give way, and be silent, if a revelation was vouchsafed to another man in the assembly. Secondly, we are not left to elaborate for ourselves a definition of inspiration. God, by that same apostle, and in the same epistle, has furnished us with an explanation of what it is. It is the setting forth God's mind in words which the Holy Ghost teacheth. (1 Cor. 2:13.) Now, keeping this in view, let us see in what terms prophets are addressed in the New Testament. “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith.” (Rom. 12:6.) How could such an exhortation be addressed to one who was speaking in words which the Holy Ghost taught? How could he do otherwise, as the mouthpiece of the Spirit, than prophesy according to the proportion of faith? Again, “Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge.” (1 Cor. 14:29.) Does the Holy Ghost authorize men to sit in judgment on God's word? A rationalist might claim for man the possession of a verifying faculty, whereby he could distinguish, as he would say, between what was of God and what was of man in the written or spoken word. But are we to believe God sanctions that? We must, if our author's statement be correct. Such injunctions, however, show pretty plainly that God did not regard all prophets as inspired. Nor must we. Mr. Govett complains that Mr. Kelly gives no proof that Rom. 12 does not apply to inspired prophets. We should have thought none was needed. Surprise we should have felt had Mr. Kelly taught otherwise.

Here we must stop, citing only one more extract from the pamphlet. “You have no other gifts than Christians in general. But Christians in general confess they have not the anointing and sealing of the Spirit. So then neither have you.” (Page 64.)

We must confess to a feeling of amazement as we read these words. Truth there is in them certainly, for we have no gifts which are not common to Christians. But is the experience of Christians in general to be taken as the standard by which to estimate what is truth? Surely our author did not think what it was he was writing. Who, too, deputed him thus to answer for his brethren in Christ? We must leave it with them to repudiate or not his statements on their behalf. For ourselves, believing Peter's words, who spake when filled with the Holy Ghost, “The promise is unto you, and unto your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39), we would ask, has God failed in His promise? If this pamphlet teaches correctly, He has. But what if its doctrine is wrong? The subject is confessedly of great importance. Let Christians look to it, and learn about it from the word for themselves. C. E. S.

Chapter 143

Letter on Receiving the Spirit

MR. EDITOR,

Will you kindly allow me to give some reply to the paper of C. E. S. upon my tract?

I agree with him that the question of which it treats is a great one, and hope that my brethren in Christ will study it. Having found difficulties in getting a London house to sell my tract, I here offer to send to any one willing candidly to study the subject during the next three weeks, a copy of the tract by post.

I would first observe, that the paper of C. E. S., only touches here and there upon the tract, omitting often to answer the proofs from scripture which I give.

I next observe, that he has once or twice singularly misunderstood me. He says, that I deny the present possession of the Spirit of sonship. It is not true. I assert its present possession. (p. 17.) What then do you say with regard to your words, cited by him from page 17 of your tract? I was there arguing against Mr. Kelly's views. He affirms that 'the gift of the Spirit' means settled rest and liberty in the Savior. This I deny. The laying on of an apostle's hands produced not the Spirit of sonship, but supernatural energies. But if the laying on of hands produced the Spirit of sonship, then we of this day need apostles to lay on hands.

He supposes me to affirm that believers now cannot attain edification. This is a part of the same mistake. I was showing that Mr. Kelly's theory led to these consequences, which seem to me absurd.

I now address myself to the main question:—What is receiving the Spirit?

To think of any man with his Bible open before him denying that Christians of our day have received the Spirit! What a strangely blind man that Mr. Govett must be!

Well, friends, the key to this mystery is banging before the door. I had said, “In the sense which 'brethren' put on the words 'receiving the Spirit,' he is now received, but not in the scripture sense.” (p. 22.)

What then is the sense which ‘brethren' put on the phrase?

It is the same sense which is put upon it by C. E. S.

"Now to receive the Holy Ghost is to be indwelt by Him (Rom. 8:9), and hence such are no longer in the flesh, but in the Spirit, and their bodies become His temples.” (1 Cor. 6:19.) (p. 102.)

“Believers received nothing less than the Holy Ghost which was the gift of God. (Acts 8:20); 11:17.) Hence they received all that the Spirit could be to them.” (An unscriptural inference.)

“A believer could not have the earnest without the unction also, for the Holy Ghost is both: so having the Spirit, he had both.” (This is the point to he proved.)

Now I had granted from the first that believers of our day have in this sense received the Holy Ghost. He has wrought on them to regenerate them, to make them sons of God, to dwell within them, and to make them members of Christ and make their bodies His temples.

But I affirmed and do still affirm, that this is not the scripture sense of the phrase ‘receiving the Holy Ghost.'

The path of C. E. S. then was plain enough. He had to show that the ‘brethren's' sense of ‘receiving the Holy Ghost' is the scripture sense. It was for him to cite passages in which the phrase, ‘receiving the Holy Ghost' occurs, and to show that it refers to the regeneration, indwelling, and sanctification of the Spirit.

This he has not done! If we have received the Spirit in one sense, we have received Him in all! That is his theory and yours. And now will you prove it? It cannot be done as C. E. S. has attempted, by citing without distinction scriptures which speak of blessings enjoyed by believers then as the ‘work of the Holy Ghost.' Are these all ours now in possession? is the question. All those which were the consequences of simple faith, are ours now, as they were theirs then. But was there not an operation of the Spirit subsequent to faith, imparting gift and power, which we have not?

My object is to present to brethren this great truth: that

There are two operations of the Spirit quite distinct from one another. The one is now possessed; the other is not. [They are distinct, but both included in the gift of the Spirit.—En.]

The one is internal and sanctifying.

The other is external, and communicates power. (Acts 1:8.) [The difference between II. and III. is falsely stated.—En.]

The one is begun to be wrought when a man believes. [The Spirit of sonship is as much after one has believed as any other form of the Spirit's power. See dal. iv. 4; Eph. 1:13.—En.]

The other was wrought only by illapse of the Spirit, or by imposition of hands after faith. [No doubt it was after the Spirit was given that the believer received Him; but imposition was only in special cases, and in no way the rule. Acts 10 proves the contrary, not to speak of Acts 2—En.]

Let us then look at the scriptures which contain the phrase in question, and see whether this view is borne out, or whether the ‘brethren's' sense is the scriptural one.

John 7:37-39. This receiving of the Spirit was to be bestowed after faith, and after Pentecost. It is not then the first operation of the Spirit, but the second. [Quite true that it is after faith, perfectly absurd that it is “external.” “Out of his belly,” &c. Is this external? It is false that this is lost now.—En.]

John 20:22. Jesus breathes on the ten, and says, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” This was not the operation of the Spirit which communicates faith, but one coming after it. [It is false that this is “external” or gone now.—En.]

The Holy Spirit descends at Pentecost. Peter says, “Repent, and be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise [of Joel] is to you,” &c. (Acts 2:38.) Here the reception of the Spirit is the promise to be realized after faith and baptism. And the apostle had already spoken of it as described by Joel. It is gift and not grace, but gift after grace received. [It is false that it was not grace as well as gift. —Ed.]

We come to the critical case, that of Samaria. (Acts 8) Philip preaches Christ, with miracles in proof of his doctrine. Many believe and are baptized. (Ver. 12.) Is not that enough No! The apostles at Jerusalem send to them Peter and John, who pray for them that they may receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet he has fallen on none. They have had the baptism of water only: not that of the Spirit. “Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.” “When Simon saw that through laying on of the apostle's hand the Holy Ghost is given,” he offers money, saying, “Give me also this power that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost."

Now is not this passage decisive? In the ‘brethren's' sense these Samaritans had already received the Spirit. In the scripture sense they had not. They were baptized believers; men and women whose 'hearts were right with God.' The Holy Spirit was dwelling in them as His temples. C. E. S. says, ‘If I have the indwelling Spirit, I have the Holy Ghost in every sense.' That is proved [?] to be erroneous by this example. Apostles prayed for them, that they might 'receive the Holy Ghost.' Philip the evangelist was unable to impart the gifts of the Spirit. Therefore apostles are sent. Till the laying on of apostles' hands, they had not 'received the Holy Ghost.'

If C. E. S.'s argument be good, and these believers had not yet received the indwelling of the sanctifying Spirit, but needed the prayer and laying on of apostles' hands, then we who are at the best only baptized believers whose hearts are right with God, have not yet the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, for we have no apostles, and none have received the Spirit save they on whom He has fallen, or who have received the imposition of apostles' hands. [What reasoning!—ED.]

It is evident that something which was communicated was visible even to the eye of unconverted Simon. He could not see the inward communication of the Spirit of holiness, nor could Peter impart it. Nor did Simon desire to impart sanctification to whom he would. But he did desire to impart gift of miracle; and offered money to purchase the power.

Let me put the point as a dilemma.

The Samaritans received the Spirit by imposition of hands, either as the Spirit of sanctification, or as the Spirit of power. If they had not received the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of holiness before apostles laid on hands, then neither have we. But they had the Spirit's indwelling, for they were men of faith [1], whose hearts were right with God. Then they received through the apostles' hands the Spirit of power, and my case is proved. [11] There are two operations of the Holy Ghost; one of which we possess, and the other we do not; because the Holy Ghost has never fallen on us, nor have apostles laid hands on us. Apostles before Pentecost were renewed, but had to wait for the Spirit of power. (Acts 1:8.)

5. We come next to the preaching to Cornelius and his friends. Peter preaches to them Christ. At once “the Holy Ghost fell on all that heard the word.” (Acts 10:44.) It was “the pouring out of the gift of the Holy Ghost.” (Ver. 45.) It brought the power to speak with tongues.

It was the baptism of the Spirit. It emboldened Peter to say, “Can any one forbid the water that these should not be immersed, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we?” As they had received the baptism of the Spirit at God's hands, how could man refuse them the baptism of water, which it was in his power to bestow? But it is not called the baptism of the Spirit. Not in Acts 10 but it is in the next chapter. Peter, defending his entering into persons uncircumcised, says, “The Holy Spirit fell on them as on us at the beginning.” (Ver. 51.) Then he remembered the Savior's promise of the baptism of the Spirit, and saw that the baptism of water received in this its true completion. John the Baptist testified the incompleteness of the immersion in water ministered by him, and pointed all believers onward to the better immersion in the Spirit and in power. This Peter saw was the fulfillment of that word.

Here then is another reception of the Spirit. Is it such as we who believe now experience? Nay! It was external, the bathing of believers in the Spirit; their being anointed, clothed upon, and gifted. It was something which appealed to the senses of Peter and the six brethren of Joppa who accompanied him. Yet in one respect it was an exception. Ordinarily the Spirit was received after faith. Here both operations of the Spirit, the indwelling of the Spirit and the other reception of the Spirit, took place at once. [This is not correct. The operations might follow ever so closely, but they are never at once. It is unbelievers who need to be born of the Spirit. Believers receive the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit in “brethren's' sense” as well as in that of scripture, is always after faith. Luke 11:13; John 4:10; 7:32; 10:16, 17; 15 xvi.; Acts 5:32, &c., &c.—En.] To these Gentiles “was granted repentance unto life.” (Acts

18.) It was God who knew the faith of their hearts, bearing witness to them as His by the outward sign. They occupied the same level with the apostles and the saints of Judaea. They had the indwelling of the Spirit; they had also the anointing of the Spirit, bestowed through direct illapse of the Holy Ghost.

C. E. S. says,.” The last illapse of the Holy Ghost by which believers were baptized with the Holy Ghost, took place, our author tells us (m. 1.) at Cesarea."

Can C. E. S. inform us of any illapse of the Spirit after this? Does he mean that in consequence? I suppose there was no baptism of the Spirit after this? I do not. By laying on of hands the baptism of the Spirit was received, where there was no illapse. (1 Cor. 13.) [It is merely begging the question, and in fact false, that the baptism of the Spirit necessarily required the imposition of hands. In Acts 2 not a word implies it; in Acts 10 what is said disproves it; and these were the two principal occasions, for Jew and Gentile. Mr. Govett's basis is unsound.—Ed.]

We proceed to Acts 19. At Ephesus Paul finds certain disciples. He says to them, “Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?” They replied, that they had not heard of the existence Of any Holy Spirit. His next question is of much import, “Into what then were ye baptized?” This supposes that the baptism of the Spirit by the laying on of apostles' hands followed as a usual and proper thing, upon the baptism of water. Their answer that they had received only John's baptism at once explained the matter, Paul then instructs them, that John was only sent to lead Israel to faith in Christ. Thereupon the twelve at Ephesus were immerged into the name of the Lord Jesus. “And when Paul had laid his hand on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

What is the sense of 'receiving the Spirit' here? It is not any receiving upon believing, but after it, and as the consequence of faith, as Paul's question shows, “Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?” He dwelt in them already, for they were believers.[?] Wherever any reception of the Spirit after faith is spoken of, it is always the reception of the Spirit of power, as here. This passage explains therefore to us Paul's word to Ephesian believers, “In whom also after that ye believed ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.” (Eph. 1:13.) The Holy Ghost's coming on them left an abiding mark, the seal of God. [It is always of power end of love and sound mind, that is sanctifying power, but not at all necessarily of miraculous power. It is absurd to deny this to any Christian,—End

The next occurrence of the expression, ‘receiving the Spirit,' occurs in 1 Cor. 2:12, 13. “Now we received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth."

There is no difficulty with regard to its meaning in this place. It has the same sense as in previous ones. The apostle is speaking of the Spirit as the inspirer of believers, and revealer of secrets. This epistle at some length discovers to us the manifestation of the Spirit in the various forms of gift. [It is no difficulty to “brethren,” but insuperable to Mr. Govett, unless he go so far as to deny to the Christian the mind of Christ, which hangs on receiving the Spirit. His dismal theory would deprive us of this.—En.]

The next occurrence of the expression is found in 2 Cor. 11:4. “For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him."

This passage exhibits the same signification. Paul was troubled by false apostles. They infested the church of Corinth. He says then, ‘If these coming apostles can preach to you as good news as I have preached, and can bestow on you such gifts of miracle and inspiration as I did, you may well listen; but not otherwise.'

The ninth occurrence of the phrase is in Gal. 3:2, 3: “This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. He therefore that is imparting to you the Spirit (see Greek) and working miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"

Here is the same signification. Paul inquired of the misled Galatians believers on what ground they received the miraculous gifts. Was it because they had become disciples of Moses, or because they were believers in Christ Law cannot impart gift to those under it: the gospel did.

Herein then is a decisive ground of superiority to the law, on which Paul was ready to rest the whole question between him and them. There was some one even in Paul's absence who was both working miracles and bestowing the gifts of the Spirit on believers. Let them inquire of him, on what ground he was so doing? Was it as a disciple of Moses, or as a believer in Jesus?

This reception of the Spirit then is not the indwelling of the Holy Ghost which belongs to faith, but a something imparted after faith and by imposition of hands. No human agent can impart converting

and sanctifying grace. Here then we are on the same ground as in Acts 19 “Have ye received the Holy Spirit since ye believed?” These had received Him, and from the hands of the same apostle that uttered the question at Ephesus. [It is manifest that Mr. Govett errs altogether in imagining that the indwelling of the Spirit belongs to faith; instead of being included in the gift of the Spirit to the believer. No one denies apostolic impartation. The apostle himself shows that it was not invariably needful.—En.]

This passage gives an answer to another question, “Could any but Jesus baptize in the Holy Ghost?” Directly and meritoriously, none but Christ could; but instrumentally, apostles both could and did. (Acts 8:18; Gal. 3:5.)

I have now gone over all the passages, as far as I know, in which the naked expression 'receiving the Spirit' occurs in the New Testament. And I suppose I have proved that not one of them takes the sense which the ‘brethren' give. [Every case on the contrary is in the sense of ‘brethren' as opposed to Mr. Govett, whose delusion is not only to hold himself the indwelling without the gift of the Spirit, but to misread every known brother's writings, and to impute a sense which they all reject. This is strange in a man of any ability.—En.] In no instance as yet does 'receiving the Spirit' mean, that indwelling of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of holiness, which believers of our day possess. They all refer to the communication of the Spirit of power after faith by the illapse of the Holy Ghost, or by the laying on of apostles' hands which we have not. In the scripture sense then we have not received the Holy Ghost. [Quite untrue.—En]

But here is one passage which may be alleged as an exception, which I now proceed to adduce.

“For ye have not received the Spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, ‘Abba, Father:' (Rom. 8:15.) Now I gladly admit, that believers now have the Spirit of sonship. But, be it observed, here we have not the absolute phrase 'receiving the Spirit,' but a qualification is added to it by way of distinguishing it from the other reception. This was said to a church not yet visited by an apostle; and to that church Paul says not, that since believers had the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, therefore they had all that the Spirit could bestow; or that this Spirit of adoption would develop into the Spirit of power. But he tells those who had received the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of sonship, that they lacked yet the Spirit as the Spirit of power, and that he hoped to visit them, and to communicate this distinct operation of the Holy Ghost. “I long to see you that I may impart to you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established.” (Rom. 1:11.) [See the disproof in Rom. 12:4-8.—En.]

Two distinct givings of the Spirit are then mentioned in the New Testament. The one is ours by faith; the other is a giving which we of this day have not, communicated after faith.

Let me cite the passages; and first those relating to that communication which we possess.

“The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.” Romans

v. 5.

“But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. Now if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall give life to even your mortal bodies because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” (Rom. 8:9, 11, Greek.) “God hath put into us his Holy

Spirit," says Paul to the Thessalonians. (1 Thess. 4:8, Greek.)

In the passages which follow is something given which we have not now. "God bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost." (Heb. 2:4.)

And after naming baptism and the laying on of hands we find, "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened [by faith], and have tasted of the heavenly gift [after faith], and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God [by faith], and powers of the ago to come" [after faith.] (Heb. 6:4, 5.) [All agree as to this.—En.]

There is a passage which may perhaps be said to include both forms of giving the Spirit. "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. 1:6, 7.) [Clearly against Mr. G. who feels it.—En.]

But what say you to such passages as these? C. E. S. may say.

"He that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." (1 John 3:24.)

"Hereby we know that we dwell (abide) in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit." (1 John 4:18.)

These passages refer to the miraculous gifts; for the gift here is made the proof of something invisible. Now the medium of proof must be clearer than the point to be proved. The visible possession then of these divine gifts proved the invisible indwelling of God, to the conviction both of friend and foe. How do we know that the Spirit of God dwells in us? Not in the way they of old did; but by the testimony of the scripture. When her Majesty is residing at Windsor Castle, a flag is hoisted. The flag is the proof of her unseen residence. We have lost the flag, though the Spirit of God dwells in us, the world does not perceive it, and it does not believe the scripture testimony.

Believers in John's day had, as he tells them, the Spirit's anointing which rendered them independent of the written word. We are not. John gave them too tests whereby to discriminate between persons inspired by the Holy Ghost, and those who spake by evil spirits and so were "false prophets." (1 John 4:1-6.) These do not apply now, for we have no inspired men.

How was the Spirit of power received? Only in two ways. 1. Either by direct illapse of the Holy Ghost as at Pentecost and Cesarea. Or 2. By imposition of hands. How did Paul receive the Spirit? By imposition of hands. (Acts 9:17.) Ordinarily, it was by the laying on of apostles' hands. This is the one exception, and here it was due to a direct commission from Christ Himself. "The Lord even, Jesus.... hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." We can see a very sufficient reason for this exception. It was that Paul might be able truly to assert his independence of those that were apostles before him.

Of the proofs given in my tract on this point, Heb. 6:2 has alone been met. That the rendering "baptisms of instruction, and of laying on of hands" is the true, is to my mind certain. There are two substantives joined together, both in the genitive case. Which of them is to come first can be learned only by their position, as first and second. Nothing but impossibility of making sense could

excuse a deviation from this order. But taken in their present order they make excellent sense.

But granting that C. E. S. says, that “the word of the beginning of the Christ” means ‘truths common to Jews and to Christians,' does not C. E. S. know when the burden of proof lies on him? I deny that these words have any such meaning, and denial is enough. But I will advance beyond what I am called to prove. The phrase (της αρχης) is used as an adjective, ‘the word of the beginning,' means ‘the commencing doctrine.' The addition “of the Christ” presents the object of which these first principles treat, the elementary principles relating to Christ, that is, the first elements of Christianity.

The scope of the argument proves the same. The writer is urging onward to deeper views of Christian truth those who had already for years received and professed it. They ought to be able to be teachers: they were needing in reality to be taught the first principles of the faith of Christ. (Heb. 5:11-14.) He then specifies some of those elements.

That the expression means 'the first principles of Christianity' has been held and taught by a majority, I suppose, of critics.

But βαπτισμος in other cases is not the word used for 'baptism,' or the Christian rite. Βαπτισμα is the word used.

The reason why βαπτοισμοι is here used is, I suppose, because two different immersions are intended. It is the word employed where different immersions are spoken of. (Heb. 9:10.) 'But those there spoken of were fleshly ordinances.' But these are spiritual. Whether the ordinances are of the law or of the gospel cannot be learned from the word immersion, but only from the context.

My other proofs are called “illustrations,” and are bowed out of court.

But the Holy Spirit came upon holy men of the old covenant: while the receiving of the Spirit was something not enjoyed till after Pentecost.'

It is true. As the result of the Spirit's coming upon them, they had miracle and inspiration. (1) But they had not the Spirit as a gift abiding, capable of being used at their will. There were prophets in Israel, but they were few and far between. (2) Here every one of the family of Christ might become a prophet, and those who were possessed of some supernatural gift (3) are directed to ask for more, and to abound, in order to edify the church. Under the old covenant there was no visible source whence these gifts of power might be derived to all. (4) Under the gospel, as long as there were apostles there was an open door at which to apply for and receive gift. Then we cannot in the present state of things obtain the Spirit in power. We may I we are commanded to desire and pray for it, and God is able to give. (1 Cor. 12:31; 14:1-12.)

Will there be apostles again?'

I had quoted in proof four texts, Luke 11:49, 50; Matt. 23:34-36. These first two are set aside, because Jesus is in them 'speaking to Jews, not to the church.' And what then? Are apostles no apostles, if Jesus tells the Jews that apostles shall be sent to them? Was Peter no apostle because he was sent to the circumcision? Was Paul no apostle because Christ sent him both to Jew and Gentile? (Acts 26:17.) But I quoted also Matt. 24:45-51; Luke 12:42-46. Here our Lord is

speaking to His disciples. These are set aside, because they treat of the Lord's servants, and not of any company of apostles as such.'

They are addressed to “disciples,” who afterward constituted the church. By the name “disciples” the constituents of the church are called even in the Acts. (Acts 11:26, 29; 13:52.) The parable included between verses 42-46 of Luke 12 refers to apostles, as our Lord's reply to Peter's question shows. Jesus had spoken of His coming in reference to His servants generally. Peter therein inquires whether His previous words were to be taken generally, or in regard of apostles alone? The Savior then gives a parable relating to apostles specially, describing them as the “steward set over the household to rule and feed them.” (Ver. 42.) Can this refusal of texts be called subjection to God's word? [Again, what reasoning? —En.]

A few words on the Hymn Question.

Do books of pre-arranged and printed hymns and hymn-tunes grieve the Spirit? or do they not?

C. E. S. answers, as his predecessors ‘No they do not!' Thereon we say, ‘Then preparation for worship and ministry does not grieve the Spirit.' ‘Then the Spirit is not grieved by using prayer-books and reading sermons out of a book!’ ‘Ah, but,' C. E. S. replies, ‘what different exercises praying and preaching are in their nature from singing!’ Very true, but nothing to the point. We are inquiring whether preconception, preparation and use of books in ministry and worship grieve the Spirit or not. If in one arm of ministry and worship they do not grieve Him, show cause why they should in another! [It is enough to show scripture. Hymns and psalms were in use among early saints, and recognized in the New Testament; not so, for the church, written prayers and sermons.—En.]

We inquire next, Are these hymn and tune-books scriptural? We get as answer, ‘They are quite necessary, if we are to have congregational singing at all.' And I reply, ‘Very true,' but that does not show that they are scriptural. To prove scripturalness, you must point out not hypothetical necessity, but some passage of the New Testament. [This has been done from 1 Cor. 14 for the assembly, and from other scriptures in a general way, as Mr. Govett well knew, if not convinced.—En.]

Then comes another question, 'Is congregational singing scriptural?'

I cannot find that it is. C. E. S. says, that in order to congregational singing there must be the knowledge before we utter it of what is to be sung. And in our assemblies some one gives out a hymn marked with a certain number, so that all may turn to it in their books. This is quite necessary, it is true, in order to the exercise as in use now among us. But was it so then Had they books of hymns and hymn-tunes? Will any assert it? I suppose not! What becomes then of congregational singing in apostles' times?

The only singing I read of in the assembly was individual, extempore, unwritten, both the music and words given of the Holy Ghost, and generally in a foreign tongue. (1 Cor. 14:26.) Hence none could join in it. There was also responsive singing, which must in like manner have been individual. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16.) [Mere imagination! not a word supposes extempore hymns; and a foreign tongue is blamed unless under special circumstances.En.]

Thus then an answer is furnished to C. E. S.' question. ‘What have the songs of Zacharias, Mary, and Elizabeth to do with congregational singing?' What indeed? But then Mr. Govett was not advocating congregational singing, but only showing how we of this day have fallen from inspired songs given of the Holy Ghost to uninspired and oft erroneous hymns written by men. Had they inspired hymns under the law? And is the church which occupies so much loftier a standing to have none?

Mr. Kelly had said that the church, unlike the Jew, has within her the ever springing fountain. Yet, strange to say, she is confined to a selection of so many hundred printed hymns. As I said, this is the well, not the fountain.'

But it seems, I have assumed more than I ought. I have assumed that ‘the assembly is restricted to the hymn-book.' Herein it appears, I was in error. “Does this necessitate an assembly being restricted to a certain selection of hymns? By no means If any one was led to give out words to be sung not in the collection—and such a thing has been done—there is nothing to hinder it, provided the scripture rule is observed, Let all things be done unto edifying."

Now is not this evasion very far-fetched? The ‘brethren' have existed as a denomination about 45 years, and during that time recourse has been had, suppose five times, to a hymn out of another than a chosen selection. It is so rare a thing that, I suppose, most of the ‘brethren' never heard of it, and it was quite needful to assure us that it has been done.

This shows, that there is a good deal to hinder it; and if any one not very well known and accepted among ‘brethren' were to attempt it, he would soon find plenty of hindrances. ‘Why cannot he be content with the many hymns we have? we must get new books if this is to go on.'

But let us accept the correction. And then the matter stands thus The Spirit is not grieved with printed hymn-books, and printed tune-books, provided that once in 100,000 times a good hymn out of another selection be given out. Then still we say if the Spirit be not grieved by the use of printed books in singing, neither is He grieved by printed prayers and sermons read out of a book [No real analogy.—En.]

Has God failed that we have not the gifts of old? says C. E. S. Man certainly has through evident unbelief. “A brother guilty of such folly [as to pretend to be inspired] would be put out forthwith, as led of Satan."

In conclusion, has not evidence been adduced sufficient to prove that there are two receptions of the Spirit: the one internal, producing holiness, which we believers of this day possess; the other which we have not, external, sensible communicating power, received through the Holy Spirit falling on a man, or by the imposition of apostolic hands after faith, and usually after baptism? Have we received the Spirit of adoption on believing? Yes! Have we received the Spirit since we believed? No! (Acts 1:8.) [Mr. G.'s fundamental fallacy lies in separating the indwelling from the gift of the Spirit. This gift was not always, nor on the chief occasions, by apostolic imposition of hands; and wisely and graciously was it so ordered; for otherwise we could not have received the Spirit, nor consequently be Christians or members of the one body. “For by one Spirit were we all baptized into one body.” Why does Mr. Govett pretend to be a Christian if he takes the ground of not having its distinctive mark and power, the gift of the Spirit? How be a member of the body without His baptism? The claim of the relationship is vain without the power and seal; but the troth

is that the hypothesis is a mere blunder and the reasoning no better, however pretentious. If we have not received the Spirit since we believed we have not the Spirit of adoption at all, any more than the Ephesian disciples before they were baptized to the name of the Lord Jesus. At Pentecost the Spirit was given, and not merely powers. The powers in many respects may be withdrawn, but not the gift of the Spirit who was to abide for ever.—Ed.]

Believe me, Yours truly in Christ,

R. GOVETT.

Letter on Receiving the Spirit

Dear Mr. Editor,

Just a few remarks on Mr. Govett's letter in your periodical. And first, as to the term, receiving the Holy Ghost; for in any discussion to be productive of beneficial results, we must be clear and precise in our use of a term, the meaning of which forms the subject of our inquiry.

Now it will surely be granted, that, since scripture, and scripture only, can teach us authoritatively about 'receiving the Holy Ghost,' to that book we must go for all our instruction regarding it. Hence the only admissible sense in which we can use the term in question must be that in which scripture uses it. But when we peruse Mr. Govett's pamphlet, and his letter, written to correct wrong thoughts about it, as he thinks they are, we learn that he writes of souls receiving the Holy Ghost in a sense unknown to the word. These are his words, “Now I had granted from the first that believers in our day have in this sense 'received the Holy Ghost.' He has wrought on them to regenerate them, to make them sons of God, to dwell within them, and to make them members of Christ, and make their bodies His temples. But I affirmed, and do still affirm, that this is not the scripture sense of the phrase receiving the Holy Ghost.'“ Mr. Govett then evidently for himself is willing to declare, that souls do receive the Holy Ghost in a sense not warranted by the word. On what ground, it might be asked, is he authorized to make such a statement? Again, he writes, “In the sense which ‘Brethren' put on the words 'receiving the Spirit,' He is now received, but not in the scripture sense.” Where are we to learn what receiving the Spirit means but from the written word? We must refuse therefore to admit any such elasticity in the phrase in question.

Next, Mr. Govett does “not leave his readers in the dark, as to what he conceives your correspondent ought to have written. “The path of C. E. S. then was plain enough. He had to show that the Brethren's sense of receiving the Holy Ghost is the scripture sense. It was for him to cite passages in which the phrase ‘receiving the Holy Ghost' occurs, and to show that it refers to the regeneration, indwelling, and sanctification of the Spirit. This he has not done.” With these five last words we cordially agree. To have gone on the line thus traced out would have been wrong, and, if scripture is really our guide, impossible. One could not class together regeneration, indwelling, and sanctification of the Spirit, as results of receiving the Holy Ghost. You must eliminate from the present discussion the first and the last of these three important subjects, which he has bracketed together. Regeneration, by which one concludes Mr. Lovett means being born again, and the sanctification of the Spirit, in the only passages where I believe it occurs, 2 Thess. 2:13 Peter 1:2, are operations of the Spirit antecedent to the bestowal by God on believers of the gift of the Holy Ghost. For by believers it is, scripture teaches us, that the gift of the Spirit is received. (John 7:39; Eph. 1:13.) It is because we are sons, that God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts

crying, Abba, Father. (Gal. 4:6.) If Mr. Govett is so clear as to what I ought to have done, it would have been considerate to his readers to have pointed them to the scriptures on which he bases his statement. This he has not done.

For it is evident, though one regrets to have to say it, that Mr. Govett has frequently in his letter out stepped the bounds of scripture, and affirmed things for which he has no authority in the word. He tells us that the Holy Ghost was dwelling in the believers at Samaria before the visit of Peter and John. The sacred historian takes pains to inform us that the two apostles prayed for them after their arrival that they might receive the Holy Ghost, which, after they had laid upon them their hands, they then and there received. (Acts 8:15-17.) How, it may he asked, could Mr. Govett make such a startling statement? His pamphlet explains the phenomenon, in which he refers us (p. 7) to the last clause of Rom. 8:9, “If any man have not the Spirit of Christ he is none of his (or, he is not of him),” ο■τος ο■κ ■στιν α■το■. The words of the apostle have reference to one who is not a Christian in reality, and the indwelling of the Spirit is brought up as evidence, that those addressed were not in the flesh but in the Spirit. The apostle is proving what their condition was from what they had received. Mr. Govett's application of the passage is just the opposite of this, seeking to establish from the fact of their being believers, that the Spirit dwelt in them, a conclusion which scripture teaches us we are not authorized to draw. For to believers only is the Spirit given. Of one who has received the Spirit, one could of course say that he is a believer. But to state as truth the converse is not whet scripture warrants. Again, he asserts that by laying on of hands the baptism of the Spirit was received, where there was no illapse. (1 Cor. 12:13.) The scripture to which he refers us is entirely silent about any imposition of hands. Further, he tells us, but, for reasons which all may understand withholds any authority for the statement that Paul, by his language in 2 Cor. 11:4, told the Corinthians that he had bestowed on them the gift of inspiration; and that the same apostle inquired of the misled Galatians, on what grounds they had received the miraculous gifts. The apostle really wrote to them, “Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” Again after quoting 1 John 3:24; 4:13, he thus comments on them, “These passages refer to the miraculous gifts; for the gift here is made the proof of something invisible. Now the medium of proof must be clearer than the point to be proved. The visible possession, then, of these divine gifts, proved the invisible indwelling of God to the conviction of friend and foe.” Sorely he might have spared himself and your readers all this comment, and more which I do not reproduce, for one word in the original upsets it all. “We know,” γιν■σκομεν, John wrote in both these verses. He did not write of something visible, but of what believers themselves knew.

Such statements are evidence that the writer of them is not subject to the teaching of the written word. Proofs of this abound in the letter from which I quote. Mr. Govett makes the astounding announcement that “believers in John's day had, as John tells them, the Spirit's anointing, which rendered them independent of the written word.” Why then did John write to them? But this is all a mistake. John never made such a statement in any epistle of his, which forms part of the canon of scripture. Mr. Govett, however, tells us, that we are not independent of the written word. Here we are at one with him, but on that very account must refuse to assent to his teaching about the reception of the Holy Ghost. And what shall we say of his method of interpreting, or rather interpolating, as applied to Heb. 6:4, 5, “It is impossible for those who were once enlightened (by faith), and have tasted of the heavenly gift (after faith), and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God (by faith), and powers of the age to come (after,

faith).” One might ask, Is this sober interpretation? Is this sound doctrine?

Let us now turn to what Mr. Govett calls the critical case, that of Samaria, which in his eyes is decisive. “In the 'brethren's sense,'“ he writes, “these Samaritans had already received the Spirit.” Indeed! Not content with putting his own sense on scripture, Mr. Govett would take upon himself to be the exponent of what he calls the 'brethren's sense of “receiving the Spirit.” With what success one may leave others to see. But to proceed. “They were baptized believers,” men and women, “whose hearts were right with God.” The Holy Spirit was dwelling in them as His temples. C. E. S. says, If I have the indwelling Spirit, I have the Holy Ghost in every sense. That is proved to be erroneous by this example.” Letting pass the inaccurate way in which he quotes what I wrote, I would observe that his whole case rests on a gratuitous and unscriptural assumption, namely, that the Holy Ghost, was dwelling in them as His temples before the visit of Peter and John to Samaria. What proof has he of this? None. The word tells us they had not yet received the Holy Ghost.

Again he writes, “If C. E. S.'s argument be good, and these believers had not yet received the indwelling of the sanctifying Spirit, but needed the prayer, and the laying on of apostles' hands, then we who are at best only baptized believers, whose hearts are right with God, have not yet the indwelling of the Holy Ghost, for we have no apostles, and none have received the Spirit, save they on whom He has fallen, or who have received the imposition of apostles' hands.” This is assuming what has to be proved, and then arguing from it. Again he writes, “The Samaritans received the Spirit by imposition of hands, either as the Spirit of sanctification, or as the Spirit of power. If they had not received the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of holiness before apostles laid on hands, then neither have we. But they had the Spirit's indwelling, for they were men of faith, whose hearts were right with God. Then they received through the apostles' hands the Spirit of power, and my case is proved."

Now not only does Mr. Govett assume what has to be proved, but he has allowed himself to do that which, judging from his remarks on Rom. 8:15, in his letter, he would readily object to in the statements of an opponent. He introduces qualifying words when treating of Acts 8, for which he has no authority, and of which, one would have supposed, his critical and decisive case could have no need. He writes of the Spirit as ‘the Spirit of holiness,’ ‘of sanctification,' ‘of power.' Scripture throughout that passage speaks only of the Holy Ghost. Is this, it may well be asked, fair dealing with God's word? This critical case, then, must be in itself far from a decisive one, if, in order to present it to his readers, he has to assume what ought to be proved, and to modify the language of scripture to make it, as he thinks, bear out his teaching. And further, what the historian does not tell us, Mr. Govett boldly asserts: “Simon,” he says, “desired to impart the gift of miracles, and offered money to purchase that power.” The historian relates that he asked for power to give the Holy Ghost by imposition of hands. But why assume that he desired to impart the gift of miracle? Is that the only manifestation of the Spirit? In none of the accounts in Acts of the bestowal of the Holy Ghost, is the gift of miracles even mentioned. On this occasion we are quite in the dark as to any particular manifestation of the Spirit. What then Luke does not mention Mr. Govett boldly asserts. What the historian does state Mr. Govett qualifies, and really alters. And then, after indulging in what he must pardon one calling pure imagination, he triumphantly exclaims, “My ease is proved.” It may be to his satisfaction, it is not to that of your correspondent.

Scripture however is clear. Receiving the Holy Ghost means what it says: nothing more, nothing less. The written word too distinguishes between the gift δερε■ of the Holy Ghost which is bestowed of God, and the gifts χαρ■σματα which He the Spirit divides to each believer severally as He will. And in the list appended of gifts so bestowed, that of working miracles is distinguished from both prophesying, and the speaking with tongues. If then the reader keeps in, mind the difference between the gift and the gifts of the Spirit, he will see that Mr. Govett's ground is untenable. Little wonder is it, if one who thus deals with scripture misunderstands the statements of those who have really set forth scriptural teaching on the subject. Nor will a bare denial as to the meaning of Heb. 6:1, 2, avail with any who would draw from the word what that passage really means. Distinctive Christian teaching is not Lobe found in it. Truth common to Jews and Christians known and acknowledged when the Lord was upon earth, is found in it. Any reader, if he has not understood it before, may be helped, if he remarks, that it is faith in God which is spoken of, not faith in Christ.

A few words in conclusion on what may be called more personal matters.

Mr. Govett remarks that I had only touched here and there upon his tract. This is so far true. For my purpose was to draw from scripture an answer to his question, “What is receiving the Holy Ghost?” That, if done, makes plain the correctness or otherwise of his teaching. And having gone somewhat at length into scripture about it so recently in your periodical, that must be accepted as a reason for not traveling at present over the same ground. He further observes that I have singularly misunderstood the purport of his remarks in pages 18, 19, of his pamphlet. I would wish to express my regret if I have misunderstood what he there wrote. On the subject of congregational singing little need now be said. He tells us he was not advocating it. He was however writing about it. It was therefore quite within the bounds of criticism to point out the irrelevancy of the instances of singing in the New Testament to which he sought to turn the attention of his readers. Mr. Govett tells us that the only singing he reads of in the assembly “was individual, extempore, and unwritten, both music and words given of the Holy Ghost, and generally in a foreign tongue (1 Cor. 14:26): hence none could join in it.” I, sir, fail to perceive all this in the verse to which he refers. Others may have more penetrating powers of vision.

C. E. STUART.

Chapter 144

The Record and Christian Standard

Under the head of “The Mildmay Hall Annual Conferences,” these two journals venture to circulate, what a correspondent justly calls, an outrageous libel. They speak of threats issued against Dr. H. Bonar and the eight who censured Mr. Pearsall Smith by “Plymouth Brethren of the Darby School.” How is it that these journalists are so rash and abusive? The persons they accuse rightly or wrongly are as opposed to us as themselves. As against “Darbyites,” as they style us, there is not one word of truth in the charge. Will they never learn to inquire before they speak, and speak injuriously? No man of weight among us goes to Mildmay, and we have always rejected Mr. Pearsall Smith's views no less than Dr. Bonar's.

Dr. Bonar's Rent Veil

I do not withdraw anything I have said as to Dr. Bonar. I have never seen him, have no motive for passion or anger against him; but when a man publishes abroad that God did not allow Christ to sleep in Jerusalem, because it was a holy place, and that He stood with the rest of the crowd to get the blessing when the High Priest came out, after offering the blood, on the great day of atonement—no earnestness of judgment or indignation of heart is misplaced. It is the fashion now to get up union without regard to Christ's honor, or the truth, and to put the names of men in the place of what is due to Him. It is well that those who float with the crowd in this should know that there are some, at any rate, who cannot do it—that true Christians should have before their consciences language, such as I have referred to, and be on their guard against the teaching of one who can so speak of the blessed Lord. I never knew any one who made statements so utterly unsupported by scripture, even when there is no particular harm in them, as Dr. Bonar; but this would never have moved my pen, my lips, or my heart. To speak thus of Christ, when it is brought before me, does; and the more the credit in which Dr. Bonar stands, the more need there is that what he says of Christ should be known. But I have done with it. I only hope my testimony may reach the consciences of those who might be misled. It has nothing to do with controversy, or the spirit it is carried on in, but with disgraceful statements as to the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor should I have thought the article in “The Christian,” on its own account, worthy of any reply. The statements of the word I should have thought a sufficient answer, the truth having been put forth. But I feel the subject of the greatest possible importance, and therefore do not let it drop. I use no strong words here; many dear souls do not see clearly the truth on the point, and suffer by it. They have not the liberty before God they might have, and true holiness suffers by it; but it is a want of light, and that is not a subject of reproach.

To be reduced to such an argument, taken from a possible but uncertain illustration, as one coming up from bathing having to wash his feet, dirtied in coming up, to prove that since the first washing was by blood, the second must be, is to show that a person has not much to say.

There is a cleansing or washing by water as well as by blood. I have little doubt that the real allusion is to the priest, whose whole body was washed when they were consecrated, and afterward washed hands and feet—here only the feet. But weak as it is, the whole of the argument is founded on the first washing in John 13 being with blood, which it surely is not. All blessing is founded on the value of Christ's precious blood, from the cleansing of our conscience from sin to the new heavens and the new earth; yea, the glory of God Himself and the Son of man's glory above. God's glory, our peace, and the immutable stability of all blessings depend on it. That is not the question, but whether our consciences are cleared once for all by the sacrifice of Christ, known of course by faith. The article in “The Christian” insists in substance, though enveloping the matter in a mist, that we are not so cleared once for all—that the blood must be reapplied for this purpose. The Epistle to the Hebrews declares that we are perfected forever, and that God remembers our sins and iniquities no more; that there being only one offering implies that the worshippers once purged should have no more conscience of sins; that if it were not so, Christ must have often

suffered. Now I do not call in question the putting or sprinkling of the blood on us. He has washed us too, it is said, from our sins in His own blood—only He has done it.

In the Old Testament we have the covenant sealed by the sprinkling of blood, or putting it on the person—the leper cleansed by it, the priest consecrated by it; but these once for all. But there is another aspect of the blood, which is that insisted on in the Hebrews, namely, its being presented to God. You have not the application of it in the Hebrews, but its being taken within the veil. No doubt the value of this is enjoyed by faith, but the great subject of the epistle is its being presented to God. On the great day of atonement referred to (Heb. 9:12), there was no sprinkling of blood on the people, but on and before the mercy seat, whore God sat between the cherubim, and the transfer of the sins to the scapegoat (and this, note, was what cleared their sins); and it is this that these chapters insist on, adding an allusion to the red heifer, of which I will speak. Hence, note, so far from the sprinkling of the blood of bulls and goats in the first part of verse 15 of Heb. 9, necessarily involving, as is stated in “The Christian,” its being the sprinkling of blood in the latter part (as both included in the antitype in verse 14), there was no sprinkling of the blood of bulls and of goats at all on the great day of atonement referred to, except on the mercy seat; it was not any sprinkling of the blood on the people which cleared them. There is no foundation for this argument at all. Sprinkling of blood on us is not spoken of in the passage. The whole argument in it is founded on Christ being offered only once, and then sitting down, having entered in once by His own blood. The only sprinkling with blood in the chapter is in verse 19—the blood of the covenant at Mount Sinai: which was certainly not repeated, and is not the question indeed before us.

In verse 14 even, no sprinkling or application is spoken of, but of the value of it to purge the conscience—He having offered Himself without spot to God. It is always this that is insisted on. Shedding of blood is what is urged—the value of the sacrifice, not its application by sprinkling. From verses 24 to 28 we have carefully urged, in a manner that leaves no question as to it, that it is Christ's offering Himself, and entering into heaven to appear in the presence of God for us, which is the subject the Holy Ghost insists on; suffering once, appearing once in the end of the world, to put away sin, bearing the sins of many, and being now at the right hand of God—in the presence of God for us—after accomplishing it once for all, or He must often have suffered. This is what is set before our minds—the value and character of the one act, and Christ being gone up on high—and this only.

Chapter 10 is equally clear. It is the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all that sanctifies by God's will. Christ is not, as the Jewish priests, ever standing, occupied with a work which can never finish. He is set down when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, having no more to do for His friends, till His enemies be made His footstool— “for by one offering he has perfected forever them that are sanctified;” and to this the Holy Ghost testifies. God's will, Christ's work (now set down), the Holy Ghost's testimony concur to give constant assurance in coming to God. There is no thought of sprinkling or applying the blood to us in the passage. It is another order of thought—many offerings, which can never take away sins, or one, offered once by Him who is now gone to God. Another remark is needed here, the force of “forever." It is continuous or continual. It is translated rightly in verse 1—offered continually. It was constantly going on. Now, Christ, having offered one sacrifice of Himself, sits down continuously, and we are continuously perfect; our conscience is as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at God's right hand.

The solemn warning which follows confirms, in the strongest way, the same truth, and the true sense of the passage. If this sacrifice be given up, if we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there is no more an offering for sins, but a fearful looking for of judgment. It is not reapplication, the value of the blood sprinkled on us being lost, but an impossibility of repetition of what has been done, because it has been done once for all. The whole passage is the urgent insisting on this, that this blessed efficacy cannot be repeated. Indeed this is universally the case in the Hebrews. Sin, if returned to, is always looked at as finally fatal. It is drawing back to perdition—impossibility to renew to repentance. At any rate, the point here is not repetition of sprinkling to cleanse, but the impossibility of repetition of that which cleanses, as that which is done once for all. Nor is it exactly justification, though akin to it; justification has judgment in view—is judicial in its character. This contemplates entrance into the holiest, and a present and constant cleanness suited to and necessary for it—a perfect conscience—no more conscience of sins—or a new sacrifice must be offered, and repeated suffering of Christ, which is impossible. By one offering He has perfected forever—for a constant state—them that are sanctified. I do not see how anything can be clearer or more definite and positive. I am as constantly perfect as Christ is constantly sitting at the right hand of God, and, indeed, because He is, appearing in the presence of God for me, the perpetual living witness that all my sins are gone, for He is there who bore them, and all the value of His blood who has cleansed me by it.

But I am told that the washing of the feet in John 13 is by blood. The simple answer is, the chapter speaks of water, not of blood— “The Lord poured water in a basin;” that is not blood. What Peter looked for when the Lord said, “If I wash thee not,” was water, not blood; and to this the Lord answers, “He that is washed” (replying to Peter, who referred to the water He had in the basin) “needeth not, save to wash his feet.” The whole chapter speaks of water, and of nothing else. It is what He had in the basin—what He was cleansing their feet with, and what the whole chapter is about, the Lord actually using it then, and referring to it. I speak of the word, as signified by it, because, as the Lord, referring to this water washing which was before their eyes, says, “Ye are clean, but not all,” Judas being there; and in chapter 15, Judas being gone, “Now [already] ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you;” it is a gratuitous and mischievous alteration of the passage to apply it to blood, when the Lord had the water there, and was speaking of it. A man cannot be converted and born twice of the word, any more than he can be justified and cleansed with blood twice.

The red heifer remains. One thing is perfectly clear—there is no sprinkling the man with blood in the account given. The blood was sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation seven times, and as it was on the mercy seat on the great day of atonement. As a fact, the man was sprinkled with running water with the ashes in it. If it is merely meant that the blood of Christ is the basis of all cleansing, I receive it fully. But the sprinkling of the blood is brought in here definitely and positively, elsewhere than on the man the blood was sprinkled with perfect efficacy, seven times, at the door of the tabernacle, where the people met God. There was no sprinkling with blood to cleanse, and what was noted was, that the sin had been dealt with long before, and consumed, so to speak, when the heifer was killed and burned. The thing the man was cleansed with, the running water and the ashes, which were a witness that this was so. There was no application or sprinkling of blood, as blood, but the witness that this had been done long ago, the blood was gone in the fire, shed and sprinkled at the door of the tabernacle—the sin

gone—according to the holiness of God's nature, and the efficacy of Christ's offering, and the value of it, perpetually before God, at the place where the people met Him. There was no sprinkling with blood, but the witness of the unbearableness of sin to God, according to that which had consumed and put it away, as to us, long ago; and the blood had disappeared in the sacrifice which had been consumed, and in which sin had been judged, while its efficacy remained constantly under the eye of God, at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, where, and where only, it was sprinkled as shed blood. For the rest, as made sin, all had been consumed in the fire of God's judgment.

This is all they have to say to deny the plain statement, the blessed statement, that we are perfected forever. No instance, no word of reapplication of the blood, or resprinkling with blood, can they find. This is quite certain. It is only an effort to make out that what is expressly water in scripture means blood, in order to deprive us of what scripture gives—a perfect conscience—no more conscience of sins when once purged.

As to the remarks on our washing one another's feet, forgiveness has nothing to do with it, that is only as to what concerns ourselves. We cannot apply blood to another, but we can, by grace, apply the word, and not suffer sin on our brother. What is said is hardly worth the words I have spent upon it. The statement that the passage quoted from the Hebrews applies only to the objective efficacy, not the subjective condition of the soul, is met by the simple remark, that the passage speaks of the objective efficacy in its effect on the subjective condition, namely, no more conscience of sins.

I never saw a more hopeless effort to get rid of the direct statement of scripture, a more utter absence of apprehension of what it says, in any comment in my life. I insist on its being its objective efficacy, not application, here; but the whole object of the passage is to show that this, known by faith, has complete efficacy on the subjective condition, namely, that it purges the conscience; in this sense making us perfect forever—continuously. Is not that a subjective condition? I wish for no greater testimony than the opponents of this blessed truth are denying what scripture states, and have not apprehended God's testimony at all. If you want a proof of the incompetency of unbelief, you have only to read this paragraph, and compare it with Heb. 9 and 10.

A purged conscience—a perfect conscience. This, they say, is “conscience as to objective efficacy of the sacrifice, not the subjective condition of one's own soul:” the whole object of the passage being to show that faith in the objective efficacy has this subjective effect. Such is unbelief. That should draw out only gracious diligence to remove it. The effort to cultivate unbelief in the blessed word, and hinder souls receiving it, is a graver wrong.

As to hypothetical circumstances for a Jewish conscience, as is alleged as to Heb. 10, they are Christianity as it there goes on to explain. This is all very bad. But I repeat here, the question is not treated judicially in Hebrews It is a question of boldness to enter into the holiest, and that is always ours. Psa. 32 just proves the contrary of that for which it is cited. The confession spoken of led to being forgiven, and no imputation left. The confession was not of sin committed subsequent to the forgiveness spoken of in the first verse, but what led to it, as plain as words can make it, and then no sin was imputed. He had kept silence, was at last brought to confess, and so had forgiveness: and the apostle uses it to show a state of no imputation of sin. There too the apostle urges, the

objective faith gives the subjective state of peace with God.

The whole paper then is simply a denial of the truth of the purging of a believer's conscience—a perfecting us forever in an uninterrupted state as to this before God. It seeks with vain efforts to make the water mean, blood, leaving no place for the scriptural use of the water—plunging the believer back into uncertainty of conscience before God, instead of applying the judgment of failure to a question of holiness, for one who walks in the light, as God is in the light, never allowing the soul to get beyond the question of guilt, and making it content when that is settled, falsifying, as has been done ever since the scriptures have been closed, the whole truth of Christianity for the souls of men. Unbelief in the true force of Heb. 10, and the truth contained in it, as to the true subjective condition of the Christian, was the real origin of all the superstition and corruption of the church.

I knew the case of a charitable institution in Ireland, where New Testaments were left to be read by those for whose advantage it was carried on, where Heb. 9 and 10 were torn out, and when the guilty ones were discovered, they said if those were true the priests misled them, and that they did not believe. And now Protestant teachers are trying to do away its force; but this began immediately after the apostle's decease. The utter weakness of the effort here to get rid of the truth is more manifest than usual, by the attempt to say that the conscience being purged, and we perfect as to it, is not a subjective condition of the soul.

It is tantamount to a confession they have no ground to stand upon, Other points I might notice; but my object, and only object, is to keep, by answering this paper, the great truth before the soul—that by one offering Christ has perfected us forever; and that the worshippers once purged through that offering should have no more conscience of sins.

Chapter 146

On Responsibility: 1-2. Introductory and The Principle of Responsibility

There is great force and beauty in the title addressed by faith to God at a time when nothing but faith could have counted upon His interest in, and care for, men who had made but too manifest their. stubbornness and self-will. And we do well to remember that He is “the God of the spirits of all flesh” (see Num. 16:22), and is never indifferent to that which His power has formed.

He is true to this character, and nowhere is His care for the creatures of His hand more conspicuous than in the wonderful provision which He has made for all the difficulties which man has wrought for himself in seeking to understand his own and God's relation to this scene, and to the evil which is undeniably in it. Man has sought ever to understand these things from his own point of view, and, but too ready to make himself the measure of everything which he strives to understand, has been led into many a devious path of speculation and skepticism and infidelity, even from the first day in which it was possible for mind to work and pursue its own way, regardless of God. But God has, in gracious and perfect wisdom, provided beforehand the solution of all and the key to all difficulties of the sincere, by giving His own mind or that which is the blessed outcome of it. The simple soul bows to His wisdom, receiving submissively what He communicates, and is blessed and helped and delivered, while the proud are left to the darkness and uncertainty of their own thoughts; for nothing is so foolish as pride, and the pride of mind is the most deceitful and deadly, as it is the most blinding, of all forms of folly.

While we might, on the one hand, trace these thoughts and efforts of man's mind—efforts to find light by the examination of his own being, or of the material creation generally, efforts to postulate God from his own conceptions of what should be, efforts to scan the past or pierce the future by such light as he could gather, efforts which have unceasingly troubled the sea of human life, and in the end left man to feel that, in spite of himself, he is surrounded by the unknown, and trembles at every turn on the brink of depths that he cannot fathom: while the history of these workings of the human mind, which have perplexed souls innumerable, is within reach, yet it can but show us man's side of the picture, and that is not the bright side, however unpalatable it may be to have to own it. God's side is far otherwise. He has not been indifferent to all, or to anything, that has disturbed man and indeed man's helpless wanderings in his foolish endeavor to “find out God” are enough in themselves to call out the compassion and the sorrow of the renewed heart, which itself, even when acting in its energy without hindrance, is but a reflex of God; but He abides in the calmness and beauty of His own light, which makes all manifest, and He blesses and guides with it those who truly turn to Him, and own Him, as for themselves, the source of wisdom. It is from this point of view that I would look for a little at the responsibility of man, as knowing about it but the teaching of God's word by the Spirit, and fully owning that this alone contains true wisdom.

Before taking up our subject, however, we must notice one little word which God has given—and it is like the words of God—to illumine, as if by; a single ray, the entire field which we are to traverse, instructing us divinely as to the true character of the scene in which man is found. By comparing

Gen. 1:3-5, 14-19 (which is the account, not of the creation of light, but of the establishment of its place and functions in relation to this world, as then ordered) with Rev. 21:1, 5, 23; 22:5, we see at a glance that it was quite within God's power to have ordained that there should be uninterrupted day in this world, instead of night and day, and the question arises, why did He allow, the presence of darkness while putting a division between it and the light? Simply to show that the scene was to be established in moral responsibility before Him—He did not banish the darkness entirely by His power. Evil was, and He permitted it to have a certain relation to this scene and to His creatures, so as to test man, and thus fairly establish the principle, of human responsibility. This principle continues until evil is finally removed; and when applied to Christians, the claim upon them is that they should act like God, and not mingle light and darkness (2 Cor. 7; Eph. 5); that they should recognize the darkness—the evil—and be apart from it in holiness, that is, in the power of good, which is superior to it and is possessed by them, for thus is God separate. Because He is omniscient and holy, evil must always have a certain relation to Him, but He may totally exclude it from the scene of His power. By-and-by, when His dealings in grace on account of evil have been frilly made manifest, He will eternally banish it, but not the knowledge of it, from the scene which is then established in grace, not responsibility, on the everlasting and immutable foundation of the work of Christ; for we know that in the “new heavens and the new earth” righteousness will dwell, and we, while conscious of the existence of evil, will be maintained eternally in holiness.

Thus we learn that what was done in “creation” was entirely with a view to a certain condition of the world, and man upon it, and therefore that anything in its economy had, and has, a relative character. We may say, conversely to Rev. 21:23, that then there was “need of the sun and of the moon to shine,” and it was with respect to this state of need of such things that God ordained them, He having been pleased, in His sovereign power, to allow such a state to have existence. All that we know as men, and are surrounded by, is thus relative, and the only way in which we can know anything absolutely, or even in its relation to another and a different condition, even if that be not a final one, is by its being revealed to us. We must see and own this, however, as that is the first Step towards receiving the truth of God's revelation, and, if we refuse to do so, there is no hope that we ever will understand.

These considerations are of importance, because we constantly find men reasoning from the phenomena, experiences, and analogies furnished by the present system, and their life in it, as if these were final and conclusive. At the very least the leaving room for the possibility of another and a different condition would considerably modify both the conclusions and the processed by which they have been reached.

One other consideration of a general character demands notice before we pass on, and that is, the relation which responsibility bears to death. Many bold statements are current, the object of which is to teach (I cannot say to prove) that the death of men is merely an orderly and necessary step in the course of nature to which their bodies are subject. The fact that in other departments of nature, say, for instance, the vegetable kingdom, or even in the case of the animals, death appears as a necessary link in the chain of phenomena, is, it is argued, enough to show that this order of events was necessarily the arrangement for man also. But this is a grievous non sequitur.

The supposed geological proofs of the existence upon the earth of races of animals which had become extinct before man's appearance there, as showing that death existed among them prior

to Gen. 3, do not trouble me. I am ready to admit that these animals may have lived and died, and it may have been intended that even those placed on earth when man was formed should be subject to the laws which obtain with regard to organic forms—such as plants, &c.—as we know them. But this proves nothing, as no moral question is raised by such death, neither plants nor animals being responsible beings. With man, however, it is far otherwise, as we shall see, and his death is the direct fruit of sin, as his failure in his responsibility. This condition of things, and the creation of the responsibility which is the groundwork of it all, began with Adam, and therefore the theory of previous races of “pre-Adamite man” is a mere idle fancy, unless it is held that they became extinct before Adam was formed, or that Adam was an independent creation. This would of course preserve his moral responsibility intact; but either is a thought very foreign to the theory to which I now refer, and consequently, as man's moral relationship to God cannot be denied (except by those who are willfully blind and debased), we must not hesitate to sacrifice the vision of men's minds to the truth.

2.-THE PRINCIPLE OF RESPONSIBILITY.

The basis of responsibility is moral relationship to God, and that man has been placed in such relationship (in contrast to the lower creation, which is “lower” indeed relatively to him just because it has not such relationship) will be denied by no one whose judgment we need to consider. Those who do deny it can reach a consistent position only by denying the existence of God, and we do not require to stop for such, because every test which can be applied to them but makes manifest the truth of scripture, that it is “the fool,” and the fool only, who “hath said in his heart, there is no God."

Every relationship (and I use the word in its broadest sense) of necessity carries with it responsibility. There exists, by virtue of the existence of the relationship, the moral obligation to fulfill its duties, whatever the extent of these, and whatever the character of the person who claims them may be. And the validity of the claim is in no way affected by loss of power in the responsible one to fulfill the duties; for were it otherwise there could not be a righteous basis for the execution of judgment, no matter what might be the extent of failure, or what the gravity of its results, because in reality loss of power is failure. To simplify this. I shall make use of an illustration which has already been used by another. We shall suppose that there is a man who owes another a thousand pounds—a common enough case—but unfortunately the debtor is a spendthrift, and has not a penny wherewith to meet the claim. He is, in fact, without power to pay but no one could for a moment say that he is not as much bound to pay as if he possessed the whole amount. The claim subsists, and therefore the responsibility also.

But as obligation flows from relationship, and it is plain that for the obligation to subsist the relationship which constitutes it must exist, so the possession of power at some one period is necessary for the creation of responsibility. The possession of the thousand pounds (to continue the illustration), or its equivalent, at one point, is plainly necessary to constitute the debt; this corresponds to the possession of the power to which I allude; and, moreover, the idea of one being set in a relationship, the duties of which he at the same time is incapable of performing, is manifestly self-destructive.

The fact is, relationship cannot exist where there is incapacity in the alleged responsible person to perform its duties. I do not mean acquired incapacity, but where be is in his nature such as to

negative the claim, and therefore the possession of power is involved in the term relationship.

Thus a beast or a stone cannot be responsible for moral conduct, and neither is in the relationship to which responsibility attaches.

A beautiful illustration of these solemn principles is given us in the Lord's wonderful answer to Pilate's boast in John 19:10, 11; and this answer is all the more complete and wonderful, because it sheds light on the subject after it has been complicated by the difficulties with which sin has surrounded it, and is not existing in its simple elements as in Adam's day.

We may be sure that, had any sinful man—had any one of us—been in His place, men would have had the record of a very different word. We should either have denied the divine origin of the power in which Pilate boasted, in order to press upon him, according to our thoughts, the consequences of its use, or have admitted it, in order to put him aside contemptuously in affected superiority; and thus would have said, either," God never gave you the power to act thus;" or, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above, and therefore I have to do with God and have nothing to do with thee." But His word was, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." In this perfectly wise answer responsibility is owned, though in the same breath with God's sovereignty, and yet each is perfectly in its place. It is as though He had said, God has allowed this—allowed them to have power, but they have used that power to have their own way, and it is manifest that it is their own way, and not God's, and so God marks the various steps in guilt.

There was far more active evil against the Lord in Judas than in Pilate, and so this led him, when God allowed them to act unrestrained, to deliver Him to Pilate. Pilate was, in one sense, only doing his duty in acting as a judge, condemning or releasing; but he was of course bound to act before God, and in subjection to Him in this. He very manifestly did the contrary, and hence his sin, which no doubt the Lord's word made his conscience aware of in some degree. Thus the possession of power as given of God, while it created responsibility, yet raised no question as to guilt; this was decided by the working of the will, which directed the use of the power, and thus the roots of the matter are brought to light.

All this is important enough as entering into the nature of even the most ordinary relations of human life, but its solemnity cannot be overrated as our relations with God rise before us; for it is these which first and most of all concern us, and moreover, all others have their true place only as these are rightly owned.

We have thus before us in this subject that which brings into view the reality of the soul's relation to God, and that which has to do with the setting of each man individually before God in his individuality, with God's claims, and with man's actions and thoughts. It is not calculated deeply to move or touch the heart—grace does this; but that is not less useful, because of its most solemn and searching appeals to conscience. And it has the weightiest of all reasons to urge for its consideration, because it is on the individual ground that the final issues will be manifested at the β■μα of judgment. "For we must all be manifested before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad," "so then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." (2 Cor. 5:10; Rom. 14:12.)

Now nothing is more important, and nothing contributes more moral vigor and reality to the soul, than the hearty acknowledgment of the force of this intense individuality. God seeks to lead men to it, in order that they may realize that each one has to do with Him, and so may have a clear and definite issue before their minds; but we can trace to feebleness in the apprehension of it, or to indifference to its truth, much of the perplexity in which souls are found. Men raise questions as to how God can deal with the heathen, or with people in particular circumstances, and do this really, though perhaps unconsciously, with the thought of finding a decent excuse for shirking what relates to themselves; but they are blind to the fact that even supposing they found a satisfactory solution to all such inquiries, yet this could not in any way settle for them the far more solemn matter of their own soul's relation to God. What possible shelter, then, can these questions, when unsettled, afford! Such thoughts are, I doubt not, ready tools in the hand of him who is far more subtle than man—the enemy of souls; but his tools are as various as the souls with whom he seeks to have to do, and so he can turn the feebleness in apprehending the importance of individuality before God to account in another way. This he does—for those who would escape from under its keen edge in the former way—by weakening the claim of God's word on the individual conscience by means of the interposition of some authority which is not God's (such as that of the church) between the soul and the word.

But all such miserable subterfuges of the enemy, and all such petty efforts of men, are blown to the winds when the soul faces the stern reality of dealing with God alone. Reader, you and I must meet God, and have to do with Him, individually about our deeds—aye, and about our sins—either here or hereafter. He cannot be put off forever. We may succeed in staving off the consideration of this truth for a time by demanding explanations about everybody's lot and portion but our own, and seek to escape, like the cattle-fish, in the darkness and obscurity produced by ourselves; but all this has an end; and were the whole body of these questions forever settled, to-morrow you would be no nearer a satisfactory conclusion for yourself, for there would yet remain the one to arrange between your soul and God. Forget not this.

Rome or “the church” may falsely claim that you cannot receive the word of God, or know it as His, or know what it says, being His word, unless you receive it through her hands, and with her explanations; but all this is proved to be a false claim by the very fact of your individual responsibility to God. For how could God hold men individually responsible to Him, giving His word to be the regulator and measure of that responsibility, unless that word were addressed to each one, and capable of being received and understood by each one? Mark well, I do not say that the word does not contain anything besides that which is addressed to man in his responsibility. It does contain very many things that are on another basis altogether, and these are surely of the reach of mere human intelligence. But even this admission is far from giving room for ecclesiastical claims even over these things, for we are distinctly told in 1 Cor. 2 that they are revealed to faith by the Spirit of God, who alone is competent to communicate either the things themselves or the understanding of them.

In considering the history and principle of responsibility, it is of the last importance that we rightly distinguish between the responsibility of man as natural man, the descendant merely of Adam, with what is addressed to that, and the application of the principle to any as occupying a new and special relationship to God, say as His children or His people. For, while it is true that the responsibility of man lies at the root of all the relations of God to man, yet we shall find it also the

case that the principle enters both into all the special dealings of God by which He has marked the course, of man's history, and into all the relationships which He has ordered and established from time to time, and into which His people have been brought.

The mere rationalist is incapable, from his standpoint, of making or of seeing the force of these distinctions. He has but one standard, or measure, to which all things, mental, moral, or material must be brought, and that is man as known by him naturally. But whatever he does, or fails to do, we must not forget that the present condition of man, in which alone of course all human knowledge about him is gathered, is itself but a consequence of what is of incomparable gravity, namely, the introduction of sin into all his relations, because into his nature. And therefore it follows that any view of man which refuses due weight to this consideration of necessity introduces the element of confusion into any attempt to define his relations with God, and certainly does so into the attempt to understand or give a proper place to the principle of responsibility. We cannot wonder, though we may grieve, as we see the consequences of his position, that the rationalist is thus unable too to see the insufficiency and narrowness of it, or the nattiness of the views it involves, albeit it is what commends itself to his “reason.” He is necessarily one-sided, and to be one-sided is as necessarily to be unable to see the clear light of the truth.

When, however, the balance is evenly held, and due weight is allowed to these varieties of position, the value of which we learn from God in His word, then the principle of responsibility is seen in its coherence and force. It runs as a golden thread throughout the whole course of man's history as a moral being; it binds together into one connected and consistent whole all the varied methods of God's dealing, and the different measures of His revelation; it manifests thus the divine unity of purpose, thought, and design which pervades the entire Bible, giving the clue to the severity of His judgments; and to the results of His grace; in a word, it sets before us God and man in their proper relations the one to the other, and nothing can be more important than this.

To us as Christians its value is great, not only because it presents us with that which checks and corrects the proud independence of man's mind, but also because there is to be found in it a solution of much of the difficulty which occurs to many minds in the presentation of the gospel to all, and a fund of powerful and practical truth for the people of God, serving rightly to direct the keen edge of many a word to the consciences of those who are fain to press, and so to misuse, grace as a means whereby that edge may be turned away from them. But the soul which has been brought consciously into the light, and has been made by grace thoroughly honest with itself, knows the inestimable benefit of that which in any degree makes us increasingly real and true.

Chapter 147

On Responsibility: 3. The Establishment of Responsibility: Part 1

3.-The Establishment of Responsibility.

It has often appeared to me a strange thing that men will allow in words that God is sovereign and supreme, while the whole bent of their mind and actions evinces that they deny, or at least question, His right to make or create what sort of a man He pleased. They do not think of questioning this right as applied to the rest of creation in its existing form; but they think and act as though He had no right to call a responsible being into existence if He so willed it.

Yet He claims for Himself His undoubted prerogative, in order that men may be silenced. “Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?"

Men would throw the blame of all the evil that is in the world upon God for His not having made things otherwise, and as they would like; but they forget that God chose to make them responsible beings, as having perfect right and power to do so, and that no blame can be shifted to His sovereign act from their shoulders whose responsibility was created by that very act. It is said, God is Almighty as well as Omniscient, and could therefore have made men perfectly safe from the reach of evil, had He chosen to do so; but He has chosen to do otherwise, and so the existing state of the world is His doing, for “who has resisted his will?” But this really begs the whole question, for it assumes either that, as is expressed, the present state of things is according to His will, or that there was no course open to Him but the two contemplated in such an assumption, namely, that He must either keep men from evil by direct power, or be concerned in their evil Himself; whereas the scriptures show decisively that neither of these is the truth. Apt indeed is the inspired reply to such objectors— “Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" (Rom. 9:20.)

Now the thus is, as far as men in general are concerned, certainly not a state in which we are kept from evil by the direct action of God's omnipotence, nor is it a state in which, by the exercise of the same power, we are of necessity under evil for which He will judge us. This were indeed to make Him unrighteous, which is precisely the issue at which many have arrived, who have sought to reconcile such an idea of our position as men with their ideas of God; and therefore it is not greatly to be wondered at that, where merely the natural evil of man's heart and will has been at work, men have been glad to find thus, as they imagined, a good excuse for the rejection of the revelation of God—the Bible—which is never welcome to man naturally, and which he readily judges as opposed to “enlightened reason.” But the condition in which God chose to ordain man at the commencement of his history was one of direct responsibility, that is, a real moral relationship to God—a condition in which he was possessed of certain powers, and of intelligence, by which they could, and therefore should, be directed in happy subjection to Him; or, to put it concisely, a condition in which he was able to understand God's will, and bound to obey it. The measure of this intelligence was the word of God.

Being capable of receiving that word to this extent (that is, being intelligent), man was bound to acknowledge it as the expression of God's will, as supreme, and was not consequently responsible for any further measure of knowledge as an authoritative guide for himself. The word—the witness or testimony of God—was, and is, thus the measure of all direct responsibility, and is inseparably connected with the principle. Moreover, the fact that obedience to it was demanded and looked for, on God's part, from man, shows plainly that man had the power of doing what was contrary to that word, and that he was left free as to the possibility of exercising that power. This indeed, as we have seen, is inherent in the nature of responsibility, and it shows us that a responsible being is one to whom failure is possible—a principle which is abstractly true in all cases, except of course strictly in that of the Lord Jesus Christ, though it may on some occasions be subject to some limitations.

The account of the commencement of the subsistence of these relations between God and man is given to us in Gen. 2:7-25, and it is important to note that we have the description in that chapter, and not in the first of the same book. The reason is plain. For while in chapter 1 we have simply the ordered existence of all things earthly with reference to God (Elohim) as Creator, in chapter ii. we have some of these same existences described in their relation to the Lord God (Jehovah Elohim), and they have consequently (for this is the name by which God designates Himself when in moral relationship with man thereafter in scripture) a moral character not noticeable in the former chapter. And we see herein the most admirable order of the revelation of God.

The distinction I speak of will be seen by comparing chapter 1:26-80 with chapter 2:7-25. In the former portion man is seen as created in conformity with the divine counsels concerning the plan of his creation, and as placed on the earth in his proper position, viewed, however, entirely as a creature, the, words which God addresses to him— “Be fruitful and multiply,” &c.—being similar to those which He addressed to His other creatures, with (of course) a recognition of that which was peculiar to the special position of man, namely, his dominion over the other creatures. Nothing beyond the fact is noted however, and seeing that it is here the brute creation, as such, over which he is to have dominion simply for the subduing of it, it is evidently a question of his relative physical position towards them, more than of any moral relations existing on either side. (See vers. 22, 28.) Man's physical wants, along with those of the animals, are made prominent in verses 29, 30.

In the latter portion (Gen. 2:7-25) on the other hand, man is seen in the relationship which his being has with God. It is here not simply, “God created man,” &c., but “the Lord God formed man.... and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.” The manner of his link with his source of life is thus shown, and it is seen to place him in direct relationship with God. It is as Elihu described in Job 33:4, “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life,” and as Paul says in Acts 17:28, quoting the acknowledgment which even the heathen gave to the fact, “For we are also his offspring.” The words addressed to him by the Lord God in this character are consequently concerning his moral obligation to Him (vers. 16, 17): “And the Lord God commanded the man,” &c. The moral purport and effect of the formation of the woman is also given (ver. 18-24): “It is not good that the man should be alone, I will make him an help meet for him;” and “therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh.” Not only so, we have also in verses 19, 20 the moral side of Adam's authority over the rest of created living things, and this in direct contrast with the physical side shown us in chapter 1. “And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of

the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them; and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof," &c.

Now it is with these moral relations, as ordained between God and man, that we are concerned in this examination. The intelligence and power given to man are abundantly manifest from the whole of the account, while in verses 16, 17 God's requirement is defined, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil becomes thus not only a test but the witness of God's claim, and conversely of man's responsibility.

It is a point of immense importance in the establishment of this relationship between God and man that the thing which God commanded not to be done, namely, the eating the fruit of the tree, was perfectly innocent in itself. But for the condition attached to it there was no wrong in the act, and the importance consists in this, that it shows that man was not left to the guidance of any internal conscience or inherent moral sense of wrong; in fact, it is plain from the scripture that this is what he did not possess as innocent. If it had been a sinful thing (that is, a thing morally corrupt as to the nature of it—I do not speak here of the effect) which had been forbidden, man in the present day might with some show of justice claim that there is this good in him, that from the beginning it was his own moral sense or inherent consciousness of right and wrong (or “spiritual faculty") which was to have led him in the way of serving God. But it was not.; and man was therefore simply put under the obligation to be subject to the word of God as supreme—a motive sufficient to lead him to be so, being no doubt also supplied in the goodness of God, as in all that was the expression of that (namely, God's works, see Gen. 1; 2) man had free possession and enjoyment.

Adam thus did not know right and wrong, not knowing good and evil, till his act of disobedience was done. He knew by the word of God the right thing to do; but in what was said to him there was no question proposed as to whether he knew it to be right or wrong. He had not to decide between it as good and something else, but he was responsible to do it as set by God's will in the relationship to Him, which demanded it as its condition, and as possessed of power to do the opposite, without which, of course, God's command would have been without meaning. The possession of this power was, however, perfectly compatible with a state of innocence, or, in other words, of ignorance of evil as related to good (and of good also, of course, in that distinctive sense); and that this was man's original condition is made perfectly plain by Gen. 3:22, where the Lord God says, after man has fallen, “Behold, the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now,” &c. Before he fell, everything that he knew was good in itself, and this, whether it were the works of God by which he was surrounded (for all these were declared to be “very good,” Gen. 1), or his own course which the word of God marked out for him (for this was obedience). All was good; but at the same time we can say that he did not know good relatively or abstractly as it is known in a mind which can compare it with evil.

Hence the tree of which he partook in disobedience was called “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.” In one sense it would not be correct to say that he was unconscious of good, but he was totally unconscious of evil. I do not forget that there was the condition of death attached to God's requirement, but even this necessitated no knowledge of evil. There being no moral wrong in the act of eating the fruit apart from God's command, man was simply required to obey, not to know as right and wrong in itself. This we need to keep in view as to the act; and as to the condition we must not forget that we look back at it from the apprehension of death which guilt has brought in,

and that therefore to us it has a moral character as a penal condition, which it need not have had to him—in fact, we may say it could not have had.

For “the sting of death is sin;” and until therefore he knew sin, he could not know death in its penal character. It is obvious that the knowledge of death as punishment for wrong must necessarily follow the knowledge of wrong, and therefore Adam could not have known death in this way. How much about the fact of death he knew we are not told—he could hardly have seen any instances of it at the time when the command was given to him; but to a being to whom the idea of a cause is an inherent necessity, his own end, to speak popularly, that is, the end of his life on earth, must have been an intelligible idea; and there is abundant evidence that physical death was made the prominent thought to him, and to man thereafter, for a long time.

Therefore the attachment of the condition did not make disobedience any more disobedient, or reveal its intrinsic moral character before it was an accomplished act.

This is borne witness to in what is told us about the immediate effect of the fall upon man. He then acquired what he had not before, “the knowledge of good and evil;” and it is well if we weigh the importance of this word, so that we may understand it. For it does not speak of a knowledge of good and a knowledge of evil, as though these were two distinct subjects of knowledge with which man then became acquainted, or even two separate departments of knowledge, or as though man had previously known what good was in itself, or what evil was in itself, and now had become practically acquainted with that which he already knew theoretically. It speaks of good and evil as so bound up in one apprehension, that, though it were the knowledge of two opposing principles which was acquired, yet it was but one perception, the perception of them as opposed to one another; both principles were of necessity included in one idea with which man became acquainted at that moment. For “the knowledge of good and evil” is the perception of it in itself without a law, or its being imposed. God does know, doubtless, good and evil according to the perfection of His own nature. But it is a condition of His nature to discern it; it was not of Adam's before his fall. He was innocent; he enjoyed God's goodness unsuspectingly, and did nothing else. There was no occasion to discern, nor capacity to do so. In the fall he acquired this capacity. He could now say, This is good, and that evil; but he was under sin. So that in this knowledge of good and evil we have a “capacity to discern right and wrong—a real moral condition of mind, but which is not subject to forms of thought, because it is not a question of thought. It is in the nature of relationship, and may in us be misled by thought."

Chapter 148

On Responsibility: 3. The Establishment of Responsibility: Part 2

3.-The Establishment of Responsibility.

Thus man learned of these things relatively to one another, and it is only thus that he is acquainted with either of them distinctively, so that before sinning he could not be said to have had this capacity.

All complexity which might have arisen if we had had to take into consideration any power of judging of things morally inherent in man from the first, is thus rendered impossible, and the principle involved in the relative positions of God and man at the outset is made perfectly clear as one of will—God's will, of course, being that which should have been owned as supreme, and thus literally accepted as man's will, which would therefore have been expressed only in obedience to God, who had done sufficient to give man perfect confidence in Him, so as also to lead the desires of his heart in that way.

Thus was man made responsible, and thus are we led to see what responsibility pure and simple means. And thus, too, we see that in Adam's sin there was far more than the mere transgression of a command (though, of course, it was this also; see Rom. 5:14; Hos. 6:7); there was the assertion of an independent will, and that too by a creature (the very principle of sin, as 1 John 3:4 rightly translated tells us), the possession of which, for God so ordered it, could be had only in conjunction with the knowledge of good and evil acquired by man's practical subjection to evil.

The whole subsequent condition of man is involved in this—he has the knowledge of good and evil, and he knows too the exercise of his own will, but that is, in the nature of it, as manifested from the first, invariably directed towards evil. It is evil which he wishes to do, contrary to the good which God wishes him to do. If he never wished to do anything but good, he would have no will apart from God's will and would thus be sinless.

It follows from this that the only just measure of sin is that infinitely wise and good will against which all sin is rebellion, and we must primarily consider sin in this light, apart from all questions of degree of moral turpitude, or of human standards, if we desire to have, as far as our power to weigh it reaches, a true judgment of its nature and extent. We must indeed go farther, and own that, without the knowledge of God and His will, we are unable to measure evil at all. For it is only by having God brought consciously before him that man is able to know the truth (that is, what is absolutely true in character, whatever the measure or amount) as to good or evil, or anything moral (or indeed as to anything material too, for even here it is easy for the mind to pursue a wrong road if it once starts from a false notion of the nature of things). One might reason, for instance, about evil, but could never know what it is in reality by this process. The utmost that could be arrived at would be a comparison of various known evils, and a speculation as to some general principle of evil which was thought to underlie them all. On this ground it is not difficult to see how men could endeavor to persuade themselves that there is no knowledge of evil possible but that which is gained by comparing certain things that are evil to them. But such reasoning blots

God out of His own universe, and therefore we need to have God brought face to face with us in a revelation of Him, in order to learn truly what evil is, for then we have a perfect standard of all good.

We cannot, it is true, plumb depths that are infinite, and apply God's perfect standard to the judgment of sin, or grasp in our minds the full extent of its enormity as it is seen by Infinite Wisdom, and measured by Infinite Majesty, for we are not Gods, but we can see and own that only thus is sin rightly measured. Its punishment, therefore, must be infinite, for it is according to God's estimate of that which is an offense against Himself, the Infinite One, and so could be no less. It is idle for men to raise objections, as many do, against eternal punishment, on the score that the notion is foreign to their minds, and contrary to their ideas of what is right. These objectors should begin at the beginning, and say if ever they have allowed themselves one true thought of the enormity of that which must be punished. Let them but own that it is beyond their puny minds to comprehend how dreadful is that which their wills have dared to do, and then there would be no difficulty in acknowledging that, while it is not in man to comprehend infinite punishment, yet, when he owns what sin is, he has the sense that nothing else than that can be right.

It is thus that we are in our due place with regard to these things, and only when we are in this attitude that we are prepared to own the grace that has provided, in the blessed Lord Jesus Christ One, the only One who could perfectly, because divinely, estimate sin, and bear before God, in a spirit which could fully enter into it, and know all the suffering it involved, and in a body made subject to the ultimate penalty it entailed, the full weight—of His wrath and judgment against sin. He is the One we as sinners need, though in poor human pride we refuse to own the troth, and prefer rather the cheats invented by minds and wills that are depraved by sin, if not invented by the one far more subtle than these, and who “sinneth from the beginning.” But grace delights to find herein its opportunity, and seeks to lead men to own the truth, and to acknowledge God in His place as supreme. For right and wrong being known, when God is supreme to the mind and heart we have certain light as to the character of His doings, even though we are unable to comprehend the extent of that which He does. We cannot measure Him or His actions, as though our measure of knowledge of right and wrong must be His, but having the knowledge of good and evil, while we have a responsibility directly based upon this, we are able to rise to the thought that God must act consistently with this principle, though in His own infinite measure of apprehension of it.

But to return to the consideration of human responsibility, it is plain that the acquisition of the knowledge of good and evil—in a word, the acquisition of conscience—necessarily forms the basis of man's condition as a responsible being subsequent to that fact. He known good and evil now, and is therefore responsible on the principle of conscience, or moral discernment, which is in him as possessed of that knowledge, even when he has no direct word or revelation from God about himself or his path. In fact we are taught in Rom. 1; 2, that the former is in itself a sufficient guide to the consciousness of having to do with God, and of what is morally suited or unsuited to Him, for those who have not any further revelation from. Him, but who are honest and sincere in the desire to own Him, as being themselves properly subject to Him. Rom. 2:5-16 makes it plain that, as regards God's judgment of such men (and those whom we call the “heathen” come within the range of this scripture), that principle becomes the measure of responsibility in their case; and although, in view of what the Cross has revealed of man's natural heart and will, we may seriously question whether there are any who actually meet the demands of God's righteous judgment on

this ground, yet we may see from Acts 10:2, 30 to end, and specially from verses 34, 35, how He is wont to deal with any who may be found truly devout before Him, even while outside the range of revelation,

On this subject the speculations of men's minds are numerous in these days, but for the most part all such seem to me to proceed on principles which are exactly the reverse of the truth. There are in the main two distinct directions in which these speculations are found to run. In pursuance of the first of these men seek to lessen the importance of conscience by trying to make out that the knowledge of right and wrong is in us a mere matter of thought, because our judgment of what is right and what is wrong is entirely the result of education or of prejudice. This, when examined, resolves itself plainly into a denial that there is morality, or an abstract moral standard, and as a necessary consequence denies an absolute standard of morals, that is, denies God. It is well to look the full result in the face, and it would be far better for all if men in general did so, and spoke plainly out, so that all might know what is the true issue before them. Concealment is certainly not of “the truth,” whether it is voluntary or involuntary, as far as man is concerned. If we are to deny God and morals, then we know what is before us, and must prepare to see the world deluged in violence and corruption, such as have in degree prevailed wherever the “reason” which teaches these doctrines has held sway, and that even of late years.

I do not overstate the result. For granting that, conscience may be much influenced by education, and therefore, putting aside for the moment the consideration of, what is judged right or wrong, there plainly remains the existence in men of the power or capacity of discernment of these opposite qualities, even though things wrong may be put for right, and vice versa. As then the capacity to discern these essential qualities exists, the question undoubtedly is, Is there a standard of abstract right and wrong, of morals, by which our ideas derived from education or habit are to be tested? It will not do to say because, with the Spartans, what we call stealing was a virtue, or because the Corinthians deified what we know as lust, or because among savage people what we are taught to call murder, is commended, that therefore theft and adultery and murder exist only as relative ideas in our minds. This is really, as I have said, to deny the existence of virtue or goodness, either in the abstract, or absolutely in God. Man's moral nature, except when degraded; scouts the absurdity, and demands as a necessity the existence of abstract moral virtue, and, not only so, but insists that there must also be a perfect and absolute measure of that in God Himself. And therefore conscience leads us directly to the fact of having to do with Him.

There are those pursuing the second path of speculation to which I have alluded who own the nature of conscience and moral standards in a general way, but seek to weaken the character of the evil that is in the world. These suppose that in all its history, past and present, God has been, and is, educating the world, or bringing it by a gradual process nearer to Himself, by elevating and improving the minds of men in general, somewhat after the analogy which the education and training of one of themselves, from childhood to manhood, suggests to them. The truth, however, is, that in all that concerns its relations with God, the world has steadily gone on from bad to worse; commencing ages ago by giving up the knowledge of God (that is, its personal acquaintance with Him, and not merely the idea of a God) which it once possessed, and using ever since then, merely as an occasion to pursue its own way with impunity,. the patient grace in which He has so long dealt with it. So that the world has arrived at its present condition, namely, that in which there is in existence a large number of its inhabitants in the condition and

circumstances of “heathen” through departure from God. (As to this see Job 21:14, 15; Rom. 1:28, 20-25.) And men often unconsciously bear testimony to the truth and right of such dealing. Do we not often hear them say that it is righteous that individuals who do wrong should bear the results in their bodies, and transmit them to their descendants, as it is incontestably proved they do? Or that nations who depart from right and light should suffer the consequences even here? What about those nations who used to have light, such as Spain, Greece, and others (not to take any “heathen” for examples)—do we not say they merit their present darkness?

I do not deny that God has given a greater measure of light in Christianity than in Judaism; but this is a fact founded, upon His own grace, and quite apart from the human thought which we are considering. For He has introduced successive measures of revelation of light in grace, on the failure of men to w1dk up to the preceding ones; and in fact the new measure becomes a new point of departure, a new commencement, for the people to whom it appeals. Thus Christianity is not built upon Judaism in the sense conveyed by the “education of the world” school: else why are the Jews utterly outside of it? Why has it been spread almost entirely among peoples formerly living in the gross darkness of heathenism, and strangers to all the teaching and privilege of Judaism? These things call for consideration.

With regard to what men call the refinements or elegancies of life, there no doubt appears to be a general progress in the world from a ruder to a more cultivated state; but if we look a little below the surface, we shall find that these accessories have become necessary through man's taste being corrupted, that is, rendered more greedy of self-pleasing. Simplicity, of which we see abundant proofs in the early days of Old Testament history, is not barbarism, but is the evidence of nobility of nature, though to us it may seem rude; for where is it to be found now? It is, moreover, quite compatible with a high state of moral intelligence. Barbarism is moral degradation.

And the truth is not therefore, that barbarism is man's original state, and that he has gradually to be freed from that, and educated up to God. That notion assumes, if it dare not say, that man, as he came fresh from God's creative hand, was a morally degraded being, requiring to be perfected by his own or others' efforts. Apart from the shocking irreverence of this idea, we are plainly told that “God saw everything that he had made, and behold it was very good,” and also it is distinctly said that “God made man upright.” So that such a condition as that of the heathen to-day is, if anything, the fitting and, in God's wisdom, the natural result of man's willful disregard of Him; and if He bears with the world which exhibits such marks of declension from, and enmity to, Him, it is only that He, in His grace, may save some out of that which is wholly bad. The means, however, by which He acts on the few are ever seized and turned to had account by the many, and it is so, as ever, with Christianity, so that access to privileges effects in itself no change on man: though doubtless they, by increasing the weight of his responsibility somewhat, prove to be the surer witnesses against him.

Before looking at the history of responsibility in the world, we may mark one thing more in the position of man as a fallen being (that is, man in the character and condition in which his history becomes known), which in its wonderful grasp of the roots and principles of the moral world Genesis suggests to us.

Man as fallen ever makes himself the center of his thoughts, instead of putting God in the foremost place in them, and the consequence is that he seeks to make his own acquired knowledge of his

own position (however that knowledge may have been acquired, even though by sinful means), that is, his own experiences, though they be those of a fallen nature, and not the communicated knowledge of God's position towards him (in his state, whatever it is), the standard for his conduct. This but leads him in action to depart farther from God, and proves but the more complete witness against him, when the simple word of God, which is the measure of his responsibility, is brought face to face with his conduct. Thus Adam, when summoned before God (in Gen. 3:9, et seq. 9), says, “I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid,” not because Your command had been transgressed, and You had a right to be angry, but “because I was naked, and I hid myself.” While the Lord God says, “Who told thee that thou west naked?” —as if to say, “You never got such a word from Me to act upon” —and He immediately recalls him to that word which he did receive, saying, “Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?” And thus the full measure of man's sin, and of his failure in responsibility, became apparent at once; and so it is always whenever God's voice is heard.

Chapter 149

On Responsibility: 4. The History of Responsibility: Part 1

4.-The History of Responsibility

God has been pleased to give us a history of the course of human responsibility, and while it is, of course, full of instruction to us, and of power to humble and convict man in view of what he is and has been, still He has grouped around it such wonders of His own wisdom and grace, as to render it also full of comfort and blessing to us, as we see Him using it to prepare the way for the full revelation of Himself.

On man's side this history of responsibility is but the account of the course of self-will, which not only can refuse to acknowledge man's sinful condition, and so also to own the provision of God designed to meet man as he is, but also can, in the strength of proud rebellion, charge upon God the cause of its own evil. On God's side it is the history of patient goodness, providing means whereby those who have no claim upon Him yet may find a way in which they may yield what is due to Him. We find more, in truth, as we examine this history, because it becomes apparent that the object which He has in it, in all stages of it, is to bring home to the heart and conscience of man the truth of his condition as a sinner, in order that he may trust altogether in God for salvation. For while man can use the fact of his sinful condition as a stone to hurl at the wisdom of God—as he foolishly thinks he is able to do—he is far from being ready to own that it is condition truly. His effort rather is by using the consequences of it, as he reasons these out, as an objection, to prove that it is not true, and so he requires to have it pressed home on his conscience that he may turn to God.

Man would blame God because he finds that he is a sinner, as though by charging God with the root of his evil, and laying at His door the cause of all the consequences which have flowed from this condition (as he cannot but see and own these), he would manage to get free from responsibility. But before that question of the root of matters ever rises, God has made it necessary for him to decide whether He has provided any means whereby man as a sinner can meet Him. If we find, as assuredly we do, that God has done this, then most certainly the first question for each man is, how has he treated these means, and God in view of them?

Man is a sinner, it is true; but it is nowhere said that any man is condemned for being a sinner. God “will render to every man according to his deeds,” and for these he will be judged. It will, of course, be as a sinner that he meets judgment, but for his deeds. But it is objected, man is a sinner; and this being his nature, it is not his fault if he sins, and therefore it is unjust to condemn him for acts so done. And it is here that the question comes in, “Has a sinner, as such, no responsibility?” or, put in another form, “Has God not provided means of restoration for a man who has sinned?” He has, and therefore every sinner is responsible in view of these.

But, as I have said, it is really to escape from the truth of his condition as a sinner that man raises these objections. For if he acknowledged that truly, while his pride would be thoroughly humbled, he himself would be left in God's hands, and this would he for salvation to his soul, and salvation

from the power of his nature.

The blinding power of Satan over the minds of men is in this matter astonishing, and indeed most sorrowful. Under the guise of philosophy he deludes men into thinking that God has willed and pre-ordained everything so that they cannot help themselves. If they have sinned, it was His will that they should sin, and it need not trouble them much, for if He has ordained that they are to be saved, they will be saved. It is an old deceit, but none the less successful with men, though none the less hollow now. In reality it is a covert denial that there is sin. For if that were the truth which the enemy leads men to imagine, then every man could have, nay, ought to have, the consciousness that he had always done God's will. But sin is, as we have seen, the exertion of the creature's will, which is necessarily and invariably in opposition to Gods; and therefore it is very manifest that there is no man who brings to the survey of his own life a single particle of honesty, who can attempt to acquit himself of ever having sinned. The mere voice of conscience, even where instructed only by nature, would suffice to denounce such a man as a liar if he did so.

If there be sin, how can all have been according to God's will? And, on the other hand, if all has been according to God's will, where is there room for sin? It is plain that the two thoughts are mutually destructive. The idea that He has willed that man should frustrate His will is too flagrant an absurdity to need comment, and thus it is that man knows only too well when he listens to its voice that the Bible speaks the truth, when it says plainly to him that he is a sinner. He rarely in these days charges fate with the cause of all things as they are, because this palpably means, as it is not God, some power or principle to which even God must bow. With the revelation of God in the world, the darkness of such a thought (which, however, the wisdom of man had reached before the Lord came into the world) is dispelled, and so man, the poor dupe of one far more subtle than he, now tries to believe that God is responsible for everything as it now exists, heedless of the utter folly of the idea. It is true that He could sweep the whole creation into destruction by one word; and it is also true, most surely and solemnly true, for every unsaved soul, that ere long He will sweep all that is evil in the world into woe that is unutterable but yet is the only fitting resting-place for foul corruption. But the responsibility of the presence of the evil here, for God so ordered it at the beginning (as we have seen in the account of the establishment of responsibility), rests with him who introduced it into the scene of God's power in goodness; and meanwhile He who has power in judgment to remove all by destruction upon all yet waits, in grace bearing with the presence of the evil which He hates, in order that He may provide the means and the opportunity for man, the sinner, to be freed from the consequences of his sins.

This is precisely the picture that is put before us in the history of Cain and Abel in Gen. 4, and the issue which is raised there is as to the way in which sinful man can have to do with God. For men were now no longer innocent, and so were standing before God in a character different from that in which Adam stood before Him, requiring therefore a dealing different to establish and test their responsibility. What met Adam, even when he had sinned, would not meet us who came into the world with a sinful nature, for the conditions are different.

Adam became a sinner by transgressing a simple command, and therefore God had in this transgression the evidence for convincing him that he had become a sinner by his own will. But with us, his posterity, the case is somewhat different, and men (with but scant regard for God, though with much for themselves) are not slow to urge this in such a way as to show that all they

seek is that they may evade responsibility. It is true that our responsibility is not the same as Adam's was, as far as regards the conditions under which it is proved or exercised; but the vital questions are— “Does God know this?” and “Has He provided for it?” We find, in fact, when we come to scripture, that God has settled the matter by giving history there. Adam is not heard of afterward in its course (except to acknowledge him in his position as head of the family), and this is, no doubt, because his case would not suit that of his descendants. Yet even in him God has shown that what He desires is, that man should take his true place as a sinner before Him. Adam did this, acknowledging by his confession that the place was his—for the transgression, as I have remarked, made it plain when God pointed to it; and although he tried to evade the truth at first, the fact, that when convicted he did not harden himself against God but acknowledged his guilt, explains how God could meet and reach him in mercy at once. Has man improved in this respect since Adam's time? No, verily. And it is as knowing his proud heart and will that God has provided against all his objections in what He has given of history, wherein He has also shown, not only the relation in which He stands to Adam’s descendants, but also His gracious way of dealing with them when they have proved that they deserve anything but this.

It will be plain to any one who reads attentively the narrative of Gen. 4, and the inspired comment upon it in Heb. 11:4, that God must have appointed the manner in which men were to approach Him after Adam's sin had brought a new important element into the relations in which they stood to Him. For it is said in Heb. 11:4 that it was “by faith” that “Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain;” and although we have no record of the very instructions given by God, yet that is a most important fact which is stated in Heb. 11, and it is sufficient to prove to a Christian heart that God must have made His mind on the subject known.

Faith, as we learn from the scriptures, is always exercised in view of testimony. If we take even its lowest form, as exhibited in men's every-day dealings with one another, this is true; and from it, as a fact, the Lord seems to argue in 1 John 5:9-12, that He may show how that, although men freely act on this principle towards one another, yet, when it is God we have to do with, we are not so ready to receive His testimony, though it is infinitely more worthy of credence.

“If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater... He, that does not believe God has made him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness which God has witnessed concerning his Son. And this is the witness (or testimony), that God has given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life” So also in regard to our dealings with God it is declared, “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true;” and in another verse of that chapter in Hebrews, which speaks of Abel's having faith, it is said, “Without faith it is impossible to please him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is,” which man ought to know from the testimony of His works (see Rom. 1:19, 20), “and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him,” which a sinner could never know but by the direct testimony of His gracious word making it known to him.

Thus, then, we are justified in concluding that there must have been some communication of the divine mind as regards the manner in which He was to be approached by men now in their altered condition, in view of which testimony Abel, being a sinful man, could alone exercise faith. If this, which, under the circumstances of man's position it may easily be discerned was an obvious necessity for man, be refused to us by captious objectors (for there are such), the scriptures (Gen.

4 and Heb. 11) at least declare plainly that there was a way of approach to Jehovah, and of having dealings with Him, which Abel used, and the Lord acknowledged as right, and in this, if nowhere else, is contained what it was necessary to show to sinful man, namely, the divine testimony to the possibility of sinners, as such, having to do with God (without His hinting that their condition was an insuperable barrier to their approaching Him), and to the means whereby that approach was to be made.

Now God has so wisely and wonderfully ordered it, that it is in what passed between Himself and Cain, the man who failed in this approach, that we find the truth and force of it pressed on man, and thus objectors are met. Cain, we learn, offered a sacrifice different from that offered by his brother, and this was refused by Jehovah. It is plain from both the scriptures under consideration that the whole question of these men's acceptance was not, as has long been falsely taught, one of the inherent character of the person offering, but of the offerings themselves. It is not, in other words, that Abel was an inherently good man, and Cain inherently a wicked one, and that therefore the offering of the one was accepted, and that of the other rejected. But Cain's was not an excellent sacrifice in Jehovah's eyes, whatever it might have been in Cain's. And now that he has failed, seeking to approach the Lord in his own way, and with his own works (or, which amounts to the same thing, with the evidences of them), instead of in the way which Jehovah approved, in what manner is he met? Does Jehovah blame him for his having been born a sinner? Indeed He does not; but that being a sinner he had not regarded what as a sinner he was bound to regard and submit to, namely, God's way, provided in His grace, whereby sinners, as such, might have dealings, other than judgment, with Him who has power to destroy both body and soul in hell," the portion of sinners.

The Lord points to his responsibility before Him in his condition at that time, which, of course, God knew perfectly; and if we read Gen. 4:7 as some do, He even recalled Cain in grace after his self-will and failure in responsibility to the remedy for him as a sinner. Thus, "if thou doest well, shalt not thou be accepted?" shows that his deeds were in question in God's accepting his person, in other words, that he was addressed on the proper ground of his individual responsibility to God, which was accurately defined; and "if thou doest not well, a sin-offering lieth at the door," points him to the divinely appointed remedy for him in his condition as a sinner, and even if declared to be such by his own acts. But if this latter clause be read as it is given in the ordinary Authorized Version, it simply presses the converse of the truth expressed in the former, and declares Cain answerable for the consequences of his deeds, "if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door."

We have in this the relative positions of God and sinful man clearly defined, and the question of responsibility, as affecting a sinner's condition, fully elucidated. In principle the ground thus laid down in the dealing of Jehovah with these two men has never been altered, and it remains to this day, that the full embodiment of the "more excellent sacrifice" is still the only way of approach to God for a sinful man, while we also still find Him expressing His condemnation of men who have "gone in the way of Cain" (Jude 11), even in the midst of Christendom.

In the renewed earth (Gen. 8) we find Noah as its responsible head making public avowal of the subsistence of this ground, and relationship between God and His creatures. And sacrifice had its divinely appointed place, even when the law came in with what seemed to be a new condition of having dealings with God.

We might trace this many-sided subject of sacrifice, with its varied shades of meaning, and measures of reference to man's relations with God; and nothing can surpass the interest which it possesses for the student of scripture who sees by faith its spiritual teaching. But although instructive and helpful in itself, it is only the general principle of sacrifice which comes within the range of the history of responsibility.

(To be continued.)

On Responsibility: 4. The History of Responsibility: Part 2

4. The History of Responsibility continued from page 272

In Noah we reach an important landmark in the history of responsibility, for we are shown, in what the word of God gives of his history, divine principles concerning two most important relationships then mentioned for the first time. These are government, or the relation of what we may call “magisterial authority” to God and men generally; and the relation of what may be called “paternal authority” to the smaller sphere of “the house,” in view of God's government on earth.

It is plain from Genesis ix. 1-3, that God now placed man in a new relationship, committing for the first time into his hand the sword of executive government.

This has never yet been recalled from man, nor have the principles of its exercise been altered by the word of God. On the contrary, in times subsequent to Gen. 9, with the increase of evil in the world, its powers have been widened and increased, and they are fully recognized in the New Testament as having divinely given claims over the obedience and loyalty of Christians. And there is in this no question of there being what are called “Christian magistrates.” Paul, in Acts 23:5, on the contrary, standing sea Christian before a ruler who was violently opposed to Christ, refers to the word in the Old Testament scripture as binding upon him with reference to any such magistrate. And in Rom. 13:1-8 Christians have the clearest light shining for them upon both their relation to the “higher powers,” as those who “bear the sword,” and the relation of these governors to God; while 1 Tim. 2:1-4 and 1 Peter 2:11-17 amplify the exhortations to quiet and submissive conduct on our part under them in all that concerns the administration of earthly affairs—the true Christian character of pilgrims and strangers here being maintained through all that is done. Men have forgotten all this who have tried to use the truths of Christianity to displace divinely enunciated principles of the government of the world; turning the teaching of scripture which was intended for the guidance of the church, into maxims for the use of the world. This has arisen from confounding together the church and the world, and from thoroughly mistaking the place and the object of Christianity. It was not intended to interfere with the world, as such, at all, but was designed to take out of it a people for the Lord's name. A worldly Christianity has thus neither the truth as to God's government of the world, nor that of the true grace of God in the midst of an evil world.

Thus, too, with the revelation given to and in Noah concerning the mutual relations existing between a household and its head. We have no previous indication of the mind of the Lord on this subject, but He revealed a most weighty principle in Gen. 7:1, saying to Noah, “Come thou and all thy house into the ark: for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation.” This unfolds no less the responsibility of the head, as such, towards God, than the result of his faithfulness towards the household, with their privilege in being, by virtue of their connection with a head who is obedient to God, eligible for introduction into a place or position of external, but very real, blessing. This is a principle of very solemn application in God's ways of government among men, as Ex. 12:5, 6; 34:7, testify, and it is one of those which run unaltered through all God's

subsequent dealings with men. It still stands good, though it has—as many other truths have—been almost obliterated by the dogmas of many Christians.

In Abraham the observance of it is indeed made by the Lord the special groundwork upon which peculiar blessing is conveyed to him, in Gen. 18:17-19: while the same principle is borne witness to in New Testament scripture, both as regards blessing resulting to the head through his faithfulness to his “house” (1 Tim. 3:4, 5), and as regards blessing flowing to them on account of his devotedness to the Lord's will (2 Tim. 1:16); as well as regards the extent of God's purpose of blessing in Christianity, namely the invariable including of all who are thus connected with those who believe. (Acts 16:31; 2:30, &c.)

Abram, again, furnishes us with the first illustration of the introduction of a new and special basis for the responsibility of particular persons, as distinguished from the rest of mankind. The principle of this I have briefly alluded to on page 217, and in Gen. 12, &c., we see that Abram was called into, and so placed before God on, the ground and relationship which God's sovereign grace and promise defined for him.

The scriptures show us that although this dealing of God with him was that of grace towards him, yet it constituted him responsible as in a path which it marked out, for God says to him in Gen. 17:1, “I am the Almighty God,” that is, God in the character revealed to him in grace—all-powerful on his behalf “walk before me, and be thou perfect.” And this is also a principle which abides in the case of all those brought into relationship with God in grace, as we shall see. In fact this is but reiterating in another form the universal principle of responsibility with which we set out (see page 215), namely, that the being placed in any relationship (however planed there, whether by grace, or in God's sovereign government) is that which creates the responsibility to fulfill its duties, whatever these are.

Of course, men object to grace, and are not slow to charge God with unfairness in taking up sinners for blessing in that absolute way. But the root of such objections and such dislike of grace is self-righteousness, and a refusal to own the true condition of man. There is nothing more wholesome than the hearty acknowledgment that all deserve nothing but punishment, that all are thoroughly bad, and corrupt, and lost. And in no other way are we clear of false thoughts about God and His grace. He has made it abundantly plain in Josh. 24:1-3 that such was the condition of all when His grace was first made publicly known in Abram; and in view of blessing which has thus come into the earth among men, while alt are evil, nothing but the sovereignty of God's election can account for any being saved and blessed. Apart from this there seem to be but two other principles upon which He could act towards men, namely, that He must either save all, or save none. But the former of these would deny His holiness, all being sinners; and the latter, while being perfectly just and righteous, would, at least in appearance, deny His love. He reconciles both in the cross, and, choosing some for salvation by it, accounts and makes them just.

The condition of man is made even more plain by such dealing, for if He has to come in and choose some for blessing out of those who are wholly bad, it necessarily shows to what state all have come, and those who reach punishment reach no more than their due, which in fact all deserve. The when God chooses has nothing to do with the sovereignty of His doing it, for it would be as sovereign (as one has said) for Him to choose now as before the world.

As far as we know it by its exercise, this election of God has its first public witness or display in Abraham; we hear nothing of it before his day, but then the world was wholly corrupted by idolatry. The principle of election then comes out in God's acting for the first time, and Rom. 9, which treats of this great and solemn subject, goes no farther back for the commencement of its line of proof of God's sovereign mercy in His dealings with men. It shows also, through succeeding generations, that God could own no other basis for blessing.

In Ex. 33 God announces this principle as that which He would act upon with Israel, but the apparent difficulty, as He had just proposed to put them on the ground defined by a new measure of responsibility as the basis of blessing, is explained, when we see that this was after Moses had to pitch the tabernacle outside the camp, all the congregation having gone after idolatry while he was up on the mount receiving the law from God.

Pharaoh's case is clear, for he was a wicked man and utterly regardless of God, though in his position of power he, above all others, should have owned Him. God, willing to show His power and wrath for the good of His people (Ex. 6:6, 7), that they might trust Him as their deliverer, endured with much long-suffering the evil of the king of Egypt, and at last dealt with him in judgment, in hardening, plaguing, and finally destroying him. That was the present application of what God did, but it has further application to us Gentiles in view of the larger mercy which has come out to us. (Rom. 9:18-24.)

Nothing can surpass the power and grandeur of the words of Rom. 9 in the laying low of all human pride, and showing man's abject dependence for blessing on God's sovereign mercy. The illustration of the potter (ver. 21) is used to make plain how all depends upon sovereign power; for it is out of the same lump that furnishes vessels to dishonor that He chooses to produce vessels unto honor.

People, and even enlightened Christians, shrink from applying the word, “fitted to destruction” to God's action; but the fear is groundless, for no “doctrine of reprobation” (as it is called) is conveyed in them, because they do not mean that God made the men bad as to their natures. It means that, just as in the case of some who were bad, He by His mercy prepared them for blessing, so, in the case of others who were bad, He put them in circumstances where all their badness could be displayed, if He had a purpose to display His power and wrath against evil in their overthrow. Thus they were fitted to destruction. It did not make them bad, nor did it interfere in the least with their responsibility on the ground we have already discussed; it made their badness manifest: and, without the mercy that chooses for salvation, all would be fitted to destruction by simply having time to live given them.

The principle underlying all this is manifest. Man being evil, his doings never can be a basis upon which God can justify him, and therefore it must be by God's way that he is made righteous. This, of course, is a matter of faith on man's part, what God shows of His way being contrary to man altogether, and necessarily so on account of man's condition, while on God's part it is sovereign goodness. And the grace that places him thus in a position of blessing and privilege before God supplies him with power to fulfill the duties resulting from it, and thus those who are blessed become in a new way responsible.

(To be continued)

Chapter 151

The Resurrection of the Body 1

“I believe in the resurrection of the body.” This has been in substance an article of the common creed of Christendom from the earliest days of the church's existence nom earth. The ancient creeds made mention of the resurrection of the flesh. Scripture teaches us of the resurrection of the body. In whatever form, then, the doctrine was expressed, the truth meant to be conveyed was the same, namely, that the body is to be raised again, and to be reunited, and that forever, to the soul which never dies. But is this true, or is it false? Have the saints of God, age after age, departed this life in the expectation of the fulfillment of a hope which, like that of the hypocrite's, shall perish? Have they put off their mortal coil, never more to have to do with it in any form or condition Or is it true that the hope concisely expressed in that one Latin word resurgam, which so often meets the eye, shall yet have its accomplishment?

In an age in which popular belief is so closely scrutinized, and popular mistakes are exposed and corrected, it need surprise no one if the doctrine of the resurrection of the body is not allowed to pass unchallenged, and even its possibility be plainly denied. “For this is nothing new. Some of the Athenian philosophers, when they heard Paul teach the resurrection, mocked at it. (Acts 17:32.) Christians at Corinth, led away by human reasoning, denied it. (1 Cor. 15:12.) Hymenssus and Philetus appear to have spiritualized it. (2 Tim. 2:18.) On the other hand the apostle, to encourage the readers of the Epistle to the Hebrews, reminded them that the great Shepherd of the sheep had been brought again from the dead. (Heb. 13:20.) Timothy, too, was cheered in his path of testimony, which might lead him to martyrdom, by the remembrance of the raising from the dead of the Lord Jesus Christ, of the Seed of David. (2 Tim. 2:8.) The question, then, is this, Does the body rise? Is that body, once indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and bought by the blood of Christ (Rom. 8:11; 1 Cor. 6:20), ever lost, as it has been said in the circle of matter Will the man who has made his body minister to his carnal desires whilst on earth, be free forever from it after death has claimed it? Now, many a question, once debated with keenness and acuteness, has been set at rest, and is no longer regarded as a matter open to dispute. Who, for instance, now doubts that the earth moves round the sun? Who would deny the truth of the circulation of the blood in the human frame? Those, however, who deny the resurrection of the body have yet to establish their case. The scoffs of heathen philosophers, and the reasonings of men, have failed as yet to obliterate from the Christian man's creed the belief in the resurrection of the body.

After Adam fell, God acquainted him with the origin of his body: “Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” Was Adam only dust? Surely not. He had a soul and a spirit, as we learn doctrinally from a passage in the New Testament (1 Thess. 5:23), which states what other scriptures confirm, that body, soul, and spirit together make up the man. The distinction between body and spirit all but the most pronounced materialist would admit. (Eccl. 12:7.) The difference between soul (φυχ■) and spirit (πνε■μα) the word of God distinctly asserts (Heb. 4:12), though often in scripture, and in common language, the word soul (φυχ■) is used for both. (Matt. 10:28; 1 Peter 1:9.) Adam died, and all his posterity, in the antediluvian world, except Enoch, who was translated, and Noah, and those with him, who survived the divine visitation of the flood within the ark. In process of time

Noah died, and his offspring, with one exception—that of Elijah, who was taken up by a whirlwind to heaven without passing through the portals of death. Death, then, having been the common lot of man, and exemption from it having been limited as yet to the two just named—Enoch and Elijah—it is a most important question, which closely concerns man, Is there a resurrection of the body, or is there not? A book has been recently published denying this doctrine, which the author is pleased to call “a theological dogma.” (Page 93.) Let us turn to an older book, to learn what it says on this subject.

But before entering at length into this question, a few remarks in explanation of the use of terms may be helpful. When we say of a man that he died, we speak of the individual as ceasing by death to exist on earth, his place here knows him no more. (Job 7:10.) Yet we are assured from scripture that his spirit does not die. The body can, and does; death claims it; the grave holds it. The person, however, lives to God, as the Lord told the Sadducees in the temple at Jerusalem. (Luke 20:38.) By death the soul is set free from the body, and the latter thereupon ceases to live, so we talk of a dead body in contradistinction to a living body. Viewing the individual as a whole, we say of him what is true of a part, he is dead; for the body, which is part of him, is dead. On the other hand, if we think of the individual in the unclothed state—for there is such a state (2 Cor. 5:4; 2 Peter 1:14; Rev. 6:9)—.remembering that the soul does not die, we speak of him as living. Personality, which is attributed to him when in the body, is attributed to him equally when out of it. Christians are absent from the body, and present with the Lord. (2 Cor. 5:8.) The penitent thief was with Christ in paradise, but of the disposal of his body we have no record. Nor is this true of saints only. The rich man died, and was buried, yet was alive in hades. And Samuel, speaking to Saul years after his body had been laid in the grave, told the king that by the morrow Saul and his sons would be with him. (1 Sam. 28:19.) Hence, if we say such an one has died, we understand that a separation has taken place between his body and his soul, the former thereby merely died, though the latter still lives, for in common language we speak of the indvidual as he appears to us. Thus when we read of the dead, meaning thereby those who have departed this life, we understand that they are so called on account of their present bodily condition. As unclothed spirits they are really alive, but their bodies being dead, they are termed the dead. So we read of the Lord, “These things saith the First and the Last, which was dead and is alive.” (Rev. 2:8.) We read of those who share in the first resurrection, “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” (Rev. 20:4.) We read, moreover, of the lost, “The rest of the dead lived not till the thousand years were finished.” (Rev. 20:5.) In each of these instances, the condition, whether dead or living, is viewed as dependent on the state of the body. If that is dead, the person is dead. If that is raised again and reunited to the soul, the person is said to be living.

Next, when scripture speaks of the dead as sleeping, what sleeps, the body or the soul? Stephen fell asleep we read in Acts 7:60, but we know from 2 Cor. 5:8, Phil. 1:28, that he was with Christ. Looked at from man's point of view he slept, for the body was still, and unconscious of all that was passing around it. The same might have been said of the rich man by any who gazed on his corpse. But look behind the curtain which hides the other world from our view. The rich man was in torment, no rest, no sleep, for him (Luke 16:23), yet nothing disturbed the peacefulness of the chamber of death. Still, motionless, because lifeless, was his body, whilst in hades he was suffering excruciating torment. Still, motionless, was Stephen's body. He slept. But he was with Christ, to whom he had committed his spirit. And all can understand such language. For when

natural sleep overtakes us, what sleeps? The body. And whilst that is wrapped in slumber, the spirit may be holding converse with God, and receiving instruction from Him. (Job 4:12-21; Jer. 31:26.) Yet we say of the person, he sleeps, nevertheless it is of the body only that the statement is critically correct. So of natural death, which Adam entailed on his posterity. It is called sleep, because the body is lifeless, motionless, and at rest. Speaking, therefore, of such things as man on earth can view them, the condition of the body, whatever that condition may be, guides us in our description of the man. He slept, he is buried, he stinketh, he saw corruption, all these are facts predicated of the person, though critically true only of his body.

To turn to another point. What is the meaning of the resurrection (■ ■ν■στασις)? Before the Lord came the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead formed part of the creed of every orthodox Jew. (Heb. 6:2; 11:35; Acts 23:6-8.) The Lord's teaching confirmed it. His resurrection proved it. The Sadducees denied it, and clearly, from their question about the woman who had seven husbands, they opposed the thought of the resurrection of the body. Did the Lord by His answer acknowledge that they were right in such opposition? By no means. They erred, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. The power of God they knew not, for they thought that the resurrection state could not differ from the present one. On that the Lord enlightened them. They knew not the scriptures which taught the resurrection. To such the Lord turned them. A resurrection of the person apart from the body, which the author teaches, would not have fitted in with their crucial test, as the Sadducees considered it. Against the resurrection, including that of the body, their question was aimed, but their doctrine was by the Lord condemned, and they were put to silence. (Matt. 22:34.) His answer met with the approval of some of the scribes (Luke 20:39), who clearly did not discern in it any condemnation of that which they considered to be the orthodox view of the subject. Against the resurrection of the body the question of the Sadducees was undeniably aimed, though their heretical teaching was not confined to a denial of that. The Lord completely silenced them. They gained not even a partial victory. Their tenets He utterly repudiated.

After His resurrection a prominence was given to the doctrine of the resurrection in the teaching of the apostles, to which the Jews before the first advent had been wholly unaccustomed. The fulfillment of all Jewish hopes, it was now taught, was inseparably bound up with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Acts 13:34.) And further, resurrection from the dead, first taught by the Lord (Mark 9:10), was a doctrine now established on a sure basis, since He was risen. Now it was the promulgation of this doctrine which stirred up the marked animosity of the Sadducees, of which we have the account in Acts 4:2; 5:17. Whilst ministering on earth, the Pharisees were those who had bitterly opposed the Lord Himself. The Sadducees now took a prominent place in attempting to stem the advancing tide of Christian truth, being grieved that the apostles preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead, τ■ν ■ν■στασιν. Such being their doctrine, what did the apostles regard as an essential feature of the resurrection? Let Peter instruct us, as he did his hearers on the day of Pentecost. David, he said, “spoke of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in bodes, neither his flesh did see corruption.” (Acts 2:31.) A resurrection of the individual, apart from that of the body which died, did not enter into Peter's preaching. No theory then of a resurrection which does not admit that of the body which has died will be in accordance with apostolic preaching, and the testimony of the Holy Ghost. Will it be objected that Peter, in Acts 2, is only speaking of the resurrection of Christ? Granted. But we learn from Acts 4 that the apostles taught the resurrection from the dead, and their enemies well understood it, not merely of

the Lord Jesus, which had taken place, but that of others which had not. They based on His resurrection, already effected, the doctrine of the resurrection from among the dead. Now what Peter taught of the Lord Jesus distinctly affirmed the resurrection of the body. We learn, therefore, what the son of Simon included in resurrection, which, if he did not define, he certainly explained. Speaking thus by the Holy Ghost, we learn that God, when He teaches us about the resurrection of the dead, does not mean the resurrection of the person apart from his body.

This doctrine is not new. It is not confined to Christianity. Old Testament worthies accounted it possible. Old Testament saints looked forward to it. Abraham accounted that God was able to raise up Isaac, even from the dead, from whence he received him in a figure. (Heb. 11:19.) For in Isaac should Abraham's seed be called. His resurrection, therefore, if he died, must take place, and that clearly involved the resurrection of his body, if the promises which centered in him were to have their accomplishment. Godly women, we read of at a later date, received their children raised to life again, ■λαβον ■ξ ■ναστ■σεως το■σ νεκρο■ς α■τ■ν (lit. received by resurrection their dead); but others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection, ■να κρε■ττονς ■ναστ■σεως τ■χωσιν. It would be difficult, surely, comparing and contrasting such statements, to doubt that, as some received their dead brought back from the grave, the well-known and much-loved form again energized by life, so others looked for their own bodies to be raised again, though after a different manner, and for a different end, never again to die, but to live for over beyond death—a better resurrection indeed! Now, of such a resurrection David distinctly prophesied when he penned that psalm fulfilled by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Resurrection of the body, therefore, Old Testament saints knew was possible and looked forward to as certain.

Coming to New Testament times, we have the Lord teaching about the future of the body. Death may claim it, but God can deal with it after death. “Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell,” or Gehenna, that is, the place of everlasting torment. (Matt. 10:28.) But when will this take place? The Lord, in Luke, tells us it will be after death. “For I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell (or Gehenna); yea, I say unto you, Fear him.” (Luke 12:4, 5.) Death then is not the end of the body. It can be cast into Gehenna, called in Matt. 5:22 the Gehenna of fire, which is the lake of fire of Rev. 20, and that after death. As yet this has not been done. But how many of those whose portion will be in that lake have been dead for centuries. The dissolution of the body, and its resolution into dust, will be found no hindrance to God's thus dealing with it. For He can thus deal with it, and He will, and that after its death and resurrection. With these two scriptures before us, that man is bold indeed who would deny the resurrection of the body, and openly assert that “it is lost sight of in the ground forever.” (Page 139.)

Further, the Lord distinctly declares that He will raise the dead. “For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily,

I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; add they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:21-29.) A very full statement have we in these few verses. The Father acts in quickening power, so does the Son, who quickeneth whom He will. Has this quickening reference to the soul, or to the body? We believe the Lord is here speaking about the soul. Every man is not quickened in the sense in which He speaks in this verse. Some only are the subjects of that power— "whom he will." By-and-by He will call from their tombs all that are in them. Now He is dealing with a class, but with a class who are dead, otherwise they would not need to be quickened. In what sense, then, are they dead? Does scripture recognize death, as at present existing, in two senses, or only in one? Does the New Testament speak of those spiritually dead, as well as of those who are physically dead? It surely does. And the first passage in its pages which speaks of the one, speaks also of the other. "Let the dead bury their dead." (Matt. 8:22.)

Having announced, then, His quickening power to be exercised on behalf of some spiritually dead, the Lord describes in verse 24 certain characteristic features of those who are the subjects of it, and their full exemption from the judgment which He is empowered to put into execution, that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. The characteristic marks are these—hearing His word, and believing (not on, but) Him that sent Him. These are they who have everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but have passed from death unto life. Dead they once were spiritually. Dead in that sense they should be no longer.

Now this change, the passage from death unto life, takes place whilst they are yet in the body, alive upon earth. It is not resurrection in any sense. It is the entrance into a condition in which they never were before. They have passed (lie) out of death into life. But when was this change to take place, and how? The following verse (25) instructs us both as to the time and the means. "Now," when the Lord spoke, that change was taking place, and the means employed was the voice of the Son of God. "They that hear shall live."

Not those, however, in the tombs, but the spiritually dead upon earth, for of such scripture undoubtedly speaks; and the meaning to be attached to the term, "the dead" (ο■ νεκρο■) in this verse, the Lord by His statement of the change to be effected definitely fixes. They live who hear the voice of the Son of God. Are these the souls at present in hades? Do souls there hear that voice and live? Do souls there now pass out of death into life? It is impossible thus to apply the Lord's words. For the dead would not remain in hades any longer if that was the case. But they do not live again till resurrection takes place. (Rev. 20:4, 5.) As immortal beings all of them at this moment live to God. In that sense they have never died. None, however, who have died are said to live again till the resurrection takes place. Now the dead in Christ have not risen as yet; of this 1 Cor. 15:20-23; 1 Thess. 4:16, are witnesses. Christ risen is the firstfruits of those fallen asleep, who had not risen when Paul wrote, nor will rise till the Lord shall descend from heaven. The resurrection of these people is still future.

The Lord, however, tells us of the present effect of hearing His word—the dead who hear it live. Of resurrection He speaks not a word in this verse; but the result of hearing the voice of the Son of God is, that life is communicated to the dead, who thereby pass out of death into life. He quickens the dead, and He raises the dead. Both are effected by His voice, but the result in the former case is to give life, the result in the latter is to call forth from the tombs. In each case the dealing is with individuals. They that hear live. All that are in the tombs come forth. Between verse 25 and verse 28 the difference, however, is marked, for the objects in view are different, and the results are different. To quicken is the object in verse 25, so living is mentioned. To call forth from the tombs is the object in verse 28, so resurrection is spoken of. In the former case there is experienced a change of condition—they who were dead live. In the latter there is a change of locality as well, for they come forth from the tombs.

(To be continued, if Lord will.)

Chapter 152

The Resurrection of the Body 2

Now by no amount of ingenuity can we evade this conclusion. The words are so clear. “The dead” is the term in verse 25, where soul-quickening is mentioned. “All in the tombs” is the designation, in verse 28, of those that shall hear the voice of the Son of man. Had the Lord spoken of those spiritually dead in the same terms that He does of those physically dead, ambiguity might have been pleaded as a reason for teaching that He speaks only of one class after all. To make His language clear, He has been pleased to speak in the one verse of “the dead,” in the other of “all in the tombs."

How, then, does the author attempt to get over this? These are his words: “It is now clear to me that the dead here (ver. 26), and those in verses 28 and 29, are of the same class; that is, they are the actually dead in each case, though apparently differently designated. For, as I conceive, the little word ‘ALL' plainly proves that it must be so. Some of the dead were to hear the voice of the Son of God in the hour mentioned in verse 25; but now all those in the grave are to hear His voice in the hour that is to come. Thus the class is the same in each case; for clearly some of the dead, and all of the dead, must refer to the same class of persons. That is to say, you cannot have one kind of dead in verse 26, and another kind of dead in verses 28, 29, included at the same time in the one all. Neither does it follow, I judge, that, because the Lord changed the designation in verse 28, therefore He changed the class.” (Page 92.) From one who insists so literally on the rigid interpretation of terms, when they militate against his theory, we might have expected different reasoning from this. The author elsewhere insists that, because those physically dead are said to sleep, therefore the persons, not the bodies, really sleep. (Page 33.) He also intimates, that as he cannot find in the word the modern formula, “the resurrection of the body,” that doctrine is no scriptural doctrine for him. (Page 4.) But here, whilst admitting the change in the Lord's language from “the dead” to “all in the tombs,” the author writes of the latter as “all of the dead.” Just what the Lord avoids, evidently from design, that the author adopts. “All of the dead,” says the author; “all that are in the tombs” were the Lord's words. Now the mischief of this change of terms is great. The author probably thereby mystifies himself, and certainly may mystify some of his readers, when he writes, “some of the dead, and all of the dead must refer to the same class of persons.” His reasoning, all may see, is based on a mistake, and a mistake of his own making. Attention to the Lord's language throws light on the subject. The marked difference in His language suggests, to say the least of it, that the assumption that the same class of dead are mentioned in verse 25 and verse 28 is quite wrong.

But why must “the dead” of verse 25 be the same as “all in the tombs?” Was the Lord only occupied on, that occasion with those in their graves? Had He no word for those then alive in the body? Had the Jews been combating the doctrine of the resurrection? The Sadducees excepted, the Jews for the most part believed it. What, then, was it which called forth these personal and pointed addresses? They objected to the Lord healing the man on the sabbath-day. They challenged the lawfulness of His telling the man to carry his bed on that day, and affirmed that the Lord had broken the sabbath. They stoutly opposed the announcement of His divinity and

relationship to His Father. Then the Lord addressed them, and pressed on them the importance of receiving His teaching, and the necessity of recognizing His, authority; for life, spiritual life, He was giving, and judgment by-and-by would He execute. Observe too, that when He speaks of those in the tombs, He drops that pointed personal appeal, “Verily, verily, I say unto you.” The way He speaks, and His selection of terms in which to convey His teaching, have a definiteness of purpose in them, if the spiritually dead are those spoken of in verses 24, 25, which is lost completely if we take the author's view of the passage. Why address them in that pointed manner, if He were enunciating truth that did not then directly concern His auditors? Regard “the dead” in this passage as the spiritually dead, and the vigor and point of His teaching become apparent.

Again, “the dead” need not be, and indeed are not, synonymous with “all in the tombs.” For, though those of them who shall have entered the tombs before the Lord comes for His saints Will be included in the first class mentioned in verse 29, yet every quickened soul, formerly dead, will not at that day come forth from them, for there will be a company of saints still alive upon earth, who will be caught up without passing through death. This is admitted (page 155), and the Lord's language, though not here teaching it, clearly leaves room for it. Since, then, there are those once dead, who will never die,— “the dead” in our passage need not on prima facie ground be synonymous with “all in the tombs;” and to make plain that they are not, the Lord, when He speaks of those who had died, does not here call them “the dead."

“All that are in the tombs.” Surely that must include the bodies laid therein. No, says the author, it does not; and to substantiate his assertion, he directs attention to Ezek. 32, whereby, from a portion of the Bible, highly and, confessedly figurative, he would seek to explain away the teaching of the Son of God in one of the most solemn and plain-spoken passages which the New Testament contains. Ezekiel writes of graves in sheol: therefore, says the author, there are graves in the region to which spirits, divested of their natural bodies, have gone. Now, since he has also taught us that the earthly body does not enter sheol at all, it is difficult to see what use there can be for graves in that region. Do you bury a spirit? The idea is absurd. Is the spiritual body, which the author tells us the unclothed spirit gets on its entrance into sheol, to be laid in the grave? (Pages 50, 72, 107.) But that, according to his teaching, can have never been associated with sin. On it, therefore, death has no claim. As, then, the spirit clearly cannot be buried, nor can the spiritual body be required to submit to burial, what is buried in sheol, if the author is to be our guide? To ask such a question, from his point of view, is enough to demonstrate the untenableness of his position.

The fact is, he has started with a mistaken idea of what is comprehended in the term sheol, which really includes the grave, as well as the region in which the unclothed spirits await their resurrection. Thus Jacob exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, when called to part with Benjamin, that his sons would bring down his gray hairs in sorrow to the grave (sheol). (Gen. 42:38.) The congregation of Dathan and Abiram went down alive into the pit (sheol). (Num. 16:30, 33.) After the same manner Job speaks (Job 24:19), and the psalmist (Psa. 30:8; 49:14; 141:7), and Isaiah (xiv. 15). For by sheol was understood what we might ball the whole underworld. Both body and soul are represented as entering it. Hence the prophet can depict in graphic language the dead in their graves (in sheol), with the worm above them and under them. (Isa. 14:11) To a Hebrew this language was not incongruous, for there are worms in the grave. Graves then can be described as in sheol, for into it the whole person, both body and spirit, was regarded as entering. Now this is a

very grave fact for one who opposes the correct teaching of John 5, and denies the resurrection of the body, affirming that it “is lost sight of in the ground forever.” (Page 189.) The supposed scripture authority (page 99), for interpreting John 5:28 of dead persons as distinct from their bodies, is found to be no scripture authority at all. The resurrection of the body, which our, Lord there distinctly teaches, the author avowedly denies, and, as he states, on the authority of scripture, which, when examined, only demonstrates his mistaken view of what in the Old Testament is called sheol.

But let us proceed. The Lord having announced what He was then doing for all who would hearken to Him, and what He will do at a future time, namely, call forth all that should be in the tombs, He, in the following chapter of the. Gospel (6), presents Himself to the multitude and to the Jews as “the True Bread,” “the Living Bread,” “the Bread of Life,” in contradistinction to the manna on which their fathers had fed in the wilderness. The manna sustained life, but could not give life, neither could it preserve from death, nor ensure resurrection to those who eat of it. The Bread of Life, communicating everlasting life to all who eat of it, ensured resurrection at the last day. Not only, then would the Lord quicken souls, but those who eat of the Living Bread, if they afterward entered the grave, He would raise up at the last day. The whole person He would thus care for, the body as well as the soul. (Vers. 39, 40, 44, 54.) By eating of that Bread one lives forever. (Ver. 58.) Having eaten of it, if death should supervene, and that is physical death, resurrection should assuredly take place. “I will raise him up at the last day."

Continuing in the company, as it were, of our evangelist, let us listen to the Lord Jesus when He met Martha outside the village of Bethany. To His statement, “Thy brother shall rise again,” Martha assented, and fixed the time of it, as she responded, “I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.” To this the Lord at once replied, “I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this?” (Chap. xi. 23-26.) Now what does this mean? Lazarus was already a quickened soul. It was not about his soul the Lord spoke. Yet Lazarus was dead. The Lord knew it. Mary reminded Him of it. Martha, when she met Him, owned it, and again at the grave called His attention to it, “Lord, by this time he stinketh; for he hath been dead four days.” The Jews who were with them believed it. Physical death was the only thing in their minds. Of spiritual death there was no manner of surmise. The sorrow which filled the sister's heart arose from this, that death held Lazarus in its grasp. Death and burial had taken place when Christ was not there. For resurrection, however, He was needed. His power, and in this instance His personal presence too, were requisite. And now, on His way to the grave, He revealed what He is, the answer to that which had filled them with sorrow; for here among His saints He was ministering to such in their distress. “I am the resurrection and the life.” Resurrection he mentions first, then life. For He was speaking with reference to death the wages of sin, and with reference to the circumstances in which at that moment they all were He is the resurrection.

If, then, His people enter into death, they shall be raised up, for “he that believeth on me"(are His words) “though he have died (κ■ν ■πο θ■νη), shall live.” Clearly He is speaking of physical death: the death of one who already has everlasting life by believing on Him. If such an one dies, he shall live. On the other hand, we learn for the first time that a saint may never die, that is, never be separated from his body, as Lazarus was at that moment. “For he that liveth, and believeth on me shall never die.” Mark here the order of thought, “Liveth and believeth,” not believeth and liveth.

The never dying has respect to the body, between which and the soul there shall be, under the circumstances indicated, no separation. The living after death must refer to the body likewise, the re-uniting of soul and body, which is here called resurrection, ■ν■στασις. Till resurrection takes place, the one viewed as about to be a subject of it is not said to live. For resurrection and living are in this passage corresponding terms. As risen the saint lives. Till risen he does not live. And this will he true of all the dead saints, Lazarus, as raised up, being a kind of illustration of it; a kind of illustration only in one way, because Lazarus was raised to die again, but the dead will be raised to die no more. An illustration in another way, because it teaches what resurrection involved, the calling out of the tomb the body which had been laid in it and, as in his case, his body was raised up again, and till then, after death had come in, he was not regarded as living, so, with the sleeping saints, their bodies must be raised up for them to live.

Thus far we have learned from the teaching of Christ three important things. He can, and will, deal with the body after death, calling out from the tombs all who are in them, the one class to a resurrection of life, the other to a resurrection of judgment. Next, that it is through eating His flesh and drinking His blood one can be sure of being in the first of these classes; and, lastly, that the Lord Jesus is the resurrection and the life. Death, therefore, can have no power, save as long as He permits it, and then only over those whom He intends to enter into it: for He can, and will, raise up His sleeping saints; He can, and will, preserve from entering into it some who shall believe on Him. We would now turn from His teaching to a consideration of His own resurrection, and the consequences of it.

Chapter 153

The Resurrection of the Body 3

Of His own resurrection He had several times spoken (John 2:20, 21; Matt. 16:21; 17:9, 23; 20:19; 26:32; Mark 8:31; 9:9, 31; 10:34; Luke 9:22; 18:33; 24:7), and His enemies understood by His words that He predicted the raising of His body; for they asked Pilate for a guard to watch the tomb lest His disciples, coming by night, should steal Him away, and, counting on the credulity of the populace, affirm that He really had risen. (Matt. 27:63) The soldiers did guard the tomb, yet He rose. The clothes in which His body had been wrapped were left behind, and the arrangement of them, as seen by Peter (John 20:6, 7), betokened nothing like haste in His exit from that rock-hewn sepulcher. Neither the apostles, John and Peter, nor the women, found the body of the Lord. Of His resurrection there was no doubt. He was seen. He was handled. He was spoken with after it. He ate, too, to convince His disciples that it was Himself. He showed to them His hands and His feet, and bade Thomas thrust his hand into his Master's side.

Now, in treating of resurrection certain terms are made use of by the inspired penmen, namely, two nouns, ■γερσις, egersis, and ■ν■στασις, anastasis; and three verbs, ■γε■ρρω, egeiro, ■ν■οτημι, anistemi, and ■ν■γω anago. Of the two nouns, the first is met with but once in the New Testament (Matt. 27:58), and has reference to the Lord's exit from the tomb. The other word, anastasis, is the common term for resurrection, whether of the Lord Jesus, or of anybody else. Of the verbs, egeiro, when used of the dead, suggests the existence and exercise of power to raise them, the power being vested in and exercised by another than the one who is the subject of it. For no dead man could be said to raise himself. The dead are raised. God raises the dead. Any one also to whom that power has been delegated is said to exercise it (Matt. 10:8); but none of the dead are ever said to raise themselves, the Lord Jesus excepted (John 2:19), who on that occasion spoke of Himself as God as well as man. The second verb, anistemi, being intransitive in some of its tenses, namely, the present and imperfect passive, and second aorist, perfect, and pluperfect active, directs attention, when any of these are employed, to the condition of the one as risen who once was dead, without suggesting, as egeiro does, the action of another to raise them. (See Mark 8:31; 12:25; Luke 16:31) The third verb, anago, occurs but twice in connection with resurrection (Rom. 10:7; Heb. 13:20), and on both occasions refers only to that of the Lord. Thus far as to the terms employed.

Very momentous are the consequences which flow from the Lord's resurrection. By it He is declared to be God’s Son with power (Rom. 1:4), and is marked out as the future Judge of quick and dead. (Acts 17:31) By it likewise the believer's justification is declared (Rom. 4:25); the resurrection, too, of all the dead is a truth no longer to be doubted, whilst, of the resurrection from the dead of Christ's sleeping saints, His own resurrection is both the illustration and the earnest. Thus man, whether saved or unsaved, is most deeply concerned in the resurrection of the Lord from the dead. He rose, the firstfruits of them that sleep. But His grave is not the only one which has been bereft of its occupant. For “many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.” (Matt. 27:52, 58) Yet not alone are saints concerned with, and share in, resurrection; for all who enter the

grave shall come forth, since Christ has risen. Of this general truth 1 Cor. 15 treats, though it dwells at length on the resurrection of the saints.

Now, in treating of this subject, the truth of which was denied by some at Corinth, the apostle dwells on three important points: first there is a resurrection of the dead (vers. 12-28); secondly, the bodies of our humiliation will share in it (vers. 35-50); thirdly, that event, namely, the resurrection of the saints who form part of the church, will be accomplished in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. (Vers. 51 -58) With the first of these points all are concerned. Christ has been raised from the dead, so there is a resurrection of the dead. Its possibility is proved. Its certainty is established. But further, the body will be raised up; and here, writing to and of Christians, the apostle has dwelt at length on the resurrection of Christians. Their bodies, sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption—sown in dishonor, they will be raised in glory—sown in weakness, they will be raised in power—sown natural bodies, they will be raised spiritual bodies. Great indeed is the change to which the body will be subject, the body placed in the tomb. Perfect, too, and abiding will be the condition in which it will be raised; for, sown in dishonor, it will be raised in glory, sown a natural body, it will be raised a spiritual body; and this will take place in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. That which is sown will be raised, though a change will pass over it, so that the body will not emerge from the tomb in the same condition in which it entered it.

Thus, in common with the bodies of those saints who will never die, the frame laid in the grave will be subject to a change, though the change to which it will be subject must perforce be different from that of those who shall never die. “For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality.” (Ver. 53)

But here the author joins issue, and chiefly on two grounds—the one a question of translation, the other a question of interpretation. The translation of ■γε■ρω, to raise, he will not hear of, when the subject on hand is resurrection. According to him, this verb, egeiro; must always be rendered to awake, when used of the dead, and the person who dies, he would have us believe, is awakened immediately on his entrance into hades, and then and there receives his spiritual body, in which, clothed at once, he awaits, it may be, and with multitudes it must be, centuries, ere he participates in resurrection (■ν■στασις), anastasis. Is this really the case? Have we been all wrong, both ancients and moderns, Jews and Greeks, in the understanding of the true meaning of ■γε■ρω, egeiro? Let us test this statement. When the Lord first spoke of His death and resurrection, He did it in figurative language, it is true, but in language which conveyed what He wished to be expressed. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (■γε■ρω), egeiro. Now here, unquestionably, ■γερ■ means to raise up. To speak of awaking a temple would be absurd. To say you would raise it up is not. In this sense the Jews clearly understood the Lord to speak, as they replied,” Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up (■γεπρ■ς, egereis) in three days?” (John 2:19, 20.) Further, after His death the Jews applied to Pilate for a guard to watch the sepulcher, on the ground that He had said, “After three days I will rise again,” ■γε■ροομαι, egeirontal (Matt. 27:63), and by that they understood the exit of His body from the tomb. Clearly, then, the author, by the translation on which he insists (page 36), is at variance with the Lord, the evangelist, and the Jews, all of whom attached a meaning to the verb, ■γε■ρω, which he distinctly rejects. But, happily for his readers, he is inconsistent with himself, and with his own weapon lays low the edifice which he seeks to build up. He tells us the dead are awakened (■γε■ροντται) in brides, and that is always spoken of as a present reality. (Page 36.) This

awakening, he insists on, has nothing to do with the body. It is the person, apart from his body, who is awakened. (Page 58.)

Well, let us test this statement. The Lord was raised (■γ■γερται) on the third day (1 Cor. 15:4)—so says scripture, and so we believe. Now was He awakened on the third day? Was He personally, and apart from His body, sleeping till then? Nobody but a heretic would dare to teach that. Yet if ■γε■ρω, egeiro, when used of the dead, must always be translated to awaken the person, that is the only conclusion to be arrived at, but one which we must repudiate, and which the author would not venture to adopt. For the moment he writes about the raising of the Lord, or, as he terms it, awakening, he tells us Christ was awakened here. (Page 57.) The addition of that one word, "here," is a confession (perhaps an unconscious one) of the untenableness of his position. The raising of Christ was not immediate, but on the third day. Nor was it apart from His body, but expressly included it. The verb, egeiro, is used of the raising of the body from the grave. All, therefore, that he contends for about the awakening of souls in hades is really surrendered, the moment he has to speak of the raising up of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ was raised the third day. All is clear if we keep to the common translation of ■γε■ρω, for "if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised." (1 Cor. 15:16.) But all is confused and inconsequential if we adopt the suggested translation. For how the awakening of Christ here on the third day after He died is a proof that the dead are awakened in hades the moment they die, is a difficulty which the author has not solved, and one for which, on his hypothesis, there is no solution.

But how did Paul understand his own terms? Did ■γε■ω in his mind mean to awaken the dead person apart from his body? What, then, is the force, the meaning, of his language in 2 Cor. 1:9? But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth (■γε■ροντι, egeironti) the dead. Was it the awakening of the apostle, or of the dead in hades, which here occupied his mind? We know it was not. One more remark on this question of translation, and we will pass on. "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised (εγε■ρεται, egeiretai) in glory." (1 Cor. 15:43.) Are those in hades in glory Does the saint close his eyes in death, to awaken in hades in glory? The Apostle Paul, writing of the resurrection (■ν■στασις) of the dead, says, the body is raised in glory, thus connecting the raising with resurrection. The author admits that the resurrection is future. (Page 36.) Then the raising is also future. This has to do with the body, for of that which concerns the body 1 Cor. 15 undeniably treats. Here, then, let us very briefly look into the question of the interpretation of this chapter, on which a few words will suffice. The language of verse 42 is clear enough. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption." That which is sown is raised, though a change will pass over it. What it is which is sown none can gainsay. In addition to this, it may be remarked that the chapter throughout treats of the body, so of death, which claims the body, and never of hades, in which the unclothed spirit awaits the resurrection, does the apostle speak; for in the only place in which hades occurs in the common text, we should, it is generally admitted on the authority of B D E F G I ■1, read, θ■νατε, death. "O death, where is thy victory?" Could that question be asked, if the body was never to be recovered from its grasp? If it is to be raised again, how suited is the triumphant exclamation. Think of the body bought by the blood of Christ, and once indwelt by the Holy Ghost, never to be redeemed from the condition imposed on it by sin! Then death would have gotten a victory indeed.

Now let us see what further light is thrown on the future of the body by the divine word. First, the bodies of the saints shall be quickened and redeemed. (Rom. 8:11, 23.) Next, we shall all be

changed, this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal, immortality. A natural body we each have now, suited to that condition in which we are; a spiritual body we shall have by-and-by, suited to our condition then. (1 Cor. 15:53, 44.) Now the body is as a tabernacle, capable of dissolution; then it will be a building of God eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor. 5:1.) If the earthly tabernacle be dissolved, we have, says the apostle, our house from heaven. He does not say that the dead saints put it on the moment they have died, for he speaks afterward in the same chapter of the unclothed state, but we have it, the time for being clothed, with it being altogether a different question. Besides this, we learn that the condition in which we shall exist will be very different from our present one. Marriage will not take place (Luke 20:35, 36), nor will the frame need, as it now does, sustainment by food. (1 Cor. 6:13.) Yet the body, whatever the change, will be the Lord's. Lastly, the body of our humiliation will be conformed, the apostle Paul teaches us, to Christ's body of glory (Phil. 3:21); and John tells us that when Christ appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. (1 John 3:2)

This is the bright side of the subject. There is also a dark side. For the bodies of the ungodly are to be raised. This John saw in vision. “I saw the dead,” he writes, “small and great, stand before the throne; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them.” (Rev. 20:12, 13.) What is in the sea, and in death, as distinct from hades, but the bodies of those which have died, those unburied and those buried. Why does John say of death and hades, “the dead which were in them?” Let the reader compare these words, the last statement in the New Testament on this subject, with those in Matt. 10:28, spoken by the Lord, these last explaining how what He says is to be fulfilled.

The ancient creeds, then, and modern confessions of faith, which assert the resurrection of the body, are in that respect correct. The body which dies will be raised up, to share with its owner his condition forever and ever. The attempts to set this truth aside, whether by means of suggested translations, or supposed scriptural authority, are futile in the extreme, and on no better ground does the statement rest, that it is the person who sleeps, and not his body. On this point the author has been misled by a statement in Dr. J. Fuerst's Hebrew Dictionary, according to which the Hebrew phrase, “he slept with his fathers,” [Hebrew characters] is said to be equivalent to the phrase, “he was gathered to his fathers,” [Hebrew characters]. Thereupon we are told that to sleep with his fathers is a statement descriptive of the person apart from his body. On this supposition a great deal of the author's argument is made to rest. (P. 28.) But is it true? A little examination will demonstrate that the statement cannot be relied on. For, first, “gathering to one's fathers,” mentioned in Judg. 2:10, 2 Kings 22:20, 2 Chron. 34:28, will, on examination, decide nothing about the point in question, but the phrase more commonly employed, “gathered unto his people,” may help in the matter. For, comparing that with the one in question, “he lay with his fathers,” we see that the notice of the person's death nearly always precedes the statement of his being gathered to his people. (Gen. 35:8, 17; 25:29; 49:33; Deut. 32:50.) Once only does it follow it. (Num. 20:26.) Whereas the only occasion on which the person's death is mentioned with the phrase, “he lay or slept with his fathers,” the notice of his death follows that well-known statement. (2 Chron. 16:13.) This fact would suggest the possibility, not to say probability, that sleeping with one's fathers is not equivalent to being gathered unto them, or to one's people.

Dismissing, therefore, the latter phrase as one with which we have nothing more to do, let us see what is the meaning of [Hebrew characters], “he lay, or slept, with his fathers.” Does it refer to the body, or does it not? It can be applied to the body, for Jacob, the first who introduced the phrase, as far as we know (Gen. 47:30), certainly by it referred to his body. And in the books of Kings and Chronicles, where we so frequently meet with it, coupled as it always is with burial, and taking precedence of the mention of death on the only occasion where the two ideas are expressed together, it seems pretty certain that the meaning attached to it by the patriarch was the meaning the sacred writers in their turn intended to convey to the reader. And this is confirmed by the fact that we only once find the words, “he slept with his fathers,” when the king met with death by assassination at the hand of his subjects. If the phrase refers to the spirit in hades, apart from the body, it is difficult to understand why on such occasions that phrase should be generally left out, for the manner of death could make no difference as to the presence of the spirit in hades after it. If, on the other hand, it has reference to the body, and originally described its recumbent position, according to the simple meaning of [Hebrew characters], “he lay down,” we can better understand why it should be used at one time, and not at another. For it is certain that [Hebrew characters] by itself is used of the death of the body. (Job 7:21; 21:26; Psa. 88:5) What, then, has been built on this phrase is a mistake. The edifice so reared lacks one grand essential—a good foundation.

And indeed the whole theory of resurrection, as set forth by the, author falls to the ground, when one attempts to examine it. The soul does not sleep in hades. The term sheol embraces more than the region in which the unclothed await their resurrection. The suggested translation of■γε■ρω, to awaken the dead in hades the moment they enter that region, is opposed to the use of the term by the Lord, the evangelist, the Jews, and the apostle Paul. The resurrection of the body is a truth of scripture, and an article of the Christian faith. He who denies it contradicts the divine word, and rejects a foundation truth of Christianity. “For if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” (1 Cor. 15:16-18) C. E. S.

Chapter 154

The Resurrection of the Lord Jesus

All Christians are agreed that the death of Christ is the basis of all our blessings. Of this there can be no doubt, for “without shedding of blood is no remission.” Without the death of Christ we could never be with Him— “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone.” He could not then, but in virtue of the death of the cross, have us in glory with Him. But, while all our present and eternal blessings are founded on the death and blood shedding of Jesus the Son of God, scripture points us again and again to Christ risen and ascended, as the One in whom we stand, and are fully blessed and accepted.

The use so often made of the apostle's resolve “not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” as if he meant that he confined his preaching to the fact that Christ died for sinners, is very far wide of the truth. As a matter of certainty we know that he preached much more than this. The truth is that in Corinth, where human wisdom was so much extolled, and human righteousness so ardently contended for by Jews, the apostle determined, that instead of regarding either, he would continually have a crucified Savior before him and minister Him. For he saw in the rejected and crucified Son of God the worthlessness both of human wisdom and human righteousness. He beheld also in the cross, the divine estimate of man in the flesh. Whether it be a question of man's righteousness or wisdom, he saw both alike laid low there by the righteous judgment of God. In the crucified Savior he knew that God had entirely and judicially set aside man in the flesh, as scripture says, “our old man is crucified with him.” The crucified Son of God must therefore be the abiding witness that the “wisdom” of the one, and the “righteousness” of the other, had equally rejected Him who is “the wisdom of God and the power of God,” and ever also constantly sets forth that man had there been judged by God as utterly unfit for Him, so that “no flesh should glory in his presence.” The apostle then was forbidden by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ to have any confidence in the pretended good qualities of the natural man. So that when he entered Corinth he determined neither to recognize the boasted wisdom of the Gentile, nor the pretended righteousness of the Jew; for he had a crucified Savior before him, the Holy One of God, hated and rejected by both. He would be occupied with the cross not only as manifesting God's love to man, but as setting forth God's verdict on the thorough depravity and incurableness of man in the flesh. To imagine that the apostle only preached the death of Christ, foundation as it is of all our blessings, would be contrary to the fact; for we know how largely his ministry entered into the resurrection, ascension, glorification, and coming of Christ, and many details also concerning each of these glorious truths.

It is a brief consideration of what scripture teaches about the resurrection of our Lord Jesus, which, as the Lord may help, is now to engage our attention. It is the all-important truth of the gospel. We read of the apostles being enveloped in mist and perplexity, because “as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead."

Notwithstanding the present extensive amount of Bible knowledge, and acquaintance with the facts and literal details of scripture, it may however be truly said that the children of God are

suffering much through “lack of knowledge.” As in the last days of Israel's history the prophet had dolefully to exclaim, “My people are destroyed from lack of knowledge” (Hos. 4:6), it may now be truly said that God's people are immense losers through lack of knowledge of Christ. For who now delights to tell of the comfort, joy, victory, and blessings they enjoy, from having to do with Christ risen, ascended, and coming? The highest blessing many appear to think that they can know here is the present forgiveness of sins, and the consequence is they become associated and entangled with much that is contrary to the Lord's mind, and injurious to their own souls; which those that have a better acquaintance with Christ avoid, because they perceive another path set forth by the scriptures to the true Mends of the Lord Jesus.

As we have seen, the error of the disciples was ignorance of the scriptures as to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Their hearts were true and fervent, but they were sad, and looking in the wrong direction for comfort, because they knew not the scripture “that he must rise again from the dead.” They knew not that “it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day.” The consequence was that they were looking into the sepulcher, and were sadly disappointed because they found not the body of the Lord Jesus, instead of rejoicing in the reality of His mighty victory. They knew not that it was absolutely necessary that He must rise again from the dead. Had His body remained in the sepulcher, what assurance could we have had of His having redeemed us? Nay, more, had He been holden of death, we should have had no Savior and no salvation. The resurrection of Christ is therefore the fundamental truth of the gospel. To take away the truth of the Lord's resurrection is to remove the keystone of the arch of divine truth—to leave the soul without hope. Hence we find Peter, after this disappointment at the sepulcher, blessing God for having “begotten us again unto a lively [or, living] hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.” (1 Peter 1:8.)

When some sought to persuade the saints of Corinth that there was no resurrection of the dead, the apostle at once refers to the resurrection of Christ, and asserts that, if he is not raised from the dead, then we have no gospel, no comfort, no salvation. He says, if Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, your faith is vain, we are false witnesses, ye are yet in your sins, all who have believed are perished, and we are of all men most miserable. Thus the fundamental truth of the gospel is asserted in connection with the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and our resurrection too is affirmed because there is one Man who has passed through death and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

In looking through the Acts, when the Lord's servants were so much under the guidance and power of the Holy Ghost, we cannot fail to be struck with the prominence the apostles gave to the truth of the Lord's resurrection. In the first chapter of that book before the Holy Ghost came, when exercised about the choice of an apostle, Peter insists that one must be a witness with us of His resurrection. And the sermon on the day of Pentecost not only insists on the guilt of the Jews in slaying Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God, but it also sets forth His resurrection from the dead, and declares that He is now in glory made Lord and Christ, the true object of faith, and the giver of the Holy Ghost. In chapter 3 Peter again addressing the guilty Jews says, “Unto you first, God having raised up his Son [servant] Jesus, and sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” In chapter 4 we find that the people were grieved, and persecuted the apostles, because “they preached through Jesus the resurrection from the dead;” and when Peter addressed them about the miracle he had wrought on “the lame man, he said, “By the name

of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand before you whole." In the same chapter after waiting upon God in united prayer we are told, among other manifestations of divine mercy, "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus." In chapter 5 Peter witnesses again to the people, that "the God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree." In chapter 6 Stephen says that he sees heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." In chapter 10 when Peter preaches to the household of Cornelius, speaking of the Jews, he says, "Whom they slew and hanged upon a tree, him God raised up the third day and showed him openly; not to all the people, but unto witnesses chosen before of God, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead" In the account of Paul's famous sermon at Antioch, he again and again insists upon the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. After alluding to the rulers of Jerusalem who desired Pilate that He should be slain, he said, "they took him down from the tree, and laid him in a sepulcher, but God raised him from the dead, and he was seen many days." He also says, God hath raised up Jesus again, as it is also written in Psa. 2, "Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee." [?] Again he tells his hearers at Antioch that "he raised him from the dead, no more to return to corruption." He further adds that "he whom God raised again saw no corruption." After this when preaching at Thessalonica (chap, 17) Paul "reasoned with them out of the scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead;" and his great offense to the Thessalonians seems to have been saying "that there is another king, one Jesus." At Athens, also, we are told that some thought Paul was a setter forth of strange gods, because he preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection, and others mocked when they heard of the resurrection of the dead. In Paul's first speech of defense at Jerusalem, he says, "of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question" (chap. 22:6); and before Felix, he not only asserts that there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust, but repeats what he had said on a former occasion, "touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day." So prominently was the doctrine of the resurrection set forth by Paul, that when Festus takes upon himself to explain Paul's case, he says, "his accusers had certain questions against him of their own superstition, and if one Jesus which was dead whom Paul affirmed to be alive.'" (Chap. 25:19) Before king Agrippa also he says that he witnessed "none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come; that Christ should suffer, and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead" &c. (Chap. 26:28)

All these quotations plainly show, when the Holy Ghost was acting in mighty power with the apostles, that they not only preached the death of Christ, but that the precious truth of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was largely set forth in their ministry; and the more we consider the subject by the testimony of scripture, the more convinced we shall be not only that the resurrection is the fundamental truth of the gospel, but that those souls must be in a defective state who are always, as they say, at the foot of the cross. That ministry of the word too falls far short of the Lord's mind, which does not enter upon the resurrection of Christ, and the glorious doctrines of divine teaching associated with it.

The truth is that, if Christ be not raised from the dead, then death has gained the victory over Him, the grave has closed upon Him, Satan has triumphed, and we have no living Savior and no salvation. The subject therefore is of vital importance. But, blessed be God, Christ is risen from the

dead! He is alive again, and that for evermore, and has the keys of hades and of death; He has obtained the victory for us, and is become the firstfruits of them that slept.

The apostle Paul tells us that the gospel which he preached was that which he also received, “how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15:8, 4.) But it may be inquired, where in the Old Testament scriptures, to which we presume the apostle here referred, are we taught that Christ would rise, again from the dead on the third day?

The resurrection of Christ was plainly foretold by David in Psa. 16, which was quoted both by Peter on the day of Pentecost, and by Paul at Antioch, to prove the fulfillment of scripture in His rising again from the dead. They argued that David did not then speak of himself; for, though a prophet, he was buried and saw corruption; but that He whom God raised up saw no corruption. In death His soul was not left in hades, the place of departed spirits, neither did His body see corruption; but He entered upon resurrection, the path of life, and ascended to the right hand of God. The words are, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt show me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” (Psa. 16:10, 11) Thus the resurrection of the Lord Jesus was plainly foretold, and the instruction is clear that Messiah would not only rise again from the dead, but be exalted to the “right hand of the majesty on high."

But with regard to the third day in scripture, which would seem often significant of resurrection, we are not so plainly instructed; and yet to the spiritual mind little doubt can remain but that the third day would be the day of Christ's rising from the dead. Abraham seeing the place afar off for the sacrifice of Isaac on the third day (Gen. 22:4) makes it more than probable that Isaac was loosed from the altar on the third day. But this is not clear enough to be relied on as positive evidence on the point. Our Lord Himself referred to Jonah as a type, when He said, “As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” (Matt. 12:40) Here we have the clearest instruction that the Old Testament record of Jonah did typically set forth the resurrection of Christ, forasmuch as Jonah, after this, was vomited out by the fish on dry land. The third day is also stamped with the divine mark of resurrection by the prophet Hosea— “After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.” (Chap. 6:2) Again, we find in reference to the peace offering, that “the remainder of the flesh of the sacrifice on the third day shall be burnt with fire,” that is, that it shall be entirely for God on the third day. (Lev. 6:17)

But the third day was also most remarkably and divinely stamped at creation. Before that day the waters of death covered everything; but on that day the waters receded, and out of the dry land sprang forth living fruitful things. “The earth brought forth grass, the herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind.” And we are twice told in this day, and on this day only, that “God saw that it was good.” And what could this be for but to teach us that the third day, the day of life springing out of death, was good not only as to creation, but also as to resurrection? Thus, without question, the Old Testament scriptures did mark the third day as specially connected with resurrection. We refer only to another ancient type, to show that the resurrection of our blessed Lord “the firstfruits of them that slept,” would be on the first day of the week; for the sheaf of firstfruits to be accepted for the people was to be waved before

Jehovah on the morrow after the sabbath. “Speak unto the children of Israel and say unto them, When ye come into the land which I give unto you, and shall reap the harvest thereof, then ye shall bring a sheaf of the firstfruits of your harvest unto the priest; and he shall wave the sheaf before the Lord to be accepted for you, on the morrow after the sabbath the priest shall wave it.” (Lev. 23:10, 11)

From all these scriptures we cannot fail to enter somewhat into the apostle's meaning when he said that Christ “rose again the third day, according to the scriptures;” and we can also perceive the serious mistake, and consequent perturbation of the minds of the disciples, because “as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.” But how great their joy was when they saw their risen Lord, and could understand something of the mighty victory which He had accomplished for them!

The apostle however asserts the fact that “now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then the end.” (1 Cor. 15:20-24.)

And here we do well to notice, 1st, That the resurrection of Christ is the divine demonstration of the person of the Son of God, the foundation truth of Christianity; for “he was declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by resurrection from the dead.” (Rom. 1:4.) It also confirmed the truth of His own testimony to His personal glory, when He said, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. But he spoke of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them.” (John 2:19-22.) The apostle Paul also quoted Psa. 2 to show that it was the person of the Son of God that was raised again from the dead. He said, “God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, as it is written in Psa. 2, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.” (Acts 13:33.)

2nd, The resurrection of the Lord Jesus overcame death, and showed that though He died for the ungodly as an offering for sin, yet having laid down His life and lain in the sepulcher till the third day (thus showing the reality of His death), it could detain Him no longer. “It was not possible that he should be holden of death,” for He was “the life,” “the Prince of life,” and “he saw no corruption.” That great and terrible foe, which we have because we are sinners, Christ triumphed over in His resurrection from the dead. It is because of this that it is not now absolutely necessary that we shall die. Instead of this, we are told that “we shall not all sleep,” but some of us will be “alive and remain to the coming of the Lord,” and then, instead of dying, we shall be changed in a moment, our mortal bodies will put on immortality, and we shall be forever like the Lord and with the Lord. Thus the Lord vanquished death in His resurrection from among the dead.

3rd, He triumphed over the grave. Covered as the mouth of the sepulcher was with a great stone, and a seal set upon it, guarded too with soldiers, all could not prevent the Son of God rising out of it. And be it observed that this the greatest victory ever obtained was wrought noiselessly. No flourish of trumpets announced this wondrous triumph. The sepulcher was left in perfect order, the linen clothes carefully put by, and the napkin that was about His head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. The whole scene tells us of the most perfect

order and quiet. Had He still been in the sepulcher, the grave would have obtained a victory over Him. But, blessed be God, it was not so; and now looking at the triumphant risen One, we can truthfully say, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” And know that all this victory is ours, by God's free gift in the depth of His abounding mercy; so that we can also say, “but thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

4th, Satan no doubt thought when Christ was nailed to the cross, and the power of death let loose upon Him, so that He bowed His sacred head in death, and gave up the ghost, that the Lord was then made an end of and got rid of. And to the eyes of those who had said, “not this man, but Barabbas,” it so appeared. Such however was not the fact. Instead of Satan, who had the power of death, triumphing over Jesus, Jesus triumphed over him. He rose victoriously out of death, and not only destroyed death, but him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. The blessed Son of God thus raised from the dead spoiled principalities and authorities, made a show of them publicly, leading them in triumph by it. He led captivity captive, ascended into glory, received gifts for men, and is henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool.

5th, The resurrection of the Lord Jesus is also God's public attestation to His finished work upon the tree. If in the cry “It is finished,” it is implied that everything had been then accomplished according to the purpose and grace of God, every type fulfilled, every scripture obeyed, all the stern demands of justice satisfied, righteously established, and all the claims of holiness met, so that nothing more remained to be done, all was fully responded to by God in raising Him from the dead. If it had been possible that one sin which He bore had been unjudged, He could not have been raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. But now we do see Him crowned with glory and honor who had been numbered with the transgressors and forsaken by God. We now behold Him righteously welcomed to the place of highest exaltation, instead of being abandoned in unsparing wrath because our sins were upon Him. Thus His being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father is the best possible proof that in bearing our sins He had perfectly satisfied God, He was “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God hath highly exalted him.” The resurrection of Christ therefore is the undeniable proof of His finished work, that sin had been fully judged, and God glorified.

6th, Christ, having triumphed over death, and gone up the path of life, He has made a new and living way for us. When He poured out His soul unto death upon the cross, we are told that “the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” Thus a new and living way was consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. But, after this, He rose from the dead and entered into heaven itself by His own blood. He rose from the dead as the “firstfruits” because others are to rise from among the dead; and He went into heaven as the forerunner, because other runners are to follow. What never-ending blessedness God has given us in a risen victorious Savior! Well may we sing—

"His be the Victor's name,

Who fought the fight alone;

Triumphant saints no honor claim:

His conquest was his own

By weakness and defeat

He won the meed and crown;

Trod all our foes beneath His feet

By being trodden down.

He hell in hell laid low;

Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;

Bow'd to the grave, destroy'd it so,

Bless, bless the Conqueror slain!

Slain in His victory;

Who lived, who died, who lives again,

For thee, His church, for thee!"

ew.

7th, In Christ risen, we see Him who was dead alive again and that for evermore, and know that God has, in the riches of His grace, given us life in Him. “God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son” —a new life surely, risen life, life in One who is beyond death, the mighty conqueror of Satan, death, and the grave. He who is now in the very glory of God is then our life. Hence we are spoken of as “risen with Christ,” having been quickened together, raised up together, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. What a marvelous blessing to be thus associated in life with One who has risen triumphantly put of death, and sat down on the right hand of God! What liberty as well as gladness it gives us! How natural therefore it is because of this, that we should be enjoined to seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God, to set our mind on things above, and not on things on the earth. And these surely must be the exercises of risen life in us, for its associations are above, its proper element is where Christ sitteth. Were this more practically the case with us, how familiar should we be with the things which are above; and how careful we should be not to be occupied with earthly things beyond our necessary duties! We should enjoy “the holiest of all” as our proper dwellingplace. “The throne of grace” world assures us of continual access with confidence, while reading continually our title to glory in “the blood of sprinkling.” The risen and ascended Man in the glory would be the constant object that attracts, commands, and satisfies our hearts. We should be joyfully contemplating Him as our life, righteousness, peace, and hope. His various offices too on our behalf in the glory, as our “High Priest,” “Advocate,” “Washer of our feet,” “Shepherd and Bishop of our souls,” are enough to fill us with overflowing, consolation and refreshment. While holding the Head, from whom all blessings flow to every member of the body, we should be in communion with Him in His present work on earth. Contemplating Him also as “Head of all principality and power,” we are reminded by the Spirit that, if He is above every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come, we are complete in Him. These and many more lines of precious instruction must occupy our souls, if we are seeking the things which are above where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Many saints are already with the Lord,

“absent from the body, and present with the Lord.” Like us they are looking forward to His coming, when He, who rose so victoriously over death, will apply His resurrection power to our bodies, and then all who are in Christ, whether dead in Christ or alive and remain, will be brought together in resurrection life and glory to be “forever with the Lord."

H. H. S.

Reviews

The Gospel Of Our Salvation: Eph. 1:18 H. F. Witherby. London: Alfred Holness, 21, Paternoster Row.

This little book of 254 pp consists of twenty brief and pithy papers, in large and clear type, on the gospel and its results to the believer. Each topic—Forgiveness, Peace, Redeemed from Judgment, Brought to God, The eternal efficacy of the blood of Christ, The fruit of the tree, The root of the tree, Dead in sins, Alive in Christ, &c. is illustrated with apt anecdotes or comparisons in illustration of the truth sought to be conveyed. Many of our readers will be thankful to know of such a work; for the need of souls is great, and a considerable variety is here given in a small space.

Our Lord's Coming Again: His Appearing And Reign: Six Lectures by Thomas Neatby. London: J. F. Shaw and Co., 48, Paternoster Row.

The subjects are: 1. The Morning Star. 2. A Thief in the Night. 3. The Sun of Righteousness. 4. The Stone cut without hands. 5. Give the king Thy judgments, O God. 6. The glory which Thou gavest Me, I have given them. This will very simply and in the fewest words indicate the plan and aim of the volume, which is heartily recommended to the Christian reader, and even for others, who, knowing not the Lord, are often appealed to throughout.

Chapter 156

The Two Rich Men (Duplicate): Luke 18, 19

How beautifully the incidents recorded in the Evangelists exhibit the workings of nature and of grace. They are short and familiar, but full of matter for the meditation of our hearts, that we may be either warned or comforted.

Uneasiness of conscience was goading the rich young ruler of chapter xviii. to seek relief wherever it might be found. He loved the world, and could not give it up; and yet he had religious apprehensions of a day of judgment, and owned the fact that there was a kingdom of God still to come. This is a common case. A calculating worldly heart, with serious religious sentiments, all together working uneasiness in the soul. He was a sample of the thorny-ground hearer. He would fain have both worlds, and yet was not so sure that he had the future world. And how could he? How could such a double-minded man be stable? How could a body, the eye of which was thus evil, be full of light? His uneasiness was goading him hither and thither, and in his waverings he seeks Jesus.

Can anything be more natural? He was not a reckless man of pleasure, but a religious calculating man of the world, who could deliberately weigh his own interests in time and eternity, and make them supreme in all his reckonings.

He was with all this, of course, nothing but “an old bottle.” The new wine is therefore spilled. The doctrine of Christ is lost upon him. He goes away a lover of the world as he had come, for the love of money keeps him apart from Jesus, and thus outside the kingdom of God.

The Lord draws the simplest moral from this incident: “How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!” The disciples, however, are amazed at this, and say, “Who then can be saved?” And Jesus answers, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.” These last words are much to be noted.

It is the way of the Spirit in Luke to group together matters for moral instruction, making that much rather his end than mere accuracy Of historic time and place. After a short interval from the time of this case of the rich ruler, according to this his usual method, as I have said, Luke gives us the case of the rich publican, Zacchaeus of Jericho. They were both rich: this is a common characteristic. And up to this moment they may have had much more in common; but from this out, as far as we learn of them, they are separated forever. Solemn thought! but a thought suggested by every day's experience.

Zacchaeus is not under the goading of a natural conscience. Nothing of this appears in his present movement. His path was under the drawings of the Father, for he seeks Jesus. (John 6) It was the secret effectual drawing and teaching of the Father, and not the goad of an uneasy conscience, that was determining his present path. This was so, as we have said, because it lay toward Jesus; as He says Himself “Every one that hath heard and hath learned of the Father cometh unto me.” And that path really leading to Jesus as really led away from the world. For Zacchaeus was now traveling a road which nature and the spirit of the world would never have taken. He forgets

himself on this journey. He was no longer the rich publican of Jericho. The young ruler, on the contrary, had never forgotten his riches. But wealthy and important as Zacchaeus was, all that is now forgotten; and through the crowd he pressed, and up the tree he makes his way, careless of every cost if he may but see the Lord.

Very beautiful this! Here is an incident, as I said, exhibiting the working of grace, as the former had done the working of nature. And the end of these workings was different as the path itself. He lays his wealth at the feet of the Lord, while the ruler had gone away full-handed as he came.

For Zacchaeus was “a new bottle.” He keeps the new wine. Both are preserved. The wine is not, spilled, the bottle is not. burst. The drawing of the Father had led the soul, and the doctrine of the Son fills it. Here was a living witness of what the Lord had said, “The things which are impossible with man are possible with God.” For here was a rich man entering the kingdom, because he was not under the mere impulse of the conscience—that could never have done it—but under the conduct of God Himself, the teachings and drawings of the Father.

What a volume of holy instruction opens to us here!

And I doubt not that the case of these two rich men suggests some principal feature in the parable that follows, “the nobleman that goes into the far country.” The parable itself is suggested by another circumstance, as we learn (chap. xix. 11); but some of the features of it arise hence, as I have said. For in the unprofitable servant we see a picture of the young ruler, and in the other servants we see Zacchaeus. The moral difference between them is this: the unprofitable servant religiously owns the seriousness of a day of judgment and of reckoning, and is careful for his own sake, as he judges against it. He lays up his Lord's pound in a napkin, dreading the account he may thereafter have to make of it. But this is all. He has no heart for Christ or His service at all; but having saved himself, as he hoped, against the results of a day of reckoning, he goes forth and spends his activities on himself for his own interests. And such an one was the young ruler: he feared judgment, but had no heart for Christ, serving himself in the world.

The other servants had no calculations about judgment at all, but they thought about their Lord and His kingdom. It was their Lord who gave impulse to their activities. They set His services before them when they went forth to do business, they took His talent with them, and not their own, that is, they traded in the world for Him, and not for themselves. Altogether the opposite of the unprofitable servant this was. The Lord's talent was not left at home, but carried abroad. Whatever was done by these servants was done by Christ, and not for themselves, whether it were more or less. And such an one was Zacchaeus. He looked on his goods, and with full purpose of heart used them for His Lord, by either restitution, or by alms-deeds, serving His glory in the world.

J. G. B.

[It would rather seem that Zaccheus, in the words here applied to his conduct as a believer, describes his conscientious habits before; but the Lord cuts all short by saying, “This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.” It was a question of God's grace now.—Ed.]

Chapter 157

Scripture Query and Answer: Romans 7-8

Q. Rom. 7; 8—Does every one that receives life, or is born again, receive resurrection life? I mean is there such a thing in this dispensation as being born again without having resurrection-life communicated by the Holy Ghost When we say, “That soul has life,” do we mean resurrection-life, as in John 20:22? If so, then every one who has life is “in Christ,” according to Rom. 8:2, and John 17:21, “that they may be one in us” (Father and Son). Then would the reception of the Spirit, consequent upon believing, and the knowledge of forgiveness, unite us to the glorified Man at God's right hand? The first, in John 20, receiving life from Christ as a divine power, and the second the Holy Spirit uniting us to Christ as man.

Would it be right to say that an individual was baptized into the body? Is 1 Cor. 12:13 true only of Pentecost?

In John 14:17, “He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” Is “he dwelleth” future? or does it mean that the Spirit dwelt with them in the person of Christ, but that at Pentecost He should be in them? As it reads in our English version, one would understand, “He dwelleth with you now, but by-and-by he shall be in you,” at some future time. F. K.

A. 1. Rom. 8 takes up the Christian as having died with Christ, and having the Spirit of Christ, who is His life. He is in Christ (ver. 1), and Christ in him (ver. 10). But the Romans, though in the second part (beginning chap. v. 12) it goes on to the full Christian position in Christ, and Christ in us, never looks at the Christian but as a living man on the earth, not as risen with Christ, which introduces entirely another aspect of the condition, nor does it take up, consequently, union with Christ. It is only our standing in Him (chap. viii.), and He in us our life, and justified; hence one in us, or members of His body, do not come into view, only it is taken for granted as truth in the hortatory part. When we speak of risen with Christ, Christ is looked at as a raised and exalted man, not as quickening Son of God, nor exactly our life, but God has raised us with Him. This is Ephesian, when men are looked at as dead in sins, and it is a new creation.

Romans looks at them as responsibly living in sins, hence death is brought in, as well as removal of guilt, but resurrection is not only that the Christian is alive to God in Christ, has the Holy Ghost, and so (according to John 14) is in Christ, and Christ in him, as to his standing before God, and state in this world. But union to the glorified Man is not the subject of Romans. Of course, if we have the Holy Ghost we are united. Colossians gives Romans doctrine, adding resurrection with Christ, only does not go on to setting in him above. We are risen, but on earth, hope laid up for us in heaven to have our affections there.

F. K. forgets that resurrection-life is a term (as a short statement suitable enough) invented by Christians to express the state in which we are, not a scriptural one. In essence divine life is always the same: only that now Christ, who becomes our life, being not only a quickening Spirit, but also Himself raised from the dead, we have this life as ours according to the condition into which He is entered as man. In one aspect He quickens (John 5) whom He will; in another He is

raised from the dead, we are quickened together with Him; and though all this is life in divine power—Christ our life—yet the difference is important, and involves a great deal. It is not only being born, but born as dead to all that is passed, as Christ was—death, sin, Satan's power, and judgment passed, forgiveness and justification possessed (Col. 2:13, so Ephesians). It leads, though it be not in itself to unity of all saints in the body of Christ. Hence the connection of life with resurrection with Christ is of all importance, because it is consequent on the death of Christ, and seals on God's part the efficacy of this work, and leads us (the question of sin, and judgment, and the power of flesh and Satan settled) into the new place or sphere to which it belongs. But the life is always essentially the same, or it could not enjoy God. But the state of that life is modified by the consciousness of that place into which it is, in all its relationships, brought where

Christ is, which affects it in all its thoughts and affections, according to the power of the Holy Ghost which is in and with it. It is the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.

This affects its whole state and condition, in fellowship with God and with Christ, for morally the life lives in that in which it is. He that hath the Son hath life, and that Son is the risen Man. Now, as to life, this is always the state of him who is a Christian, that is, who has the Spirit. (See Rom. 8) But he may not have realized what it really means, though all be his; and in Rom. 7 we get one quickened so as to delight in God's law, but not delivered so as to have the place that belongs to one who knows the power of Christ's resurrection, and having not the Spirit. This last state is developed in chapter viii. No one in the Christian state but has this life; and all this belongs to whomsoever is quickened now; but till he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, his state and condition, as alive in Christ, is not known to him, he has not got into that state in relationship with God. It is his, no doubt, but he has not got it. Resurrection-life is life in another condition, the only one now owned by God, but not another kind of life in itself. Charcoal and diamond are exactly the same thing chemically, but they are very different actually. But the only state owned of God now is life connected with Christ risen.

2. By the Holy Ghost we are baptized into one body. But baptism is never “into” anything, but “unto.” In this case the difference is not very great, but it is always the object to which we are baptized. It is the object of the Holy Ghost's baptism; but as that is in power, they become members of it, and so it is treated here as in verse 19.

3. As to John 14:17, it may be taken as “will,” as it is solely the question of an accent, μενεπι or μ■νει. But I think it quite immaterial. Christ could not remain with them, this other Comforter could; Christ was with them, not in them; this other Comforter would be in them. But it does not at all mean that He was dwelling with them in Christ. He is speaking of another Comforter not come yet, and putting this in contrast with their present state. I prefer, μ■νει as it is, because of θεωρε■, γιν■σκει. The Father would give them another Comforter, who could not come till Christ was gone. It is of Him, and this new state of things, the Lord is expressly speaking, as to the world, and as to the disciples. It would not be for the world (Christ had been, though rejected), because the world did not see or know Him (that is, when come). Not so the disciples—ye know Him (present), because He abides with you (in contrast with me who am going), and shall be in you, which I now cannot be. “Is in you” would not have done, as affirming not what characterized the Spirit as the new Comforter, but a positive existing fact. J. N. D.

Chapter 158

Rome, Turkey, and Jerusalem

The excellent author draws the attention of the reader to the prophecies which bear chiefly on “the time of the end.” Much that he says is correct and important; but he does not seem to distinguish the coming of the Lord from the manifestation of His coming. (2 Thess. 2:1, 8.) Hence the place, and hopes and affections, of the glorified saints must be confounded more or less with those of the people to follow.

The chief defect in “the Outline” is that the future resuscitation of “the beast,” or fourth Empire of Rome, is not seen before its final effort against the returning

Lord, when it is to be hurled into perdition All admit the once undivided empire of the Ctesars; and then the divided kingdoms of mediaeval and modern Europe. But many have yet to learn that “the beast that was and is not” must appear again (Rev. 17), and be judged by the Lord's appearing in person. (Rev. 19) The omission of this towering evil in the West is fatal to an adequate apprehension of the prophetic word as to the closing scenes of this age.

Again, “the Consumption” is founded on a mistake of the meaning of scripture and scriptural language. Neither Dan. 7:26, nor 2 Thess. 2:8, implies, as may our English word “consume,” a gradual waning of strength. “Destroy” is the true force of the Chaldee and of the Greek. So also any one can see from Isa. 30:27, 33,—that “breath of His mouth” will bear no such idea as the gracious effect of the Spirit by the word, but of unsparing divine judgment, whatever be the wishes of commentators like Whitby and the like. Certainly the enemies of God are to be consumed, but this is an utter destruction reserved for the Highest.

As to “the Euphrates,” the general application to the Turkmen woe and wasting is not denied; but it is well also to remember that the last holder of the Turkish dominions north of Palestine is to be not weak but mighty in power, though not by his own power, and no lees astute and prosperous in his hostility to the Jews, till he too is broken without hand, that is, by divine judgment. So, whatever actual accomplishment “the frogs” may have, we must not forget that they are “spirits of demons doing signs,” which can hardly be said of infidelity, worldliness, or popery. Their specified object, too, is acting on the kings of the whole habitable world, to gather them to the war of that great day of God the Almighty. We must not lose sight of the fulfillment in the crisis. There is the principle at work now: all results will be out, precise, and plain then.

On “the Advent” Mr. H. distinguishes the Lord's coming for His own and to the world. “To His own people He will not come as a thief.” (Page 81.) This is very true, and, if fully seen and duly applied, it would help souls greatly.

But the author falls short, we think, in his acquaintance with the revealed future of the Jews. Dan. 7; 9; 11 make it clear enough that the connection of Rome with Jerusalem will not close, whatever appearances may say, till the Lord judges at His second coming the power which, with the Jews, crucified Him at His first. The king of the north, the last representative of the Ottoman Empire, must also perish about the same time, though it would seem the later of the two. The Assyrian

typifies him in Isaiah and other prophets.

Chapter 159

Sardis and Philadelphia: Revelation 3:1-12

THE contrast between the addresses to the church at Sardis and Philadelphia is similar to that in 1 Thess. 5 So here, as to the world, the coming of Christ is spoken of as a thief in the night, but not so to saints in the world, “Of the times and seasons ye have no need,” &c. The professing church at Sardis will have the character of Christ's coming in judgment.

In verse 2, “I have not found thy works perfect:” no decay of spiritual life ever lowers God's standard of holiness in the church. The church at Ephesus is reproved for losing first love; here it is “works” He speaks of.

All resources of spiritual government and power are perfect in Christ. “These things saith He that hath the seven Spirits of God and the seven stars” (ver. 1). Christ has the perfectness of seven Spirits and seven stars. Whatever we have to do in this world, common occupation, business, anything, the great object is to represent Christ, “If thine eye be single,” &c. There may be a hundred wrong ways, but I must take care to get into the right one. If my soul is knit to Him ("my soul followeth hard after Thee") we shall measure all our path as to how far we can do justice to Christ. Whether I have made much or little progress as a Christian, I must have Christ my object, as the end. Christ will be reflected all down the path, then every step onward will be brighter and brighter. It is not going fast on the road that is the great point, but going always in it (the faster the better too): “forgetting those things that are behind and reaching forth to those things that are before, I press towards,” &c. We must have our hearts set upon Christ. Though in one sense not nearer Christ at the end than at the beginning, in another we are a great deal nearer. The fact of our resurrection is not nearer; but we are nearer in the moral effect of the expectation. Of the church it is said, “That he might cleanse it by the washing of water.” In one sense it is perfectly clean, but in another it is getting more so, through the application, by the Spirit, of the word to the individual members of Christ's body and so producing in the whole moral likeness to the image of Christ. So the outward fact of resurrection is and may still be future, but it is the power of the troth of resurrection wrought into his heart that Paul desired.

There are some in Sardis of whom it is said, “They shall walk with me in white,” but the Philadelphian state is one of far more blessing. There is energy in the midst of. Sardis encouraged: but there is approbation given to Philadelphia, “Thou hast kept my word.” The great exercise of faith will be keeping the “word of Christ's patience;” for the days are come in which it is said, “Where is the promise of His coming?” The heart set on Christ Himself gets such a sense of His blessedness that it is kept fresh in the hope of seeing Him. “When we shall see him as he is,” it is said not “shall be.” We shall see Him as He is now, the glorified man; and we should so realize Him now When it is thus with me, I have so tasted what He is that I want Him to come.

In one sense Christ cannot come, but is waiting in patience until His word be fulfilled, “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me.” He waits, He has not got it yet, and I must wait; my heart has now such a connection with what Christ is, is so knit up with Him, that it can find no satisfaction in anything else. “My patience!” “He shall see of the travail of his soul,” &c, The Father's will is that

we should lose nothing. The character of the promise to him that overcomes corresponds with that in which they were exercised. What is the promise? “He shall be a pillar in the temple of my God.” It is not said 'the temple of God’ merely. Mark the number of times “my” comes before us in this verse. You have been associated with My patience, and now you shall have the same association with God that I have. “Thou hast a little strength.” See what a little strength comes to! a crown then Great strength now is mixed with carnal things, and will be weakness then.

"I will keep thee from the hour of temptation.” Mark that word “from;” it is not merely through. Does the Lord delight in trying His people? No, He would rather keep them from it; but He must try us for our good., Still we may well use that petition, “Lead us not into temptation.” For it is a sad thing if God is obliged, as in Job's case, to try us by exposing us to Satan for the destruction of the flesh. Trial will come upon all the world. As long as there remains wheat in it, He will sift, sift, sift it, till every grain is separated, and He will have us to be separated. “I will keep thee from,” &c. As regards the saint, in the consciousness of little strength keeping the word of Christ's patience, in fellowship with God's long-suffering, he will be kept from that hour.

So in Hebrews we read, in passing through the wilderness God gives us two things as means of blessing down here—His word, and Christ's priesthood. There is the promise of entering into His rest; and with everything that comes in between our apprehension of that rest and us the word of God deals as a two-edged sword. “The word of God is sharper,” &c. What tends to unbelief? Every thought, intent, every little root that strikes into this world—anything not from God—everything that separates from our desire to see Jesus and be with Him. We are in the wilderness, but every heart rests either in Egypt or Canaan. It is either Canaan in hope, or Egypt in heart. Whatever does not bear the thought of God separates from Him, as the word shows us. Sorrow, affliction, is not wrong: but, if the will does not submit, it is rebellion, and this is wrong. All open sin is cut up by the word, the two-edged sword. All our weakness and infirmity are borne by Him who is touched by the feeling of our infirmities, &c.

We must be going on with Christ, and in the consciousness of going on. “Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” “I will write upon him… my new name.” Christ will stamp those who overcome as associated with Him in the temple of His God. He will give us His own portion as risen and heavenly.

Chapter 160

The Saviour and the Sinner

Luke 7:29 - 50

This is one of the passages found here and there in scripture which bring out in strong relief the grace of God, and what is in man's heart too.

Here we get the Pharisee, this poor sinner, and the Lord Himself. We see these three characters, these three hearts all together: the man righteous in his own eyes; a person outwardly in wickedness; and then the heart of God, and the way in which He looks at and judges these two cases.

What precedes in the history is this. John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to ask, “Art thou he that should come; or look we for another?” (ver. 19), and this gives occasion to the Lord to speak of God's ways and dealings, the principles of which are of all importance to us. John had come with his solemn testimony, but the conscience did not bow to it. Then came the gracious testimony of Christ, but the heart was not moved by it. “But wisdom is justified of all her children.” God's ways, whether in the testimony of John the Baptist, or in that of the Lord Jesus, are justified by the children of wisdom. The Pharisee is here, and the poor sinner: then comes the question which is the child of wisdom.

We get a most important principle here: these publicans and sinners “justified God” both in the testimony of John, and in that of the gospel. When we know what we are as sinners, we justify God, never ourselves; and then in His ways with us He justifies us. The moment we begin to justify ourselves, it is only the utter darkness of the human heart.

We find these two testimonies. John the Baptist came requiring fruit, calling to repentance: the publicans and sinners justified God in this: the ax was laid at the root of the trees, these poor sinners acknowledged it and repented: they justified God. The first good fruit that is produced is always the acknowledgment that we produce bad fruit.

Then came the blessed Lord, telling of sovereign grace that rose above all their sins; they justified God in this too. The man that justifies God in condemning him most thankfully justifies God in sending His Son to save him. Those who owned the truth of God's judgment, and that they deserved it, confess their sins. (Matt. 3:6.) Are we all willing to justify God in condemning us?

John was so strict he would not even eat with any one; he could have nothing to say to these sinners: that was the reason they said, “he hath a devil."

“There is none righteous, no, not one.” (Rom. 3:10.) This is plain enough; the “great white throne” will not make it plainer. “That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.” (Rom. 3:19.) This is God's testimony, and in the gospel of grace too.

Now we see around us numbers of religious people, going on decently and reverently; but their delight• is not in God. Take such a person, and see where his heart is; leave a man alone three or

four hours, and he thinks of his cares, game, pleasures, never of Christ. Christ has no place at all in his heart.

We all have the idea that we shall be happy in heaven; so we shall, perfectly, blessedly happy. But put the natural man there, and he would get out as quickly as ever he could: there is nothing above he would like. When the blessed Lord came down in grace, man would not have Him.

If you take a false religion, you never find a man ashamed of it; you never see this among Mahometans, heathen, or even in corrupt Christianity. Take a Christian, a real Christian, is he not ashamed to confess Christ before men? He is ashamed of himself for it, surely. You never find a person ashamed of a false religion, but you find Christians ashamed of the true. Take man as man, and every mouth is stopped. Do we justify God in condemning us? The child of wisdom says, 'It is true, I deserve to be cut down: I am a child of wrath; I justify God!' When that is the case at once we are thankful for grace. When I am personally convinced that I deserve condemnation, I say, 'I justify God in the grace that rises up above all my sins: I do not justify myself.'

The Son of man came in grace carrying the testimony of goodness wherever there was a poor sinner who would receive Him. God's wisdom in this double way is justified. Wherever there is truth in the inward parts, we justify God.

Then as to the fact of the history we find who this child of wisdom was. We see it was not the Pharisee who set up to have a righteousness for God. The woman justified God's testimony by John (I do not mean in fact, but it was the same testimony), she acknowledged her condemnation, but she justified God too in another way.

We cannot pretend to be righteous (I do not speak of what grace produces, but of the natural man), we do not love our neighbor as ourselves, we are not troubled if our neighbor's house is burned down as if it were our own. If I take the law of God, we may deceive ourselves about loving God with all our hearts, but a man must be a dishonest man if he says he loves his neighbor as himself.

Paul could say of himself, “Touching the righteousness which is in the law blameless” (Phil. 3:6), but the moment the law said, “Thou shalt not lust,” it might as well say, “Thou shalt not be a man.” If I take the law, you see it is most useful; it probes the heart and brings the consciousness that we have not kept it. Take all of you here this evening; God has said, “There is none righteous, no, not one.” Can any of you say He is mistaken? It is perfectly true that, unless we are probed, we are all disposed to have a good opinion of ourselves; we are all disposed to be Pharisees. When a man is in this state, Christ is not the object of his heart at all: he calls himself a Christian, but, if he is honest, he will have to acknowledge that Christ has no place in his heart.

In this wonderful history in Luke 7 we get these three hearts unveiled: the man's heart, not that of an open profligate sinner; the heart of the woman who was such; and God's heart. We see too who was the child of wisdom.

The Pharisee, who is curious to know about Christ, asks Him to dinner, but he gives Him no water for His feet, and no oil. He is curious to know this preacher, and he thinks himself perfectly competent to judge about religion. The Lord noticed it all. There into this fine house the woman comes confounded as to her sins, but her heart fixed by what is in Jesus, her whole heart going

out to the blessed One. The Pharisee sees the woman washing the Lord's feet with tears, and anointing them with ointment, and he says within himself, ‘That is no prophet.' When the conscience is reached, it is under judgment; but when it is not reached, a man thinks he is perfectly competent to judge whether God is right or wrong. “And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed him five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him. Thou hast rightly judged.” He says to Simon, you are right, showing that He was more than a prophet. “Seest thou this woman?” Her whole heart is upon me. We see too a person who has the Lord Himself in his house, and he is settling that He could not be a prophet! Where the conscience is exercised, it never judges, but it is judged. We all have a natural conscience, that is perfectly true. God took care man should have that, but the intellect of man knows nothing of the things of God. If my intellect could measure God, I must then be the master of my subject. If I understand mathematics, I am master of that subject; if my mind were capable of judging of God my mind would be the master of God. When conscience awakes and says,” Thou art the man,” you have been sinning against God, there is no attempt then to judge. All true knowledge of God comes in through the conscience. Nothing but faith, which is the eye of the conscience, can put man in his right place with God. God brings me to justify Him: He is a holy God, I am not holy. That is the way the knowledge of God comes in. God is love: that is true of course, but this is the way true knowledge of Him comes. The Pharisee thought he was all right, but in the presence of the Lord in grace he settled that He was no prophet. The mind of man is pitch darkness when we justify ourselves, not God. When we turn to the poor woman, we get owning in the fullest way her sinfulness, confounded by it; but what had she found in Christ? What does Christ mean? Who was He? What brought Him here? Was it our wishing, our asking? We rejected and crucified Him when He came. I find, beloved friends, God acting when man was an utter sinner, all mouths stopped, then God manifest in flesh comes down amongst men. What brought Him down? I see in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, and more fully still in His death, that “God so loved the world.” This love of God had come into the world so that sinners could look and trust Him, while owning their sins.

The two names of God which express what He essentially is are light and love, light which is the purest thing we can conceive, and love. You see the law did not reveal God. It gave a perfect rule for the children of Adam, but Christ is not that (I do not say that He is not a model for Christians): but He is God Himself come into this world as light and love, showing me my sins because He is light. Show me any society you please where men are enjoying themselves, bring in Christ, and this spoils it all.

But then if God is light, He is love too. When God has shown me! as light, all that I am, I find I am in the presence of the perfect love which brought Him here, and now instead of fancying I can meet the judgment, I have God Himself here showing me what I am. The heart of this poor woman and the heart of God perfectly met. “God is light,” and the woman had not a word to say for herself, but God is also love, and so she goes into the Pharisee's house. The light and the love manifested in God are both revealed to this woman's heart; the light showed her that she was, an utter sinner; the love was what brought her there. She did not yet know that she was forgiven, but there was this blessed revelation of God which required nothing from her, but which was for her just what she

wanted. Christ was God in this world come to win back the confidence of man's heart to God. I get this blessed One in this world, and He says, 'Are you ashamed to show yourself to a decent person? Well, come to me.' He was here in this world, using the holiness that could not be defiled, to carry the perfectness of His love to every poor sinner. We see a perfect example of this in the poor leper of Matt. 8:14. If a man touched a leper he must be put out according to the law. Well this poor leper saw the power that was in Christ, but he did not know His heart, and he says, “If thou wilt thou canst make me clean,” then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched him. I find the blessed Lord using the holiness that could not be soiled, that He might touch man in his sins! When my heart has seen that, I have got both truth and grace, truth in the knowledge that I am a sinner, and grace in Christ. The poor leper might have said, 'I am vile, not fit to show myself to God or man, but I find One who can touch me,'

Christ is God come down to sinners in their sins. The law could only say, “If you do not do this, you are cursed.” Christ comes to these sinners, and He shows us what we are; but He shows us also what He is—love, that brought Him down to us as we are, the vilest, the most willful, sinners. Have not you committed sins, all of you? Well, how much sin will shut you out of heaven? Why did you sin? Because you liked it, your conscience tells you so. You cannot say to me, “You are a big sinner, and I am a little one.” Suppose you have committed ten sins, and I eleven, then am I to be shut out, and you let in? If I find two crab trees, one bearing one crab, and the other one hundred, I say the one is a crab as well as the other. How many sins had Adam committed when he was driven out of paradise? One. That one sin proved his distrust of God, and his confidence in Satan. One crab proves the tree. It is quite true that some are living in flagrant sin, like the poor woman: it would be well if they were like her here. There is no good in sin but there is good in being convinced of it, as she was. God must deal with all sin, and this is what He does. If you have not found Christ, if you have not been washed in the blood of the Lamb, you are under judgment.

The woman could not talk about theology, but she has found God, and what is in God's heart.

The Lord could say to the Pharisee, “You are perfectly dark as to your own heart and as to God's heart. If you gave no water for my feet, this woman has washed them with tears; if you gave me no kiss, she has not ceased to kiss my feet. Everything she had she has given me. You had the Lord in your house, and you did not know it."

Then He says of the woman, “Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little,” She had really met God's heart as expressed in Christ, though she could not explain how it was: light was in her heart, love too, and they met. Why do I go to the cross? God manifests there His righteousness against sin, and His love to the sinner, and I justify God in His blessed love: as a child of wisdom, I justify wisdom.

Then we get Christ's answer to the woman's faith: “Thy sins are forgiven.” She did not know it when she came in, but she loved Christ, she trusted Christ; and now the sins are all gone. He said to her—it was not a mere doctrine in the air, but He gives her the comfort of it— “Thy sins are forgiven.” God has sent love and light here, out He has sent forgiveness here also, “according to the riches of his grace,” not narrowly, closely, measuring our need. He pronounces this judgment upon her, “Thy sins are forgiven,” as He did to the thief, who was fit to go to paradise, “Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.” The dying robber was bearing the fruit of his ways before man, but Christ was bearing it before God, and therefore he was a fit companion for

Christ in paradise. This is true, of every believer. “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” (Col. 1:12.) “For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.” (Heb. 10:14.) This sanctification is entirely uninterrupted, because Christ gives it perfection.

People call in question what the Lord has said to the woman, “Who is this that forgiveth sins also?” What is the good of preaching the remission of sins, if you do not believe it? Do you think, when God calls you by His grace, that He means you to be happy with Him or not? If we do not know we are forgiven, it is impossible to be happy. John, writing to all Christians, says, “I write unto you, children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.” (1 John 2:12.) You will not find after the day of Pentecost unforgiven sins in a believer. Did Christ die for half my sins? I believe Heb. 10, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” Though I deserve death and condemnation, I believe that Christ, in the fullest grace, has taken my place, and He did not sit down till the work was perfectly finished. If the work that puts away your sins has not been done perfectly, when is it to be done? Can Christ die over again? Can another Christ come and die? “Without shedding of blood is no remission.” Christ cannot shed His blood over again, but the work by which He put away our sin never loses its value in the presence of God.

All through the Gospels we see that it is the soul that clings to Christ, touched by His love and grace, that learns most: that is where light and understanding come in, and so here the first full testimony of the gospel is given to this woman— “Thy sins are forgiven?” Did He deceive her? “Thy faith hath saved thee” —a blessed world If you have faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, you are saved. What did He come for, but “to seek and to save that which was lost?” It is an accomplished work that can never be repeated. There is no veil now: we are brought into God's presence by Christ's work. If our sins were as scarlet, they are now as white as snow, because this work of Christ, perfectly accomplished, puts me before God in the value of it.

Mark another thing. He says to the woman, “Go in peace.” “Peace I leave with you.” Are you before God in the perfect peace He was in? He has made peace by the blood of His cross. He met God there on the cross, and the testimony of the gospel is that of a finished work. Now, beloved friends, remember the Lord's love takes all pains that He might do this for us. His sweat was as it were great drops of blood, when He was only thinking of the cup He was about to drink.

I justify God in condemning me, but I justify Him also in saving me. He is righteous and holy, and He could not bear the sins; but He is love too, so He put away the sins. Whatever I do now is to be done in the name of Jesus; I am called to walk like a child of God. All duties flow according to the place we are in: duties cannot exist till we are in the place to which they belong. How can I have a child's affections if I am not sure if I am a child? You must be a Christian before you can have Christian duties. We had duties as men, but we are lost on that ground.

Be assured of this, that scripture is perfectly plain on the point that we know our relationship with God. We own the judgment that was due to us, but we know the relationship in which we are. “At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” This is the effect of the presence of the Holy Ghost.

Am I to doubt the value of Christ's blood shedding? Does the Holy Ghost make me doubt? God says, “Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.” I do not doubt it: the Spirit cries,

“Abba, Father.” Ought I to doubt it? We shall go through exercises—the deeper the better; but the love of God has been revealed, and the fact is that I was a poor sinner, but here this blessed One came into the world when I was such, and died for me when I was such. The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are all engaged in this work.

Have your hearts been opened to see the unutterable love in the Son of God coming to die for you, and that God has accepted this work? We shall have conflict with ourselves surely, conflict with Satan and with the world; but we are in perfect peace with God. God calls us to own our sinfulness, but to know His love. The Lord grant, if this is not yet your case, that you may submit yourselves to God's righteousness.

"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

Chapter 161

The Value of Scripture Knowledge

I feel strongly that one has to cast oneself on the Spirit of God, for speaking of mere circumstances sometimes creates difficulty. I would say that it has struck me, where the King is spoken of, the bride is Jerusalem; when the Lamb is spoken of, the bride is the heavenly Jerusalem. Of course, there are many analogous principles in both. Psa. 45 is entirely concerning the King's wife—the Revelation entirely the Lamb's. I would say there is a good deal of interest in seeing the different characters of blessing in their relationships. I see two grand characteristics in the Lord's dealings. The one that of righteousness, as it is said, “The righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright;” and the other grace: not that in His dealings in grace He gives up righteousness, but righteousness, simply as righteousness, could not be to sinners; but they needed grace, which is maintained in righteousness in the Lord Jesus. The position of the church, as knowing their righteousness in Him, comprehends the character of grace. I see this distinction going on all through. In Isa. 60 we have the King and the bride. God could not identify Himself with His people Israel when they failed in their responsibility to Him, and He cast them off; but when, in Isa. 60, we see them in the stability of glory, their iniquity having been forgiven, and carried away into the land of forgetfulness,” the sons of the strangers are to build their walls, and the nation and kingdom that will not serve them are to perish,” &c. They will exercise dominion, but not in grace; power is mentioned in the seat of righteousness at Jerusalem. This made the apostle cry out,” Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his ways, and his judgments past finding out."

He saw Jerusalem to be the place, properly speaking, of righteousness, and yet if God had received the Jew, on his own proper ground of righteousness without Christ, brought out the fullness of their iniquity, and concluded all in unbelief, it was thus that God might have mercy upon all. That just “as ye in times past have not believed God, yet have now obtained mercy through their unbelief; even so have these also not now believed, that through your mercy they also may obtain mercy,” has been brought forward to prove that through the mercy of the church the Jews are to come in; but it should be rendered, “even so have these also now not believed in your mercy, that they also may be the subjects of mercy.” They would not believe in the Gentiles' mercy, and are themselves therefore made the objects of mercy. Even the Jew, who stood on the principle of righteousness, comes in on the ground of mercy. We see how different the character of the bride, the Lamb's wife, is from that spoken of in Isa. 60 In the first place, of the former it is said, the nations [of them which are saved] shall walk in the light of it, &c.; not only light goes out from it, but life and grace are its characteristics. The fullness of the love and grace of Christ is expressed in His receiving the church, and it becomes his helpmeet in expressing His grace in that day.

As regards the heavenly Jerusalem, it is not righteousness maintained in power, but grace, that will be its characteristic. There is nothing more instructive than taking that which is to be the character of the heavenly Jerusalem, and comparing it with that of the church now. We ought to be now anticipating that which we shall be actually in the day when the Lord gives us glory. Nothing that defiles was to enter into that heavenly city: the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the

nations, &c.—that should be the character of the church now; purity, love, and grace towards the world. Our place is just that of drawing down now the character of grace that will be displayed in the glory. We do not see in the heavenly Jerusalem the security of righteousness exhibiting itself in power against others, but in grace. Paradise knew nothing of grace; innocent men might live in it; but there was no tree of life there for those who had failed. We read that “the streets of the city were pure gold."

This is that which the mercy seat and girdle were made of. Purity is the very walking place of the saints there: instead of its defiling us, as the world does now, and making our feet need the washing of our High Priest, the very place on which they walk will be purity and righteousness. “Transparent glass” denotes true holiness. The character of the divine purity is aimed at in the laver, ministering death and resurrection. The very place of our conversation, that on which we stand and walk, will be righteousness and true holiness. In us the world will see that glory which we shall see immediately. “Every several gate was of one pearl.” They will discern in us then the beauty and comeliness which Jesus will have put on us.

We read of the church under the character of a goodly pearl, which the merchantman finding, sold all that he had for it. Its comely beauty is thus exhibited, and its desirableness to the merchantman, which made him willing to sell all that he had for it; and Christ, for that loveliness which God clothed the church with, did the same. The doorway of the city has the character of grace in the flowing forth of the river of the water of life. Here are no plagues and curses. It is most profitable to bring the light of the glory of the coming dispensation to the circumstances in which they are, so that the character of that light may be expressed in those circumstances. In the case of the Jews who walked in the light of the coming dispensation, those who had faith and hope in that which was not present, and who thus obtained a good report through faith, brought in the energy of the divine thoughts into their circumstances, though walking obediently to the dispensation they were in.

A passage in Psa. 145, speaking of the blessing of that day, I would refer to, where we have brought before us the blessing of the saints on earth: Messiah taking His place in the kingdom; conversation between Messiah and the Jewish saints in that day, stating what their happiness will be, &c. The deliverance of Israel, and God's dealings with them, will make them competent to declare His acts to the people which shall be born. Messiah and His saints speak these things together, and they tell the nations what their God is (vers. 11, 12); and then we have the character of the kingdom. Their business will be that of learning the character of God, and to make it known to the Gentiles; and this should be the business of the saints now. The world cannot know God, but we are called to be the “epistle of Christ, known and read of all men.” The church has to be Christ's letter of recommendation to the world. The church, being made a partaker of grace, can rise above all law demands. Innocence could not do this. There was no healing tree in the garden of Eden, but, the church being made partakers of grace now, the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

The greatest part of the blessing of the church is that it is united with the Lord Himself. It is not merely that it is glorified and loved, but the Father loves us as He loves Jesus; the best proof of this love is that He has given Jesus for us. That love which is brought out through the glory associates the church with the Son—He comes in the glory; and the glory which it will have is

consequent on love. The source of the glory which will be displayed is more blessed even than the manifestation of it. It is blessed to be manifested in favor; and why? Because the favor of the person is precious to me. In John 17:23 the Lord prays that the world may know that “thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” While the Lord has obtained all for us, yet, when He comes to give His bride her glory, He does not say that it is a proof that He has loved her; but, in the blessed self hiding of love, He says that it is the Father's love: “and thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” This is exceedingly blessed and beautiful: the Lord gives witness before the world, not that He loves her, for that was shown in the necessity of her sinfulness; there is nothing more precious than that between the church and Himself; but to the world He exhibits the church as loved by the Father, which gives it honor, not in connection with sin and shame. We see the same principle brought out in the history of the prodigal son, however touching that love may be between the ruined sinner and the Father, which causes Him to fall on his neck and kiss him; yet before the servants He takes him home in honor, with the best robe on, and the ring on his hand, &c.

We have to understand the depth of the love of Christ in meeting the sinner. This brings out the costliness of His love; but there is something besides this. When He loved the church before the world, it is as the Father's giving her glory, and taking delight in her. The love of our Jesus is perfectly blessed, and touching, and considerate towards us; there the heart's affections learn to delight in Him. I would now merely refer to one passage, Eph. 5:27: “that he might present unto himself a glorious church,” &c. As God took Eve, and presented her to Adam, so the second Adam will present the church unto Himself. There will be all the divine delight in doing it. The church is called the Lamb's wife, because He suffered for her. It is impossible without suffering to bring out the fullness and savor of love.

The heavenly Jerusalem is shown [in Rev. 21] to be really a divine thing, “descending out of heaven, having the glory of God.” When we think about sin, without reference to the glory of God, we come short of a right estimate of it. The moment we have tasted of the “glory of God,” compared with this everything is sin. The blessing of the church must not come short of this glory: The Father has loved the church, and given it to the Son. It is taken out of Christ (as shown in Psa. 139:15, 16), and as the bride it has the “glory of God.” Man having got the knowledge of good and evil, he must either be miserable in using his knowledge against God, or he must rise above the evil as God is above it; and it is this which is the place of the church in union with Christ, and grace is wrought into glory. We see that “the glory of God did lighten it,” and that the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it, not the Father. While God unfolds Himself in His various characters, in His wisdom, in different dispensations, the very place of the worship of the church is that which is the whole display of God's wisdom and power; “the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.” In Eph. 3:21 we read, “unto him be glory in the church, by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end.” This seems to set the church as the crown of all dispensations, setup as over, and the link of God with, all dispensations. Great glory will then be His: “to him be glory in the church,” &c, according to the power which worketh in us.

With that of Father there are three great characters of dispensations: first, that of Almighty; then of Jehovah; then that of Father. The apostle, in 2 Cor. 6, speaking of the place of the church as being separate from the world, says, “wherefore 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.” This was the first character in which God manifested Himself in dispensation, but

at this time God Almighty did not say, I am your Father. The very principle and essence of this dispensation is that God is revealed in the character of Father. Jehovah and Almighty are not the proper relations of God to us. When the glory comes, there will be the full perfection of everything: “The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb.” The Lord God Almighty as concerns the glory, and the Lamb as having brought us into security through His sufferings, are united. For eternity, in chapter 21:1-8, it is simply, “the glory of God did lighten it,” &c. We have nothing about the Lamb after the millennium: the bride, the Lamb's wife, will be His helpmeet, as the minister of grace.

I would now turn to the question of Messiah's kingdom. There is a difference between the state of things in which there is a King reigning in righteousness, and “the new heavens and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” If it dwells there, there is no need for rule. When there is a liability to evil, we want power to secure good.

During the millennium there will be the King reigning in righteousness—not merely dominion in righteousness, but securing righteousness by power. I distinguish between the states of “dwelling” and “reigning."

The time when God will be all in all will be analogous to that of paradise in its character; the millennial time, to that of Noah's power, though there will be a great deal of the Adamic power brought in. Noah, if he had been faithful to the power given him, would have had a great deal of the Adam blessing; but he failed entirely, and then failed family discipline. The character of millennial blessing on earth will be the security of righteousness by power; but when “God shall be all in all,” the new Adamic character of Christ will be displayed over a new creation, and all evil will be done away: “the tabernacle of God shall be with men, and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be their God.” Therefore on the incarnation the heavenly host sounded, “Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” But when the Lord Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the word was, “Peace in heaven.” If Christ takes His place on earth and in heaven, there must be peace between God and the people on the earth.

Then, as to the Scriptural phrase “forever,” there are one or two points on which I would speak. I do not acquiesce in the alteration of that passage in Heb. 10— “But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God.” I believe it is right as we have it in some Bibles—the comma after “for sins,” not after “forever.” It does not refer to the length of the time that He sits there, but to the fact that Jesus is not as those high priests who stand daily offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin, but that He has sat down, as the continuous evidence of the perfection of His sacrifice, that the believer might have always a purged conscience. This is the force of the passage, and not that He is perpetually in heaven.

I see distinctly, in regard to the saints as to Christ, that they shall reign forever and ever. It is not said with Him forever, but more generally as regards His reigning forever. I see distinctly in Dan. 2:44 the same thing presented as in the passages which have been quoted, merely the merging of the human character into the divine perpetuity of the kingdom, not looking at the King in relation to the specialty of the kingdom as to the necessity of its continuance, but showing the blessing of supremacy that belongs to Him as Lord. In regard to the quotation in Ezekiel, it must be taken in a modified sense, for this reason—it is about Israel a question of generations in the land; “your children's children shall dwell in it forever"; yet the very elements—not the earth only, but the elements—are all to melt, but the kingdom of the Lord God of Israel shall not be destroyed. They

are but witnesses for an appointed time that Jehovah reigns.

I would now turn to 1 Cor. 15. It does not refer to Messiah's kingdom down here. The kingdom that is to be given up refers to that spoken of in Psa. 8 Here is the question of all things being put under man's hand; when judgment comes, the Father (we read) judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: then the Son has a sort of independent kingdom. In the person of the Lord Jesus God has set man over the works of His hands. Is this title in Christ now? Yes, and the church owns the title, and the world does not; but if He were to take the power, He must exercise it in righteousness. In the sense spoken of we own Christ as reigning, but not as sitting on His own throne. Psa. 109 describes the rejection of the Lord, and His deep humiliation. In Psa. 110:1 Jehovah says to the Son," Sit on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool." He shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom. His kingdom comes at His appearing. This is a question between man and God, not the question as to Messiah's kingdom. Does He deliver up the rule as man when He appears? Clearly not; but He must reign until His enemies be under His feet, till He has put down all rule and all authority and power. His enemies are not yet put under Him, though the Father has put all things under His feet in title now. But you must recollect that Satan is to be let loose at the end of the millennium, and fire comes down from heaven, and devours those whom he deceives. If death, as has been said, will be used to destroy the enemies, still this proves that there must be enemies to be destroyed, and we must look to something afterward to render death void; as to the saints, we know that it is rendered void. The apostle, in this chapter, drops anything but the resurrection of the church. When all things shall be subdued, then the Son, as man, the second Adam, shall be put in subjection at the end. It will not be then man governing the world, but man will be done with, and God (the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) will be all in all. God shall wipe away all tears. Nothing about the Lamb; the mediatorial character will be then removed.

I separate entirely Messiah's kingdom from the bride, though both are most blessedly connected. His glory will shine upon the earth, and the nations will see the glory in us; we shall see it in the Lamb, seeing Him as He is, we shall be made like Him. We shall have nothing to do with the destruction of Antichrist; Christ will not be revealed as Prince of princes, but as the Lord from heaven. In the description of Antichrist, in Isa. 14, we have first his human love of power: then thou hast said," I will ascend into heaven," &c. He takes every character of Christ, and asserts that he has it. The Son of man, who is in heaven and from heaven, comes down in power, and puts down this man, and people must then believe that Christ is King; Messiah's kingdom will not, in its full sense, be established then. The character of the rule of Antichrist is that the pride and power of His kingdom proceeds from self, and God will show man's will to be a horrible lie against His power, and prove the truth of that word, "by me kings rule;" but Antichrist cannot be touched till his iniquity is full, and he says, I will go up to heaven, I will be like the Most High; and therefore, because sentence against an evil work is not speedily executed, the hearts of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil.

I believe there will be a testimony of remission of sins preached in the name of Jesus, the instrument of the Holy Ghost, to effect a penitence, an Elias ministry, that will draw out the hearts of the remnant after Him, something similar to that described, in the Song of Solomon; then, when they have looked on Him whom they have pierced, they will mourn because of Him. Whilst Antichrist rages they are preserved. Israel is brought up through the wilderness, and they appoint

themselves one head, and great shall be the day of Jezreel. In this David-reign of Christ He has also to subdue the enemies that are in the land; and after the Assyrian comes up and is destroyed, the indignation is over and will cease. Thus Christ is associated, with Israel and begins to secure the earth; here goes out the gospel of the kingdom to the nations; after this the Son of man sits upon the throne of His glory, and judges the nations according to the manner in which they have treated His messengers. Messiah having thus established His kingdom, there is peace, and then the heathen know that Jehovah He is God.

I would here remark that all the nations mentioned in Gen. 10 are comprehended under the two powers, Gog and Antichrist; and it is remarkable that the nations are now arranging themselves just according to the order which scripture describes, though I would not speak as the oracle of God as to their identification with present circumstances. The Lord may hold back His hand, but I believe it hastens greatly. In Isa. 18 is described the land shadowing with wings, spreading its protection over other nations, and the whole chapter is a distinct account of what will happen to Israel at the time of its restoration. Many details are given elsewhere.

There is a little confusion sometimes as regards the instruments of power; the promise to the saints is that they shall reign with Christ as kings; but when Christ takes the earth, it will be as Prince of Judah. It is also written," Know ye not that the saints shall judge the world?" We find the blessings of the world secured by righteousness and true holiness—heavenly rule. The saints may accompany Christ in glory when He comes to judgment, but His robe will be red, theirs white. Though the saints are with Him, they are not the executors of vengeance, but of grace that sustains all righteousness.

As to the third part of the question, let me say that these words, "differ essentially," must refer to the standing of the saints, for, as to the ground on which any man is a saint, there cannot be any difference. The development of the character of God does alter in different dispensations, but we know His character can never alter. For instance, sanctity: God is known in this His character; whether it be among the Jews, or in the church; and two cannot walk together except they are agreed. Fellowship may not have the same external form, but it must have been the same principle. The Lord Jesus Christ is "the same yesterday, today, and forever," and the Spirit of Christ is the same. This is always the ground on which there is dealing on the conscience. "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth." The principle is essentially the same, before the flood, after the flood, and at any time. Holding fast these things is very important: certain things that we have learned from God become necessary principles in all dispensations; but as to the character and form in which they are developed, they are different, save that this great principle is the same. Sin having come in, there must be grace, and there must be righteousness.

As to the difference of the saints' standing, therefore, on the earth daring the millennium, it will be quite different from that of the saints now on earth, for this great reason—the millennial dispensation, as regards the saints on earth, will be a dispensation of judgment. In one sense it is grace to the Jew, and grace in paradise. There can be no dealing with the sinner except in grace; but the Jewish economy is not one of grace, but of the law. The law is of works, but grace is not. There never can be departure from the principle on which the soul can stand with God, but the economy of a dispensation is a different thing. The economy of the church is judgment within itself.

The church consists of persons separated by internal sanctity from the rest of the world; into the outward forms of this a person may enter, but the church is essentially an assembly of separated persons. The moment it is not, it ceases to be a church. It consists of those whom God has called out of the world. In the millennium it will not be so, inasmuch as the Lord Jesus will manifestly govern the world on certain principles; until Satan is loosed again, there is no necessary manifestation of who is not of the world, and who is, but the character of the church is quite different.

When persons speak of an invisible church, it is merely the assertion of apostasy, for the Lord says of the church, “Ye are the light of the world.” Now what is the good of an invisible light? “No man when he hath lighted a candle,” &c. (Luke 11:33.) I do not say that there are not invisible saints as individuals; but the term, invisible church, conveys no other idea to my mind than that of apostasy, and that the church has ceased to be what the Lord set it to be—the light of the world. The church is to be a distinct, manifested, gathered body, while the world is under the dominion of Satan, and in this dispensation is the special manifestation of the church. The Lord gave Himself to gather together in one the children of God scattered abroad on the face of the earth. This oneness can only be maintained through the power and energy of the Holy Ghost. Wherever the Holy Ghost has been grieved, the church has ceased to fulfill in the world what it was sent for; though God's purposes cannot be altered. The church is not one, and the world does not believe that the Father has sent Jesus. The church is called on to believe the glory that has been given them, that by their being one the world may know that the Father has loved them as He loved Jesus. This will be known in the millennium. Then it will not be the Holy Ghost working secretly, as He does now, but the manifestation in the world of God's righteousness.

The proper duty of the saints now is by secret association with Christ to withstand evil, that they may be fashioned in suffering and grace with Christ. There all the fine traits of fellowship with Christ are brought out, “the trial of your faith,” &c. The vessel of earth being put into the furnace, when it comes out it shines forth with all that was in its Master's mind. In the millennium we shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of the Father under the government of the Son of man. A new nature is always, necessary to fellowship with God. The man who is taught of God knows that his old nature is bad, knows by experience “that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.” The knowledge of this principle I believe the Jewish believer had, and he had a new nature above the dispensation. If he could say, I delight in the law of God after the inner man, then he had a new nature and the Spirit of Christ, as the apostle says, though he might not get beyond the standing of the dispensation; but in the millennium it will not be merely that man born again will be a new creature, but the creation itself will be also new; Satan will not then be corrupting it by our lusts. Now the whole creation is subject to vanity, then it will not be so: still, man will exist in nature, but the whole creation will not be actually subject to vanity. We are subject to vanity as to the fact of man's will in it, and the consequent dominion of Satan over it. When permitted, he could bring down the wind on Job's house. When the Lord comes as the second Adam, the saint shall be clear out of all present subjection to vanity—it will be gone, because Satan will be bound.

Through our fallen nature and lusts the creation is wholly under Satan's power—not that he can do a tittle more than he is permitted. The more blessed man is, and the more blessings he has by-and-by, the more will he enjoy God. It is not so now. I believe they will then have an enjoyment of natural happiness of which we can scarcely have any idea. God having stamped vanity on

everything that is under the sun, whatever is sought as an object takes us away now from God. Happiness in the things of nature must therefore now be restrained, as the liberty of the manslayer was in the city of refuge, though we have liberty through other hopes. There will be a vast difference between the position of the saints on earth and ours in this respect. The affections of their hearts can fully flow forth on everything around them. The happiness of the saints on earth wilt be in ministering fullness of joy and blessing through Christ to others: their joy will not be merely in being blessed as recipients, but in having the mind and joy of the blesser. Being the administrators of government, they shall be the ministers of blessing. Then will be fulfilled that promise, “They shall not build, and another inhabit; they shall not plant, and another eat; for as the days of a tree are the days of my people, and mine elect shall long enjoy the work of their hands."

It will not be then, as now, “one sowing, and another reaping.” They will not only not have to stir up their hearts to watchfulness against the flesh, having no temptations to resist, but, Christ then ruling over the world, men may lawfully enjoy everything that is in the world. When temptation comes, then those who have not faith will fail. No hypocrite could enjoy natural things unto God, but, the temptation not being there to draw out his evil, it remains unknown to him. “The man who anon with joy received the word” was not a hypocrite, but, when trial came because of the word having no root in himself, he is offended.

As to the fitting posture of the saints. This is a very solemn question; it takes the heart out of the things of knowledge to that which acts on the conscience. The Lord constantly speaks according to His claim of revelation, and not according to our knowledge of it. The Lord said to His disciples, “Whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?” The thing had been revealed, but he answers on unbelief. The measure of our apprehension of it must be according to our faith. The fitting posture of the saint is to have his mind completely in heaven, knowing that he is redeemed and made a priest to God, and that he shall reign over the earth. The things of the flesh cannot enter here; but it is quite another thing how far the body may hinder us. This throws us, day by day, on the Lord for strength in our inner man. While we can say, we are raised up together, and made to sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, in fact we are in an unredeemed body, waiting for the Lord from heaven. This is all I want. And what sets me to work now? The knowledge “that when he shall appear, I shall be like him, seeing him as he is.” As the apostle says, his hope was not to be unclothed, but clothed upon; having the resurrection life in his soul, he reached over everything that may come in between the present time and the coming of the Lord Jesus, when he should be clothed upon.

The apostle was morally right; he was not looking for death; he could say,” not that he would be unclothed;” if he died, he would be happy, being always ready; but a special revelation was needed to tell Paul and Peter that they were to die. When the disciples were in sorrow because they had lost Jesus, they were told for their comfort that Jesus should so come in like manner as they had seen Him go into heaven, and the Lord tells His disciples that “they should be glad, because he was going to the Father, and would come again and receive them unto himself.” If the kingdom and glory are mine, what difference is it whether I have to put off this tabernacle, or not? It will be only waiting here or there. The crown of righteousness is laid up by the Lord, the righteous Judge, for all them that love His appearing. Eight habits of thinking are formed by looking at the glory. A person's whole habit of thinking is often a lie of Satan. All knowledge that gives

another set of thoughts, and a link of mental association with Jesus in glory, is very valuable. All these great facts, which upset all things here', say, “I am not a debtor to you, body.” All the Lord's judgments are promises to the new man. If judgment did not come, evil would be perpetual. It is deliverance to the saint. The promise of the Lord may shake something on which your heart is set; if this is broken by the hand of the Lord in chastening even, there will be blessing and benefit, but it is more blessed to be separated in obedience by the word of the Lord.

The posture of the Thessalonian church was that of suffering, and looking for rest from that suffering; this is the proper posture of the saints, Not wanting to be terrified by the prospect of suffering, but needing the prospect of something to relieve them, from the Suffering they are in. (2 Thess. 1:6, 7.) This they have in the coming of the Lord Jesus.

Let us then exhort one another, and so much the more as we see the day approaching. When you see these things, do not be disturbed, look up, do not look down, for your redemption draweth nigh. I do not deny that dark circumstances are coming, but may this cause us only to look up like Stephen, and see the glory that is also coming! This would separate us from all that is contrary to the purity, holiness, and love of the Lord Jesus. We want much this separateness. We should look at ourselves in thorough and deep humiliation, seeing how divided and scattered and weak the church of God is. (Isa. 22:9-14.) We go and philosophize about principles, but the Lord tells us that we are but making a ditch. There is a great deal of planning and wisdom and order—a great many sacrifices—to make up the ditch,” but there is not a looking unto the maker thereof, nor having respect unto Him that fashioned it long ago.” That is what we want. As regards our moral condition, and as regards results, we have to be looking for the Son from heaven. May the Lord keep us firm, looking unto Him that fashioned the church long ago.

Scripture Queries and Answers: Place of a Dead Man

Q. 2. Is it not possible to deceive one's self, by applying this doctrine to a sort of holding yourself in the place of a dead man, so as to be afraid really to do anything, lest it should be your own life acting?

A. 2. One may of course turn even this truth into bondage; but it is far easier to make our death or having died with Christ the mere fact of knowing about it; and this might, not to say must, soon land one in light and careless ways, as being powerless.

Chapter 163

Scripture Queries and Answers: Beginning to Break Bread

Q. 1 Tim. 5:17. (1) Is an elder or bishop the question when brethren wish to begin a breaking of bread where there is none? (2) Ought they to cease when trial, weakness, or scandal exists?

A. (1) Wherever brethren are found alive to the glory of Christ and of their own privileges as His members, they are not only free but bound to meet together and consequently to remember Him in the breaking of bread, the symbol of His death for their sins in divine love and of their unity as His body. They are of course bound to begin in fellowship with those already breaking bread if reasonably near them. It is deplorable to make the sign of fellowship in a new place the occasion of disturbing it in an old; but those in the old locality are not entitled to put any obstructions or delays in their way but such as approve themselves to every godly soul elsewhere. No one, no assembly, has authority to hinder members of Christ from gathering to His name and remembering Him in the Supper and all other acts of the assembly. Scripture amply proves that none should wait for a bishop or bishops first, even when apostles were there to choose such, But it was the rule to begin meeting as God's assembly without them. The qualities suitable for them only developed or were seen in time. It was on a subsequent visit, if the apostle did not spend long enough time, that they were chosen; and sometimes a delegate like Titus at Crete was directed to do so. But in every case assemblies preceded bishops.

(2) Even if a few believers have been hasty in meeting or any element in the meeting is not what one could desire, it would be a grave act to seek or counsel their dissolution: we do not see an apostle venturing on any step like it. And we cannot, we ought not to, act without scripture. The state of an assembly might be such as to keep one away, as that of Corinth did Paul; but this is a very different thing, for even so, he is most careful to remind them of their place, privilege, and responsibility as the assembly of God in that city. All this aggravated their failure, and gave him a hold in the Lord's name on their consciences.

Q. 1 Peter 4:5, G. “Quick and dead:” is it moral, or physical? The same in each verse? G. W. G.

A. The physically “dead” are meant in both verses. Christ is, and is ready, to judge quick and dead. Only as glad tidings were preached though not in the same way or fullness) in times past to men (living then, though now) dead, as well as to men living now, it was to this end that they might be judged as regards men in flesh, but live as regards God in Spirit. The Jews were apt to slight the judgment of the dead, through their pre-occupation with the judgment of the quick at the appearing of the Messiah. Hence the apostle is the more careful to show the believers from among them, not merely as in chapter iii. the judgment which awaits those formerly disobedient who are kept in prison awaiting their final doom, but the twofold end of the good news in the promises proclaimed to men in the past—either judgment as men in flesh responsible for their works, or living according to God in Spirit because the word was mixed with faith and issued in righteousness and holiness of truth.

Chapter 164

Scripture Queries and Answers: The Hour of Temptation

Will you do me the favor of clearing up one or two of my difficulties?

Q. 1. The hour of temptation (which you take to embrace a longer period than the crisis of the great tribulation) is to come upon all the world (the whole habitable world) to try them that dwell upon the earth (apostate Christendom): why upon the whole earth if only to try Christendom?

Again, the “great multitude” are of “all nations, kindred, people and tongues:” do you judge that Christendom has no representation in this that is, that she comes into the tribulation, and is utterly cut off thereby

Do you think the expression, “the great tribulation” embraces the whole Apocalyptic judgments, and judgments of every kind (pre-millennial of course), and touches every member of the human family on earth, save the ten tribes who are brought under the Lord's rod in the land?

In what form does the great tribulation come upon the heathen nations—being far away from the seat of the beast?

May the “great multitude” of Rev. 7 be substantially identified with “the righteous” of Matt. 25:37?

Also will you kindly say whether the Jews will rebuild the temple, or a certain part of it in unbelief, to be destroyed after the abomination of desolation has been setup therein? If not, are we not driven to conclude that Ezekiel's temple will be erected by unbelieving Jews, on the divine pattern (somewhat a difficulty), and the idolatrous image be sustained there before the glory of the God of Israel comes into it? Does Ezek. 43:7, 8, 9, throw any light on this, “the place of the soles of my feet they shall no more defile, nor their kings, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places. In their setting of their threshold by my thresholds, and their post by my posts, and the wall between me and them, they have even defiled my holy name by their abominations?"

What countries are “Gomer and all his bands, the house of Togarmah of the north quarters, and all his bands?” Being in confederacy with the king of the north, I suppose they are Eastern powers. But in Smith's Bible Dictionary the writer seems to identify them with the Cimbri of the north and west of Europe during the Roman Empire (Denmark, between the Elbe. and the Rhine, and Belgium), the whole of the British Isles at one period, and now the Gael of Ireland and Scotland, and the Cymry of Wales. W. R.

A. 1. I consider that “they that dwell on the earth” is here, at least, rather a moral expression than a designation of apostate Christendom. It is opposed to dwellers in heaven, and not merely a distinction from some other part of the world.

Christendom seems to be not included in the vague and general mass of nations on whom “the great tribulation” is to fall, having its own special description and judgment, as Babylon, &c., just as it also is distinct from the Jews and from Israel in this chapter. The Jews will pass through a tribulation severer than this, but also more circumscribed, as we may gather from Matt. 24 and

Mark 13, compared with Jer. 30 and Dan. 12. The scourge is the Assyrian, or king of the north, rather than the beast who is the support of the false prophet, king in Palestine. But it is plain that the Apocalyptic period as a whole is a time of trouble increasing in intensity and over many spheres, extending to Gentiles as well as Jews; and as the everlasting gospel will go out far and wide, so I think the surviving fruit of that last mission will be seen in “the righteous” or sheep of Matt. 25, when the Son of man comes and reigns over the earth. That apostate Christendom will have the sternest doom of all, is plain from 2 Thess. 2:10-12.

Undoubtedly the Jews will build in unbelief the temple in which the lawless one or Antichrist is to sit as God. But we have no reason to suppose that God would deign to own it, or that the temple as described by Ezekiel is not distinct. We must remember that it is the habit of scripture to regard “the house” as having a continuity of character, however often destroyed and rebuilt. In Haggai it is not “the glory of this latter house,” but “the latter glory of this house."

“Gomer and all his bands” are north-eastern; but Possibly the Cimbri, &c., may be some of the race that migrated westward. “The house of Togarmah” of the north quarters I presume to be the Armenian stock, as the latter people say themselves. They will follow Gog, the prince of Rosh, Meshech, and Tubal, that is, the last head of the Russian Empire. (Ezek. 38; 39)

Chapter 165

Scripture Queries and Answers: 1 Corinthians 6:2

Q. 1 Cor. 6:2. ■ν ■μ■ν is by competent scholars translated “before you.” May not this decide the meaning of the world and even angels being judged? That is, not by the saints as assessors with Christ but as witnesses in whose presence the judgment takes place.

A. Wetstein has shown by sufficient examples that κρ■νεσθαι ■ν is a technical phrase for being judged at such or such a tribunal: Aristides de Soc. i. p. 128; Platon. ii. pp. 214, 261. Polyb. v. 29. Plut. Themist p. 128. Cat. p. 849. Lysias c. Philost. and Diod. Sic. xix. 61.

With κρ. therefore ■ν is quite distinct from ■μπροσθεν or ■ν■πιον and beyond controversy confirms instead of enfeebling what had been just laid down as an axiom of common Christian knowledge, that the saints are to judge the world and even angels, not merely to be present when their judgment proceeds before the Lord. So Raphelius and Kypke, the last explaining the idiomatic use of ■ν from a company of judges in the midst of whom the case is disposed of. But the truth is that the preposition branches out from a mere local or material idea of inclusion into various applications characterizing what is spokeν of, and so even meaning “with” or “by,” as grammars and lexicons will show. κρ■νεσθαι ■π■ is much more to be “judged before” as any one can see in the preceding verse 1: ■ν ■μ■ν should be distinguished from this, as it unquestionably is the strictly proper phrase for the closer sense of “by you.” It is not the final judgment, that of the dead, which is in the hands of the Lord, the Son of man (John 5), but of the quick, judging akin to the sense of reigning. (See Matt. 19:28; Rev. 20:4.) Even now angels are ministering spirits sent out for service on account of those who shall inherit salvation: how much more when the saints shall be glorified and reign with Christ!

Chapter 166

Scripture Queries and Answers: Being Dead

Q. 7. Is it profitable to ask a Christian, “Are you dead!” since scripture says, “Ye are dead?” Does it not tend to throw one on feelings and experiences?

A. 7. Such a query to an unestablished soul would inevitably lead to an inward investigation. But he who rests simply on Christ might be led to weigh and learn more thoroughly what death with Christ implies, and what becomes him who died with Him. Scripture assumes that the Christian has thus died.

Scripture Queries and Answers: Eternal Life

Q. 3. Is eternal life not a thing but a Person (Christ)? and is it true that a Christian has no life, inasmuch as Christ is in heaven?

A. 3. Eternal life is a thing that we have, though we have it only in the person of Christ; but it is our life here as Christians, with its mind and affections, quite as real and much more important than the natural Adamic life of man.

Scripture Queries and Answers: Greek

Do the words, ε■ς τ■ διηνεκ■ς, in Heb. 10:1, refer to the sacrifices as continually offered, or to the inability of such sacrifices to perfect in perpetuity those who offered them; that is to say, Do the words relate to the offerings, or to the offerers?

Why is it we have in this chapter (passim) προσφ■ρω, to offer, and προσφορ■, an offering, and not ■ναφ■ρω, to offer up, especially as we find from verses 10, 11, 12, that is attributed to the offering, προσφορ■, which we should have supposed could only be by ■ναφ■ρω, offering up, when only it would be a sacrifice (φυσ■α)? We have both, “no more offering for sins” (προσφορ■), verse 18, and “no more sacrifice for sin” (φυσ■α), verse 26. W. L. P.

A. 1. The connection of ε■ς τ■ δ. is not the same in verses 1 and 12. In the former it is with the Jewish ritual, and means that they kept offering unbrokenly the same sacrifices year by year, sacrifices unable at any time to perfect those that approached. In verse 12 the connection is with the continuous, or unbroken, session of our Lord at God's right hand, as having offered one sacrifice for sins. It is well known that Lachmann punctuated so as to connect ε■ς τ■ δ. with the clause after in verse 1, and with the clause before in verse 12; but I am satisfied that he unwittingly perverted the sense in both. “Continuously” can run well in the first with “every year,” not with “never,” or “not at any time;” as, again, in the second it is only possible to take it with the preceding clause by supposing some such ellipse as ■σκο■σαν ■μ■ν, with CEcumenius and Theophylact, which is not only needless, but weakens what follows. Tisohendorf has evaded the difficulty by inserting a comma in neither.

A. 2. The reason why προσφ■ρω, is employed in Heb. 10 seems to me the need of a more general word than ■ναφ■ρω, which had been used in chapter 9 in distinction from προσφ. wherever it was intended to express the actual bearing of sins. Where a substantive is wanted for this, θυσ■α is used, which is as specific as προσφορ■ is general. Hence, where προσεν■γκας is defined by ■π■ρ ■μαρτι■ν and θυσ■αν, it is as strictly sacrificial as if it had been ■αυτ■ν ■νεν■γκας, or τ■ς ■μαρτ■ας ■μ■ν ■νεν■γκας.

Chapter 169

Scripture Queries and Answers: Romans 6

Q. 1. Rom. 6 Does scripture anywhere, in speaking of the Christian being dead, separate it from his having died in Christ?

A. 1. Not so: the ground is that we died with Christ, buried with Him by baptism to death—His death. Thus are we become identified with Him in the likeness of His death. Therefore also we are to reckon ourselves dead to sin.

Scripture Queries and Answers: Romans 6

Q. 6. Does Rom. 6 teach that the old man was crucified with Christ, but that the new I died with Him? Is there such a distinction between “crucified” and “died?

A. 6. That our old man was crucified with Christ is what the chapter says; and that he who died with Christ is justified from sin, that is, the believer, not whilst he did not believe.

Chapter 170

Scripture Queries and Answers: Romans 6:7

Q. 4. Is it true reasoning to argue that because Rom. 6:7 says, “He that is dead is justified from sin,” it must be the new I that is spoken of as dead, inasmuch as no one could say that the old I is justified?

A. 4. The most that can be allowed is that justification from sin supposes a sinner, though now a believer. It is of course the same person, but one who being a believer has passed from death into life, and has died with Christ.

Chapter 171

Scripture Queries and Answers: the New I and the New Man

Q. 5. Can you understand a distinction being made between the new I and the new man, and would you say that the former is spoken of as dead, and the latter not? Does scripture use the expression new I at all?

A. 5. I can understand the distinction, “the new I” being the soul as now born again, but referring to what was, “the new man” being only what is by and in Christ. But metaphysics are best avoided in Christian teaching.

Chapter 172

Scripture Queries and Answers: “Two or Three"

Q. Matt. 18:18-20. In a company of 40 or 50 saints gathered to the Lord's name, can 11 two or three” be said to constitute the assembly to the exclusion of the rest? Is the decision of a few to be regarded as that of God's assembly, and binding not only on all the rest, even if their consciences are distressed, but on all assemblies elsewhere, even though some of the grounds taken are now acknowledged by the few themselves to be unfounded? Is a hasty act thus done to be viewed as ratified in heaven and irrevocable?

G. W. Y. (Hamilton, Canada.)

A. Such a pretension is intolerable. It is not only without an atom of scripture but directly opposed to the nature and truth of God's assembly, where exclusion e.g. is not binding unless carrying with it the consciences of all. In peculiar cases there might be of course near relatives or friends, perhaps even partisans or accomplices more or less, whose opinions ought not to be given and if given ought to be rebuked rather than heeded. But as a rule discipline according to the Lord must and does carry the simplest as well as the spiritual with it. Where will or personal feeling works, it would destroy weight, and such persons are not in a state to guide the assembly. It might be that the condition of those gathered might show such a lack of conscience, destroyed by error or given up to self-will and laxity, that godly souls might be forced after: due waiting and solemn warning in vain, to withdraw from the meeting as no longer God's assembly. This is possible no doubt, but a very delicate and extreme case. But the notion of two or three out of forty or fifty constituting the assembly, and staying in with those whose protest they ignore and despise, is a snare of Satan to force their own will, and is a return to the Popish principle that the clergy are the church. I do not believe that such a decision is bound in heaven or binding on assemblies on earth or individuals; though it does not therefore follow that hasty action would be right, either as to receiving elsewhere the one wrongly dealt with or as to the withdrawal of those aggrieved by it. Prayer and humiliation would be the resource, not agitation nor separation. The Lord knows how to interfere and correct what is amiss; for it is the merest superstition that a wrong or mistake by an assembly is to abide unrescinded. And if the assembly deliberately accepted such a principle as that “two or three” could make up their minds and go through the form of putting away, for instance, contrary to the judgment of the rest, yet binding it on the consciences of all, it is evident that neither the discipline nor the assembly is really according to scripture; and, after due testimony if the evil were persisted in, both should be disowned as not of God.

Indeed the truth is more stringent far. For the putting away to be valid must be through God's action on the consciences of all (allowing for such exceptions as have been stated); and the action of a few, if ever so right in their thoughts, against the consciences of others is no longer the assembly's act. Not even two or three godly men who do not go with the action can be rightly ignored. The rest are bound to wait. The majority is a human principle and essentially different from the assembly where God dwells and in which He acts to glorify the Lord. As the rule, it is when action is precipitate or excessive that it fails to carry along the consciences of all. Nor is

haste a slight fault in such cases. It is flesh, and not of the Spirit; it breeds parties, no less than excess does, which produces reaction in the saints, and leads to sympathy with the evildoer who is thus wronged, instead of all the godly uniting in their horror of his evil. If a few were ever so right in their judgment, yet forced it on spite of others who conscientiously differed, it would not be of God, as being a practical denial of His assembly. Hence one must not push things beyond their conviction as before God. Nothing is rightly done unless they prove themselves clear in the matter. Grace thus turns the godly exercise of extreme discipline by the assembly into exercise of soul and positive blessing in their humbling of themselves before God. Human will, whether in one or in many, brings in terrorism or wheedling, confusion and every evil work, self-exaltation and party spirit, to the utter destruction of waiting on God by faith, subjection to the word of the Lord, and the gracious and holy uniting power of the Holy Ghost.

Chapter 173

Scripture Query and Answer: Romans 8:9

Q. Rom. 8:9. What is the difference between the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of God? and how can one have the former, and yet not have the latter? E. C.

A. It is not a question here of new birth: this one might have as in chapter 7., and yet have no power but be wretched also. If one have the Spirit of God indwelling, one is in the Spirit, not in the flesh; one is in the Christian place of liberty and peace. It is not said that one could have the Spirit of Christ here spoken of and not have the Spirit of God; on the contrary the Spirit of Christ is supposed to be the Spirit in practical power forming us according to Christ; so much so that if one has it not, one is not of Him (α■το■), one is not Christ's in redemption power. The Spirit of God might work in or at least by a man who professed Christ without life, as we see in Judas. (Matt. 7:22; Heb. 6:4-6.) But this is not His dwelling in the believer; it is not the Spirit of Christ.

Chapter 174

Smyrna and Pergamos: Revelation 2:8-17

The failure of man, of the church even, does not touch the source of divine grace. From Adam downwards everything that was placed in the hands of man has failed; but the very evil and failure has only been made an opportunity by God for showing more and richer grace. Also times of declension and unfaithfulness in the body give occasion for brighter manifestations of faithfulness in individuals, who might under such circumstances enjoy closer and more blessed communion with God Himself.

The Lord in these chapters turns His eye to that which should have been the place of righteousness; “but behold iniquity was there.” Therefore it was necessary that judgment should begin at the house of God, and this at first in the way of testimony, for He ever warns before He executes judgment, and in judgment remembers mercy. We see that the Lord took notice of every circumstance, of every shade of conduct, in these churches. His love is not a careless love, indifferent about the ways and daily steps of His people, because He has secured their blessing at the end. Rather like a parent that could not be satisfied with knowing that his child must eventually inherit his property, He anxiously trains him up, watching every development of his mind and faculties, ordering all things in his education so as best to fit him for his future destination. There is great comfort in seeing that this is the spring of God's dealing with us; at the same time it should act strongly on our consciences to see how closely the Lord must watch over us, not passing over anything in us, but judging and disciplining us in all our ways and states.

We have to remember that the church, and indeed every individual, is set in the place of direct conflict with Satan, the more so from the high standing and privileges given to us in Christ. We know that Satan will be fully dethroned by-and-by, when God will establish His own kingdom and glory; and even now, in order to realize our blessing in the heavenly places, it is necessary he should be practically dethroned from our hearts through the power of the Holy Ghost; for although it is quite certain that he shall be bruised under our feet shortly, yet that certainty of Christ's final victory over him dues not lessen his activity meantime, which is so great as to make constant watchfulness necessary on our part. Without this watchfulness we shall constantly be giving him a handle; for the flesh, by means of which he works, is still present with us. Perhaps we have often been surprised at grievous falls in ourselves or others; but if we fail to watch in little things, such will be the result. Habitual watchfulness in little things is the secret of not falling.

It has ever been in times of general failure that the promises of God have been most graciously brought out, and that His faithful ones have had increased communion, being thrown more entirely upon Himself. If we are ourselves in trial and exercise of soul, we may look for increased revelation of His love to our hearts; and this, not only in giving us clearer and firmer apprehension of the promises of God, but also a fuller knowledge of all that is in Christ, as suitable to be drawn out by our need. He that is faithful may always count upon this, and expect to find in trial deeper manifestations of grace. This principle is clearly seen in the epistles to the churches, both by the promises given to them, and the different characters in which the Lord presents Himself to them

according to their circumstances of need. We saw the last time how the church in Ephesus began to fail also. Instead of being spoken to, as in Paul's Epistle, of the high and holy things connected with the church at large, instead of being addressed as occupying the place of witness and testimony to others, their eyes had to be turned inward to their own state: a plain proof how much they had declined. But the Lord was still there, and brings out to the eye of faith “the tree of life.” They had fallen from their first love, but He sets paradise before them, where there will be no declension.

In the case of the church of Smyrna, they had begun the downward course, but the Lord had arrested it by tribulation most graciously, for we go wonderfully quick down hill unless a strong hand stops us. They were in trial and poverty and persecution, and upon this, how does He reveal Himself to them? “I am the First and the Last;” One whom nothing can touch—no clouds, nor storms, affect; like the sun, bright before the storm, and bright after it; above and beyond it all! Yes, it might be said, this is true of Him, but the storm rolls over us and threatens to overwhelm us. But He reveals Himself not only as the First and the Last, the One therefore on whom we may lean for eternal strength, but also as “He which was dead and is alive,” as One who had gone through it all, One who had entered into all the weakness and undergone all the trials, even unto death, and yet is alive. There was nothing He had not gone through; for death is the last effort of Satan's power; it ends there for the sinner as well as the saint. Satan has no power in hell—those who die in their sins come under God's judgment there. Satan may have pre-eminence in misery there, but no power. His reigning there is some poet's dream; it is in this world he reigns, by means of the vanity, pride, evil passions, and idleness of men; he is the ruler of the darkness of this world, not of the next.

But whatever may be the extent of power which he exercises against the children of God, we can be in no trial which Jesus has not been through, and met the power of Satan in it, and yet is alive. And now He lives for evermore, not only to sustain you while passing through the storm but to feel for you and sympathize with you, as having experienced more than all the heaviness of the circumstances you are in, and able to pity you with the utmost tenderness. He came into the very center of our misery; but the weakness of God is stronger than man, and though Christ was dead, yet is He alive. (Ver. 9.) “I know thy works.” The Lord recognizes what He can in us. We may say our works are not what we could desire, and it is very true they are not; but the Lord knows them, and though it is right and useful to judge ourselves, so as to detect the evil and correct it, yet it is very unworthy to be always occupied in considering our works. The answer to all our thoughts and estimations of ourselves is, “I know thy works:” your business is to know Me. He presents Himself as our object, not our own works. “And thy poverty.” Certainly riches never entered into the church of God without producing more trial and difficulty. You may see rich men giving their riches to relieve the poverty of others, and this is very blessed; but wherever the character of riches continues, it enfeebles the energies of the church of God.

Take notice too that Caleb and Joshua had to go round the wilderness with the rest, though not sharers with their unbelief.

We see in Pergamos that we have to separate ourselves from the evil around, though we may not be separated from its results. We may find ourselves in feebleness and weakness, as this church did; but our comfort, like theirs, is that the Lord says, “I know thy works, and where thou dwellest.”

God, in His grace, takes full knowledge of all that concerns us—not only of our conduct, but of the circumstances we are in—and this even when He has somewhat against us. There is great comfort in knowing this; for we may be placed, by providential circumstances or by means over which we have no control, in a place where Christian conduct is very difficult, and which it might not be right for us to leave, as, for instance, a converted child in an ungodly family; and the Lord will not only judge His child's conduct there, but He will take notice of every little circumstance which makes it trying. He just as well knew all the power of Pharaoh, and the details of his tyranny, as the cries and groans of the Israelites; and it may not always be His will to take us out of the trying circumstances. He may choose to have us glorify Him in them, and learn what perhaps we could not learn elsewhere. There may not always be opportunity for great works in the Lord's service; but He takes notice if we do but hold fast His name, and of the circumstances which may make even that measure of faithfulness difficult.

But the Lord not only threatens to fight against them. with the sword of His mouth, but encourages them with the promises suited to counteract their temptations. They were tempted to eat of things sacrificed to idols; but He promises to those that overcome, that He would give them to eat of the hidden manna. If they had grace to separate from the open evil around them, He would reward them with the unseen blessings of the heavenly places. They were tempted to deny His name and faith; but He promises those who should overcome this temptation to give them a white stone, and in the stone a new name written," which no man knoweth, save he that receiveth it." To keep them from slipping back into the world, to strengthen them in incurring, as they must, in separation from it, the disapprobation of so many, He promises them inward blessings to cheer their hearts. The white stone seems to mark His individual approbation; the new name, peculiar intercourse between Christ and the individual, different from that which all share alike—different from the public joy.

All the saints together will enter the joy of their Lord, and with one heart and one voice sound His praise. There will also be joy in seeing the fruit of our labor, as it is written, "What is Our joy and crown of rejoicing? are not ye in the presence of our Lord?" &c.; and in seeing the company of the redeemed, all according to Christ, in holiness and glory.

But, besides this public joy, there will be the private individual recognition and approval, the white stone and the new name. Christ speaks elsewhere of His own new name as Head of the new creation. There are old names belonging to the Lord Jesus, but His new name is connected with that into which His Father brings Him when all things which have failed in the hands of man will be established and developed in Him; and, having thus Himself a new name, he gives us also a promise of a new name. We are not only to know Jesus, and be known of Him, according to present circumstances, but to have a special knowledge of Him in glory according to the glory. Our souls must value His personal approval, as well as think of the public approval; the latter will be great, blessedness, but there is nothing in it that will stamp peculiar love in the individual. Glory will be common to all, but glory is not affection. The new name is the proof of Christ's value for one who has acted on the knowledge of His mind, overcoming through communion with Him. This will be met by special individual approbation.

There is the public joy and approval in various ways, the manifestation of our being loved of the Father as He loved Jesus; but there is also the special private joy of love for those who have to act

in circumstances of trial and danger. When the common course of the church is not straight, nor in the full energy of the Holy Ghost, then we find the Lord applying Himself more to the walk of individuals than to that of the church as a body. “To him that overcometh.” There is peculiar value in this. First, it takes us out of the danger which especially belongs to such a state of things, of every one walking according to his own will, and tracing out a path for himself, because of the unfaithfulness and disobedient walk of the professing body. What faith has to do in such circumstances is to lay bold intelligently of the Lord's mind and walk according to it, strengthened by the promises which He has attached to such a path as He can own.

This at once refers the heart and conscience to Jesus, and breaks down human will, whilst full of encouragement to the most feeble saint. And it is very precious to have thus the guidance of the Lord, and the promise of His peculiar approbation, when we are thrown much on individual responsibility, as must be the case when the professing church has become mingled with the world. For then individuals who seek to be faithful must often have to walk alone, and endure the charge of folly and self-will, even from their brethren, for refusing to follow the beaten path. The natural tendency, indeed, will be self-will; and the only safety will be to bring the soul under the sense of direct responsibility to the Lord, by means of such warnings and promises as these, which both guide and supply strength to stand free from all around, whilst the consciousness that Christ marks and owns our ways will sanctify as well as encourage our hearts. For it must be joy to any one who loves the Lord to think of having His peculiar approbation and love—to think that He has approved of our conduct in such and such circumstances, though none may know of His approval but ourselves. But, beloved friends, are we content with the approbation which Christ only knows? or are we not too desirous of men's commendation for our actions, or at least that they should give us credit for our motives? Are we content, as long as good is done, that none should know but Christ even our motives? Are we content, even in the church, to by thought nothing of—to seek nothing but the white stone, and the new name which no man knows, save he who receives it?

How terrible must the evil and selfishness of that heart be which is not satisfied with the Lord's special favor, but seeks honor from man instead! I would ask you, which would be most precious to you—His public owning of you as a good and faithful servant, or the private individual owning of His love? We shall have both, if faithful; but the heart that is specially attached to Christ will prefer the latter, and there is nothing that will carry us so straight on in our course as the anticipation of this. I would therefore have you to rest especially on this promise. Whatever glorifies Christ is what we have to do with. We are to be as much separate from and above the world as Christ is—as He says, “My ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts are higher than your thoughts.” So should ours as united to Him. All our conduct should be ruled by this: we are united to One who is made higher than the heavens, we therefore are so too. Most sublime truth! but most practical too—where it is realized, it must tell in every detail of life. How could one made higher than the heavens be seeking earthly things, riches, &c.! As some one has said, “If an angel were to come down here, he would be as willing to sweep the streets as to be a king.” Much more, then, one who has this personal intimate consciousness of union with Christ. The more of a servant the happier he is, because it would be more like his Master. But in seeking to be like Jesus, we must remember that there is much difficulty: we have Satan always to resist us, we have to overcome in various circumstances and trials—not only to contend with, but to overcome; so that it is not all joy,

though we are set in so blessed a place.

To keep the flesh mortified is the great thing in these practical difficulties, and nothing will do this but living communion with the Lord. We must be watching its first strivings, or, before we are aware, the flesh will be giving a handle to Satan. If we are holding fast (as the faithful ones in Thyatira were commanded) that which we have in the Lord, then Satan will lose his power over us, and then all is joy—even suffering for the sake of Jesus will be joy. But if there be not the every-day commonplace diligence to break the power of the every-day commonplace difficulties, we shall have to contend with the flesh instead of Satan, with whom our conflict ought to be; while it will also give him power to come in, and then we are not ready to meet him, but have to get the armor in order ore we have to begin to fight. I pray you, beloved friends, to attend to this, for if we fail in this daily judging and keeping down the flesh, we lose the power of overcoming Satan, and at least only stand our ground, and prevent his gaining advantage over us, instead of gaining ground on him. We are unfaithful to Christ when it is so, for we have the victory in Him, and we owe it to Him to gain ground upon the world; where Satan reigns, to stand in such a position as to be able to go forward and win souls from Satan, instead of only standing on the defensive.

I ask you, in the name of the Lord's love to you and because of the privileges that belong to you, to judge yourselves, to look if the flesh be so judged in you, that you are ready for the battle; or whether Satan would find the flesh so alive in you, that it would be a handle he could use against you.

But while thus judging yourselves, remember that your souls, in the midst of whatever failure and humiliation, are to rest on the joy of His perfect righteousness, though to have overcome will add to our joy on the day of His appearing, and bring more glory to Him now. The Lord give us to find Him in all circumstances to be just what we need, and so enable us to walk in the Spirit as to discern all the grace and suitability which are in Him for our every necessity, and to understand and feel in our own souls the fitness and power of His promises.

Chapter 175

The Son

"God.... hath in these lost days spoken to us in [the person of the] Son." —Heb. 1:2

The question by which our Lord put the Pharisees to silence, so that "no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions," was concerning the mystery of His sacred. person. Though they knew that Messiah would be the Son of David, they were completely confounded when asked how the Christ could be both David's Lord and David's son.

And still, "What think ye of Christ? Whose son is He?" are the vital questions on which hangs the eternal destiny of man. It must therefore be of all importance to learn from scripture what is revealed concerning Him; for types have prefigured Him, prophets have heralded Him, one more than a prophet was His forerunner, a multitude of the heavenly host hailed His entrance into this world, and apostles have delightfully dwelt on the glory of His person, the everlasting blessedness of His atoning work, the offices He now so perfectly sustains, and on His coming again. May we then ponder the sacred writings which testify of THE SON with that reverence and subjection which become those who delight to hearken to God's testimony of Him

"We know that the Son of God is come." The Word which was with God, and was God, became flesh, and dwelt among us: and God, whom no man has seen, has been declared by the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. The divine moral glory so shone in Him, that Spirit-taught witnesses tell us, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, fall of grace and truth." In olden times, the thorough sinlessness of this peerless One was continually set forth by the imperative requirement, that each victim sacrificed should be "without blemish and without spot," and His inimitable moral excellencies were borne witness to in the sweet perfume of the burning incense; while various offerings typically expressed His perfect purity, His entire devotedness, as well as the savor of rest God always found in Him, both in life and in death. The laying down of the victim's life, the shedding and sprinkling of the blood, the entrance of the high priest inside the veil once every year, not without blood and incense, all pointed to Him, whose blood was shed for many for the remission of sins, and in virtue of whose one offering the veil was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, thus removing every hindrance to the believer's going at once into the presence of God.

Of the sacred person of THE SON, as also of His sufferings, and the glories which follow, ancient prophets have sweetly spoken by the Holy Ghost. The promised Seed—the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, the virgin's Child—has been manifested according to their word, in the mysterious person of Immanuel. The babe of Judah's prophet has been born, and the Son given, whose name is the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace; who will ere long establish His kingdom with judgment and justice "upon the throne of David." According to others, Israel's Ruler has come out of Bethlehem, "whose goings forth have been of old from everlasting." (Mic. 5:2.) The true Shepherd, the Fellow of the Lord of hosts, has been smitten, and the sheep have been scattered. (Zech. 13:7.) The Anti-type of Isaac has been offered up, and raised again. The blood of the true paschal Lamb has

been shed, and a way made for us through death and judgment into the very presence of God. It is no marvel, then, that His forerunner should have been divinely taught that He was “the Son of God,” should have announced Him to be “the Lamb of God,” and declared that He who came after him into the world was really before Him—for THE SON was before all things—and that His shoes' latchet he was unworthy to unloose.

Prophets also foretold that He—the Son, Messiah—would be despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, sold for thirty pieces of silver, His sacred hands and feet pierced; that His garments would be parted by the soldiers among them, and lots cast upon His vesture. They also declared that He would be numbered with the transgressors, and bear the sins of many, that it would please Jehovah to bruise Him, and to put Him to grief; that the cry of His distress would be, “My God, my God, why host thou forsaken me?” That though He would be made an offering for sin, and pour out His soul unto death, making His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death; yet the prophet sweetly announced that His soul would not be left in hell [hades], neither His flesh see corruption, but that, having been shown the path of life, He would go book to Him in whose presence there is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Jehovah therefore said to the mighty Conqueror over death, Satan, and the grave, “Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” For this we know He waits, of whom it has been said, “The Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment,” and, that He will sit” upon David's throne,” and “reign before his ancients gloriously."

From this brief glance at the Old Testament prophets, we see that they spake of Him, “who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:6-11.)

It is no wonder, then, that a multitude of the heavenly host should introduce THE SON into this world with “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men” (Luke 2:14), or that the apostles should so dwell on the glory and perfections of His sacred person, and be inspired to make Him known to others as the object for unchanging delight. One of these divinely-taught writers says, “We have seen with our eyes, we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life, for the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.” (1 John 1:1, 2.) Another Writes of the divine glory of the Son to the Colossians, as “the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature. For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from among the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For in him all the fullness was pleased to dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross,” &c. (Chap. i. 15-20.) What a precious cluster of glories is here presented for our contemplation

Again, in the Hebrews we are told that “God hath in these last days” —after all the varied testimony of prophets— “spoken to us in [the person of the] Son” (chap. i. 1); and we propose now to look a little, with the Lord's help, at what is recorded for our blessing concerning Him in the earlier chapters of this epistle. Before, however, proceeding farther, it may be well to press upon the reader the importance of making the word of God as much as possible our vocabulary when speaking of the unfathomable mystery of THE Son, and in all simplicity of faith receiving what God has declared of Him for our intelligence and blessing, instead of drawing deductions, reasoning out conclusions, or allowing ourselves to think or speak of Him according to human phraseology, and thus, unconsciously glide into serious error. We may be certain that “no man knoweth THE Son but the Father,” and that enough has been revealed of Him in scripture for our instruction and comfort.

In Heb. 1; 2 THE SON is remarkably brought before us; in chapter 1 as to His eternal Godhead, and in chapter 2 as to His manhood. Yet not exclusively so in either chapter, for how could this blessed One, who is both God and man in one person, be divided? Perhaps there has not been a more fruitful source of error than the attempt to do this. In both these chapters, however, scriptures are quoted which specially refer to Him as Messiah.

In the first He is also presented as the purger of sins, and then as sitting down on the right hand of God; both which wonderful acts He did being man, yet as no one less than God could do. In the second we see that He took part in the children's flesh and blood, takes not hold of angels but of Abraham's seed, that He is the sanctifier, and the One who, under the title of Son of man, will put all things under His feet. Thus we find that when the Holy Ghost brings before us the eternal Godhead of THE Son, He also reminds us that He is man; and when He specially presents Him to us as man, He shows us that the Child born—the Messiah—is the mighty God. How could He be Maker of all things, Heir of all things, Upholder of all things, and how could He put all things under His feet, except He were verily and truly God? And how could He partake in flesh and blood, be the purger of sins, taste death for everything, and sit upon the throne of David, without being verily and truly man—the woman's Seed, Son of Abraham, and Son of David, according to the flesh? Hence scripture says, “It is Christ that died,” that “the Son of man” was lifted up, and that God “spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.” It was the glory of His person which gave such eternal value to His work; whereas, among men, it is the dignity of the work which gives honor to the person.

In Heb. 1 THE SON is looked at as “from everlasting to everlasting.” (Psa. 90:2.) He is therefore infinitely above angels—the highest class of created intelligence that man knows; for He had a more excellent name, was emphatically called by Jehovah, “My Son,” and He called God, “Father.” The Son as man is now exalted to the Father's throne, the One to whom angels, and principalities, and powers are made subject; and the world to come will not be put under angels, but under Him to whom it was said, “Sit thou at my right hand until I make thy foes thy footstool.” THE SON, then, is infinitely above angels, who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister for them who shall inherit salvation. That Holy Thing that is born of Mary is called the Son of God, but being also eternally divine in His own person, He is no less than the effulgence of God's glory, and the exact expression of His substance. He is therefore before all things, and greater than all things, for all things were created by Him, and by Him all things subsist.

In the first twelve verses of this chapter, THE SON is, as we have said, particularly looked. at in His Godhead character. He is truly “the First and the Last.” Not only did He most truthfully say, “Before Abraham was I am,” but He was before anything was which is made, for it is said of Him, “by whom also he made the worlds.” We read elsewhere also that He had glory with the Father before the world was, and, father and son being relative terms, we find here His eternal Sonship most plainly revealed. (Ver. 2; John 17:5.) Moreover we are also taught that the Father's counsel and purpose, and His love to us, were in the Son before creation” According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love.” (Eph. 1:4.) THE SON, then, is eternally divine. We are instructed by an inspired prophet that one attribute of Godhead is Creator. “To whom will ye liken me, or shall I be equal? saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their hosts by number..... Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard that the everlasting God, the Jehovah, the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary? There is no searching of His understanding.” (Isa. 40:26-28.) He, then, who created all things is Jehovah. We have, therefore, in this first aspect of the sacred person of THE SON, the clearest possible proof of His being “from everlasting."

Secondly, He is brought before us as the One who did by Himself make purification of sins, and set Himself down on the right hand of the Majesty on high. (Ver. 3.) As man had sinned, man must bear the penalty of divine justice for sin; and since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; but who could satisfy the infinite claims of God's justice? or drink up the cup of His eternal condemnation of sin, but one who was divine Himself? Who else could glorify God about our sins, could put them away forever, and cleanse us by His own blood, but He who had eternal attributes—the Son sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world? Again, who but He could step from the sepulcher to the throne of God, and take His rightful place there? It is not here the aspect of His resurrection as being raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, most precious as that view is; but it is THE Sow, who descended first into the lower parts of the earth, lay in the grave till the third day (thus giving the most decided proof of His actual death), rose again from among the dead in the glory of His own eternal excellency, and took His place on heaven's throne, to which He was righteously entitled “who.... when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.” (Ver. 3.) Blessed be God, there He is, the ascended, glorified Man, and made both Lord and Christ. Thus, in verses 2, 8 of this chapter, we find THE SON is looked at before time, or from everlasting, as the One by whom everything was made; and in time purging sins by Himself, and then sitting down in the highest place of power and glory at God's right hand.

Thirdly, there THE SON still sits; but He is coming again, and then He will be the object of the worship of angels, even as now in heaven angels, and authorities, and powers made subject to Him. Hence we read, “And again, when he bringeth in the First-begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.” (Ver. 6.) It need scarcely be said that worship could not be rendered by angelic beings which surround the throne of God to any one who was less than God. To no creature, however blessed by God, or endued with divine power, could such honor be rightly accorded; the idea would be sinful in the extreme. Angels know who the Son is, and that He died for man on the cross; they announced His entrance into the world when born in Bethlehem, they afterward tracked His solitary and perfect path, and ministered unto Him; and when He comes

to the world in glory, they will accompany Him in His power. Whatever may be the measure of the intelligence of angels, it is quite clear that they knew to whom worship rightly belongs; for when John was once and again so overcome with the bright shining of an angel, and the wonderful things made known to him, that he “fell down to worship before the feet of the angel which showed him these things,” it was at once refused. Instead of the angel accepting the homage, he rebuked the erring apostle, saying, “See thou do it not. I am thy fellow-servant, and [the fellow-servant] of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.” (Rev. 19:10; 22:9, 10.) Angels, then, who clearly know that God is the true object of worship, will take their happy place of rendering worship to THE SON when He comes as the Firstborn into the world, and in this they will be of one accord, for it is said, “Let all the angels of God worship him."

Fourthly, then His rightful place on earth will be the throne, for He comes not to suffer, but to reign. As the true David, He will occupy His own throne, for all things are to be subdued by Him unto Himself, before He delivers up the kingdom to Him who is God and Father, “when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power, for he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.” (1 Cor. 15:24, 25.) He will establish, too, His ancient people in their hoped-for earthly glory, when all the promises shall be made good to them. And who but one who is God could take possession of all things, and subdue all things to Himself? We read, therefore, “But unto THE SON he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.” (Vers. 8, 9.) Thus, in millennial glory, when THE SON—the Messiah—takes His kingly place of power, and reigns before His ancients gloriously, our attention is again called to contemplate Him in His eternal Godhead. Fellows, or companions, He will doubtless have; but here, as in all things, He must have the pre-eminence. It is unquestionably the millennial times in which we here behold THE Son; for it is characterized by righteousness, according to the scripture, “A king shall reign in righteousness.” Now God is preaching grace, and bearing with this evil world in marvelous patience and long-suffering, but when THE SON sits on His own throne, He will wield the scepter of righteousness, for, as we have observed, righteousness will characterize His kingdom, not grace. It will be manifest that He loves righteousness, and hates iniquity; and, because He is eternally divine, will be able to subdue all things unto Himself. Then He “will show who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see; to whom be honor and power everlasting. Amen.” (1 Tim. 4:15, 16.)

Fifthly, as the eternal Godhead of THE Son has been looked at “from everlasting,” before the worlds were made, He is also brought before us as “to everlasting,” when heaven and earth shall have passed away. Now He is upholding all things, and by Him all things consist; but when, according to the divine counsels, this old creation shall have fulfilled its course, and have forever passed away, THE SON will still be known in all His unchanging freshness and glory. He by whom all things were made will lay aside, as a garment, what is perishable and has waxen old. We read, “Thou, LORD, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth; and the heavens are the work of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment, and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” (Vers. 10-12.) Can there be a clearer testimony to the eternal

Godhead of the Son? Who else could have brought everything that is made into existence? or who but He who is Almighty could fold up and lay aside this vast universe, and yet Himself remain in all His infinite and unchanging attributes? Most truly did He say in the days of His flesh, “Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.” What man, what angel, what creature, could truthfully utter such an authoritative sentence? Well might His bearers have been sometimes astonished, and have exclaimed that “He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

Thus has it been our happy privilege to trace in this inspired word THE SON eternally divine before all worlds, then as the Maker of all things, then as purging sins, rising victoriously over death, and taking His rightful place on the Father's throne. We have also been contemplating Him as the One whom angels universally will worship when He comes into the world in power and glory, to reign as King of kings, sitting on His own throne; and, lastly, when time shall cease, and this old creation pass away, we have been instructed that His eternal attributes will shine out in all their divine and unchanging glory and freshness. Well indeed has it been added “Jesus Christ [is] the same yesterday, and to-day and forever."

The Word by whom all things were made became flesh and dwelt among us. But He who is divine is also Son of man—God was manifested in the flesh.

God sent forth His Son made of a woman. Jesus Christ has come in flesh. He, who being in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, was found here in fashion as a man, and took a servant's form. He ate and drank, suffered hunger, thirst, and weariness. He slept, He walked, He prayed, preached and taught. He resisted and overcame Satan in temptation. He groaned and was troubled, He wept, He was grieved for the hardness of men's hearts, and looked round about on them with anger. He so lovingly entered into the sufferings of those around, He cast out devils, healed all manner of sickness with His word, that it was said by the prophet, “Himself took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.” He was then verily man, born of woman, though without sin, and in every respect perfect, spotless, holy, harmless, and undefiled.

THE SON however did not become incarnate in order to make Himself one with us, but that He might die for our sins, and rising again make us one with Himself. It is of all importance to see this clearly; for how could the holy One unite Himself with fallen and sinful man, who justly merited the wrath of God? THE SON, therefore, had a solitary path through this world. By reason of His essential holiness and perfect purity He could not be otherwise than “separate from sinners,” however much He went about doing good. There could not possibly, therefore, be union between us and Himself, until our sins had been judged, in His holy person on the cross, and we were righteously cleansed. This the Lord most clearly taught. Referring to Himself, He said, “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.” (John 12:24.) For this we know the Father sent the Son. He came to die, for He came to save. In no other way could the righteous demands of God, or the necessities. of our case, be met; for man had sinned, and the penalty of death had come in by sin. He, therefore, took part in the children's flesh and blood, that through death, He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver them, who through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He takes not hold of angels, but He takes hold of the seed of Abraham, for Messiah was the promised seed of Abraham, and also of David of whom, as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God, blessed for over. (Rom. 9:5.) Thus Christ is both God and Man.

His life here, however, was one of suffering. He was truly “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” He came for the suffering of death. He suffered having been tempted, which must have been deep distress to His infinitely holy soul. He suffered, that, as the Captain or Leader of our salvation, He might be made perfect through sufferings. He not only knew every step of the way and every circumstance connected with us, as Omniscient, but He passed through everything that was needed to make Him fit for the office of Leader of our salvation. Though He were a Son and thus could command all to obey Him, yet He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. His perfectness was in obeying in every respect in circumstances most adverse and painful. His love, subjection, obedience, and faith—all was perfect. And having been perfected, and a man glorified at God's right hand, He is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him. (Chap. 5:8, 9) Ah who can tell the variety and depth of the sufferings of our precious Lord!

He suffered from man for righteousness' sake—was hated without a cause, despised, and rejected. He suffered from Satan in temptation and bruising— “thou shalt bruise his heel.” He suffered (alas how deeply I) by reason of His wondrous love for His own nation, from God's governmental dealings because of their sin, for “in all their afflictions he was afflicted;” and He suffered from God atoningly for sins, the just for the unjust (how unfathomable to us!), when He cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” God only knows the love and sorrow that met there. It was “the death of the cross."

But His was a victorious death; and, as it has been said, He death by dying slew. He saw no corruption. His soul was not left in hades. He rose from the dead, for it was not possible that He should be holden of death. He went through death, and annulled death and him that had the power of death. Thus He triumphed over death and Satan and the grave. The Son of man is therefore a risen victorious Savior.

When John was overcome with a sight of the glorified Son of man that he fell at His feet as dead, He graciously comforted His servant by assuring him that, though He was dead, He is now for evermore a living Person, and holding in triumph the keys of death and hades. “He laid his right hand upon me, saying, Fear not, I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, amen; and have the keys of death and of hell [hades].” (Rev. 1:17, 18.) Thus the Son of man has triumphed. Death could not detain Him. He rose from among the dead. His was certainly a victorious death.

“By man came death,” we know, and here we see, “by man came also the resurrection of the dead,” (1 Cor. 15:21.) Hence we find that after Jesus rose from the dead, He showed Himself alive again by many infallible proofs, being seen of His disciples, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. He appeared in their midst, showed them His hands and His side, gave commandments, breathed on them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost;” and expounded unto them in all the scriptures, the things concerning Himself. When some who saw Him were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit, He fully demonstrated to them the reality of His own actual and bodily resurrection from among the dead. He said unto them, “Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken he showed them his hands and his feet.” (Luke 24:37-40) Moreover, “He led them out as far as to Bethany, and while he blessed them, was parted from them and carried up

into heaven;" and they watched Him ascending higher and higher, until a cloud received Him out of their sight; and while they steadfastly looked toward heaven, hoping to catch another glimpse of their precious Savior, heavenly messengers stood by them and said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:9-11.) Nothing can more fully prove the reality of the resurrection of the man Christ Jesus from among the dead. This was victory indeed.

And, as we have just seen, He has ascended. We now "see Jesus.... crowned with glory and honor." (Ver. 9.) We remember that He was in death, but we see Him glorified at the right hand of God. A man in glory: what a precious object for our hearts "He who descended first into the lower parts of the earth is ascended above all heavens, far above all principality and power, and might and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this world but also in that which is to come." (Eph. 4:2, 10; and i. 21.) There He is highly exalted—a glorified Man. There Stephen when he looked steadfastly into heaven, saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God. And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." (Acts 7:55, 56.) There we now have to do with Him. There too we know Him in new relationships. "He is not ashamed to call us brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me." (Vers. 11-18.) We know too that it was after His triumphant resurrection, He said to Mary, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." The One, therefore, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honor.

Now He is before the face of God as our High Priest. "Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto [his] brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things relating to God." (Ver. 17.) After having made atonement for the sins of the people by the sacrifice of Himself, He sat down on the right hand of God. There the glorified Son of man in heaven carries on His never-failing office of High Priest for us, after the Aaronic functions, but according to the Melchizedec order. He is not one that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but is merciful and faithful, able to succor us in temptation, help in every time of need, and bring us right through our pilgrimage, to the end, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for no. He who is of the seed of David according to the flesh, and Son of God, has passed through the heavens, and is our faithful, unchanging, and sympathizing High Priest; and, when He comes the second time and takes His Messiah throne, He will be, according to the prophetic word, "a priest upon his throne" —both king and priest on earth. (Zech. 11:13.)

He is, however, soon coming to reign, "for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto THE SON; that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.... he hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." (John 5:22-27.) Again we read that God "will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance unto all in that he hath raised him from among the dead." (Acts 17:31.) The Son being now at the right hand of God is "expecting till his enemies be made his footstool." Man is yet to be set over the works of God's hands. Man (not angels) is yet to subdue all things unto Himself. "For unto angels hath he not put in subjection the (habitable) world to come;" but quoting

from Psa. 8 and applying it to Jesus, the Son of man, he says, “But one in a certain place, testified, saying, What is man that thou art mindful of him? or the Son of man that thou visitest him? thou madest him a little lower than the angels [applied to Jesus in v. 9.] Thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet.” (Vers. 5-8.) Thus we see that the Son who made the worlds, who became incarnate, who was tempted, who suffered and died, was victorious over death and Satan; and who ascended into the heavens, sat down on the right hand of God, and entered upon His priestly functions, is yet to come forth and take His rightful place over all things, execute all judgment, and subdue all things unto Himself. “And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

No doubt one chief reason why the glory and perfections of the sacred person of THE SON are thus so fully brought out in the first and second chapters of the Hebrews is to set forth the infinite value of the one sacrifice, and the perfectness of His priestly office, for there must necessarily be an everlasting efficacy connected with all that He did. Hence, as to the offering, we read, “By one offering he hath perfected forever [or, in perpetuity] them that are sanctified;” and, as concerning priesthood, we are told, There were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: and “every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifice which can never take away sins; but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever [or in perpetuity] sat down on the right hand of God.” (Heb. 7:28; 12:14) Thus, through the infinite efficacy of the one offering, the worshippers, instead of having to do with many sacrifices which could not take away sins, are once purged, and have no more conscience of sins, so that the Holy Ghost can in-dwell them and unite them to Christ in the heavens; such have also liberty to draw near to God—to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, where our High Priest is, and where His blood over speaks. Instead therefore of there being now “a remembrance of sins,” we remember Him, who has by His one offering for over put away sin. Hence, though sin is in us, we have no sin on us; for we are cleansed, sanctified and perfected forever by the will of God through one offering; and God has said, “Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more.” Christ being now in heaven is the clearest proof that our sins have been borne, suffered for, and are gone forever. We have, therefore, “no more conscience of sins.” How rich and abundant is the grace of God to us in Christ!

If, then, in virtue of the accomplished work of THE SON, the conscience is purged, the veil is rent, and He is gone into heaven itself by His own blood, we, as purged worshippers, necessarily have access to God with confidence; our hearts are attracted to where He now is, so that we run the race set before us according to His word; and we also take that position here which is suited to His mind. Hence the believer is looked at in the closing chapter of this Epistle as a happy worshipper, an earnest runner, and a faithful bearer of the reproach of Christ. He is a worshipper inside the veil, where Jesus is, a runner of a race looking steadfastly unto Jesus, and outside the camp with a rejected Jesus bearing His reproach.

The liberty of access for the worshipper is here contrasted with the way of approach, while the first tabernacle was standing, according to the only ritual divinely-instituted but now done away in Christ. It was characterized by distance from God, for the veil excluded them. It was not rent—the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest; so that they never knew what it was to be in the presence of God, as purged worshippers. The priesthood too was of an earthly and

successional order, confined to an earthly line of things (not heavenly) as between the people and God. It was a changeable priesthood, and often interrupted by death. There was also “a worldly sanctuary” —a place of worship on earth, a material building, which was truly, and the only one ever recognized as, the house of God. Such was the Jewish order of things. Whereas Christianity tells us of distance—having been removed by the veil being rent from the top to the bottom, when Jesus died upon the cross, so that the worshipper comes now with boldness into the holiest of all. The order of priesthood is heavenly and eternal, all believers being made priests, and Jesus the Son of God being the unchangeable High Priest. Worship therefore is not now connected with a building on earth, but with the holiest of all above, “the true tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man.” Because the Lord's people are His house, there is now no building on earth, which can be truthfully designated a house of God. (See Heb. 3:6) It was therefore said by our adorable Lord, “Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” (Matt. 18:20)

To attach the idea of a sanctuary now to any building on earth is then so far to abandon Christian ground, and to go back to the Jews' religion; which is not only dishonoring to the Lord, but far more damaging to souls than many imagine; because it throws them at a distance from God, and necessitates their requiring a humanly-ordered priesthood to come between themselves and God. This the natural man likes, because it gives importance to men; while he rebels at the thoughts of divine grace, and refuses the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free. But, blessed be God, we have remission of sins, and we have boldness to enter where He is. Hence we are welcomed with “Come boldly to the throne of grace.” Do we know what it is to be inside the vail, in the sweet consciousness of God's “perfect love” and in the enjoyment of “perfect peace,” while our hearts at the same time are going out to the Father in worship and thanksgiving? It need scarcely be said that this is not the sinner drawing near in order to be cleansed, but the worshipper entering in with boldness, because he is cleansed, and has “no more conscience of sins.” Hence it is written, “Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Chap. x. 22.) Our Lord referred to this remarkable change in the character of worship. He said to the woman of Samaria, “Believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father.... But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit, and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:21-24) Worship then must be “in spirit;” suited to the nature of God, and “in truth,” or according to God's own revelation of His mind. Happy indeed are those who thus worship the Father!

At the same time the believer is deeply conscious he is in a world where Jesus was but is not, and is running on to where He is. The spiritual worshipper is also then a devoted runner, and in so doing he is exhorted to drop every weight which impedes his course, to lay aside unbelief in all its delusive forms—that easily besetting sin—and to run the race set before him. (Heb. 12:1-3.) He is encouraged to run, not to loiter, nor to seek a resting place, where the faithful Forerunner had none; but to follow on in the race with patient persevering faith. Not with spasmodic or desultory efforts, but with patience; not looking to men, however well they may have been reported for their faith: but to keep the eye steadily on Him who has run the race perfectly, who knows every step of the way, every impediment and temptation, and is now sitting on the throne of God. We are then to

run the race set before us, looking unto Jesus (or looking steadfastly on Jesus) where He now is. Thus turning from every other object, and fixing the eye of our heart on Him, the Leader and Completer (not of our faith, but) of faith, we must look steadfastly and dependently on Him who has trodden the path of faith perfectly from the beginning to the end; for all our resources are in Him. We are enjoined also to “consider him,” whose path was beset so painfully with opposition and trial; for when we well consider Him who endured so great contradiction from sinners against Himself, we become so cheered and strengthened that we do not grow weary and faint in our minds. The blessed Lord had joy in prospect, and so we have the bright hope of being with Him, and like Him forever. We are told that “for the joy which was set before him, he endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” The Forerunner is for us entered within the veil, and we are to run the race with patience looking unto Him.

We are also to bear the reproach of Christ. We cannot now be associated with a worldly system of religion on earth, for the veil is rent. He suffered without the gate, and we are exhorted to go forth unto Him without the camp. Our place then here is to suffer with Christ in His rejection. God hath highly exalted Him, and has made Him the central object of His counsels; Christ must therefore be the true and only center for the faithful here. False religiousness is as displeasing to the Lord as irreligiousness itself. Yet there is a way for faith in the darkest times. The Lord has interests still on earth of deepest moment to Him. He cannot bear what is evil. It is only the more hateful to Him, when His holy name is used to accredit it; though ecclesiastical evil is often the last thing which arouses the conscience. Still the word to the faithful is “Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity,” and “go forth unto Him without the camp.” This brings its “reproach,” but it is the path of blessing. To turn away from what is not according to His truth, “and to go forth unto him without the camp” is clearly His will concerning us. It may entail painful severances; but to be out to the Lord, and “with those who call on his name out of a pure heart,” is the divinely ordered path; and that is enough for a true heart. “Let us go forth therefore unto him without, the camp, bearing his reproach.” (Heb. 13:11-13.) It has been rightly said that a worldly religion, which forms a system in which the world can walk, and in which the religious element is adapted to man on earth, is the denial of Christianity.

May we know increasingly the blessedness of being inside the veil as purged worshippers, outside the camp with Christ in faithfulness to His name, and patient runners of the race which ore long will bring us into His presence forever: “for yet a little while and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.” (Heb. 10:37.) When the Lord presents Himself as “the root and offspring of David, and the bright and morning star,” it is immediately said “and the Spirit and the bride say Come"! so we may be assured it is the apprehension of His blessed person that will keep fresh in our soul the hope of His coming—the earnest desire of seeing His face. H, H. S.

Chapter 176

The Spirit of God and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost 1

IN order to understand these subjects of divine revelation, and yet to distinguish them in dispensational action, it is necessary to learn from the word of God the present standing and relations of a believer in Christ to the Father and to the Son, as compared with the previous calling of Israel into a place of blessing on the earth. It will be seen that “the Spirit of God” is connected with each, as likewise with the nation and the church, but in different ways; whilst “the baptism of the Holy Ghost” (at Pentecost) brings out from the world into a present portion with Christ glorified in heaven. Indeed it is this, and the blessings which flow from union with Christ, our new Head of life, founded on eternal redemption through His blood, and opened out by His resurrection and departure to the right hand of God in power and glory, which characterize Christianity and Christians: and distinguish them from the economy of Moses, and the position of Israel in the Old Testament, as a “people under law and in the flesh."

In bringing these observations to bear on the subjects proposed, I would say, in the first place, that “the Spirit of God” could not bear witness to Judaism as an economy, or to its ritualistic and sacerdotal observances, except to say, that “the law made nothing perfect,” and to add further, “that the way into the holiest was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing."

“The Spirit of God” declined to witness to man under the law, and to its ordinances, by Moses and Aaron, for the simple reason, that “in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin God had no pleasure,” inasmuch as there was a remembrance of sins. “The Spirit of God, which moved upon the face of the waters” in the chaos of creation, could and did act likewise upon the creature-man—at every time, and under any circumstances, in this ruined world. Judaism, though an institution from God, started with nothing. perfect; it did not possess in itself a perfect sacrifice, or a perfect priest, or a worshipper made perfect; and therefore the Holy Ghost waited on the person of the Son of God, and tarried in His testimony for the coming in of Jesus as the Savior, “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.” This refusal on the part of the Spirit to witness to the polity of Moses “and the worldly sanctuary” is stated in Heb. 9:8, and that He waited for the “time of reformation.” His readiness to bear testimony “to the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot unto God,” is unhesitatingly declared, as well as to the purged worshipper, and to the new and living way which was opened into the holiest “through the rent veil.” This is the basis of our communion.

Heb. 10:14 affirms this to be the glorious truth of Christianity and of the perfections of Christ, throughout the length and breadth of its revelations, namely, “This man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God.” For by one offering” he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified, whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us."

“The Spirit of God” thus tarried for Christ, and then rested upon Him, when He took His place as “the sent One from the Father,” and entered on His ministry and work, for the glorification of God, in the midst of men below.

Indeed one peculiarity of John the Baptist's testimony was this— “upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” We have further before us from this scripture the two great parts of Christ's ministry: one, as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;” and the other, “he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” The first was accomplished by His death on the cross below, and the last by His ascension into the heavens as the glorified Son of man. Our redemption by His blood, and our acceptance in the risen Christ, was a pre-requisite to any witness of the Spirit of God to men. He did wait upon Christ, and rest upon Him, as we have seen; but the work of redemption could be the only basis of our intimacy with God, and by which he could shed his love abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.” It is, then, as believers in Christ “we joy in God,” by whom we have received the reconciliation. “The men whom thou gavest me out of the world,” as Jesus said to the Father, must first be born again of the Spirit, and become partakers of eternal life and of the divine nature; before the Holy Ghost could bear record to them as new creatures, or come and dwell in them as “the Spirit of adoption, and witness to us that we are the sons of God.” The descent of the Holy Ghost is consequent also upon the departure of Christ out of this world, and His exaltation at the right hand of the Father. “If I depart, I will send him.” Moreover, the Holy Ghost tarried for the glorification “of the Son of man in heaven,” even as He had waited upon Him at His incarnation, and rested upon Him, when on the earth. This is the first and prime object of the Spirit, namely, “He shall glorify me, for he shall take of mine, and show it unto you.” United as we are with Christ, by the power of the quickening Spirit, He can then witness in His turn to us, “that as Christ is, so are we in this world,” and “make our bodies the temples of the Holy Ghost.” “Ye have an unction from the Holy One,” &c.

It will be easily perceived that all which has been stated, and which distinguishes us as Christians, flows from the grace of God into which we are called by the Son of His love, and from the perfection of Christ's work on His cross below, as well as from the glory into which He has been raised above.

In this range of blessedness which pertains to the new creation, and of which the Son of man, as second Adam, takes the Headship, our prayers can have no part in the way of means, either as to “sending the Holy Spirit, or receiving His baptism.” We are introduced by sovereign grace into this circle by the Father's love, and the prayer of His beloved Son, “Father, I will that those also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” In an earlier chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus had spoken of this further witness and presence of the Holy Ghost in the midst “of his own who were in the world,” as the result of His own prayer entirely. “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever.” In chapter 16 also, the coming of the Spirit depended upon the Lord's absence from His disciples: “It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I depart, I will send him.” Once more, in chapter 14, which is very precious, because out of the range or need of our prayers, as touching the Holy Ghost and any of His relations which prayers some suppose to be necessary to bring Him), Jesus says, “but the Comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name,” &c. The presence of the Spirit of God on earth depended thus on the departure of our Lord—upon the Son of man being glorified—and on the double action of the Father and the Son, as further stated in the following verse, “but when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto

you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me," &c.

It is evident that our Lord's own prayer to the Father, and not ours in any way, whether past or present, have to do with the descent of the Holy Ghost, or with any of the relations which He undertakes and carries into effect, for the accomplishment of the Father's purpose, and the Son's glory. Indeed this is the only ground taken by the Lord when He actually leaves the disciples in Acts 1, and is carried up in a cloud into heaven; "being assembled together, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which," saith He, "ye have heard of me." "The baptism of the Holy Ghost" was thus a future thing, though proximate, yet not connected with His resurrection from amongst the dead so much as with His departure and place in heaven, as "Head over all things;" therefore He said to them, "Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence."

This descent of the Spirit of God was in effect the fruit of Christ's own request to the Father, and not an object of prayer on the part of others. It was a promise of the Father's, and further, a promise of the Son, for He adds, "Which, saith he, ye have heard of me." Moreover, His prayer, and this promise to send, coupled the fact of their "receiving power" with the descent of the Spirit, "but ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses to me, both in Jerusalem.... and to the uttermost parts of the earth."

Here it is of all importance to acknowledge a further peculiarity of this dispensation, namely, that another and a new sample of men was left behind at Christ's ascension, and bidden to tarry for "the promise of the Father," and "the baptism of the Holy Ghost." This new company waiting below were connected with Christ, "the firstfruits," who had gone up as the wave-sheaf before God, and as associated with whom James writes, "Of his own will begat he us, with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."

Before the Lord had ascended, and taken His own place as Head of the new creation, the Holy Ghost could only witness and abide with one person on the earth, and that One "the Word made flesh." The Spirit of God could not witness to the perfection of Israel, even when under Solomon in all his glory, for they were a nation in the flesh, and separated to God by external ordinances, and were a responsible people to Jehovah their King, both by covenant, and as under His government. It may be proper to notice here, that the Holy Spirit could, and did, bear testimony to all that the God of Israel was and did amongst them by His words and ways, and could likewise act on any individual—for Jehovah was sovereign.

The prophet Isaiah records this historically in chapter 63: "As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of Jehovah caused him to rest; so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name." So in their journeyings, "the angel of his presence saved them, in his love and in his pity he redeemed them," &c. The presence of the Spirit was likewise amongst them from the onset, for the prophet says, "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea, with the shepherd of his flock? Where is be that put his Holy Spirit within him?" And, lastly, "but they rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit; therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them."

Besides this recognition of the Holy Spirit in the general history of Israel, and the ways of God towards them in government, we may as well introduce here the cry of David, “the anointed of the God of Jacob,” when he prayed, “Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me.” This penitential cry is often quoted to prove a coming and a going away of the Holy Spirit in Christianity as in former days (so little is the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost realized); but the dispensational difference which has been already described is a sufficient answer to any such difficulty. In whatever ways the Holy Spirit was with Moses, as the leader and commander of God's people Israel, and in whatever way the Holy Spirit was with the sweet psalmist as the spirit of prophecy—or with the long line of the prophets in Old Testament history—yet the Holy Ghost, as such, was never a witness to an economy which consisted in types, and shadows, and patterns of the heavenly things to come, and stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

The Holy Ghost waited for the heavenly things themselves ere He could become the indwelling Spirit of a believer in Christ, and the witness to the second Man, as Head over all things, or as the earnest of the inheritance, and as the anointing and seal from God the Father to His many sons. He could not be this till that “which was perfect was come."

(To be continued, if the Lord will)

Chapter 177

The Spirit of God and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost 2

We may now return to the Acts, to witness, as a matter of fact, the descent of the Holy Ghost, which “filled all the house” where the men who tarried were sitting. His coming was not what they had to pray for then or now (as some affirm), when all were waiting in confident expectation of the gift. Nay, all depended upon the Father and the Son, as touching “the promise, which ye have heard of me!” Cloven tongues as of fire, which sat upon each of them, were the result of Christ's “prayer” to the Father, and of His own faithful love to those whom He had left behind; and so “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

The baptism of the Holy Ghost, which was promised “not many days hence,” was come, and they were under its grace and power. For the first time on earth there were “men in Christ,” united to Him who had gone up to heaven by the presence and power of the Holy Ghost who had come down. He further claimed them in Christ's name, and possessed them for Himself as His temple, being one with the glorified Head on high; “and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.” What had been promised was thus accomplished, and the Holy Ghost was present on earth as the other Comforter sent by the Father, “to abide with us forever.” He takes His place likewise as the formative power here, in uniting the members of Christ together, “for by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body,” whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have “been all made to drink into one Spirit.” His power and presence, as we have said, is formative of the present dispensation, and therefore necessary for the carrying out of the Father's counsels as to Christ and the church, “which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.” The presence of the Holy Ghost upon earth in divine power is requisite, therefore, for the counsels of God, and for the glory of Christ, in gathering the members of His body into this unity; and in fashioning the bride, as the Lamb's wife, in expectation of the day when the marriage of the Lamb shall have come, and the bride have made herself ready.

The Holy Ghost, and His presence and actings on the earth, as sent by the Father and the Son, “this other Comforter,” is, further, a constituent part of our faith, because essential to Christianity itself, which is dispensationally in the power of the Spirit. “The baptism of the Holy Ghost” is thus indispensable to “the church of the living God;” nor could there be “the body of Christ on earth,” till His descent at Pentecost had witnessed afresh to the Lord as Head above, and made known to us the presence and power by which “Christ and his members” were to be formed, and united as one body. “So also is Christ.” There was no such work or operation as this till the Head was seated in the heavenlies; on the contrary, up to the cross, and the crucifixion of Jesus, there was a doctrine of baptisms and “laying on of hands,” with a crowd of ordinances, which only “served for the purifying of the flesh,” before that Christ arose, as may be seen abundantly in the Old Testament, and the synoptical gospels.

A baptism by water, in Jordan and elsewhere, was connected with John's ministry, as the forerunner of the Messiah; but this was for repentance and remission of sins, and recognized man

as still under the law. The disciples also of Jesus baptized with water; but there could be no “baptism of the Holy Ghost,” even in connection with the Lord's ministry, before His death and crucifixion; for there was nothing on earth with which God was “well pleased,” or in which He “could rest with pleasure,” except the Son of His own love, and He was buried.

Our eternal redemption by the cross of Christ has put us on the other side of the flesh and the world and the devil's power and dominion; and our union with Christ by resurrection has associated us with Him in life, and “as new creatures in the Father's counsels and love,” which were pre-determined before the foundation of the world. It is this “mystery, which was hid in God,” but is now brought to light, and manifested in the glorified Son of man, that the Holy Ghost witnesses to, and declares to us by the apostles, under the anointing of the Spirit, in the epistles. This opens out the place, as well as the objects and ministry of the Holy Ghost, in this present dispensation, and which required His descent to carry out. He had, moreover, to form upon the earth that glorious church, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, which Christ will finally present to Himself when He comes to fetch her.

"The baptism of the Holy Ghost,” having relation to the members of Christ, is therefore more corporate than individual, seeing that it is by it we are brought into the unity of this body with all our fellow-members, and in which we are respectively set as” it hath pleased God.” His bestowment and presence cannot therefore be the subject or object of our prayer and supplication, seeing that the day of Pentecost is the record of His descent; and not only this, but that those who waited the few days as representative men received this baptism, and “were all filled with the Holy Ghost,” and united to Christ as the Head with ourselves. On our part His presence is to be acknowledged as abiding with us forever, and this forms our new responsibility as “men in Christ;” for example (and individually), “Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption;” and again (as in the assembly of God), “Quench not the Spirit,” despise not prophesyings.

We have thus looked at the Holy Ghost, not only as a Person revealed to us in Christianity, as one with the Father and the Son, but chiefly as taking His place of co-operation on earth, in this dispensation, and consequent upon the departure of the Son to the Father. He is also the energizing power in quickening, and gathering, and uniting the members of Christ to their Head in heaven, by “the baptism” of the Holy Ghost. This, as we have said, is a more corporate action of the descended Paraclete at Pentecost, than as a proper personal expectation, and not, therefore, to be understood or restricted to us individually, like the indwelling of the Spirit, or as the Spirit of adoption.

Besides this formative power of the Holy Ghost, between the Head in heaven and the members of Christ on earth, and this baptism, by which the body is gathered out and completed, and the “unity of the Spirit” maintained and kept, there remains yet to be considered what this new order of man is, and what this new company of men are, who come out of “the upper chamber” in Acts 1—for this is individual. Personally they are new creatures, born of God, and one with their departed Lord in the Father's love and counsels, in the many-mansioned house.

As to their description and nature, they are “men in Christ,” and correspondingly “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,” and tongues as of fire sat upon each of them. Thus are they distinguished from all the Jews in Jerusalem and Judea, and from mankind at large. Their

characteristics are, first, that they are individually united to Christ in life and righteousness, who is gone up; and filled with the Holy Ghost, who has come down. There are thus men upon the earth who are “not of the world, even as Jesus was not of the world” —men who are one with the Second Adam above, and are to represent Christ below as heavenly men, and to “walk as sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation,” &c. Moreover, while this was their peculiarity, as gathered out from the children of men, it was also their normal state and description, as seen in “the Holy Ghost's actings” throughout the Acts. Perhaps one of the most convincing and remarkable proofs of this is supplied in chapter vi.: “Wherefore look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom,” &c. Another may yet be added: “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.” Proofs of an opposite kind may also be stated, which sprang from the enmity produced in those who were of the wicked one, against those who were one with their Lord, and the consequent persecution “against the church” which was at Jerusalem, so that the disciples “were all scattered abroad."

"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison;” they that were after the flesh persecuted them who were after the Spirit. Another proof of the contrariety which thus originally existed may be gathered from the declension and growing apostasy of these last and closing days, when the difference has been so completely lost that the world cannot find anything like enough to Christ, or sufficiently unlike itself, against which to stir up its enmity, or to call out its persecution. This fact, however, ought only to give more earnest desire “to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called,” in the true confession of what has been let go and departed from, through the craft of men, and by the subtle wiles of Satan. Our responsibility is in the acknowledgment of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and the distinctive relations in which by grace we have been set, and in the confession that our sufficiency is of God. The rights of Christ, and the privileges of His own, and the mystery of the church, are inalienable and indestructible, and it is only adding to the confusion and declension to say, “who shall ascend into heaven to bring Christ down from above; or who shall descend into the deep, that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.” Nor is it different in principle to pray for the descent of the Spirit, or the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which were promised by the Lord, and sent from the Father and the Son at Pentecost, and which characterize Christianity itself as the only adequate power on earth, whether for the formation of the church of God, the body of Christ, or for making ready the bride of the Lamb.

(To be continued)

Chapter 178

The Spirit of God and the Baptism of the Holy Ghost 3

THE recognition of this “baptism of the Holy Ghost” is the church's responsibility, and should, in these days of departure from the truth, be acknowledged and carried out, by a withdrawment from all the sects of Christendom, the existence of which violates this “unity of the Spirit,” and by a refusal to cooperate with any, and all, who accept and build upon this general declension which we see around. To make this condition a common ground of alliance in confederated action is the sin of the day, and to use it as a platform for united prayer and supplication to God, as is, alas I so usual amongst the sects, is sad. Thus to turn round what is our shame, and reproach, and default, into an occasion (not of repentance and confession), but of combined effort by prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit, and for the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is a very grave artifice of the enemy.

The one grand distinguishing mark of Christianity was the promise of the Father, which was fulfilled by the descent of the Holy Ghost, as “the other Comforter,” and “He was to abide with us forever.” The outward manifestation of His power, in the way of miracles, gift of tongues, raising the dead, and recovering of sight, may have been withdrawn judicially from the church, because the presence of the Holy Ghost has been forgotten, and treated as a thing of the past, and almost out of mind. Even in these last days, just on the eve of the Lord's own coming and the church's rapture, it is made the absorbing object of united supplication by the sects that the Spirit may be poured out, or that the Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost may be received.

The resource of faith now is in true repentance and confession; not in conferences for the descent or baptism of the Holy Ghost, but by “praying in the Holy Ghost, and building ourselves up on our most holy faith, keeping ourselves in the love of God,” &c. The remedy is not by unbelief in a new form, and repeated by Christians towards the Holy Ghost, as it once was by Israel in reference to the Lord, saying, “who shall bring him down from above,” but what saith it? “The word is nigh thee,” &c. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the churches."

The relief is to be found in the unfailing grace of God to those who still get into the place of His mind through His word, by the teaching and guidance of the Holy Ghost, which remaineth amongst us, “whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.” Confession that He has been sinned against, and dishonored, and grieved, is the right and true exercise of soul before God in days like these. Dependence on the grace of Christ, and the Lord's unchanging love to His own, are the open doors for the reliance of faith, in any departure from Himself above, or in forgetfulness of the Holy Ghost's presence and operations on the earth. But to refuse humiliation and confession (which would be so proper) because of this sin against the Holy Ghost, and to combine in earnest prayer for His bestowment or outpouring, and baptism, is to overlook the church's responsibility, and to take an antagonistic position to the truth of the dispensation. It is virtually to say His descent at Pentecost has been falsified or forfeited, and that it depended not upon the promise of the Father and the Son “to abide with us forever,” but on the faithfulness of the church to Christ.

Any who at this present time have, on the other hand, taken this ground of confession and humiliation on account of the sin of the professing church, and refused to join in united prayer that God would send down the Spirit afresh, have found by faith and obedience the sufficiency of the Lord's love, and the real presence of the Holy Ghost in their midst. Unbelief and Saul's armor have been by them refused, to make room for dependence and the power of the Spirit.

The twos and threes who thus meet together now throughout this kingdom, and in other lands, have found the faithfulness of Christ in their weakness to be more than enough, and there “am I in the midst of them” has been the rallying-point in many a time of trial. “Thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name,” has often cast them in the confidence of dependence upon the grace and sympathy “of him that is holy, and him that is true,” who has, in faithful love, “set before them an open door, and no man can shut it.” Not by might, nor by power, “but by my Spirit,” saith the Lord, has been their refuge: and the encouraging words of Paul to Timothy (“Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus,” for patience and endurance, on the one hand; or else, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,” for conflict, on the other) have strengthened the feeble knees in prayer, and nerved the outstretched arm in the hour of danger, Instead of entreaty for the Holy Ghost to be sent (a more unhindered power in the Spirit has ever been their request). And they remember the word of the Lord by Haggai to Israel, in their declension and apostasy, “Yet now be strong.... for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts.” This recovery and power lay in the fact of Jehovah's presence in their midst, as it is in these perilous times too: for the “foundation of the Lord standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his; and let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

After the manner also “in which the Holy Spirit was with Moses and the people,” when Jehovah brought them up out of Egypt with His glorious arm, as has been previously referred to, so Haggai says in his prophecy, “according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you, fear ye not.” The confidence and assurance of the remnant with Zerubbabel rested upon the word, “for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts,” having for its counterpart, “so my Spirit remaineth among you,” and they proved by faith and obedience their sufficiency to be in the living God. Unbelief, especially in an evil day, may easily turn the path of faith and dependence into a provocation, as did Israel in the wilderness, or as does the professing church now.

Forgetfulness or ignorance of “the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost” on earth, or of “the Lord's faithful love to His own” which are in the world “unto the very end,” has caused the prayers and supplications of Christians to be neither in the truth nor in the Spirit. Their persistent maintenance of sectarian systems and church establishments, which not only prove, but are themselves, the departure from scripture, as respects the glorified Head of the church in heaven, and the baptism of the Holy Ghost into one body on the earth, has stopped the way for ages to the manifestation of this “unity of the Spirit.” This denial of the one body on earth has, on the other hand, thrown open its floodgates for union with the world, as seen in the multiplied religious and political associations of to-day, crowned by “an Evangelical Alliance.” As the legitimate fruit of this spiritual fornication, the truth, of Christianity, and of the rights of the Son of man on high, have been sacrificed to the world's advancement. The formative power of the Holy Ghost for quickening and gathering men out of the world into oneness with the ascended Lord, as Head over all things to the church, has been in this way surrendered to “the prince of the power of the air,” for the advancement of man in

the flesh where he is, and the development of his faculties, in order to make the wrong world what it seems to be. Besides this downward road of departure from the glory of God by the responsible church on the earth, and from the glory of Christ in His Headship in heaven, through the wiles of the enemy, there still lies, as we have seen, the unbelief of the Lord's own people as to the abiding presence of the Holy Ghost with us forever—not merely to quicken those who are dead in sins, and to dwell in those who are thus born of God, but to “baptize the members of Christ into one body, and to make them drink into one Spirit."

The Holy Ghost, ever true to the glory of the Father and the glory of the Son, has not changed in the work which brought Him down at Pentecost, but is carrying it out; and “my Spirit remaineth among you,” together with, “I am in your midst,” are the rallying assurances for faith and obedience today. No sect on earth, and the refusal of any, and every one of them, clears the way back “to the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace,” and opens the heart to the abiding truth and preciousness of the “baptism of the Holy Ghost.” It is not by abandoning to the enemy's craft the great fact of our dispensation, namely, the Spirit's presence in power on the earth, “to gather together in one the children of God,” or by having recourse to united prayer, and begging that He may be sent in power to baptize, that any who are in the snare will get out of the spider's web, but by the acknowledgment of the truth, that He abideth faithful to the objects which brought Him here, and thus take their places in the one body.

“Be strong,” “fear not,” are handed down for faith from generation to generation. Moses rehearsed them to Joshua, with the addition from Jehovah Himself, “As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee.” Haggai, in the last days of Israel's past history, reassures the remnant of their sufficiency for an evil day (and in the midst of general departure too) by the abiding faithfulness of God, and the presence of His Spirit. “I counsel thee to buy of me—gold tried in the fire,” &c., are the encouraging words to “him that hath an ear” to hear what the Spirit saith to the churches. Let all be careful not to reduce the Holy Ghost's presence in formative power in the church of the living God down to our own individual relations to Christ, and the Spirit's operations in us, wonderful and blessed as these are, lest we should be satisfied merely with what He witnesses of to us, and of which He is the earnest and seal, and so overlook the glory of the Head.

May our hearts, in the sense and enjoyment of all that is individual, be the more free to acknowledge what is collective and corporate, by the Spirit's power, and baptism into one body, for the glory of Christ, the Lord, and for the glory of God the Father, in another relation to Himself personally, as “the members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” That the Lord nourishes and cherishes these members now is a present fact, and proof of what the Holy Ghost has come down to gather together in the unity of the Spirit. He abides with us, in the exercise of this divine power which unites the members thus to Christ, and forms the body on the earth, in hope of the approaching nuptial day.

In conclusion, let our corporate relations to Christ end the body, at this present time, be understood, in the love that nourishes and cherishes each one of His members, and be added to our individual ones, that many who desire to know the truth of the church of God, but are still in the sects around, may take their place outside them all, in the true unity of the Spirit, and by this acknowledgment of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as members of Christ, and of the same body, refuse to be schismatic, and bad builders.

May many be thus practically led into the realization of their oneness with Christ and the church, that in the enjoyment of an extended communion and fellowship with all saints, they may “endeavor to keep” it with those who do. Beware of surrendering “the church of the living God,” and the truth of “the body and bride of Christ,” and the necessary “baptism of the Holy Ghost,” as present realities, to the enemy of Christ's glory, and to human tradition. The object of Satan is to keep man where he is, and to make him active, benevolent, and philanthropic, in the darkness of this “present evil age,” of which he is the ruler. He seeks to get Christians off the ground of their heavenly calling, that they may religiously become citizens and dwellers upon the earth, and so deny their dignity as God's fellow-workmen in another order of things, for the new creation of God, with the second Adam, our glorified Lord and Head.

Satan encourages any use of Christianity or Christ, yea, and of the Holy Ghost, that can be applied for the improvement of the world, and the advancement of mankind in it, and thus triumphs over those who blindly accept the slavery “of sweeping and garnishing the strong man's house,” as false to their confession of Christ, in positive separation of life, and walk on earth; as well as untrue in a daily denial of the world, the flesh, and the devil.

J. E. B.

Letter on the Sufferings of Christ

9th June, 1866

My Dear Brother,

I trust I should retract at once if I thought I was in error, especially in what concerns the blessed Lord Himself. I am quite ready to admit, and have admitted over and over again, that doubtless expressions may be made clearer. My principal difficulty to bring my mind to bear on it is the character of the objections. I admit the objectors have succeeded in troubling some; but I find daily many of these, the moment they have read what I have written, perfectly tranquil. The attacks, begun with deliberate fraud in quotation, were followed up by low malice, most of which, when I have seen them, I have not read. I should be ready to explain to the humblest and most ignorant. But the attacks have not commanded my respect. I am aware the enemy has succeeded in troubling some, and leading others to profit by it, to hinder souls whose consciences were making progress; but the Lord has a long look out. Our faith has to wait for Him, and such I seek for myself. I only fear that it may leave some, for whom I had hoped better, in the mud they have sought to create. I only ask to be enabled to do at each moment what is right in the matter, believing, though it be the enemy's work, it will do good. I proposed to the brethren to go out of communion, and leave off ministering (not for any difficulty I had), but to leave them perfectly free; but they would not hear of it in these parts, and in many others.

I am not the least uneasy myself. I feel distinctly it is an effort of the enemy, and that he will be baffled; but I do not want to involve others in it, nor will I make it a matter of self-defense, mingling that up with the Lord's glory, and raising discussions, when it ought with such a subject to be edification. As regards connecting it, or comparing it, with Mr. Newton's doctrine, were it not for the pure wickedness of what set it a-going, it would be beneath contempt. To say that being born in a state, and seeking to extricate oneself, and not being able till death, is the same as being born in the very opposite, and always walking in that state, and entering into the sufferings of another in grace, does not deserve to be reasoned on! The same thing. One makes the other impossible. I cannot condescend to take notice of these attacks: those who get entangled in them must count the cost for themselves. Explain my own views, or unfold the truth as far as I can, this I am ready to do; but I am in no hurry. I do not want to get defending myself, but prefer trusting the Lord, who will make things clear. Some parts of it are a new kind of trial, but there is grace enough in Christ for it, and I leave all that, without great difficulty, to God. We shall find out where He is leading. May the Lord save as many as possible from Satan's power in it.

I am ready to do all I can towards it, where it is really sought. I have no doubt many expressions may be made clearer; but, if honestly examined in the context, they cannot have the sense attached to them. In substance, instead of having to retract, I believe my enemies to be in very mischievous and evil error, going far to deny the reality of Christ's sufferings, and thus depriving Him of a blessed part of His glory, and us of the deepest comfort and vital truth.

I can easily understand that what relates to the remnant of Israel may not be understood, and hence that part is difficult to enter into. That does not trouble me. But the denial of Christ's sufferings, where these are real, is another matter; and, allow me to say, though I shall reply to your questions out of the New Testament, you cannot understand that subject without referring to the Old. Nor can I consent to give up that which was able to make men wise unto salvation through faith that is in Christ Jesus.

I am aware that Mr. Newton said his doctrine was not in the New Testament, but in the Psalms; but one of the devices of Satan is to deprive us of truth by connecting it with deadly error. This is one source of trouble to honest minds now; but it is a reason for going peacefully on in the truth itself, and having patience with people's minds. His doctrine was in neither. Nor do I admit such a principle. For the Old Testament throws infinite light on what we have often only the fact of in the New. There is sufficient in the New to connect it with the Old, as in the case of Christ's sacrifice, but far more detail in the Old. If you expect to find the details as to the remnant of Israel in the New, you will be disappointed. Mr. Newton connected the blessed Lord with sinful guilty Israel, and hence had necessarily a false Christ. I say He entered into the sorrows and sufferings of the godly remnant. It is never stated in my papers that He was in the place that brought them in. The attacks on me are founded on a deadly error: that entering into the sufferings, or suffering with them in heart and grace, supposes Himself to be in the state or place which brought them in. Christ was baptized with the baptism of repentance. Was He in the case, or state, or position to need it? Every Christian knows that He was not, yet He submitted to that, or went through it.

There cannot be a more dangerous principle than that on which the charges against my statements are founded. They are really unawares founded on Mr. Newton's principle, not what they are attacking. I have no thought on the personal or relative positions of Christ which is not that of the whole church of God.

The only thing new, and which is not so for multitudes of saints, is there being a Jewish remnant, and His entering into their sorrows. The rest is merely calling souls to, I believe, a most profitable and faith-deepening contemplation of the blessed Lord's sufferings; and that, for friends or foes, I am not going to give up. Statements may be cleared up, but not truth given up. Thank God, many studious souls had been already, and the hubbub raised has led many others since to draw great profit from it.

I will now turn directly to your question and to the New Testament. But you must feel that before God no divinely-taught and God-fearing mind will leave out Psa. 22; 69; 102, or Isa. 51, or 53 in learning God's mind on the sufferings of the Lord.

It is admitted that in Gethsemane Christ was not yet drinking the cup. We know that He could then pray that He might not. Was He suffering simply from man for righteousness' sake? I merely state this as a general principle, that there is suffering which is not from man for righteousness, nor accomplishing atonement. You ask the question, “if uniting were necessitated in the blessed Lord, except as the sin-bearer?” You have just fallen into the dangerous error I adverted to. Where have I said it was necessitated? I have just stated the contrary. And this makes all the difference. Atonement is wrought in the forsaking of God when Christ was made sin for us. No doubt death was there consequently, but much more than death, and to confine it to the act of death is fatal error—just what one form of infidelity is now doing. And it is just because minds have lost, or never

had, the true sense of what atonement is, its unfathomable depth, that they have confounded other true sufferings with it. When the Lord, with strong crying and tears, made His supplication to Him that was able to save Him from death, was it only from wrath and the work of atonement? When He said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death; tarry ye here and watch with Me, were they watching with Him undergoing atonement The Son of man was to suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation, and be put to death, and rise again: is this a statement of atonement?

You will say, perhaps, these were His sufferings from man simply for righteousness' sake. No doubt man's hand was in it, as it was in the cross, where atonement was wrought. But scripture teaches me that it is not simply that. The disciples had seen His sufferings from men all through. This He only began to tell them of on His last journey to Jerusalem. Not only so, the Lord's position and theirs was changed—His hour till then was not come. He was acting with Emmanuel power, and sending them forth, and disposing of every heart, so that they lacked nothing. But Messiah was to be cut off, and He tells them in Luke that all was changed in this respect. (Luke 22:35-37.) “But now let him that hath a purse take it. For I say unto you that this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors, for the things concerning me have an end.” No doubt this was fulfilled in that in which atonement was wrought; but it is not atonement which is spoken of, but the rejection of Messiah, and the total change which accompanied it. When the Lord spoke of smiting, quoting from Zechariah, no doubt it was in death, or unto death, He was smitten; but He is not speaking of atonement. “All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.” Does this mean, I will make atonement, and gather into one flock Jews and Gentiles, being lifted upon the cross? Was it smiting the Shepherd as then having gathered the Jewish sheep around Him, so that they were scattered? If I am to believe the Lord, it was this latter. It was not the gathering power of atonement, but the scattering power of smiting; not the lifting up, though in the same work, but the smiting the Man on the earth, the earthly Shepherd.

You will say this went much farther. To be sure it did, blessed be God; but this does not alter the fact that there was this. Man's hand was in it, Satan's hand was in it. He had departed from Him for a season; now the prince of this world came. It was man's hour, and the power of darkness. The blessed Lord's soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death (and note, before drinking the cup). You will say this was only from man and Satan. It was (though His power never changed) a declared change from His spoiling his goods. And scripture shows me that, while tried by this to the uttermost, and suffering, He looked up to His Father through it, and would only take it as a cup from Him—that His perfection was shown in bowing to it all as His will and way. And not only was atonement made, but Messiah was cut off, all the promises connected with His presence in Israel in the flesh set aside, the beloved nation and city, over which He wept as that which He would have gathered often, cast off and judged.

This was not from man's hand merely, though through it. It was God's divorce of His people, wrought out alike because of need in the death of Messiah. It was not atonement but judicial, and while it was because of their rejection of Christ, His heart, who wept over them, entered into it, suffered in it and by it, and in His piety did not take it from secondary causes but from God's hand. No doubt He at the same time wrought atonement, was wounded for His people's transgressions, and braised for their iniquities, as by His stripes they will be healed, but all this on the far deeper

ground of atonement; but this does not set aside the truth of the setting aside all blessings in the living person of Messiah, all promises connected with it, nor that the Lord felt all this, and suffered. Was it not in His cutting off the people were rejected (not saved by atonement, true as that is)? Was it God cut them off, or man (not finally, as we know, but as connected with a living Messiah)? Do you think Christ was indifferent to all this, or not? Was He not true in heart when as yet it was only in prospect that He wept over Jerusalem? I shall be told this was only sympathy. I abhor the statement. Scripture teaches me that He suffered that He might sympathize. I believe it fully, deeply.

Persons hostile to the truth have taken the statements I have made as to the different states of heart, or a tried soul, to which, consequently, this interest and sympathy of Christ might apply, and given them as the state in which Christ was. I might, no, doubt, have guarded by a positive disclaimer against such an application. To an honest mind it was needless—to a dishonest one useless. When in the general statement, I had carefully put it in, to guard against any misapprehension on the very point you take up, it was deliberately and purposely left out, and unsuspecting minds caught to be puzzled by it. With this before me, what do you feel I can think of the clamor that has been raised?

I have answered your question from the New Testament. If you with these facts of the New Testament take the Psalm you will soon find your mind guided into further truth and apprehension of what passed when this poor man cried, and the Lord heard Him. I have no desire to give up what I have learned there. I believe both the atonement and the personal sufferings of Christ are lost by doing so, and true sufferings, in order to sympathize, turned into sympathy. I cannot enter here into more detail. The fact that Christ's sorrows ran up into atonement, the positive drinking the cup of wrath, and putting the sin away, that His sufferings merged in this, which hinders the wrath coming on them who have a part in its efficacy, has made it more difficult to estimate those dealings of God which are judicial, but have not in accepted ones even the final character of wrath. In Christ one passed on, so to speak, into the other; in us, and spared Israel, it does not, because Christ has taken that for us; but in a legal state we dread it, and so will Israel at the end. All, if at peace, separate them easily; it is not so if we are not.

Judgment begins at the house of God. They are difficultly saved. This has nothing to do with atonement. Jerusalem has received at the hand of the Lord double of all her sins. This excludes the idea of atonement. Does all this pass without any interest of the blessed Lord in it; or did He so suffer as to be able (besides atonement, which alone renders the other possible as a distinct thing) to enter into their sorrows? Read the Psalm and see. Read the New Testament, and see if you cannot find facts which are the fulfillment of them.

I am willing and bound to do anything I can to help any, the feeblest soul. I am willing to stand aloof from brethren (I do not mean to separate from them in heart or will), if they have not the courage, or are not in a condition to face the adversaries of the truth, or are so perplexed by them that the connection with it is a burden; but I am not willing to give up the faith I have in the sufferings of the blessed Lord, nor the link of heart with Him which the apprehension of them gives me. But I believe souls are getting great blessing by the consideration of them, and Satan doing a work, as is often said, in which he deceives himself. I dare say many could not explain it thus logically, many may make crude statements; but the true of heart will be blessed in learning the

sorrows of the blessed Lord. It is not the first time alas! some have been driven back by the truth.

Your affectionate brother and servant in Christ,

J. N. D.

The one point on which there might be difficulty is the bringing the smiting, which in act took place on the cross, into the whole period from the supper. This might have been explained (it is at the end of my tract), but for fair minds is no ground of difficulty or objection. Scripture does so fully. “Ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.” They were scattered before the time of smiting was there. “So now I say unto you, he that hath a purse, take one,” and the Lord's discourses in John; “Now is the Son of man glorified.” The whole tenor of the Gospels is this—to take the smiting as come, the same as the sense of the smiting.

Chapter 180

The Sufferings of Christ

My Dear Brother,

As one who in the past has had to learn, through painful experience, the truth as to the sufferings of Christ, and who in consequence may in some measure be able to understand and to meet difficulties others may have met with, I beg to send you, for insertion in the “Bible Treasury” (if you see fit), a brief statement of the way in which the subject, according to scripture, presents itself to my mind, hoping that the Lord will graciously enable me to express myself aright, and that He may own this (as every) endeavor to give expression to what concerns Himself, His grace, and His glory.

I offer this merely as a contribution, and not at all as implying any necessity for it—quite agreeing with the beloved author of the well-known papers in the “Bible Treasury” on the “Sufferings of Christ,” who, in the subsequent edition, says, “If they” (that is, the above papers) “had been studied with a willing mind, I believe true edification and profit would have been found.” For myself, I am sure of this, having learned it, I may say, in a very practical way; for the Lord, when He deigns grace and mercy towards us, knows how to prepare us for it, and how to remove obstacles. In fact we may have to learn, in a manner far more practical than we are apt to presuppose, something of what these sufferings of Christ were, which seem to have been least understood and most denied.

If I may generalize at all from my own case, I should say that in nothing are we so prone to cling with tenacity to traditional and conventional notions as in our view of the atonement. I have known more than one struggle to free myself from traditional trammels, with anxious care in giving up what was wrong, to hold fast what was true; but no struggle I have ever known has been comparable to that I underwent as regards the doctrine of the atonement. It seemed the last stronghold to hold out, and the hardest to surrender. But a more single eye, and greater simplicity, would indeed spare us much. As in the offerings we see not only the slaying of the victim, but also the burning with fire (indicative of the ordeal of divine judgment), so in the case of the true sacrifice, Christ Himself, there was not only His death physically, but the fire of divine judgment for sin, through which His soul passed. And even in the case of the Christian there is the fire for purification (Heb. 12:29), which in the case of our Savior was, of course, not for purification, but the divine judgment and award of sin.

Again, we read in Heb. 9:27, “As it is appointed to men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Clearly, therefore, though death came in by sin, judgment for sin is here looked at as a thing distinct in itself from death, that is, the death of the body; for the Christian may undergo this, but never come into judgment (John 5:24). In the case of our Lord the judgment of sin preceded, instead of following, death, and was so complete and satisfactory, that before He died He could say, “It is finished;" and by His bearing it His people never can know death as the wages of sin, that is, as our Lord Himself says (John 8:51), “he shall never see death.” The Christian receives not the “wages of sin,” because Christ has tasted death for him, whilst, for the same reason, he does receive the gift of eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord.

In Ex. 12 we read that a lamb was to be taken on the tenth day—a lamb for an house—and kept until the fourteenth day of the same month, towards the close of which latter day it was to be slain. The lamb was to be without blemish, and this interval gave time to prove that it was so. Just so we have the period of our Lord's infancy or childhood, of His manhood, of His service, and, as on the fourteenth day, His death. It is witnessed that He grew in favor with God and man, and, as Peter says, we are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, “as of a lamb, without blemish and without spot.” It was necessary that the perfection of Christ as man should be proved and made manifest, as also His perfect acceptability to God, and His Father's delight in Him, at and from His birth; likewise that His own enjoyment of His Father's love should be absolutely free and unhindered. Hence it was that as man-tested and of proved perfection— “he offered himself without spot unto God,” this being, of course, at the period of the cross.

Now, though at His baptism by John our Lord voluntarily identified Himself with the remnant, yet He was not morally or judicially identified with them by God, nor was there anything substantial in such association. Substitution occurred only on the cross, as it is written, “He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.” That our Lord intended His identification with the remnant at His baptism to be permanent, that is, effectual, and knew what the result must be as regards atonement, is so true, that in Psa. 69:5 He says, “Thou knowest my foolishness, and my sins are not hid from thee.” Of course this “foolishness,” and these “sins,” were those of His people; but though not yet made sin-bearer by God, His identification with His people, in the purpose of His heart, is so complete, that He can call their sins His own from the time of His identifying Himself with them (as we see He did in grace at His baptism); and so voluntary was it, that, even up to the moment just anterior to the cross, He could say, “Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels, but how then shall the scripture be fulfilled?” &c., that is, it was His own will to do His Father's will, or those scriptures never would have been written. Everything concerning Christ as man had been pre-arranged and pre-ordained in the counsels of the Trinity, and hence was voluntary on His part. That the scripture said what it did, was His own predetermination, and in fact His own Spirit spoke in the prophets concerning His own subsequent sufferings. Moreover, if the Psalms are properly understood, we find there the expressions of the remnant in their latter-day sorrows. David's personal experiences in part, that is, to a certain extent, and to a certain depth, gave rise to these expressions; but as to all expressions of sorrow, in the case of Christ, apart from the personal failure in others which brought it on, the Spirit of Christ speaks to an extent and depth infinitely transcending what David could know.

Not only, then, in atonement did Christ suffer. In Heb. 5:7, 8, we read, “Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him out of death, and was heard in that he feared (or because of his piety); though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” Admitting the paramount importance of the atonement, and how absolutely alone that work stands—how precious is it to our hearts to study and ponder over the sufferings of our Lord as man! How else should we be prepared to take His yoke upon us, and to learn of Him? And how infinitely, in obedience, in suffering, and in every perfection as man, He transcends our best or most successful efforts to follow in His footsteps! But may He encourage our hearts, and cheer us on in the path of obedience and of suffering! Shall we say, “May it be our privilege to know more of it?”

Certainly Paul sought to know the fellowship of His sufferings.

If we turn to Isa. 1, we find there the judgment of God on Israel for their rejection of their Messiah—and for what He suffered from man—a chapter which we may compare with Psa. 69 In Isa. 63 we find, besides the nation's estimate of Him, the judicial action of God, “When than shalt make his soul an offering for sin,” &c. Hence we read nothing of judgment on men in this chapter, which accordingly we may compare with Psa. 22 These mark very distinctly the consequences of what comes direct from God, and of what comes directly from man.

Now in the former chapter of Isaiah we read, “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned [or rather as a learner, or disciple]. The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.” Here we have the spirit of obedience, as in Psa. 40:6, the place of obedience (“a body hast thou prepared me"). To whom was Christ not rebellious? Evidently to Him who wakened Him morning by morning to hear as a learner. Comparing this with Heb. 5, we see, without the possibility of mistake, to whom all this refers, and that there was that which He suffered that He might know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. In fact it is not atonement in Isa. 1; there is suffering from man, there is instruction, in the way of suffering obedience, from God; and we find judgment on the wicked in the last verse, and sympathy with His people in verses 4 and 10. As regards death, “he was heard in that he feared” (or on account of His piety), that is, He was raised out of, or from amongst, the dead. (Compare Psa. 109:4) Christ has indeed suffered as only such as He could, but His sufferings were in fact such as, with regard to their character, the remnant will pass through, and others often pass through—fear, dread, the judgment of sin—in His case, too, their rejection of Him as Messiah by the Jews, and His sorrow on their behalf in consequence.

In rejecting their Messiah, the Jewish nation, as we have seen in Isa. 1, sealed their own doom. In consequence, Jewish hopes passed away for the time, their Messiah being given up by them to the Gentiles, expressly that He might be slain— “It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.” The sorrows connected with the judgment of the nation—apprehended morally by the remnant—fell upon them, and more especially and perfectly upon Christ, who, as we know, wept over Jerusalem in the knowledge of her coming judgment. These sorrows, keenly realized by Him in their whole nature and extent, could only have been so realized when the nation had finally committed itself by rejecting Him, and hence were during His last hours on earth, during which also the will of man, no longer held in check by Divine Providence, was allowed to run its course against Him. Besides these, the sorrows pertaining to the remnant, there were the personal ones to Christ of His own cutting off as Messiah, or being slain; hilt, above all, of that cup at the hand of His Father, which was the essence of the atonement. Such were the complicated sorrows of Christ, from the moment of the betrayal, and more or less from the time when He steadfastly set His face to go up to Jerusalem for the last time, but more particularly in Gethsemane. All culminated at that interval in which He exclaimed, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” That His death was compassed by the Jews: well known—.” Is not this he whom they seek to kill?” And in Matt. 27:1 we have the distinct statement, “When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death"; “and the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.” Peter, in consequence, says, “Him, being delivered by the

determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." Christ was in fact a martyr, and the Prince of martyrs, though the "Prince of Life."

But His death was necessary in order to atonement, and therefore we read, "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." This, however, still left man perfectly responsible for his own motives and acts. Nothing that men or devils ever do can otherwise than subserve the purposes of God: God cannot be thwarted or injured by them. Their utmost efforts, foreseen by God, only forward His purposes. So it was with the crucifixion or slaying of our Lord Man compassed His death, and executed it. But when crucified, and during those three hours of darkness, Christ experienced the forsaking of God; He tasted death, not simply as the Christian may, physically, but as the divine and adequate judgment of sin-death therefore in its bitterness to the soul. This, therefore, was wholly God's doing. Man can kill the body, but cannot afflict the soul, still less inflict the soul for sin. But "when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin" is God's doing alone. Hence, as has been said in the Psalm we find 69 recounting the malice of man, and judgment on man invoked for it; whilst in Psa. 22, where we have the forsaking of God, and "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death," what man did is comparatively obscured by what God did, and hence blessing is the result. These psalms, though written by David, are bare prophecy, relating directly and personally to Christ, and not at all to anything that David experienced. Christ alone suffered, as described in Psa. 22

The truth is that our Lord's career (if I may use the word with reverence) in this world brought to a crisis and solved the whole question of good and evil. He was perfect goodness and grace, but the whole powers of evil—devils and men—were against Him. They succeeded in crucifying Him, and on the cross, when made sin for us, God even forsook Him. Thus sin was judged by God; the holiness, righteousness, wisdom, and love of God were manifested and vindicated. It was now clear why God could be righteous, and yet justify the ungodly. The death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ are an infinitely wonderful vindication of divine righteousness.

In some of our Lord's sufferings His people can suffer with Him. For instance, how often did He suffer in His spirit from sympathy with others in their sorrows. So did He suffer for righteousness' sake; and even in Gethsemane, where His sorrow was not the less real, that what He dreaded had not yet actually arrived. In all these ways may His people suffer, and that even so as to be made conformable unto His death. "They persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded." Here there is suffering with Christ, and that as to what came from beyond man. The smiting was actually on the cross, but when that period called his "hour" arrived, God no longer restrained the will of man—events thickened, and were directly bearing on, and connected with, the cross, and with His death, and cannot be detached from it. As being permitted by God, and as carrying out His purposes, the smiting is taken as from God. The fact is, that in moral and spiritual processes, it is impossible to disconnect cause and effect. In the mind they co-exist at one and the same moment. The whole period of the cross is characterized in scripture by one tone, by one event, even though circumstances had their natural sequence and connection. Hence our Lord (for instance in Mark 14:27-50) applies the passage, "Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered," to an occasion antecedent to the cross, because morally identified with it, though its literal accomplishment was on the cross, and not till then. There are what may be called—at least in moral things, if not in physical—antecedent as well as

subsequent consequences or effects of an event or course foreseen, felt, and realized in the mind by the moral agent; and where an event is so immediately impending as was the cross from the time of the betrayal, the cause is looked at as a subsisting fact (because it. is so in the mind), and effects are attributed to it as consequences, though actually preceding their cause. Thus our Lord could say, “Whom thou hast smitten,” and He was as truly meeting indignation and wrath, though not yet crucified, as the scorching heat of a furnace will affect and injure me before I am actually in the furnace.

If God gave Christ up, Christ took it, and what it involved, namely, His being crucified and slain, from God, that is, the smiting was to Him from God, though men were the instruments—the unconscious ones, as regards God's purposes, the conscious ones as regards their own motives and feelings; and similarly could it be said as to the disciples, “whom thou hast wounded,” as to what accrued from men.

If I mistake not, I have now touched upon the main points of difficulty to some. What is sometimes called the third class of the sufferings of Christ refers to our Lord's agony in Gethsemane, and has been alluded to in my remarks upon Heb. 5 and Isa. 1 Is it not here more especially that we learn by the example of Christ, and aided, I trust, by His Spirit, to take the bitter as well as the sweet from our Father's hand in willing subjection? Am I not to be conformed to Christ in this? It need scarcely be said that, as regards an accusing and tormenting conscience, that belongs to the sinner alone, and not to Christ. But what are the sorrowful results to the awakened and alarmed conscience? Fear, dread, anguish of soul, Godward.

Now our Lord suffered this. He agonized in soul at the thought and prospect of what the consequences of sin were at the hands of God, and though relief comes in God's time to His people— “to those who have been exercised thereby,” to Christ no relief came till the bitter cup of divine judgment had been drunk by Him. Christ was thus learning the difference between good and evil, not as He always knew it, in the favor of His own most holy nature, but as having and being all goodness in Himself, yet learning what evil was, not merely objectively, but as to and in the presence of its judgment, which a holy God weld not let pass. We learn it as existing in ourselves, and as taught to judge it as a thing which has been judged by God—He, as what He was to incur judgment for when made sin for us, and as our Substitute.

The suffering in sympathy, and the suffering for righteousness' sake, are easy to be comprehended. The suffering in atonement, too, is acknowledged, but very inadequately understood. Our Lord's true sufferings, as a man and as Messiah, are, much to the loss of saints, far too little understood. As the Messiah He was expressly born into this world—of the true human and royal lineage, and the true Son of God. Yet could He say, as in Psa. 102, “Thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.” Doubtless He was rejected by Israel; but in the foreseen hostility of Israel there was the word, “Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,” and it was piety on His part to take His rejection from God, who permitted it and used it. So is it our privilege to look beyond second causes, though not ignoring or excusing them. Those who know God have, above and beyond what is present, to do with God alone.

I remain, my dear Brother,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

J. B. P.

Chapter 181

Superiority of Christ Over Circumstances

It is a great thing to have the spirit so free from everything else, as to be able to be thus occupied with “these things.” It is not a healthy thing to be occupied with evil, though of course we must be sometimes.

In Num. 19, if any one touched the unclean person, whoever had anything to do with it was unclean till even. You cannot have to say to evil, without getting, in a certain sense, away from God. It may not be like the man who had to be cleansed, and wait seven days; but the mind cannot touch sin without a certain removal from direct communion with God.

It may he necessary to go to a brother or sister who is in evil. I do not mean now temptation: there you get positive evil; but the man who touches is “unclean till even” —a kind of warning against having to say to it. One sees persons who like to pry into evil; but, if in the power of the Spirit, I am occupied with “these things,” which are pure, lovely, &c. I may have to come down, and be occupied for a time, as a duty, with that which God hates.

The principle of Num. 19 remains the same. It was grace, and to restore communion. There a man was actually defiled: sin is sin in God's sight, whatever way I have to do with it; and sin is hateful to God. Even if a man did not know, still he had to bring an offering. It was not a question of imputation here; the ashes of the red heifer were there, the testimony that the sin had all been consumed when the heifer was burned; but something had come in to destroy communion. The ashes put into the water gave the consciousness there was no imputation: that question was not raised, but the man could not go in to God for worship till he was clean. The very putting the ashes in gave the character that sin was judged for the saint, all done away; but then he may have been doing a thing that Christ had to die for. It is a question of holiness and my state, just because there is no imputation.

What he looks for here (Phil. 4) is that their souls should be in the peaceful enjoyment of these things, what God likes and loves, and the God of peace should be with them. Now, when we meet in intercourse, are these the kind of things that occupy the mind? It may be mischievous talking—that will not do you any good; or it may be idleness, vanity—that is no good either; or it may be talking about people: but how far can God say, I can go there, for they are talking about things I like? “My heart is inditing a good matter, I will speak of the things I have made touching the king.” If the heart is inditing a good matter, we get fellowship and communion, the heart is full, and it comes out.

It is a lovely picture in, Luke—a despised remnant nobody knew or cared about; yet there they were speaking of Christ.

Verse 10. The apostle let slip something here: “now at the last.” He thought it rather a long time coming, and then, to correct it, immediately adds, “but ye lacked opportunity.” He let out that he had really been in need, and it had come at the last. It is beautiful to see the delicacy of intercourse in that way: we get it amongst ourselves. Like everything else, he just took it up for

Christ. At Corinth, where they were rich, and fond of money, he would take nothing; but here he is very glad to have it.

But, going back to what was said about our intercourse when we come together, we find “these things” are not uppermost. There are two things: in the first place, if we are full of the Lord, it will come out; but if there is watchfulness, it will come in. It is just our ordinary intercourse I mean. I may have to go and speak about special things, but that is not the point here.

Paul was the expression of the power of divine grace in that which was committed to him. Here were Gentiles who had to learn everything, and he was sent in their way, the expression of divine life, that they might learn what it was: he could say, “Walk as ye have us for an example."

"Truth came only by Jesus Christ:” that which is “true” characterizes the whole thing. “He has given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true.” “Whom I love in the truth.” But it is remarkable what the apostle says in verse 12. It characterizes all the epistle. He is above circumstances, and experimentally he had found Christ sufficient in all things. He had been in hunger, cold, and nakedness, and found Him a wonderful source of content. It was not a general principle, but what he had actually learned; “I am instructed.” It is more difficult to abound than to be abased. You are cast on God when you are abased; but when all is comfortable around, then is the tendency to be independent of Him. “I can do all things:” not I go on well, but the presence of positive power; not that I get into a better state, not that the circumstance is changed, or the state of my mind; but power has come in, and put those things away which were pressing upon me. It is “all things” —you cannot get anything for which Christ is not sufficient as a present thing. If we have to die, He is sufficient for us; if we have to live, He is sufficient for us.

These are things to be learned, not known in a moment; but if he had not known what Christ was, he could not have said this. He says, I have learned that all through. It is true Christian experience.

We get the power of the Spirit in all the epistle. Here you have it shown in entire superiority over circumstances. It is not merely known, but “I have learned.” Then it is Christ strengthening us, strength made perfect in weakness that is its nature, the character and kind of strength. “My strength” is not made perfect in people who think they are strong. We must be brought down to nothing as to strength, in order to know where real strength is; that is what people are rather slow to learn.

You have this in 2 Cor. 12 Paul wanted to get rid of the thorn, but the Lord says, No, I must have you incapacitated; and then evidently it is My work and power, not yours. You get the two sides of Christian life in that chapter: one was, “I know a man in Christ;” the other, that Christ's power was known in him. When I come down here, I find myself made nothing of, and then it is Christ in me. You must have weakness: “when I am weak, then am I strong.” We may know we can do nothing without Him; but it is a different thing when one comes to say, I can do nothing without Him.

In Col. 1 we get strengthened with all might.... unto all patience, &c. Here he is speaking of his circumstances. But it is a very great thing, and one we are slow to learn, that without Him we can do nothing. We all know it as a truth—all Christians do. It is connected with abiding in Christ.

It is not actual service, though true of it; but you get that more in 2 Cor. 12 I do not feel the want of Him so much in joy; we do, but we do not so feel it. Hence, often a Christian, after a great deal of

joy, even spiritual joy, will get a trip. I must have all the armor on before I can take the sword.

“My God shall supply all.” A very strong expression, which means a great deal. As I know Him, who have been through all these things, and know what He is to a person in every case. It is not “God,” but “my God,” the God I know, who taught me to abound, and to be hungry. It could not come down lower than that. I see my need, and He is rich. No matter what need I get into, He is sufficient for me. Paul was in a most trying position, not only kept a prisoner, but all his activity totally stopped—a terrible trial to Paul.

“His riches in glory” meet the need. As in Ephesians, when he speaks of all the thoughts and purposes of God, he speaks of the glory of His grace; when He speaks of my sins, it is the riches of His grace. All the dealings of God are according to what He is in glory, having taken us up in grace. It is all through Christ Jesus, whatever it is; it all comes down, and all goes up, through Christ.

It is a simple thing, but not simple for us—at least we are not simple enough for it. (See Psa. 23) Jehovah is my shepherd. In Psa. 30 he says, “I shall never be moved. Thou, Lord, by thy favor hast made my mountain to stand strong. Thou didst hide thy face” —and where was this fine mountain then? But in Psa. 23 he cannot say, Jehovah is my shepherd, till he has been through all the power of evil. Not Jehovah has given me abundance of green pastures (though He does give them), but He is my shepherd, and then come the green pastures and still waters, but he was not looking at that only. “He restoreth my soul,” if he had got into trouble. Then he goes on to death: “I will fear no evil;” Jehovah is the shepherd. If he meets enemies, Jehovah spreads a table for him in their presence, as Joshua did when they went into Canaan. Then he says, “He anointeth my head with oil.” He reckoned on Jehovah, and had learned to reckon through all the difficulties of the way. For His name's sake He leads in the paths of righteousness, and goodness and mercy follow me all the days of my life; but he did not say that till he had been through all the power of evil. The point is, Jehovah is my shepherd, not, having good things.

When Christ says, “sufficient for thee,” it is clear there was something He had to be sufficient for. We need strength made perfect in weakness. God hath chosen the weak things of the world, “that no flesh should glory in his presence.” He pulls down all human competency. He makes vessels, it is true, but they are mere vessels. It is weakness here; not failure, but infirmity. What a blessed thing to have Him to go with us, to take care of us, to lift us up, and keep us up!

Restoring the soul is not necessarily after failure, but takes it in. “For his name's sake” He makes good what He is in all His dealings. If I set up to have any strength, that is not according to what He is; and He has to pull me down. He must make the vessel nothing, so that the work shall be His.

It is a great deal to keep self nothing in the heart; we know it is so; but still.... Even a heathen writer said, “You may drive nature out with a pitchfork, but it will slip in.” The thorn was not strength, but it made nothing of Paul, and Christ could act, because Paul was put down.

A person gets on, and the flesh takes subtler forms; but I ask the question, Am I just as happy if others are blessed in their service as if I am? All these things are so dreadfully subtle. There might be room for self-judgment if there was no blessing; and quite rightly; but am I content if I know I am doing His will, and there are no results There is no standard but what becomes Christ and His

revelation.

Self can come in everywhere. In 1 Cor. 14 it was the shutting out self to covet the beat gifts. They were fond of tongues which made a show, and they were told to covet prophecy.

Anything can puff up the flesh: a man would rather be the best thief in the country than nobody at all. Self is so very subtle, that, unless in God's presence, we do not detect it.

In Eph. 4:6, ■π■ π■ντων gives the personal supremacy which upsets Pantheism, which, without it, aid might be alleged to mean, though it would be really ■ν. But He is everywhere throughout the universe; and then distinctively He is ■ν ■μ■ν (or ■μ■ν).

Mark 16:20, I think, plainly shows that it was not written till all the gospel history which we have in the Acts, &c. (the Revelation only excepted), was over. God has given His history of the foundation of Christianity, and would allow, at the utmost, but this brief notice of the general dispersion of the doctrine of Christ. That it is a summary of the facts we have in John and Luke, the Galilee account ending with verse 8, we have already seen.

Chapter 182

Reply to Tract on the Tenets of the (So-Called) Plymouth Brethren 1

There is sufficient fairness in the statement of Mr. Marshall, in rejecting the greater part of the stupid charges in the paper he quotes, to make it easy as well as pleasant to deal calmly with his objections on other heads of doctrine. Though on one head Mr. Marshall is roused, in general he quietly discusses the merits of the case before him. I cannot be surprised that a Wesleyan Methodist should hold Wesleyan doctrine, though I may not agree with him, and I can assure Mr. Marshall (that though he mistakes the “Brethren's” doctrine in some points, and I think, of course, there is ignorance of scripture truth on others, yet, seeing the spirit in which “Brethren” are generally assailed) I have to thank him for that in which he has spoken rather than to complain of it. The best return I can make, assuring him at the same time of my sincerity in thus recognizing the tone of his pamphlet, and my desire to reciprocate it, is to state what I, at least, hold on the questioned points, and to inquire whether the views he objects to, so far as they are justly stated, are supported by scripture. I shall only take up the really important questions. They are four: “The moral law is not the rule of Christian life:” secondly, “The doctrine of imputed righteousness;” thirdly, “Abraham has no place in the church, nor could any saint have till the Holy Ghost came after the ascension;” fourthly, “Sanctification,” which is treated by Mr. Marshall in his remarks on imputed righteousness. There are other collateral points, as ordination to ministry, praying for the Holy Ghost, the sabbath, which I may touch on: the latter will come naturally under the head of law, and our deliverance from it.

Our subjection to the law is a capital point. But the whole principle on which scripture places the question is unknown to the writer of the pamphlet; namely, that the law has power over a man as long as he lives, but that we have died in Christ, and are not looked at as being in the flesh at all—not in the first Adam, but in the last.

Let Mr. Marshall allow me first to quote what scripture says as to the law, and our relationship to it. And first in Romans, in which epistle, and in that to the Galatians, the apostle has chiefly discussed the subject. I cannot but think that what he says must give subject for thought to those who insist on law. Many passages are much stronger in the original through the omission of the definite article inserted in English. Thus, “But now the righteousness of God apart from law,” that is, on wholly another ground, so that the question of moral and ceremonial law cannot be raised. It is apart from law in every shape and form. So in many other cases. But I shall take the ordinary English translation; enough will be found there to make all clear. Further, I am quite aware that it is alleged that they do not look to be justified by law, but only to be under it as a rule of life. Let the reader only pay attention to what the word of God says, and all will be clear as to this too. I will speak of it, moreover, farther on. I desire that scripture may be before the mind of Christians: so I will quote it. I can add any comments afterward.

Rom. 3:20-21. Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets.

Verse 28. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

I shall consider verse 31 hereafter.

Chapter 4:18, 14. For the promise that he should be the heir of the world was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith, for if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression.

Chapter 5:20. Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound.

Chapter 6:14. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

Chapter 7:4. Therefore, my brethren, ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sin which were by the law did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, having died in that in which we were held.

Chapter 7:8. For without the law sin was dead; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.

Verse 18. Was then that which is good made death to me? God forbid. But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good, that sin by the commandment might become exceedingly sinful.

Chapter 10:4. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

1 Cor. 15:56. The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

2 Cor. 3:7. The ministration of death written and engraved on stones.

Verse 9. The ministration of condemnation.

Gal. 2:19. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live to God If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Chapter 3:2, 3. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

Gal. 3:10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse.

Verse 12. The law is not of faith.

Verse 28. For before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should after be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith; but after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

Chapter 4:3-5. Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world. But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law.

Verse 9. But now after ye have known God.... how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements to which ye desire to be in bondage?

Verse 30. Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.

Chapter 5:1-4. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law ye are fallen from grace.

Verse 18. But if ye are led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.

Rom. 8:14. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

Eph. 2:14-16. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances, for to make in himself of twain one new man, making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby.

Other passages might be referred to, as Phil. 3, Col. 2, but I pass them over as long general statements, though most important ones as to the doctrine as a whole. I quote only further 1 Tim. 1:7-9. Desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm. But we know that the law is good if a man use it lawfully; knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient.

Heb. 7:18. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof, for the law made nothing perfect.

Chapter 10:1. The law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things.

Verse 9. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second.

Heb. 13:18. In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old; now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

Now I ask if all these texts do not present the law as a system, and a principle of dealing which, as to the Christian, has been set aside to introduce another; if they do not give ground for reflection to serious men, whether (when we find, not a scarce text, or a forced construction, but a careful, elaborate discussion of the law, sheaving that we are delivered from it), there is not something as to the setting aside of law, which they have not given its full just force to.

The apostle insists that we are delivered from the law—dead to it, that we may live to God. What does this mean? He insists that it made nothing perfect, that we were kept under it till faith came; that as many as are of the works of it (not bad works, mind) are under the curse; that if righteousness come by it, Christ is dead in vain. I might cite many such.

It is evident that there is a system called law, from which there is deliverance, and which the Christian has done with, by passing into another.

Now I am not ignorant, of course, that people say the ceremonial law of Moses is passed away, but not the moral law. But this is a fallacy. Not that there is no difference: for there is. But the statement is a fallacy. Scripture shows that the law system has passed away as a whole. A vast portion of the types and figures has no doubt been fulfilled, but all have not, and these last will be fulfilled. As a system, it is admitted by all, they have passed entirely away. This is insisted on in Galatians especially. In Hebrews, though there be more contrast than comparison, the corresponding antitypes are insisted on. The rites of the law were the shadow, not the image. A veil, which showed men could not go in, is not the very image of a veil, through which, as a new and living way, we enter with boldness into the holiest. A sacrifice which puts away one sin, or a year's sin, so far as present relation with the tabernacle went, is not the very image of one, by which Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified. But remark, it is not as local, immaterial, things they were established. Christ has fulfilled them. They were all in the reality meant by them as important as the moral law, nay, more important to us. Still they were only figures and ceremonies, powerless in themselves.

But the moral law, holy, just, and good as it was, was powerless, save to curse. It could not give life. Had there been a law given which could have given life, righteousness should have been by the law. But neither life nor righteousness could be attained by it. What was given for life as soon as a man knew himself, was found to be unto death. It worked wrath. However, as a general idea, though some types may not yet be fulfilled, as the feast of tabernacles, and others, all admit that as a ceremonial system it is passed away for Christians.

But, further, although there be confusion of mind, and men really seek righteousness by the law, that is, by works, yet it is in terms generally admitted that the statements of the apostle set the law aside as a means of justification. His statements are too plain for a person who respects the word of God to contravene thorn. “If righteousness came by law, then Christ is dead in vain,” “That no man is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident,” and many other such, are too plain to resist. We read, “Christ is become of no effect to you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.” (Gal. 5:4.)

But they say, we take it as a rule of life: sanctification is as necessary as justification. Now that without holiness no man shall see the Lord is clearly written, and is assuredly true. I should have a great deal to say to this connected with a new life, Christ being our life; but at present I confine myself to our immediate subject. The question is, Is the law the means of living rightly? Will a man under the law be victorious over sin? It is not whether a man must be holy: no real Christian denies it. Now many of the statements of the apostle, and many of the strongest, which declare we are not under law, or that the law is not the means to live to God, apply, not to justification, but to freedom from the dominion of sin—that under the law we cannot be set free from it, but that deliverance from the law is the way of bringing forth fruit to God. I shall quote some passages. The true means of deliverance I shall speak of at the close.

Rom. 6 treats entirely of living to God, not of justification. “The law,” we read, “entered that the offense might abound.” (Chap. 5:20) Chapter 6:14: “Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace.” Chapter 7:4: “Wherefore, my brethren, ye are become

dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Verse 8: "For without the law sin was dead (ver. 9), but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died." In 1 Cor. 15:56, "The strength of sin is the law." Now here, especially in the passages cited from Romans, the question is not justification, but dominion of sin over us, or ours over sin. The apostle takes pains to say all he can for the law; it is not the cause of sin; the cause concupiscence, but while under law concupiscence has dominion over us, nay, the motions of sin are by the law. Such is the positive testimony of the apostle. Although it would be quite false to say the law is the cause of sin, yet sin has dominion wherever a man is under it. Being delivered from the law, is necessary to bringing forth fruit to God. Such deliverance is as needed for this as for justification. The strength of sin is the law. It is, even if grace be there, the ministration of death and condemnation.

There are two passages of Galatians which I have omitted, as long reasonings, not short statements, to which I will now briefly refer. In Gal. 2:14-19 the apostle rebukes Peter for turning to legal obligations after giving them up. And note here how he takes the law as a whole, for Peter's conduct referred to ritual exactitude. Paul takes it up as a whole, for while I quite admit the difference of the "ton words," or moral law; yet, as all given together by God's authority, it was all looked at as one whole, based on one principle, man's satisfying God by fulfilling the obligations he was under, as contrasted with grace saving him when he had not, and God's righteousness. Well, Peter had given up the law to be justified by Christ, and now returned to it, after having Christ. Why, then, did he leave it to get justification? In building again that which he had destroyed, he made himself a transgressor in putting it down. Who had made him do it? Christ. Then Christ was the minister of sin, for He had made Peter do what his present conduct, if it was right, showed to be a transgression. That is, taking up the law after coming to Christ is making Christ the minister of sin.

The apostle's reasoning in Gal. 3:16-22 is this. God gave the promise to Abraham, and confirmed it to his seed—which was really Christ—480 years before the law. Now a confirmed covenant, if it be only man's, cannot be disannulled, nor can it be added to, that is, you cannot add the law to the promise. That was complete in itself, and confirmed before the law existed. To bring in the law was to alter and add to the terms of it, and could not be. How could the law then come in? It was added for the sake of transgressions (τ■ν παραβ■σεων χ■ριν) to produce them—not to produce sin. God does nothing to produce sin. The sin was there; but till the law came it could not be a transgression; for, where no law is, there is none. It is the same sense as in Romans; the law entered (the Greek reads, παρεις■λθεν," came in by the bye," that the offense might abound) till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made.

I have added these passages for my reader's sake, as additionally clearing up the point; but the passages I have quoted prove that the law is not the means of living to God, any more than of justification. On the contrary, if we are under law, sin will have dominion over us, and that we must be delivered from it, in order to bring forth fruit to God. Scripture is distinct and positive as to this. The law is a distinct system and definite principle, under which Christians are not living. People have confounded law with various things and obligations enforced in the law. The truth is, the duties were all there before law was given. Law gives a divine measure of these obligations in contrast with evil, and enforces the obligations by an authority outside ourselves, involving, as it is given, a curse if they are not fulfilled. The law is the perfect rule for a child of Adam, but supposes

sin and lust, and forbids them; but it does not take them away, nor give a new life. It takes up our relationship to God and our neighbor, and insists on consistency with them. It is a transcript, not of God's character, as is absurdly said, but of man's duties. I say “absurdly;” for could God love His neighbor as Himself? Or Himself with all His heart, as a duty? Away with such folly, Further, the ten commandments suppose sin, and, unless one, forbid it.

It is equally absurd (and I speak for others than Mr. Marshall now) to apply the commandments to Adam. How could he honor his father and mother? How could he steal, or know what it meant? He did not know what lust was till after he was tempted. Adam had a law; but it did not suppose sin in him, but forbad what would have been no sin at all, if it had not been forbidden, and was thus a simple test of obedience, and no more; and we can see the perfect wisdom of God in this. The law formally given on Mount Sinai (for the law was given by Moses) supposes sin (for sin was there) and forbids it, and maintains the relationship in which man stood to God and to man, and of course was all perfectly right in doing so. But did it deliver man from the power of sin and lust? This is at least one important part of the question, that is, where it is a rule; and we have seen the apostle stating that it did not, but left man under it, yea, was an occasion for lust to act. But more, man must be delivered from it to bring forth fruit to God, To have godliness man must be delivered from law. But I add, for what is it a rule? Is it a perfect, adequate rule? For a child of Adam it is: he is to love God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself, and not to lust. Only note, law forbids what is in man, without giving life or force, and, because it is a right rule, condemns and works wrath, and this is law, and this alone, and all that law is.

A law is obligation enforced by an authority outside us, requiring from us whatever the rule expresses, and in God's law, that there should not even be a lust, but is addressed to those who have lusts, who are alive in the flesh. Its requisition is right, but for that reason it condemns us to death, and, because man is not what it requires, it is found to be death. But in its contents it is a perfect measure or rule for man in the flesh. But it is not for those who are in Christ.

For him who is a son of God the rule is, “Be ye therefore followers [imitators] of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ has loved us, and gave himself for us, a sacrifice and all offering to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” “Hereby know we love, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” It is not reciprocated kindness, of which love to self is the measure, but a giving up self, as Christ did, in love. It is good in the midst of evil, which is what Christ was, grace as displayed in Him, doing well, suffering for it, and taking it patiently, as He did. It is forgiving, laying down our lives in the prerogative of divine love, which is our rule, and walking (being light in the Lord) as He walked, apart from the world, an epistle of Christ to it; and love and light are the two essential names of God, and Christ was the perfect expression of it as man here.

Of all this the law knows nothing. It does know what a child of Adam ought to be for God, and that it requires evidently just what it should do. Of what God is for him it knows nothing, and of what a child of God ought to be, and a dear child as walking in the love he has learned, and which is shed abroad in his heart, it can tell him nothing. The law is God requiring from man what man ought to be, but which he is not; the gospel is God saving him in sovereign love, and, giving him eternal life in the Son, sending him to show forth this life and the character of Christ, that is, of God manifested in a man, in a world that knows him not. The law requires righteousness from a man

alive in the flesh, and that flesh is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be, so that they that are in the flesh cannot please God; and if it is said, “But Christianity takes him out of the flesh,” I answer, It does, but at the same time gives him a much higher rule; he is to walk in the Spirit as he lives in the Spirit. The Christian, having Christ for his life, is to manifest the life of Christ in his mortal flesh.

And now a word as to the manner of this. The law did not give life, and could not; it required righteousness from man such as he was. In Christ we have not only our sins wholly put away, which the law could not do, but only curse us for them if under it, but he becomes a new life, but a life as now risen from the dead, but Christ, who is our life, has been crucified, and God looks upon those who believe as crucified with Him, and so does faith. Ye are dead, says the word. (Col. 3:8.) I am crucified with Christ, says faith; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. It reckons itself dead to sin, and alive to God, not in Adam, but in Jesus Christ our Lord. In a word, as Christ died to the whole scene into which He had come, died unto sin once, so the Christian, crucified with Him, belongs to the place Christ is entered into, the new creation, in Christ his life, and has died to the flesh, and sin, and the world. He is not before God in flesh at all, he knows this, that his old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. Now the law has power over a man as long as he lives, but we have died in Christ and are not in the flesh.

Hence we read, when we were in the flesh the motions of sin, which were by the law. But when we know our death with Christ, and that sin in the flesh was condemned on the cross, the law having been unable to accomplish any such object, and have the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, then we read, “ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit; if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you: now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His, and if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, and the Spirit is life because of righteousness. That is, practical righteousness is attained, not by a law which was weak through the flesh, applied to that flesh, which was not subject to the law of God, neither indeed could be, and withal cursed the disobedient. But by the gift of a new life, that is, Christ risen, and the power of the Spirit of God, and by being dead to sin, as crucified with Christ, and dead to the law by the body of Christ. Sin in the flesh was condemned in the sacrifice of Christ, but we are dead therein to it, and alive in the power of a new life. The flesh, the law, and the world are gone together for faith through the cross of Christ. (See Rom. 6:6, 7:4; Gal. 2:19, 20, 3:13, 5:24)

If we walk in the Spirit, we produce fruits against which there is no law; if we love our neighbor as ourselves, we fulfill the law. The righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. They only fulfill the law who are not under it, and have nothing to say to it, but who walk after the Spirit, which they have received through Christ. The law deals with flesh, which is not, and cannot be, subject to it; and hence, righteousness never can be attained. The Christian is dead to sin, having died with Christ on the cross, and does not belong to the scene to which the law applied, is not in the flesh, and is dead to the law, and lives in the Spirit, Christ risen from the dead having become his life. The flesh is the life of the sinful Adam, and law belongs to it. We have died to both in the cross of Christ, and are married to another, that we may bring forth fruit unto God.

The great truth is this—we have died on the cross to our whole standing in Adam, and to the law that was the rule for it, and are risen with Christ into the new creation in Him, alive from the dead to

give ourselves to God. We have the treasure in earthen vessels, but our place before God is that—in Christ, and Christ in us. We have died from under the law, but therein died to sin, and are alive to God in Jesus Christ our Lord. We are in a wholly new position, and though the righteousness of the law be fulfilled in one whose life Christ is, it is because he walks after the Spirit, and does not put himself under law. He cannot (Rom. 7) have two husbands at a time, Christ and the law. Remark here, I am speaking, as the passages I refer to are, of practical righteousness, a godly life; but if we are under the law for that, the law also curses us. As many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; and if the curse is not executed, the authority of the law is gone. If we are under law, we are under a curse, or its authority destroyed. If Christ has borne the curse, we have died with Him out of the position in which the law reached us. By the law we are dead to law, that we might live to God, crucified with Christ, yet living, but not we, but Christ living in us. He will not live wrongly. I do not enter here into failure, or Christ's blessed advocacy if we do fail, but only bring out the principles of the life in which we do live to God.

Let me take another view of the subject which is afforded us in scripture. From the fall to the flood, though individuals were blessed and testimony was there, there were no special dealings of God. The promise had been given to the Seed of the woman in the judgment of the serpent; for there is no promise to fallen man, though the object of faith is thus held up before him; but man went on in wickedness till God had to bring in the flood, to cleanse, as it were, the earth from the pollution. But after the flood, having instituted the restraint of government in Noah, the world having fallen into idolatry, and nations having been formed, God calls out Abraham to be a root of promise for Himself. Abraham is the head of a seed of blessing, as fallen Adam of a seed of sinful men. I leave aside Israel, the natural seed here, to speak of Christ and the nations. In Gen. 12 the promise of all nations being blessed in Abraham is given, and confirmed to the Seed in chapter 22. This was sovereign grace, and no condition was attached to it. The Seed was to come, the nations to be blessed in the Seed. This raised no question of righteousness, there was no “if,” no condition. But the question of righteousness was of all importance; it was raised at Sinai. If they obeyed His voice, they should be His peculiar treasure, and they undertook to do all Jehovah should say, and made the golden calf before Moses was down from the Mount with the two tables. The question was raised by requiring righteousness from man, and this was the law. Man has been tested on this ground, and found wholly wanting.

I add some details. The law simply by itself never even reached man as a covenant of works, the tables never entered into the camp; the golden calf was there. They were broken at the foot of the mount. Moses interceded, and the people were for the occasion, as to God's dealings, forgiven. But Moses could not make atonement, and with the revelation of goodness the people were put back under law. “The soul that sinneth I will blot out of my book.” But God makes all His goodness pass before Moses. The Lord passed before Moses, and proclaimed the Lord— “the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty], visiting,” &c. Now here we have provisional grace. They are the terms of God's government of Israel; but in fact grace—which spares and forgives past sin, but no atonement effectual, final, and conclusive, perfecting forever them that are sanctified, was made, as indeed there was no one there to make it. They were consequently replaced under legal obligation, and the man that sinned was to be blotted out of God's book. It was grace and forgiveness, and law after.

It was when Moses went down after this interview (Ex. 34:29, 30) that his face shone. It is this law after grace and provisional forgiveness that is declared to be the ministration of death and the ministration of condemnation (2 Corinthians in contrast with the gospel, which is the ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit. And now see how the apostle reasons on the whole matter. The promise, given to Abraham, and confirmed to the one Seed (Christ), could not be set aside nor added to by a transaction 480 years after. God had thus bound Himself; but the law came in by the bye till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made, that is, Christ. Then its function ceased; and consequent on Christ's work, all being sinners, the law broken, and Christ rejected (the last means by which God could seek for fruit from man), the attempt only proving that man hated both Christ and His Father, that the mind of the flesh was enmity against God—then God's righteousness is revealed without law (the Greek reads “apart from law"), the righteousness of God by faith of Jesus Christ. Man's probation as to the history of it, on the ground of getting geed by any means from him, was over.

Now, says Christ, is the judgment of this world. Hence it was that Christ cursed the fig-tree never to bear fruit. Hence it is that it is said now once in the end of the world [the consummation of ages] He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. When I say the probation is over, it is not that man is not yet dealt with as to receiving the gospel. Of course he is; but what can be made of man in the flesh has been tried; and it is not now the question whether he can succeed in making out righteousness for the day of judgment, but, receiving the truth, find out that he is already lost, and righteousness and salvation and indeed glory his as believing in Christ. As a person under probation he knows he is a lost sinner, and finds a new life, a perfect salvation, and divine righteousness in Christ. Now all this clearly shows the place of the law between the promise and the coming of the Seed to whom the promise was made, and how we are created again in Christ Jesus unto good works. It is no longer the law requiring human righteousness from flesh to prove what it is, but a new creature, and the power of the Spirit, leading us it the path in which Christ walked. We are sons, and to walk as God's dear children, to put on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies—the whole character and walk of Christ.

Chapter 183

Reply to Tract on the Tenets of the (So-Called) Plymouth Brethren 2

I will now take notice of the Judge's remarks. In the first place, Mr. Marshall's statements make quite plain that, if we are under the law at all, we are under it not merely as a rule of life, but as a question of righteousness or condemnation. He says expressly of a believer, if he act contrary to the law (page 10), he would then have come under its condemning power; so on the same page, if a believer “acts contrary to the law, what then? Will not the law take hold of him, and condemn him?” Thus all pretension that it is a rule of life, but not the way of righteousness, failure under it bringing a curse, is wholly set aside. If I am told there is a remedy in looking to Christ, so there was in the prescriptions of the law. We have not advanced a tittle. Only remember, reader, that it is for this cause the apostle says, as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse. If you are on this ground, you are at this moment, according to your theory, under the curse. And this is all true if we are under the law at all. People talk of not taking it for this, but taking it for that. Who are you, to deal with the law and testimony of God thus? It takes you, as God has declared it should, if you are under it, and curses you. The curse comes with it, and sin revives when it comes. Mr. Marshall is right: it lays hold of a man, and condemns him. And, if “as many as are of its works,” they are all cursed. And Christ does not step in to weaken its authority. He bore its curse, and delivered us from the law, but He cannot be made a curse for us now; and, if it comes on us, there is no way of getting it off us left. If it be a rule of life, then righteousness comes by it, and Christ is dead in vain.

But let us see what Mr. Marshall has to say of it even as a rule of life. If it be God's rule of life, it must be a perfect one. Indeed a rule that is not a perfect one is pure mischief and deception. But what is Mr. M.'s account? “Christ enlarges it,” that is, it is not perfect, but has to be enlarged. Suppose I have to enlarge a measure to be honest in what I give; is my first measure right? Thus I must have the law enlarged to go right—a strange rule. But, further: “The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat, all, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.” Here, then, we have a clear, positive, and definite rule. All, and whatsoever they bid you, is to be done. “Of course,” continues Mr. Marshall (page 9), “he only meant such parts of the moral law as were in accordance with his new dispensation; and nearly all parts of it are in such accordance.” Here is a strange rule for me. Nearly all of it is right—God's rule, mind—and I am to judge by my estimate of the new dispensation what is not. I am not to find it enlarged, but to pare it off as I see it is consistent with my position. But how can this be called a role? Now these remarks prove to me that Mr. Marshall is an honest man. He sees that you cannot reconcile Christianity and the rule Christians are, on this system, to live by; and he honestly says so. But then all becomes nearly all, and whatsoever is cast overboard; and the rule is no rule at all, enlarged in one place, and pared down in another, by some other which is not given to us at all. Surely this is not establishing law.

The text universally alleged to put us under the law is, “I am not come to destroy the law and the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.” Now what Christ's fulfilling the law has to do with putting me under it I never could understand. I should have thought that it would rather have boon the contrary, and if fulfilled, there was an end of the matter. Thus he fulfilled the sacrifices, and the

rather as He speaks of the prophets, which gives to the word fulfill, used as it is as to both, a force quite different from that sought to be made of it.

It is a mere fancy, let me add here, that a Christian cannot use every word of scripture for profit, law and all, without that putting him under law. All that happened to Israel is written for our instruction, on whom the ends of the world are come, but that does not put us in the place they were in. All that reveals God to me, His mind, His will, His ways, is profitable to me, is light, without putting me in the place of those of whom I read.

But there is another consideration to be referred to here—the sermon on the mount. This, blessed as is the instruction contained in it, was before the cross, which judicially closed the relationship of the Jews with God, breaking down the middle wall of partition. We have no hint of redemption in it from beginning to end, nor of the relationship in which men should stand to God by it. It gives, and gives most blessedly, the characters which were fitted to enter into the kingdom of heaven just going to be set up. Now that kingdom was not yet set up, but announced as immediately to be so. Nor do I for a moment imply that they were to give up the character necessary in order to enter as soon as they had got into it. It would be absurd: But what it does is to give the characters suited to the kingdom, not to show the effect of its being set up by the rejection and cross of Jesus. It is not the law, nor is it the gospel. Christ could not preach His death and resurrection as an accomplished ground of salvation. It is to disciples, though in the audience of all, that no man might mistake the true character of the kingdom, nor of those who were to get into it. That and the revelation of the Father's name are the subjects of the discourse. The law and the prophets were until Joint, since that the kingdom of heaven was preached, and every man pressed into it. The gospel of the death and resurrection of Christ could not be preached, though long before and now prophesied of. The preaching was that they might receive Him, not crucify Him.

Nor is the sermon on the mount, as is stated, in a large degree portions of the moral law. Two commandments are referred to, which are the two abiding characteristics of sin since before the flood, corruption and violence, lust and murder. No others are alluded to, sabbath or any other. And if it wore to prove the law a perfect rule, how could it be written to them of old time, so and so was said, referring to law, but I say unto you, and so teach them quite differently? The whole idea is a delusion. That those who then broke the least commandment, and taught men so, were not fit for the kingdom is clearly stated, but that is all, and nothing about the law subsisting after Christ's death. Unless it be in temporal things there is no grace, no blood-shedding to cleanse, no redemption to deliver. The kingdom being just at hand, the character suited to an entrance into it is given. Israel was on his way with the Lord to judgment, and if they did not come to an agreement they would be delivered up, and so they have been. It is not grace to sinners, but righteousness demanded, to be fit to enter in, that is, such a walk and spirit as is set forth in the sermon. Charging scribes and Pharisees who were under it with making void the law has nothing to do with putting Christians under it after Christ has died.

As to establishing the law as a system, Christ clearly did not. He taketh away the first that He may establish the second. He is the end of the law for righteousness. We establish law, for that is the real force of the word in the highest and only scriptural way. They that have sinned under it will be judged by it, unless indeed redeemed out of that state. Christ's bearing the curse of the law established its authority, as naught else could do, but did not leave the guilty under it. The mistake

made is this. Many things contained in the law, all in the moral law as usually understood, say Christ's two great commandments, and the ten commandments (not now discussing the sabbath which belonged to the old creation, the Lord's day to the new), were obligations before the law, and are obligations under Christ.

But the law, that is, the enforcement of these obligations by the authority of God, binding them on man as his righteousness by a rule of life (and that only is law), or pronouncing a curse on them if they did not keep it, from that, that is from law, we are, wholly and in every shape and way delivered, dead to it. It is adultery (to use the image of Rom. 7) to have to say to it, to call ourselves Christians, if we are not absolutely from under its authority. I learn how God viewed evil and good from it, I can learn to support true ministers from what is said of oxen, but the law is not binding on me. I learn more of Christ's sacrifice in detail from Leviticus and other places than from the Gospels; yet I have nothing whatever to say to the law as to them, not being under it.

So of moral obligations. I learn in the law that God abhorred stealing, but it is not because under the law that I do not steal. All the word of God is mine, and written for my instruction; yet for all that I am not under law, but a Christian who has died with Christ on the cross, and am not in the flesh, to which law applied, I am dead to the law by the body of Christ. In vain it is alleged that this is only as a covenant of works. The law is nothing else but a covenant of works. Matthew Marshall has shown it in his remarks already commented on. Mr. Wesley, it seems, admits (page 12) that Christ is the end of the law in the true sense; then let us have done with it. He has adopted, he tells us, every point of it (nearly all Mr. M. says). What He has adopted, if it be so, let us learn from Him. “This is my beloved Son, hear him,” and Moses and Elias disappear. His teaching will suffice by itself in such things.

As Mr. M. is content with what he has found in brethren as to the Lord's day, I should have nothing to say on that head. I take it up here only in its connection with the law. With the insisting on the godly enjoyment and observance of the Lord's day, which he approvingly quotes, I entirely agree, but as the sabbath and change from the seventh to the first day of the week is closely connected with the question of law, I will treat this point also for a moment. A Christian recognizes the first day of the week, not the seventh. Why so? The law we hold absolutely gone as to the Christian, not by enfeebling its authority where it applies, for Christ bore its curse, and men who have sinned under it will be judged by it, but because we have died from under it. Now what was the sabbath? God's rest in the first creation. We do not belong to it—our bodies do, hence a day of rest is a blessing for man toiling through the fall. But that did not make it a matter of eternal obligation, but the Son of man Lord of it, an expression in itself quite inapplicable to a moral obligation. The sabbath was God's rest in the old creation. In that creation God cannot rest now. Hence the Lord beautifully and blessedly says, when maliciously charged with breaking it, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” They wrought in grace in a world of sin, but could not rest in it. Now the Lord took man up on the footing of the old creation, and as undetermined whether he could find God's rest on the ground of his own responsibility. Hence the day of rest belonging to that was given and imposed upon him, as all the rest, as a matter of law. Death and life were set before him. Now he is known to be dead in sins. Under that system man failed.

I believe that the millennium will be, in a certain sense, the accomplishment of that day, but on that I do not enter here. But Christ's cross closed for the spiritual mind the old creation and the old

covenant. He gave Himself for our sins to redeem us from this present evil world. His resurrection began redeemed man's history on a new footing, on which innocent Adam never was, any more than sinful man; a state based, not on responsibility, in which there might be failure, but on a work whose value could never change; a state which was a proof of accomplished redemption by an accepted work. Thus the first day of the week, that is, of Christ's resurrection, became the sign and witness of rest for us. We begin work with it, that is, with redemption in Christ, not end with it, though in fact we shall not fully rest till we are risen. Still, through Christ's resurrection we have rest for our souls, and it is a pledge of the full rest of God into which a promise is left of entering. This entering into the rest of God is the compendium of the fullest blessing of His people; for He rests in holiness and perfected glory and love, and will rest in it, when He has His people there and all answers to His own nature, and His love is satisfied. But this for us is in resurrection, and through the resurrection of Christ; and as the seventh day was the symbolical rest under the law, because God had rested from the works of the first creation, and was made additionally obligatory under the law in connection with redemption out of Egypt, and strictly enforced under pain of death; so for us the first day of the week is the witness of a better redemption and a better rest.

The Lord met the disciples the first day of the week, and again the following. The first day of the week the disciples came together to break bread; the first day they were to lay by for the poor as God had prospered them; and in Revelation John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, when it had already definitely acquired its name. It is not a seventh day, as if we worked when God rested, and rested when God worked. It is not the fourth commandment, for we are in no way under the law, but the blessed liberty of rest to serve God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Besides being a boon in itself to toiling man, Jehovah gave His sabbath to Israel as a sign between Him and them, a mark of God's people. (Ezek. 20:12, 20) Nor is any new institution established in the law, as the setting up of the tabernacle, the manna, or other special things, without the sabbath being specially enforced. It was a sign of their being God's people, though in fact they never really, any more than Adam, entered into God's rest (Heb. 4); there remains a rest. But this has ceased; they are no longer God's people, unless in promise for the future, when they will have their rest by grace.

Hence the Lord never has to say to the sabbath in the Gospels but as slighting it. It is a singular fact, that, as in the law it is repeatedly and rigorously enforced, in the Gospels it is studiously made light of. The Son of man was Lord of it. He recognizes it as existing under the law, but makes use of and acts on it, as above it, making the man carry his bed on it, and the like. The old covenant was passing away; and we, having died with Christ, are not to be judged in respect of sabbaths. Yet, for the same reason, I hold the Lord's day as a blessed privilege conferred, and to be observed for the Lord's service as “the Lord's day,” and I do not doubt we may, in our little measure, be in the Spirit on the Lord's day, however that may be our privilege at all times. And let the reader remark that there are many things binding, not as law, but as the divine good pleasure. I do not pray by law, nor read the word by law, nor praise God by law. Yet I should be unhappy and be guilty if I did not. A father's will is a law to a loving child, if he has not given a formal order.

But I may add here, I am not afraid of the word “commandment.” It is a wholesome word, because it involves obedience. Christ could say, As my Father has given me commandment so I do, and that as regards His work on the cross, His highest act of love. Did I do everything in itself right, nothing would be yet right, if obedience to God were wanting in it. So “I come to do thy will,” and

we are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. It is as to this the word “commandment” has its wholesome place. But we cannot be under law without being under a covenant of works, and that Mr. Marshall's pamphlet shows, as we have seen.

I come now to the question of righteousness, which connects itself pretty closely with that of law. Mr. Marshall has not quite understood “Brethren's” views on this. I know not whether I shall succeed in making them clear. Scripture never speaks of the righteousness of Christ (though, of coarse, He was in every sense perpetually righteous) but of man's, or legal righteousness, man being what he ought to be towards God and his neighbor, of which the law was the measure, or of God's righteousness, what He is in Himself manifested in the display of His own consistency with Himself, and that judicially in respect of Christ, and through Him of us. Righteousness is practically recognizing the claim of another—claim in the sense of what is due to him; with God it is as the source and measure of all claim, what is due to Himself. This may be, as to the creature, what is due to God, according to the place He has put the creature in, the creature's duty; and of this law was the perfect expression enforced by the authority of God, and sanctioned by the penalty of a curse. In this consistency with God's will man wholly failed; not only that God came in Christ, reconciling the world, not imputing their failures, and man rejected Him.

Man's moral history was over. Not only God had turned him out of paradise because of sin, but, as far as man was concerned, he had turned God out of the world when He had come into it in mercy. The second Man comes on the scene. Now our probation was in the first man, God's purposes were in the Second. And both these come out into light through the work of Christ, perfect when fully proved. He meets our failure as the sin-bearer for us, and lays the foundation of God's accomplishment of His purposes of glory in the same work. That is our portion. Had man even kept the law, this did not give him a title to be in the glory of the Son of God; but we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the first-born among many brethren. We have borne the image of the earthly, and we shall bear the image of the heavenly. We rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Now Christ in His death glorified God as to all that He is, and that, where God had been dishonored, in the very place of sin. Man's enmity, Satan's power, death, the curse or wrath of God, all met there; and He in love and obedience was made sin. There it was obedience was perfected, God's righteous judgment against sin fully displayed, and endured in the forsaking of God, yet God's perfect love to sinners displayed in the same act. God's majesty maintained in the sufferings of Christ, His truth, and all that was needed that His purpose of bringing sons into glory might be accomplished.

God was glorified in the Son of man, and man was set at the right hand of God. All that God's glory could claim as against sin, and for the accomplishment of His purposes, according to that glory, all that could make it good, and that as only could be done where sin was All that could glorify God, and, blessed be His name, to the glory of God by us, was accomplished; and righteousness, God's righteousness, what was due to His consistency with Himself, set Christ at His right hand as man; for Christ suffering as man had realized that glory, making it good at all cost to Himself. (See John 13:31, 32; 17:4, 5; 16:10) God, having all in this work that was due to the claims of His own glory, acted righteously, did what was the necessary consequence according to that glory, and glorified Christ with Himself. “I have glorified thee on the earth” (there where it was needed, and nothing but Christ made sin in the perfection of obedience and love to His Father could do it), “and now glorify thou me with thine own self,” and man entered into the glory of God righteously—this, besides

Christ's bearing our sine in His own body on the tree. He was Jehovah's lot and the people's lot. Much blessed instruction is connected with this, but I confine myself to righteousness.

The testimony to the world is that there is none righteous, no not one; but there is righteousness in this, that Christ has gone to the Father, and the world will not see Him any more (that is, as then come in grace) until He comes in judgment. Through this work the believer is justified from all his sins, for Christ has borne them and suffered the penalty. God is just (righteous), and as such the justifier of him that believes in Jesus, justifies the ungodly, and whom He justifies them He also glorifies. Grace reigns through righteousness, unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord. He is made unto us righteousness, and we the righteousness of God in Him. He is before God the ground and measure of our place before God, and His righteousness displayed in putting us there, while all is grace towards us. He is gone to our Father and His Father, our God and His God, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

And now a word as to “imputed righteousness.” No such term is in scripture, but imputing righteousness, of which the sense is wholly different in English, and a different word employed in Greek. Imputing righteousness is simply counting or reckoning us righteous. Imputed righteousness is a certain valuable sum put over to our account. Thus in Philemon, “If he owe thee anything, put that to my account.” And so “sin is not imputed where there is no law.” You cannot put that specific act as a transgression to the man's account, because when there is no law it has not been forbidden, as it could be under the law in Israel; though the reign of death proved they were sinners, and lost. Now this and the passage in Philemon are the only places where this word is used. But imputing righteousness, used some eleven times, is, as the Thirty-nine Articles justly state, simply accounting the man righteous.

But whatever the blessed fruits of divine life or of the Spirit, which there surely will be where that life and the Spirit are, and be the proof that it is really there, still, if God justifieth the ungodly, and if it is to him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly that faith is imputed for righteousness, it is evident that it is not because of what a man is himself, but of another, that he is accounted righteous. By the obedience of One shall many be made righteous. And mark the difference. We are not accounted righteous according to the poor measure of the fruits which we produce, with the defects which may accompany them, but according to the measure of Christ's work, in which He has borne our sins, on the one hand, and perfectly glorified God, when made sin, on the other; the former represented by the sin-offering in Leviticus, and the other by the burnt offering. Or, in another aspect, when both were parts of one sin-offering, by the blood on the mercy seat, and the sins of the people laid on the head of the scape-goat.

Now Mr. Marshall's system contradicts itself. “The brethren,” he says, “are quite in accordance with scripture in holding that a believer is justified solely on the ground of the Lord Jesus Christ's atonement and satisfaction for his sins; and that so believing his faith is imputed to him for righteousness, and that he is thus justified and accepted of God.” Now, that a true Christian is made partaker of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, that he is to cleanse himself from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord, that he is not his own, but bought with a price, and to live wholly to Him who has died for Him, and risen again, as a thousand passages testify, cannot be too earnestly pressed on the Christian. It is of vital importance and daily need. That is not the question; at any rate it is no

question with me. The question is this, our righteousness before God. But Mr. M. says (page 16), “If all a believer's righteousness, at present and in the future, are in Christ alone, why were all those cited exhortations and commands?” If a believer is justified, as Mr. M. says, solely on the ground of Christ's atonement and satisfaction, and that his faith is imputed for righteousness, they cannot be for righteousness to be accepted of God; for how then is it solely by Christ's work? But I answer, Not to make out righteousness but for consistency and growth in the place he is set in, to grow up to Him who is the head in all things, to glorify Christ as he ought to be able to enjoy God. We are accepted in the beloved. See how it is said in John 14: “In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.” By the Holy Ghost dwelling in me I know I am in Christ, consequently accepted perfectly of God. This is not my responsibility, but my place; but cannot be without Christ being in me; they go together; and there is my responsibility now, namely, to show forth the life of Christ, of Christ who is my life, in everything—that Christ should be all to me as He is in all that have received the Spirit, and that all I do I should do in His name. My objection is, not that men should press holiness, but that they should make righteousness out of it when Christ is made unto us righteousness.

As to the phrase, “we through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith,” it teaches the contrary of what Mr. M. supposes. It is not righteousness we are waiting for, but the hope of righteousness; we are made the righteousness of God in Him (Christ), and then wait for glory which belongs to that righteousness. Christ is made to us righteousness: by one man's obedience the many are made righteous; and the objection to that, that we may then continue in sin, is not met by putting us under law, or giving uncertainty as to righteousness, but by showing (Rom. 6.) that righteousness involves death to sin. I cannot have one without the other, and so live to God. It is a sad thing if a Christian never can know he is accepted; and if he was not righteous somehow, he assuredly could not. The scripture shows us it is in Christ we are justified, that is, accounted or held for righteousness, as Mr. M. admits, solely on the ground of Christ's atonement. Otherwise, if we cannot so stand before God, no peace, no joy, no bright hope of glory; for this belongs to the righteous. But He has made peace by the blood of the cross, and we are accepted in the Beloved. It is well that a simple principle should be realized by Christians, that duties flow from the place we are already in; and if I am in a place in which I always must be, as a child with its parents, it only makes the duty perpetual, and this is always the measure and principle of duty. Destroy the relation, and the duty ceases.

I have treated the main questions at issue, and which are of importance to every soul. I only add that in one aspect all Christians are sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints called and set apart to God by the power of the Holy Ghost; in another they follow after holiness, and, beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. They know that, when He shall appear, they shall be like Him, for they shall see Him as He is, and, having this hope in Him, they purify themselves as He is pure.

As regards the church, or assembly, the question is not at all if Abraham was not justified by faith through Christ's work, nor whether he will be in glory, nor whether he was more or less faithful than any of us. There were those more or less faithful then. There are more and less faithful now. The question is what place God set the Old Testament saints in, and where He has set us. Now I believe God has set us in a better place, because, after speaking of the faith by which all those elders obtained a good report, it is declared God had reserved some better thing for us. (Heb. 11)

It is a mistake to think that there may not be in God's sovereign wisdom a better place in which some are set. Among those that were born of women there has not arisen a greater than John the Baptist: who more faithful or separated to God than he, filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb? Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. What a privilege that of the disciples, to have the Lord with them, the long and earnest desire of prophets and righteous men! Yet for these very persons it was expedient that He should go, for then they would receive the Holy Ghost. Under the law the Holy Ghost signified that the way into the holiest was not made manifest; now we have boldness to enter into the holiest. The veil is rent.

Reply to Tract on the Tenets of the (So-Called) Plymouth Brethren 3

But our business is to show that the church did not exist. “Church” is an unhappy word, because nobody knows what it means. Say “assembly,” and all is plain. Every gathering together of people is an assembly, but God's assembly is a distinct thing. Now Adam, nor any individual saint, could not be an assembly. This is clear. Israel was an assembly, and in a certain sense God's assembly, but in every way the opposite of God's assembly now. It was by birth of the race of Jacob: a Gentile, as such, could not belong to it. It was a nation, not a gathering by testimony and calling. The Gospel of John makes the difference. Christ died for that nation, but not for that nation only, but to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad. The fact of their being children of God did not make them an assembly, but their gathering together into one. But another element characterizes God's assembly, God's dwelling amongst them. Now this He does not do with man, but on the ground of accomplished redemption. He did not dwell with Adam in his innocence, nor with Abraham and others; but as soon as He had brought out Israel by accomplished redemption, though then an outward one, then He came and dwelt among them, as it is written (Ex. 29:45), “And they shall know that I am Jehovah their God, that brought them out of the land of Egypt, that I might dwell among them."Let us come to the direct proofs of the different positions of the New Testament and Old Testament saints. The Lord's own declaration should suffice, “On this rock I will build my church—the confession that He personally (Jesus) was the Son of the living God. This could not be before. Looking for a Messiah with true faith, for the promised Seed, was before, and was surely saving faith; but that Jesus was the Son of the living God could not be before Jesus. And hence the Lord says,” I will build:” not that He had been long building, when in truth in that state as a man He did not subsist.

We have two aspects of the church. It is Christ's body, and the habitation of God by the Spirit. Neither could possibly have existed before Pentecost. First, till Christ ascended there was no head in heaven for the body to be united to. You would have had a body without a head. Ephesians declare that we are raised with and seated in heavenly places in Christ, “according to the working of his mighty power which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand.... and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

Thus it is distinctly the raised and ascended Man that is made head of the body, and set over all things. There was no such Man till the ascension, and thus union loses all its reality, the church all true existence, where it is set up by man's imagination before Pentecost. “He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit.” “We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.” All supposes the man Christ, and Christ ascended, when union is spoken of, and that is union by the power of the Holy Ghost.

Further, till after the ascension the Holy Ghost did not come down to form the church and dwell in it. In 1 Cor. 12 we read, “by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.” They were, as we are expressly taught in the Acts, baptized with the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 1) So

John, “He it is that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.” (John 1) Now the Lord says, “If I go not away, the Comforter will not come; but if I go away, I will send him unto you.” I must here notice and correct a mistake. Mr. M. urges that Christ's breathing on the disciples, saying “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” was the giving of the Comforter, not the day of Pentecost; but John's Gospel is explicit. That was from Christ risen. As God breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, so the Lord breathed on them that they might have the power of life by the Holy Ghost. But this was not sending the Holy Ghost.

We read in John 7 the Holy Ghost was not yet [given], because that Jesus was not yet glorified. We read explicitly, John 14:16, I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever. And (ver. 26), But the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, &c. And (chap. 15:26), But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me. So chapter 16:7-15. These passages leave no question as to the Comforter being sent down from on high when Jesus had gone up, sent down by the Father in His name, and by Him from the Father. Hence we know we are sons, and the Spirit has revealed the things freely given to us of God, and the disciples were enabled to give all that the Holy Ghost led them to give of Christ's life here below. Hence Christ when He went up received the Holy Ghost afresh to communicate it (Acts 2:33), which identifies the Comforter also with what was given at Pentecost, though gifts may be distinct power, but here the Holy Ghost distributes to every man severally as He will. (1 Cor. 12:11.)

It is a mistake of Mr. Marshall's to take the breathing on them the day of His resurrection for His sending the Comforter from the Father after He had gone away. He must, He tells us Himself, go away in order to send Him. (John 16:7.)

At all events, we learn from 1 Cor. 12 that it was the coming of the Holy Ghost which is called His baptism, which we know (Acts 1:5, answering to John 1:33) to have been on the day of Pentecost. This forms the church, the one body of Christ here below, whereby the gathered saints become withal the habitation of God through the Spirit. Thus the fact that the risen and ascended Christ is head, and that the descent of the Holy Ghost forms the body, make it impossible for the church to have existed before Pentecost.

Another and lower ground of reasoning, though perhaps more palpable to some, alike shows the impossibility of the church's existing before the cross. Jew and Gentile could not be united in one. The Jew was bound strictly to keep up the middle wall of partition. The church is formed by its being thrown down, Christ thereupon forming in Himself one new man. (Eph. 2:14-16.) The church was formed through the throwing down of that which Judaism was bound to keep up. It could not exist until Judaism was ended. Hence too in Heb. 12 we have “the church of the first-born which are written in heaven,” and “the spirits of just men made perfect,” as a distinct class. (Ver. 28.) The truth is that the bringing in the Old Testament saints into the church is only dropping the whole proper blessing of the church itself. The teaching of scripture as to it is wholly lost. Saints may be individually blest and saved, though that truth is darkened, but a body united to a head in heaven is entirely out of sight. Thus Mr. Marshall diligently argues that, as we are Abraham's seed, Abraham must have been in the church. “Of one seed,” he says in concluding, “or church.” But the seed are individuals, sons of God and heirs of God, which has nothing to do with being the body of

a Man who is in heaven, or bulled together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. A man's bride and body is another idea from being children of a father. Viewed as children of God, we are Christ's brethren, not His body.

Mr. Marshall is mistaken, like many others, as to the prophets in Eph. 2 being Old Testament prophets. The Greek sufficiently shows in Ephesians that they are New Testament prophets; but chapter 3:5 shows, without question, to any reader, that they are New Testament prophets in contrast with all of old time. (Compare chap. 4:2)

Mr. Marshall again refers to the expression, “the whole family in heaven and earth.” Now I have not the least doubt that the only true rendering is “every family,” which upsets the argument altogether, in contrast with Amos 3:1, 2, But the whole argument rests on the fallacy, even taking it as it stands in English, that a family is a body, and so the family of God. is the body of Christ glorified. Thus “surely all the members of a family may be said to belong to it” have no force in any way, because members of a family has nothing to do with members of His body. It is a relationship with God and the Father, and not with Christ, save so far as they are brethren—an individual place. Mr. Marshall's tract sees nothing of these differences. The judgment and song in Rev. 15 do not even apply to the church at all. Nor is relationship with the Father introduced into the Revelation. The nearest approach to it is in chapter xiv., when God is called Christ's Father. The book describes the government of God Almighty, and not even sons with a Father. The saints, old and new, are seen on thrones, but the body of Christ is not spoken of, nor the saints belonging to the church, or even to the Old Testament, seen on earth at all. Taking union on the lowest ground, mere gathering here, Christ gave Himself “to gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad.” Even here (and it is not the unity of the body) being a child of God is one thing, and gathered together is another.

As to judging of the equity of putting them there with the comparative merits of individuals we have nothing to do, nor has it with the question. We must see what scripture states. Now I say that not only the church did not exist, but was not, even prophetically, revealed in the Old Testament—formed no part of promise or prophecy.

In Rom. 16:25 it is said, “according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began, but is now made manifest." Again, Eph. 3:5, “which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body.” Again, verse 9: “the mystery which from the beginning of the world was hid in God; to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be made known by the church the manifold wisdom of God.” “The mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints.” (Col. 1:26.) We have thus the distinct and repeated declaration that the mystery of the church not only could not exist while the Jews were a separate people and bound to be so, but was not revealed. The revelation that there was no difference between the Jew and the Greek would have overturned the whole fabric by its base.

Let me urge Mr. Marshall to read, not the writings of “Brethren,” but the Bible, and see if the church is not a wholly new thing, consequent on the exaltation of Christ to the right hand of God, and that it could not by any possibility have existed before; and not to confound the promise of a coming Savior, received by faith, with membership of Christ's body, when He is exalted to be head over all

things to His body, the church; nor to think it impossible because of the grace given to Abraham, that God may have “reserved some better things for us."

I will add a few words on ordination. Mr. Marshall cites a number of passages in which Paul exhorts Timothy as to his ministry, stirring up the gift which was in him. Most admirable exhortations assuredly; for indeed they are of the Spirit of God Himself, though we speak of Paul, but they have nothing to do with the ordination of ministers. But Mr. Marshall misquotes the only material citation. Timothy had been ordained, he tells us, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Scripture does not say “by,” but “with;” and, when we see what Paul says elsewhere, we see the importance of the difference. The whole sentence is, “the gift which was given thee by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.” Now here we find the real force of the matter: a gift was given, a very different thing from ordination; and elsewhere we find more information as to it (2 Tim. 1:6), “the gift that is in thee by the patting on of my hands.” A man was personally marked out by prophecy [as we see in the case of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13), again at Antioch], and then Paul laid his hands on Timothy, and conferred a gift, which was the privilege of the apostles, as we see Paul and John going down to Samaria, and so conferring it, and Simon wanting to buy the power.

Now I freely admit that the presbytery also accompanied this by the laying on of their hands, as a testimony to Timothy; just as in Acts 13:8, an act interpreted in chapter 14:26 and repeated again in chapter 15:40. But the substance of the act was the conferring the Holy Ghost with a careful changing of the word, which has escaped Mr. M.'s notice. Hence in the Episcopal church, in which the officiating prelate professes to give the Holy Ghost, the laying on of his hands is ordered to be accompanied by that of other priests; but no one ascribes ordination to them, but to the prelate.

The difference between eldership and gifts is clearly established in every respect in scripture. It was desirable that an elder should be apt to teach, still it was said, “especially those who labor in the word and doctrine,” so that some did not; and in their episcopal work—for they were all bishops, that is, in their service as overseers of the flock,—each was to be able “to exhort and convince gainsayers, holding fast,” if he had no special conferred gift of teaching on which he had to wait (Rom. 12), “the faithful word as he had been taught.” He is even here contrasted with a teacher, and is to use in his service what he had learned, to stop people's mouths. Elders were appointed in every city (Titus 1:5, compare Acts 14:23), aptness to teach being a desirable qualification; but eldership was no gift at all. It is to be presumed hands were laid upon them, though it be never positively said so; but it was the common use in every signification of blessing, approved and commended to the Lord, used with the sick, used by prophets, or the church as to apostles; and as Timothy was to lay hands suddenly on no man, it may be very well presumed he did so on elders. It is a mercy that it is never said, or we should have apostolic succession. And it is not ever said.

But let us see on what a totally different footing gifts stand. First, the Lord (when He goes away) gives talents to His servants, and they are bound to use them without other authority. He who had not sufficient trust in the Lord to do so was a wicked and slothful servant. Then I learn the fact that “they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word,” and afterward (Acts 11) that “the hand of the Lord was with them."

I find Peter giving directions as to this, “As every man has received the gift, so let him minister the same, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” (1 Peter 4:10.) In Rom. 12:6 the word is, “Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth on teaching,” &c. So in 1 Cor. 12 it is elaborately stated that they had their gifts according to the dividing of the Spirit as He would, making this man one member in the body, that another; and, wherever a man was, he was that member. So, if Apollos taught at Ephesus, he taught at Corinth when there, and Silas and Judas at Antioch, and so on; and in 1 Cor. 14 directions are given as to the use of gifts, when they were not to be used, how many were to speak, &c., that all might be to common edification, concluding by saying, “for ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and that all may be comforted.” The women were to keep silence in the assemblies; it was not permitted them to speak; it was a shame for them to speak in the assembly. So persons (2 John) who went about preaching were to be judged by their doctrine. Then we get a warning in James not to be many masters (teachers), showing by the moral warning that ordination to do it had no place.

Finally, in the important passage in Eph. 4 it is referred to gifts from Christ on high, when He fills all things in the power of redemption. Five permanent and regular gifts are mentioned, of which two had been declared to be the foundation, which is not laying now, Pastors, teachers, and evangelists remain, sadly hindered by the state of the church—still they remain. In addition to this we have “the increase of the body to the edifying of itself in love by that which every joint supplieth according to the effectual working in the measure of every part.” The difference of this and 1 Cor. 13 is worthy of note. There it was mere power by the Spirit of God, which might be, and was, abused; here it is what Christ, who cannot but be faithful to His own body, gives till all grow up to Him who is the head. There being by the present Holy Ghost, you have tongues, miracles, healings, &c., but there is no “till we all come,” as there is in Eph. 4; on the contrary it is “as he will.” We may have lost a great deal, but the principle of scripture is as plain as possible.

Of ordination, as connected with these gifts, we have nothing, unless that apostles could confer the Holy Ghost and gift by laying on of hands. Committing doctrine to faithful men, which may be done in any age, if one be capable to do it, has nothing to do with conferring official authority, and this is what ordaining means in modern language. And this is why “ordain” is objectionable, because it conveys a distinct meaning in modern language, which scripture does not warrant. The English version is intentionally unfaithful in this. In Acts 1 it has “must one be ordained,” where there is no word at all; it is simply “must one be a witness.” In Acts 14 it is “they chose for them,” where they have put “ordained them;” and in Titus it is “ordain elders,” when it is simply “establish.” This was not without intention.

The other passages Mr. Marshall quotes prove rather the contrary of what he cites them for, as 1 Thess. 5:12, 18. Why call upon people to know those that labored among them, and love them for their work's sake, if they could not help knowing them as their own ordained ministers? Their work was the ground of knowing and valuing them, and a very just one. So Heb. 13:7 has really nothing to do with it, (for these were dead, and, knowing their end, they were to follow their faith), verse 17 has; but here their work is again the ground: there is no hint of appointment.

When Mr. M. speaks of the hundreds of thousands of churches which need ministers, he is assuming the whole system of modern churches, of which there is not a trace in scripture. Men have made the churches; and so they must make ministers for them, whether God has made them or not. Such a church as Paul wrote to does not exist in Christendom; and if he were to address a letter as he then did, no one would get it. “No one,” Mr. M. adds, “ever knew or heard of any such direct divine appointment since the time of the apostle Paul!” Just so. In scripture such are found, as we have seen. And he told us that, after his decease, from without and within, ruin would come; and it has. But these would become the perilous times of the last days, for which we have directions in 2 Tim. 3, and more detailedly in 2 Tim. 2 in the next, or third chapter, we have our resource, knowing from whom we have learned, (the inspired teachers, and generally the scriptures) that which was from the beginning. (1 John 2:24.)

But Mr. M. has just told what has been, I may say, our desire, certainly mine—to go straight back to the time of the apostle Paul, that is, to the scriptures, the written word of God: for there only we have His ways and directions. I admit it has never been done since then. The mystery of iniquity was already at work. We have returned to that which was at the beginning, conscious that much has been lost, but persuaded that Christ can never fail His church, and that He will give it needed care and blessing, and gifts to minister to it, till all are come. We may fail in our faithfulness, but not the blessed Lord in His love, nor in what is really needed. But, however feebly, Mr. M.'s is just the true account of what those commonly called the “Brethren” have done. They have gone back to Paul's time, that is, to the word of God.

Chapter 185

The Two Adams

The thought on my heart is to speak a little as to the two Adams, as here brought before us.

There is a wonderful contrast presented, in scripture between the two Adams—the Adam of the garden of Eden, and the last Adam, who is a life-giving Spirit.

The contrast between these two is not merely a matter for the mind of man to be interested in, or to occupy itself with. The fact of the two beings before us is the wonderful way of God in setting forth His own glory. It was just this; He took occasion of the failure, misconduct, and ruin of Adam and Eve in Eden, to bring forth the exceeding riches and the magnificence of His own character of truthfulness and large-hearted grace, both of which Satan had denied in speaking to Eve, when he told her that God did not mean what He said, that He was niggardly and narrow-minded and that He wished to keep from her something that would be of use to her and Adam—the knowledge of good and evil. God's answer to that came out when sin had been brought in, and the whole human family in our first parents had been utterly lost and ruined. God's truth, and the large-heartedness of His grace and mercy, came out, and He said, in the presence of Adam and Eve, to Satan, “The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

Now, one of the things that strike me in these last days is, how little the minds generally of religious persons are really cleared entirely from the first Adam, and recognize everything in connection with the first Adam to be dead loss, and if they have got anything whatever, that they have it in the last Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me briefly pass down the account given in the end of Rom. 5:12: “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” The thing that distinguished Adam was that sin entered into the world by him. Well, the heart might say, I grant you that, but that does not prove the complete rain of the whole race. Does it not? Why death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Death passed upon all upon the ground of their being descendants of the first man who had sinned. When they begat a son, he was begotten with their own likeness and character; and in Genesis that character is strongly marked in the murder of Abel, for Cain withstood God, and would not, even in type, recognize the sacrifice as appointed by God.

Verse 15 speaks also of that one, “through the offense of one many be dead.” In verse 16, again, sin and “the judgment, was by one to condemnation.” In verse 17, “By one man's offense death reigned by one.” Verse 18, “By the offense of one judgment (same upon all men to condemnation.” Verse 19, “By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.” When God gave the perfect description of what man ought to be—to love God with all his heart, and all his soul, and with all his mind—the effect was this, it caused the offense to abound. And on which of these verses can anybody build for any comfort? God has said, “Wrath is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;” not merely governmental wrath, but God in heaven judging righteous judgment. That is the picture God gives of the father and mother from whom the

whole race descend, and everyone has a likeness to his father and mother. Where is there a single stone then for his foot to rest upon? Ah! but look at the other side, not only the contrast, striking as it is, but it is a contrast brought in, taking occasion by the very ruin, so that there is not one single thing in the Lord Jesus Christ, not one, of which I could say with intelligence, “I hope that will stand me in stead,” without owning the entire ruin of all connected with the first Adam.

Everything is in ruin and under judgment, and God well understood what He had pledged Himself to, when He said, “the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.” He well understood the condition to which our first parents were sunk. There was not a thing that met His mind in either of them, not a power they could work forth in any way for blessing to themselves. They were not only then and there in a predicament, but there was no power in them. Whatever was to be done, it was the seed of the woman alone could do it. The serpent had power, and unless God could find some one who could tome in to put his foot on the head of that serpent, all were lost, lost, lost, for eternity; every single individual would have been lost. But God could do it, and God would do it, and speaks of Him who was His champion to put down every mark of evil Satan had brought into the nether heavens and nether earth, and to bring in a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

See what is said of this same Adam in this same series—Rom. 5:15: “If through the offense of one many be dead, much more the grace of God and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.” We have thus the antagonism of God in His love against the ruined state of the creature, and not a single thing but God and Christ—not one. It is all the gift of God through Christ. All that He finds in the sinner is death, and bondage, and corruption—nothing else whatever. He goes on again (verse 16), “The free gift is of many offenses unto justification.” What did He do as an answer to those offenses? He brings justification. To whom does He, bring it? To man, whose mouth is stopped, and who has not one word to say for himself. “They which receive abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness, shall reign in life by one Jesus Christ.” Verse 18, “By the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.” Lastly, verse 21, “That as sin, hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

Then, again, beloved friends, if I have got connected with the last Adam, I have in Him that which just tells me how God has taken occasion of my ruin individually to set forth. His Almighty power, and the riches of His grace in Christ, and nothing else whatever. My eyes are brought then to Christ, and all I look at in myself is utter ruin; but there is a Savior. I am never turning to myself, but I am turning to Him whom God has thrust in against the will of man—no one can deny it is against the will of man. Christ has set forth the virtues of His salvation, and when Satan found Him in the world to do that work, the hatred. of man came out against Him, and man came to be a destroyer. I take these two persons, and one is here, the other there. Now on whom is my back turned, and to which is my face turned? Have I my back turned clean against Adam, and the whole family of which I was a member? There is nothing but ruin there, it is no use turning to it, it is ruin from first to last, and I will set my face Christward and Godward. I cannot look this way and that way at the same time.

It is good to know the contrast as to what I was when found by Christ. Mine was not a living soul when Christ picked it up; it was a living soul when made by God, not when Christ picked it up. As

to the one to whom I look for blessing, which is it? Have you been thoroughly cleaned out of everything that grew on the stock of the Adam and Eve family?

Now let me call attention to the use God makes of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. I think here again, beloved friends, if I may express it in simplicity of heart before you—I think there is great shortcoming in the present day in presenting God's thoughts to those whose consciences are in any measure awake, and a want in many who, I do not doubt, are the Lord's, of setting to their seal the work of the Lord towards poor sinners.

I would just like to remark as to the difference on the great day of atonement between the atonement and the Azazel, or scape-goat. The blood carried in was for God; it was proclaiming that to be the mercy-seat. Through the rent veil is the way the believer draws nigh, and when inside he finds on the throne the Lamb. The scape-goat had the sins confessed over him, and took the sins away to a land not inhabited. That is the part I want to look at in detail. First, as to clearing the ground on the question of sin, God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; and, if I am to have confidence in the thought of meeting Him, I must have known that which will enable me to meet Him who knows everything connected with my ruin.

In connection with sin, I think there are three things very important to separate the one from the other. What is sin in principle? What are sins as distinguished from sin? and what is guilt? These are the three things I want to call attention to before passing on. When sin is brought in in Eden, it is very simple indeed. God had given everything freely to Adam, to remain his as long as he marked his dependence upon God by not touching a certain tree. What came out with Eve was, she thought she could better herself, and she took the place of independence. Adam did it in a more solemn and deliberate way after. Self-willed independence was the secret of sin. God had pledged Himself to give Adam everything. But they preferred catering for themselves to being dependent on God. If I take self-willed independence as a definition of sin, do I not find in every one self-willed independence of God? Is it not born with us? Is not self-will what we see even in a babe? and as a child grows up, we hear, “I like” and “I don't like;” and as men get into the world, there is a seeking after their own. How many a one, terrified at God's word as to judgment to come, will lay to heart how he is to meet God, and toil and labor, entirely setting aside the work of Christ, and never taking any notice of it until he finds he cannot succeed that way. Three years I toiled and labored after God awoke me, and I saw something of the beauty of Christ too, and never thought of asking God what His way was of dealing with sin. What came out? What did it all come to? That eighteen hundred and upwards of thirty years ago, God, without consulting me, without waiting for me to say whether I liked His way or disliked it, had given His Son from His bosom, and made a way for the sinner to draw near to God. Is there no conflict, no thoughts of our own that we superadded? Ah, to be sure there is. What are all these thoughts to accomplish a way of our own but just self-willed independence of our own human minds? Sins are will working out into action. When Cain was born, Eve said, I have gotten the man from the Lord, I have the child; but he was a murderer, not a Savior. When he found that God had respect unto Abel's offering, and not to him, he set his heart to kill his brother.

What is the difference between that and guilt? Guilt is the state of one having set aside the laws of One who has power over him.

When would a creature have come to an end of the experience of the impossibility of God and the sinner meeting together? When their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched. How could I grasp the largeness of God's mind against sin—the creature-worm, if you please—turning His back on God, and saying, No, I will cater for myself, I will be independent? How could I measure what God's penalty would be—His hatred of that before the whole universe? Where are these three things met? God shows in Rom. 6 that. He had His thoughts about the humiliation side—the experience of the Son of His love down here on earth. Mark these two verses (3 and 17), “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” “God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” That is, God proposed the doctrine, set it forth, that the only hiding-place to be found, for any one belonging to the family of the first Adam, was in the last Adam, in the depth of His humiliation. To, what extent does He go?

These three words, “Crucified together with him, dead together with him, buried together with him,” tell the extent of it. There is a refuge, and a safe one, for one who knows that he is ruined in himself, belonging to a ruined race, and having a ruined head to the family in Adam and Eve.

The three things which come in—I know who the Nazarene was and is, and I know that He was set forth evidently crucified, put to open shame by man, and in the hour when everything told to the grief and sorrow of His heart, God added an element the creature never could have added, and He cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Psa. 22 is wonderful in connection with that cry of the Lord, because, immediately after expressing a sense of forsakenness, He goes on to vindicate God for having done it. No creature has over been forsaken for sin. He was forsaken when He took the cup from the hand of His Father, and was put to open shame before heaven and earth, hanging on the cross.

Was there any self-willed independence in Him? Never, never; He was the only one who could carry out the mind of His Father perfectly. Ah, I know the secret, my conscience understands it. If there were not a second man on earth that would say, He was put to open shame for me, I say I have it all to myself, and I bear the whole burden as the one whose self-willed independence brought it on. He bore the penalty, the judgment came on Him. Seeing this, a power is brought in on the soul which gives a death-blow to independency.

If you do so and so, I will do so and so. God is thought to be very hard. We cannot satisfy even our own minds—it is impossible. When the soul knows God made Him to be sin for us, and that He bore the penalty, what a simple thing to say, Is that the God I have been so self-willed against? Am I to go on longer in my own independency against the God who gave His Son from His bosom for me? Shall I go on so? Shall this principle not be hated and judged by me? I see the love of God in having put His Son to shame—the One in whom the penalty was borne; then I loathe this self-will, I learn to watch against it, in anywise, and watch against attributing any blessing whatever save to Him that hung upon the cross.

What had I to do with His hanging there? Nothing but my sins: as to its virtues, nothing. Men may find the nails, the Romans may have found the spear, that may be man's part; but what is God's part in the cross? “He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."

When God looks at the Son of His love in connection with the sinner—the Son crucified to be a hiding-place for poor sinners—what are God's thoughts? Ah! I have revealed that; you are blessed in knowing how I could reveal it, to get honor to Myself and to My Son, the only One who could look sin in the face, and take the judgment—you a creature of yesterday! then it is the death-blow comes to self-will. I want to begin with God, I wish, to begin with God. When we get to the blessed Lord in Psa. 40, it is not only that He in that way charged Himself with the sin that rested on the human race, and could do it, but He speaks of sins more in number than the hairs of His head.

How it will shine forth when the Lord, according to Zechariah, comes in, all their sins and iniquities gone, and Israel shall say, “This is our God, we have waited for him, and he will save us.” The Lord claimed them all, and makes the hearts of Israel willing to abase themselves before God.

If I have no good thing to give Him, I will give Him my bad things; any sins, my self-will, my guilt, I will give to God and to Christ. I have got a heavy burden of ruin, and I will let the Lord be heartily welcome to it. You never get that till you get grace and mercy as the ground of your standing. I give all my self-will to Christ. I have done nothing but sin; I will give all my sins to Him. Yes, He is the only one who has borne the judgment, He is the one who has borne it, and He is the one who is the joy of God's heart as the Savior of lost ones.

Do you know Him as your Savior? not only your Savior from the wrath to come, and from Satan and the world, but from your own self? Many a one wants to have that driven home. What characterized the Lord when here? All that Satan could do, he could get nothing out of the Lord. When Christ was here, He was always master of Himself. The Lord undertakes to save us from ourselves. When He presents us to the Father, we shall be in glorious bodies, delivered from humiliation, made like unto His own body in glory. Then we shall be perfectly delivered from everything not of Him. Can you say to God, I am a poor, simple, foolish thing, but I see that thou hast said, and written it down, that I am crucified together with Christ? Thou lookest on me, having faith in the love that gave Thy Son; thou lookest on me as crucified together with Him who was put to open shame.

A second thing comes out—dead together with Him. He gave His life a ransom for us, and the eternal life with which He quickens us is the eternal life which He had before the world was. There can be no mistake as to what that quickening is. Dead, buried; ah, do all believers know what it is to reckon themselves buried together with Christ? When I think of the grace of Christ, I say there was the end of myself. God put me away on the cross.

Now as to the power of this practically: if you have got any gospel at all, what is your gospel? Is it the gospel of eternal life? If so, I expect you to be doers, not hearers only. You cannot have life, and not be a doer. God has met everything against me in Christ. What is the grand mark of that given to us here? “Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God.” Do you reckon yourselves to be dead? Do you know what it is to be in communion with God? That He is a living person, whose glory we can have no idea about? The Lord Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God; and do you and I know what it is to say of everything connected with the first Adam, Thou sayest of me that I am crucified together with Christ, dead together, buried together with Him? If thou sayest that I can reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God, I believe. Yes, you say; but do not you see that I do not feel it? He never said that you would feel it? Abraham was given certain promises, and God took special care to let everything in nature get the

sentence of God against it. You see how faith versus feeling was tried in Abraham. “A father of many nations have I made thee.” I can quite suppose the people around him saying, Where are these nations? You have no child even, only Ishmael, who was not born in the house. Where are all these nations? What did Abraham say? Just leave all alone. God has committed Himself by promise, and He is able to perform—leave it all alone.

He took the truth of God just as the thing in which he could rest, and would rest, and did rest. I do wish to press that side of the gospel. The heart having found in the humiliation of Christ that which enables it to look ruin in the face, and say, I am not afraid to see the place Adam got into, not afraid of the flesh or of the world. Why? Because there is a Savior. “Know ye not that as many as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death.” We are crucified together with Him; dead together with Him; buried together with Him. There is where the saint gets rest. God said it, God has written it. We have learned just a little of the blessedness of the humiliation of Christ, if we have faith; but God only knows the fullness of it, and He will give us perfect blessing in His own time.

G. V. W.

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